



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

*For Immediate Release*

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### **Just 80 days to go until the Whitsunday Clipper Race Carnival**

The countdown is on to one of the biggest parties the Whitsundays has ever seen, with just 80 days until the Clipper Race Fleet sails into town and the Clipper Race Carnival begins. The Clipper Round the World Yacht Race is a unique event which sees seasoned skippers paired with novice crews on an epic 40,000 nautical mile adventure.

The Whitsundays stopover will be the final one in Australia for the Clipper 2017-18 Race, and will be a fortnight of showcasing the Whitsunday region and what it is renowned for - beautiful scenery, amazing sailing and warm, Queensland hospitality.

The Whitsunday Clipper Race Carnival, from January 13 to 29, 2018, will be a whole-of-region event for visitors and locals and of course the Clipper crews, their families, friends and supporters.

Clipper Race Chairman, Sir Robin Knox-Johnston said the fleet “can’t wait” to get to the Whitsundays, having already had a taste of what the region offers in 2016.

“This will be our second visit to the Whitsundays, after the Clipper 2015-16 Race stopped in Airlie Beach on the way to Vietnam in January 2016,” said legendary sailor and Clipper Race Chairman, Sir Robin Knox-Johnston.

“Whilst we created memories to last a lifetime during that stopover, the 2018 edition, with the addition of the Whitsunday Clipper Race Carnival, will make it even bigger and better. With just 80 days to go, we can’t wait to get there and are all now counting down to some incredible experiences.”

Situated in the World Heritage Listed Great Barrier Reef with 74 island wonders, the Whitsundays is sure to provide a stopover that will be a stand-out experience for the Clipper Race fleet.

Events will be staged across the Whitsundays, starting with a big welcome party for both the Clipper Race crew and the community in Airlie Beach, with the events calendar to also include a Long Table Lunch on the pristine silica sands of Whitehaven Beach, on Whitsunday Island, and an Australia Day Rodeo in Bowen, at the top of the Whitsundays.

Locals and visitors to the region will also have the chance to see inside the fleet’s vessels during ‘open boat’ tours and there will be a Crew Presentation Night detailing how people from all walks of life can take on the ultimate ocean adventure.

Abell Point Marina is hosting the vessels in Airlie Beach and General Manager Luke McCaul said it was an honour to welcome the Clipper Race fleet, their families and supporters, for what promised to be one of the biggest parties the Whitsundays has ever seen.

“The Whitsunday Clipper Race Carnival is a combined project between the marina, the council and Tourism Whitsundays and it promises to be a fantastic event, with something for everyone,” he said.

“The free Community Welcome Event will be held on the Airlie Beach Foreshore and everyone is welcome to come along.

“The Progressive Lunch, meanwhile, will be held in various locations, on Sunday January 21, 2018, where people can experience fine dining with a relaxing yacht cruise through the wondrous Whitsundays, sipping on sparkling wine and enjoying fresh local seafood as they cruise the world’s most famous reef. Tickets are available on the Tourism Whitsundays website.”

The Clipper teams will ring in 2018 by departing Hobart on Friday, January 5, following the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race, and will then race each other up the east coast of Australia, with the fleet scheduled to start arriving to Airlie Beach from Saturday January 13, 2018.

For more information about the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race and the Whitsunday Clipper Race Carnival please visit the Whitsundays Clipper Race Website where there is also a Race Viewer to watch all the action.

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