



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

*For immediate release*

*9 June 2016*

### **THE WHITSUNDAYS TO HOST 2016 EMIRATES MELBOURNE CUP TOUR**

The Whitsundays has been selected to host Australia's most iconic trophy, the Melbourne Cup, during the 2016 Emirates Melbourne Cup Tour this year.

The 18-carat gold trophy left the Victoria Racing Club in Flemington this week to begin the tour and is expected to arrive in the Whitsundays on 11 September.

The trophy will travel to 34 towns and cities across Australia and New Zealand, before returning to Flemington for the 'race that stops a nation'<sup>™</sup> in November.

Tourism Whitsundays applied for the opportunity to host the Melbourne Cup and was successful, having committed to providing a range of activities for the whole community while the Cup is in town.

CEO of Tourism Whitsundays, Craig Turner, said hosting the Melbourne Cup would be an unforgettable experience for the community.

"Although the Emirates Melbourne Cup event is in Victoria, it is a national event and a big part of Australian culture," he said.

"We are thrilled to be able to play host to the 2016 trophy, and will be announcing the community activity schedule shortly."

VRC Chief Executive, Mr Simon Love, said this year the Tour will celebrate a heightened enthusiasm for racing amongst community groups far and wide following Michelle Payne's triumphant Emirates Melbourne Cup victory in 2015.

"Since the Tour began in 2003, we have delighted in bringing communities together in the shared history and magic of the Emirates Melbourne Cup and Michelle's victory last year certainly adds another dimension to those narratives," Mr Love said.

"Hearing the many tales, from triumphs to tears and everything in between, as people recount their own unique experiences of one of the world's greatest sporting events, is a joy for all involved."

At the heart of the Great Barrier Reef on Queensland's coast, the Whitsundays is made up of 74 island wonders in the warm waters of the Coral Sea.

The Whitsundays is the perfect place to swim and snorkel the Great Barrier Reef, charter a boat and cruise the islands, or witness the incredible diversity of marine life including turtles, whales, dolphins and tropical fish.

To find out more about the Whitsundays and to book your next tropical escape, visit [www.tourismwhitsundays.com.au](http://www.tourismwhitsundays.com.au)

**- ENDS -**

**FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES, CONTACT:**

Joanne Hennessy

PR & Communications Specialist

Tourism Whitsundays

Ph: 07 4948 5917 or 0417 765 736

Email: [communications@wmdl.com.au](mailto:communications@wmdl.com.au)