

MEDIA RELEASE



CRUISE WHITSUNDAYS
GREAT BARRIER
REEF FESTIVAL
WHITSUNDAYS • QUEENSLAND • AUG 4-7 2022

THE HEART
OF EVENTS
The Whitsundays

For Immediate Release
02 August 2022

Protecting What We Love Festival events at the heart of conserving our Great Barrier Reef

Festivities and fireworks aren't the only side to the Cruise Whitsundays Great Barrier Reef Festival from August 4-7.

This four-day celebration of life in the community at the Heart of the Great Barrier Reef is also when the Whitsunday region throws a spotlight on environmental issues at stake across the World-Heritage-Listed icon.

In addition to launching the 2022 festival with a personalised tour to the 'Reefworld' platform at Hardy Reef, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) 'Master Reef Guides' will be among those delivering informative, educational and immersive presentations about reef conservation at this year's event.

On Friday, August 5, those unable to make it on the previous day's outer reef tour, will be able to head to sea with Ocean Rafting's Eco Hosts, Master Reef Guides and marine biologists on a half-day 'Reef Seeker' education tour.

Guests will have the opportunity to 'be a marine biologist for a day', visiting select inshore reefs of the Whitsunday Islands, collecting valuable data, and learning about key marine species, reef threats and the vast diversity of the Great Barrier Reef.

Departing the Coral Sea Marina at 8.30am, returning at 12.30pm, tickets cost \$149 per adult and can be booked directly with Ocean Rafting on 4946 6848.

Meanwhile back on land and hosted by the Coral Sea Marina Resort's 'Coral Sea Academy', a free-of-charge 'Protecting Our Great Barrier Reef Workshop' will take place on Saturday, August 6, from 10am-12pm.

Great Barrier Reef Festival committee member, Master Reef Guide and 'Little Fish Tourism' Director, Crystal Lacey, said the first hour would include a question-and-answer session with Master Reef Guides, as well as presentations by representatives from GBRMPA, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), Whitsunday Regional Council's Climate Change Innovation Hub, Reef Catchments, Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership (HR2RP) and Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS).

"The second hour will be about a choice of interactive activities," she explained, "including a Marina Coral and Fish Hide and Seek Tour, visit to the seagrass pontoon and mini turtle and dugong-spotting tours aboard Whisper Cruises' electric boat from the marina's Ocean Club."

Coral Sea Marina Marketing, Sales and Service Manager, Joscelyn O'Keefe, said the marina team was proud to once again be partnering with the festival to connect locals and visitors with reef advocacy groups.

"Ultimately, we hope that through participating in initiatives like these, people of all ages will develop an emotional connection to the reef, generating the power to change habits, positively impact the global environment and conserve our most precious natural asset for many generations to come," she said.

From 10am-2pm on Sunday, August 7, representatives from GBRMPA, AMCS, Reef Catchments, the Climate Hub, Eco Barge Clean Seas, Coral Sea Academy, Cruise Whitsundays, Ocean Rafting, Red Cat Adventures and Daydream Island's 'Living Reef', will all be on hand at the festival's 'Family Fun Day', off the Airlie Beach Esplanade.

Here, interactive games, competitions and treasure hunts for kids, will ensure the younger generation is immersed in reef culture, with plenty to interest the parents and grandparents too.

Tourism Whitsundays

PO Box 479 | Cannonvale QLD 4802

1/5 Carlo Drive | Cannonvale QLD 4802

+617 4948 5900

www.tourismwhitsundays.com.au

Tourism
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At 12.30pm, Master Reef Guides will make their way to the 'Immerse' sculpture and animation display centred around Airlie's giant fig tree, to deliver a story-telling experience on the 2022 festival's overarching theme of the Great Barrier Reef's 'Great Eight'.

Following on at 3pm is the Anything Environmental Recyclable Regatta where schools, community groups, businesses, and groups of friends, take to the water to battle it out in rafts constructed from materials that are recyclable or would otherwise have been dumped.

Raft rules and registration details are at www.greatbarrierreeffestival.com.au.

At 6pm the festival wraps up at the Lagoon with the inaugural public mainland screening of 'The Greatest Reef', a film by marine biologist and Master Reef Guide, Johnny Gaskell, whose claims to fame include discovering a 'Blue Hole' off the coast of the Whitsundays in 2017 and setting a goal to dive or snorkel 250 sites across the full length of the Great Barrier Reef in order to personally examine its health.

Tourism Whitsundays Chief Executive Officer, Rick Hamilton, said for anyone interested in reef conservation, or even just the beauty of the reef, these were the key moments of the four-day program to factor in.

"Through the festival's more environmentally-focused events people have a chance to literally be a part of something great, and what could be greater than protecting our Great Barrier Reef," he said.

For more information, or to register for events, visit www.greatbarrierreeffestival.com.au.

This media release is in partnership with the Great Barrier Reef Festival.

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To view a Word Document of this release and supporting images, [click here](#).

To view the 2022 Whitsundays Heart of Events video, [click here](#).

About Tourism Whitsundays: Tourism Whitsundays (TW) is the organisation responsible for destination marketing and visitor attraction for the Whitsunday region. It is the lead agency recognised by Tourism and Events Queensland and the Whitsunday Regional Council to lead the promotion of the region as a tourism destination. Tourism Whitsundays markets all aspects of the region including the Great Barrier Reef, Whitsunday Islands and Coast, accommodation, boating and sailing, fishing, touring, recreational activities, adventure, dining, shopping, weddings and honeymoons, conferencing and business events.

FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES, CONTACT:

Donna van 't Hoff

Marketing Manager

Tourism Whitsundays

Ph: +61 417 765 736

Email: pr@tourismwhitsundays.com.au

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