



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

July 8, 2019

MEDIA STATEMENT: SHAME ON YOU 60 MINUTES

Statement from Tourism Whitsundays CEO Tash Wheeler:

“Last night 60 Minutes aired a story with regard to the islands. This story was not a balanced look at Island resorts on the Whitsunday Coast, it was unethical, unbalanced journalism, nothing short of a ratings grab. The story showed no regard for the people behind the industry and the thousands that work hard and invest to promote this magical part of the world.”

“While it could have been a sad disheartening story the fact of the matter is, the Whitsundays have relished in the re-opening of some of the most iconic island resorts following major refurbishments and redevelopment such as Daydream Island and Hayman Island.”

These are the facts they ignored:

- Starting the year off was a multi-million-dollar investment made by the owners of new resort Elysian Retreat on Long Island.
- Daydream Island Resort opened in April following a \$120m+ redevelopment.
- Last week Hayman Island by InterContinental re-opened after the \$135m development.
- Not to mention the continued commitment and investment by Hamilton Island Enterprises which has seen in excess of \$500m being invested over the past 10 years.
- South Molle Island was purchased by CCIG Investments, the same company that owns and redeveloped Daydream Island Resort. The clean up on South Molle has begun.
- Lindeman Island has proposed huge redevelopment, three new resorts, 325 suites and villas – all with a proposed total development cost of \$583m.
- Lacking in last night's story was that six island resorts are now open and looking incredible in the Whitsundays, which is more than what was open prior to March 2017.

“The Whitsundays has a diverse range of wonderful island resorts to suit everyone's holiday needs from the ease of self-catering to exclusive, from couples only to family friendly.”

“Another disappointing factor is that over the past six months, joint marketing activity with Tourism Whitsundays and many other key partners has focused on a number of promotions on key news channels promoting the return of the Whitsunday Islands. With the promise of promoting the region, reminding people that the island resorts are up and running, the mainland and islands are full of amazing experiences for holiday makers to come and enjoy. The disappointment felt at the same network running a 'beat-up' story that wasn't entirely factual was crushing. Particularly given the fact that the positive information surrounding the Whitsunday Islands is not a hidden fact.”

Statement from Whitsunday Regional Council Mayor Andrew Willcox:

“It is unfair on our hard-working tourism industry that a program like 60 minutes reported such a one-sided story leaving out glaring facts like the reopening of Daydream Island and Hayman island.”

“It would appear that 60 Minutes may have suffered the same fate as some of our islands... For decades 60 Minutes were at the peak of investigative reporting but sadly their ratings demise over the past decade has left them a decaying shell of their former credibility.”

“Our tourism industry deserves better and it is basically unAustralian for a media outlet to decide on an agenda that suits their storyline rather than present the true facts.”

“The fact is that we now have seven resorts on islands open across the Whitsunday region most recently with Elysian Retreat, Daydream and Hayman island all welcoming guests.”

“Our tourism industry offers outstanding product which is endorsed by our success in winning four national titles at the Australian Tourism Awards.”

“I am always a proud Mayor when representing the Whitsundays as our tourism stakeholders always excel on the national stage. Red Cat Adventures won Gold for Major Tour and Transport Operators, Big4 Adventure Whitsunday Resort got Gold for Caravan and Holiday Parks and Whitsunday Escape took out Silver for Unique Accommodation.”

“These awards are recognition for the amazing resilience and enthusiasm of our tourism operators and also the industry leadership by Tourism Whitsunday CEO Tash Wheeler and board chair Al Grundy.”

“We are the custodians for a wonderful and unique part of the world, so I am always keen to shout long and loud that the Whitsunday Region is the best tourist destination in the world.”

Whitsunday Island Resorts open:

1. [Palm Bay Resort](#)
2. [Daydream Island Resort](#)
3. [Intercontinental Hayman Island Resort](#)
4. [Hamilton Island](#)
5. [Elysian Retreat](#)
6. [Camp Island Lodge](#)
7. [Whitsunday Apartments Hamilton Island](#)

Chairman Tourism Whitsundays Al Grundy notes:

“Not to mention the largest fleet of charter and self-hire yachts in the Southern Hemisphere providing over 600k bed nights per year on the water and access to the amazing array of Whitsunday Island.”

“It is also import to note that the Whitsundays takes 40% of all marine tourism into the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.”

Snapshot of completed & in process investment:

- \$500m+ (over 10 years) Hamilton Island
- \$135m Hayman Island

- \$120m+ Daydream Island
- \$40m Whitsunday Coast Airport
- \$6.3m Airlie Beach Foreshore
- \$500,000 Island Short Walks Infrastructure
- \$2m Hill Inlet upgrade and expansion
- \$1m Peter Faust Dam Tourism Infrastructure Development
- \$1m Flagstaff Hill Interpretive Center
- \$900,000+ Reef Ecologic – Underwater sculptures (GBR First)
- \$Multi- Million Elysian Retreat
- \$Multi- Million Freedom Shores / Northerlies
- \$Multi- Million Coral Sea Marina | Resort

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About Tourism Whitsundays: *Tourism Whitsundays (TW) is the organisation responsible for destination marketing and visitor attraction for the Whitsunday region. It is the lead agency recognised by Tourism and Events Queensland and the Whitsunday Regional Council to lead the promotion of the region as a tourism destination. Tourism Whitsundays markets all aspects of the region including the Great Barrier Reef, Whitsunday Islands and Coast, accommodation, boating and sailing, fishing, touring, recreational activities, adventure, dining, shopping, weddings and honeymoons, conferencing and business events.*

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