



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

***For immediate release***

**January 9, 2019**

## **POSITIVE VISITOR INDICATORS TO START THE YEAR**

Tourism Whitsundays is pleased to report that in the year from September 2017 – September 2018 the highest growth was domestic overnight expenditure and total domestic holiday visitors. Domestic overnight expenditure was at \$651 million up 43.2% and total domestic holidays at 402,000 up 57.4%. Most notably total intrastate holiday visitors was at 233,000 up a whopping 70.4% which proves that even living in a state with so much beauty, The Whitsundays is top of the holiday list for Queenslanders.

CEO of Tourism Whitsundays Tash Wheeler said “Whilst the statistics are mostly encouraging, we believe it’s also important to note this data is an indicator for our region, the data is compiled from a snapshot of international and domestic visitors. The total combined holiday visitation for domestic and international year ending September 2018 equates to 643,000 visitors which leaves 227,000 visitors coming for business, visiting friends & relatives or other purposes.”

We also had noteworthy international visitor numbers with total international expenditure for the Whitsunday region at \$215.9 million up 9.7% and spend per visitor up 12.8%.

Tash Wheeler Tourism Whitsundays CEO said “Looking over the statistics we’ve happily noticed that our International visitors are staying longer; length of stay is up .5% from last year. From this snapshot we can infer that our international visitors are staying longer and spending more with our accommodation, tour operators and local shops.”

Whilst Tourism Whitsundays noted that some of our core international markets were slightly down, they were still producing solid visitor numbers with United Kingdom, Germany, China and USA accounting for 119,000 visitors in the year reported. Interestingly Canada was observed as being an international market for the Whitsundays to watch with visitors from there at 10,000 up 24.1%. Other notable emerging international markets were Scandinavia up 7.1% and France up 8.2%. Currently our joint Great Barrier Reef campaign is running through Germany we hope this will help to boost numbers from Europe in the coming 12 months. Tourism Whitsundays also looks forward to continuing to work closely with Tourism & Events Queensland Americas & UK to market and drive visitation from those core markets.

The International Visitor Survey and National Visitor Surveys are also managed by Tourism Research Australia. The International Visitor Survey samples a snapshot of 40,000 departing, short-term international travellers aged 15 years and over who have been visiting Australia. The National Visitor Survey surveys via the phone approximately 120,000 Australian residents aged 15 years and over. These surveys provide our tourism industry with important variables such as international and domestic visitor spend, demographics, travel party, etc.

Tourism Whitsundays CEO Tash Wheeler adds “With 2019 comes the big return of Daydream Island and Hayman Island as well as the opening of boho-chic Elysian Resort and many more exciting new product developments for our resilient region; we hope to see these visitor growth figures return.

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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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