



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

*For immediate release*

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### **The Whitsundays is a hit for winter weddings**

The Whitsundays is the “wedding heart of Australia” with more than 1,000 couples choosing the tropical paradise for their nuptials every year, drawn to the sublime views, gorgeous weather and world-class facilities.

This year’s winter wedding season has started with a bang with two Whitsunday wedding suppliers winning awards at the prestigious Queensland Australian Bridal Industry Academy (ABIA) Awards.

Congratulations to Tourism Whitsundays member The Wedding Planners Whitsundays, who fought off hundreds of other suppliers to take home the Wedding Planning award. The awards, now in their 20<sup>th</sup> year, are voted for by clients.

In a nod to the quality of the Whitsundays weddings industry – which hosts more than 1,000 weddings each year – six Whitsunday wedding businesses were also named as finalists, including Villa Botanica and I Do Events.

Jess Lawrence from The Wedding Planners Whitsundays said the award was recognition for not just her business but also the Whitsundays.

“I’ve always known we have a great team in our key staff and planners but it’s also about the suppliers we work with who provide such a great service – so it’s nice to get that recognition state-wide,” she said.

Jess’s business has been at the forefront of a regional marriage equality campaign, which will culminate in the region’s largest same-sex wedding to date, when Joshua Breakwell and Joshua Starr, tie the knot, in August.

The “Two Joshuas”, from Newcastle, won a \$50,000 Whitsundays wedding in a competition co-ordinated by local industry group Weddings Whitsundays and sponsored by The Wedding Planners Whitsundays and Paradise Cove Resort, where the wedding will be held.

Weddings Whitsunday president Brooke Ogden, of Brooke Miles Photography, said she was “not surprised” by the ABIA results.

“We have the most incredible range of high quality, professional wedding suppliers and the votes at the ABIA awards shows that the couples agree,” she said.

“Personally, I couldn’t be happier with this result and I am so proud of my industry colleagues and the Whitsunday region for shining so high at this level. Our wedding suppliers are first class and through the Weddings Whitsundays website, everything you need is in one place, at your fingertips.”

Tourism Whitsundays General Manager Tash Wheeler congratulated the winners and finalists, saying winter was a beautiful time in the Whitsundays with warm, sunny days and cooler nights, making it a perfect wedding destination right through winter and into spring.

“From now until the end of November, brides and grooms fly into our tropical paradise from all over Australia and the world for a wedding like no other,” she said.

“Weddings in the Whitsundays is an important market sector for the destination as it brings over \$74 million to the region and its suppliers.

“From ‘barefoot on the beach’ to opulent and lavish, we can accommodate all sizes and styles of wedding, with the backdrop of the beautiful Coral Sea and 74 island wonders or lush green mountains and cane fields. You can also enjoy pre and post wedding trips to the Great Barrier Reef and world famous Whitehaven Beach!”

[www.tourismwhitsundays.com.au](http://www.tourismwhitsundays.com.au)

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