

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Boomers Beaming at Airport Cafe

Baby boomers are the majority workforce behind Taste Whitsundays, the café at Australia's Best Regional Airport, Whitsunday Coast Airport. The staff range from 55 to 70 years old and treat their customers to live performances mid-service and during any delays. With vocals and strings in the form of a ukulele, Taste staff are ready with a song list covering the 60s to 90s, kids and holiday specials.

Taste Whitsundays opened in February 2022 and faced significant staffing issues due to the ongoing effects of the COVID pandemic. Job adverts resulted in baby boomer applicants and due to limited other applications, a team was formed entirely of over 55s. The reliable and happy team work a rotating roster over seven days and take great pride in entertaining guests as they wait to board their planes.

Taste Whitsundays Owner, Kate Aslett and CEO Kevin Collins know their staff are providing an experience unique to The Whitsundays.

"When we set about to staff Taste Whitsundays, we wanted to achieve one thing above all - a great last impression of The Whitsundays and we needed staff with local passion, commitment and a great sense of fun to achieve that, we employed with love of community and fun front of mind and the results speak for themselves," said Mr Collins.

"The connection to community also gives us a connection with every local flying through the airport and this community feel is infectious with the tourist traffic as well, almost the "Cheers" effect where everybody knows your name," Kevin Collins.

"What I love so much is seeing how the guests get involved in a song at the counter and cheers erupt when the singing starts – there is nothing more fun and spontaneous than a group of "tuck shop mums" as we call them breaking out in a rendition of "under the boardwalk" as coffee and meals are being served. Its surprising and delightful," Says Ms Aslett.

"Every day we hear comments from guests saying Whitsunday Coast Airport is the best airport they have been to because of the attitude of the staff and they are blown away with the spontaneous songs. We hope over the holiday period we will put a smile on people's faces and help them enjoy their travels, even if they experience unfortunate holiday flight delays, where else do you hear cheers from people on delayed flights?" says Ms Aslett.

"The community is a big part of The Whitsundays and our team brings that with them to work and gives our travellers one last dose of our wonderful hospitality before they continue on their travels," said Mr Collins.

"The surprising thing for many visitors is our service is super quick and efficient, thanks to the system we have set up that is based on technology and efficiency that takes the pressure off, even during the busiest times, allowing for our staff to make jokes, songs and have fun. It's a good use of smart tech and old fashioned service," said Ms Aslett.

Tourism Whitsundays Chief Executive Officer, Rick Hamilton knows the service being delivered at Taste Whitsundays is part of the exceptional Whitsundays hospitality, and he can't argue with the great feedback.

"As the first and last touch point for many travellers to The Whitsundays, Whitsunday Coast Airport and Taste Whitsundays do a great job of making guests and residents of our region feel welcome and relaxed.

“The feedback received about Taste Whitsundays and Whitsunday Coast Airport is fantastic and cements why our visitation has continued to climb in 2022. Visitors to the region love our hospitality and the friendly attitudes displayed by all our operators and businesses, it’s the small things that are having a big impact on our visitors,” said Mr Hamilton.

Taste Whitsundays is located within the Whitsunday Coast Airport and serves a range of hot food, snacks and drinks daily. Fly into Whitsunday Coast Airport from Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne daily with Qantas, Virgin, Jetstar and Cairns with SkyTrans. To book accommodation and experiences for your stay in The Whitsundays, visit thewhitsundays.com.au.

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

To view The Whitsundays destination video, [click here](#).

About Taste Whitsundays: Taste Whitsundays is the café at award-winning Whitsundays Coast Airport. Taste Whitsundays was set up to offer fast efficient service and fresh meals with a local Whitsunday flavour and flair. A collaboration between local restaurant identity Kev Collins and the creative design skills of ex Townsville fashion icon Katelyn Aslett it brings together the best of everything Whitsunday in terms of food, drinks, colour and atmosphere to create a positive, last holiday experience for outgoing guests. The service system at Taste Whitsundays is the latest technology with some custom features to aid service. The menu was carefully planned and designed for speed and efficiency, allowing the team to pump out orders in record time with minimum pressure. It is often said, by first timers to Taste Whitsundays, that the use of technology was to minimise labour costs by needing less staff, until people see it in full swing and realise it is about speed of service and giving the staff more time to interact with guests for a fun comradery and a positive vibe, removing a lot of the usual busy service pressure. The secret ingredient is the unique team of local baby boomer staff, including Jeni who brings her ukulele to work every day and a team who looks for any excuse to break into song in accompaniment. Taste Whitsundays offers perhaps the only airport in Australia that passenger actually enjoy a flight delay.

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.

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