



MEDIA RELEASE

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WHITSUNDAYS TOURISM EXCHANGE A HUGE SUCCESS

The annual Whitsundays Tourism Exchange (WTE) was another runaway success according to operators and agents.

Representatives from key Australian travel companies sampled the region's tourism products and experiences last week as part of WTE, organised by Tourism Whitsundays and held at The Palm House.

Around 36 Whitsunday tourism operators had the opportunity to present to more than 20 Australian product managers from major tourism wholesalers, inbound tour operators and online travel agents, who will now share this knowledge with their overseas networks.

James Coughlan from Intercruises said the event was fantastic for the region.

"It was very positive and there are some great products and opportunities taken away that would be a perfect fit for the cruise industry," he said.

"The Whitsundays has the most amount of cruise ship visits in Queensland this coming season and we need to be sure we are providing the cruise ship guests the very best of what the region has to offer. Events like this allow us to be sure we know about what is out there – if we don't know about it, we can't offer it to our clients."

On the other side of the table in the "speed dating" style forum - where each operator has 8 minutes to talk about its product - was Red Cat Adventures, who operate several boat tours and a resort in the region.

Co-owner Asher Telford said the exchange, his second, was really well run and extremely useful for the business.

"We met some valuable contacts and were given feedback about our products and business," he said.

"The venue was excellent and very well set up for the exchange. A definite highlight of the day was the catered lunch at Fat Frog Beach Cafe."

Meanwhile, co-owner of Lady Enid and Sundowner Cruises Nicole Graham said the opportunity to meet all the key product managers from the large wholesalers, including the cruise ship industry, was invaluable to the business.

“We have certainly made some great connections, which I am positive will turn into future bookings,” she said.

“Many of them had not been to the Whitsundays, so hosting them all on board Sundowner for a sunset cruise on their first night was a wonderful introduction to their Whitsunday experience.”

As well as the pre-exchange sunset cruise, a networking evening was held on the jetty at Coral Sea Resort following the exchange, which was hosted by Coral Sea Resort, Whitsunday Coast Airport and Tourism Australia.

Participants in this year’s Whitsundays Tourism Exchange included Booking.com, Tourism Australia, GTA (inbound tour operator and wholesaler), Flight Centre, Helloworld, Expedia and Aoliday.

Some product managers took the opportunity to spend a few days in the Whitsundays to experience the region, including world famous Whitehaven Beach and the Great Barrier Reef. Products showcased included Palm Bay Resort, Mirage Whitsundays and Cruise Whitsundays.

While in region, the delegates stayed at Coral Sea Resort, BIG4 Adventure Whitsunday Resort, Mantra Club Croc, Mantra Boathouse Apartments and Toscana Village Resort.

ENDS

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