



**MEDIA RELEASE**

*For immediate release*

**November 16, 2018**

## Whitsunday Tourism Industry celebrate at the Queensland Tourism Awards

Tonight at the 2018 Queensland Tourism Awards the Whitsundays was delighted to take home a swagger of awards, including 5 gold, 6 silver and 3 bronze.

The Awards ceremony was held on Friday November 16, 2018, at the Events Centre, The Star, Gold Coast.

“We are the proud custodians of a unique part of the world which we share with over one million visitors every year,” Whitsunday Mayor Andrew Willcox said.

“Our Whitsunday tourism stakeholders can hold their heads high that they continue to set the benchmark in providing amazing land and water experiences in the heart of the Great Barrier Reef.”

Tourism Whitsunday CEO Natassia Wheeler said “What an incredible tourism industry we have in the Whitsundays. Tonight’s recognition showcases the quality of the operators in our region.

“Congratulations to all our operators who entered this year’s awards, that in itself is a great achievement. Taking home 13 awards from 26 submissions is an amazing result for the region. These awards are a great opportunity for the Whitsundays to present our world class tourism experiences”.

“Tourism Whitsundays was also proud to be part of the collaborations of Great Barrier Reef regions awarded the gold for destination marketing for The Guide to Driving the Great Barrier Reef.”

The Queensland Tourism Awards, which are hosted by the Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC), cover 30 different categories and recognise the outstanding achievements of operators across the state.

QTIC Chief Executive Daniel Gschwind said the 34th Queensland Tourism Awards had attracted a high calibre of tourism operators across all award categories, with more than 170 entries received state-wide.

“This year’s entrants across 28 business, event and individual categories reflect the diverse and dynamic range of tourism operators helping Queensland’s tourism industry flourish,” he said.

“Queensland’s tourism industry continues to demonstrate just how invaluable its contribution is to the state’s economy, contributing \$25 billion or 7.8 per cent of the state’s gross product, and employing 217,000 people.

“International visitor numbers for Queensland have seen record growth in the 12 months to June 2018, increasing 5.5 per cent. Some 2.7 million international visitors generated \$5.7 billion in overnight expenditure.

“While the industry continues to see growth in visitor numbers and expenditure, Queensland must strive to remain competitive in the global market.”

All Gold Award winners from categories 1-25 in the Queensland Awards will now automatically gain entry into the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards, due to be held in Launceston, Tasmania on Friday, March 9, 2019.

For more information and a full list of award recipients, please visit: [www.qtic.com.au](http://www.qtic.com.au)

### **Award Winning Whitsundays Operators**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Award</b>	<b>Whitsundays Nomination</b>
05. The Steve Irwin Award for Ecotourism	Silver	Tall Ship Adventures - Derwent Hunter
11. Major Tour and Transport Operators	Silver	Ocean Rafting
11. Major Tour and Transport Operators	Gold	Red Cat Adventures
12. Tour and Transport Operators	Bronze	Whitsunday Jetski Tours
13. Adventure Tourism	Bronze	Ocean Rafting
13. Adventure Tourism	Silver	Whitsunday Jetski Tours
13. Adventure Tourism	Gold	Red Cat Adventures
14. The Richard Power Award for Destination Marketing	Gold	The Ultimate Guide to Driving the Great Barrier Reef
15. Tourism Restaurants and Catering Services	Bronze	Hemingway's
17. Caravan and Holiday Parks	Gold	BIG4 Adventure Whitsunday Resort
19. Unique Accommodation	Silver	Cumberland Charter Yachts
19. Unique Accommodation	Gold	Whitsunday Escape
22. Deluxe Accommodation	Silver	Mirage Whitsundays
23. Luxury Accommodation	Silver	Heart Hotel and Gallery Whitsundays

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