



MEDIA RELEASE

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Clipper 2017-18 Race fleet to set sail on Wondrous Whitsundays Race

The Clipper 2017-18 Round the World Yacht Race fleet is about to embark on the last race of its All-Australian Leg, as it races up the east coast of Australia to the Whitsundays in Race 4: The Wondrous Whitsundays Race.

The All-Australian Leg is the fourth of eight legs, which make up the 40,000 nautical mile voyage around the world, and is certainly full of challenge and adrenaline with the Clipper Race crews having completed a gruelling race around the south of Australia from Fremantle to Sydney, followed by the iconic Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race.

Now, they are dusting off their kit and hoisting the sails again, as they prepare to depart for the 'Wondrous Whitsundays Race', which takes them from Hobart to the Whitsundays, on January 5, 2018.

Expected to take between eight and 10 days, the 'Wondrous Whitsundays Race' – so-called to reflect the wonder and beauty of the Whitsundays - will see the Clipper Race yachts arrive into Airlie Beach between January 13 and 15, 2018.

Once in the Whitsundays, the Clipper Race crew, who represent over 20 different nationalities, will take a very welcome two-week break, enjoying everything the tropical island paradise has to offer with their families and friends.

The region is ready to roll out the red carpet for its guests, with an action-packed, two-week Whitsundays Clipper Race Carnival planned from January 13 to 29, 2018.

Tourism Industry Development Minister Kate Jones said the Clipper Race Carnival, supported by the Queensland Government through Tourism and Events Queensland, would provide a boost to tourism and the local economy.

"Visitors to the Whitsundays during the two week carnival are expected to spend millions, with multiple events to experience in this spectacular region.

"The Clipper Round the World Yacht Race is both an adventure, and a gruelling test of strength and skill, and competitors will welcome the break in the idyllic Whitsundays.

"The Carnival is a collection of events that will showcase the Whitsundays stunning scenery and reaffirm the region's reputation as one of the world's premier sailing destinations."

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Tourism Whitsundays CEO Craig Turner said it was an honour to host the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race fleet, and to be able to name a race after the Whitsundays was truly exciting.

“When we started planning the Whitsundays Clipper Race Carnival we engaged a branding consultant so our promotions would all have the same consistent look and feel going forward, with the brand colours of blue and mauve reflecting the colours of the Whitsundays along with the excitement of the carnival,” he said.

“The word wondrous was chosen to describe the Whitsundays in event promotions, as it sums up what our beautiful, wonderful region is all about – wondrous experiences on land and sea, wondrous views and 74 island wonders. So for the consortia, it was a natural extension to name the race the ‘Wondrous Whitsundays Race’.

“We are very excited that the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race organisers have allowed us to name the last race of the Australian leg in honour of the Whitsundays, and our wondrous region will go down in Clipper Race history!”

Clipper Race Founder and Chairman Sir Robin Knox-Johnston said: “I am very much looking forward to the Clipper 2017-18 Race arriving in the Whitsundays later this month.

“In addition to excellent sailing conditions and a stunning location for crew to enjoy, the inaugural Whitsundays Clipper Race Carnival will make for a fantastic two week celebration of sailing and it is great to have the Clipper Race at the heart of it.”

During the Whitsundays Clipper Race Carnival there will be a raft of free events on offer for sailing enthusiasts including tours of the ocean racing yachts, public talks by the skippers and opportunities to meet the crews. There will also be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to race around the Whitsunday Islands on one of the Clipper yachts in the Clipper Race Day.

There are events planned right around the region as part of the Whitsundays Clipper Race Carnival including the Bendigo Bank Clipper Welcome Party, the Fish D’Vine White on Whitehaven Long Lunch and the Whitsunday Foodservice Progressive Cruise Lunch.

The Clipper Round the World Yacht Race is the only race of its kind, pairing novice crews with experienced skippers on the adventure of a lifetime. Crew members can take part in just one leg or every leg of the 11-month long race, which starts and ends in Liverpool in the UK and takes in Uruguay, South Africa, Australia, China, the USA and Northern Ireland.

For more information and to book tickets for the Whitsundays Clipper Race Carnival events please visit www.whitsundayclipperrace.com.au.

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