

MEDIA RELEASE



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Whitsunday Islands Named the Best in Australia & South Pacific

This week Condé Nast Traveler released the results of their 32nd annual Readers' Choice Awards with the Whitsunday Islands ranked number one of the Top 5 Islands in Australia & the South Pacific beating some serious competition.

The competition all vying for the top spot was fierce, the Whitsunday Islands taking out some of the most iconic islands in the Australia and South Pacific region. Amongst the finalists for the Top 5 Islands in Australia & the South Pacific was Bora Bora, French Polynesia (# five), Tahiti, French Polynesia (# four), Tasmania, Australia (# three), Fiji (# two).

Tourism Whitsundays CEO Tash Wheeler believes this is a deserving accolade for the Whitsunday Islands.

“Long have we locals known the amazing beauty of the Whitsunday Islands, it’s fantastic to see this group of islands receiving this prestigious award from Condé Nast Traveler.

“All the islands listed as finalists are truly beautiful, to win against the likes of Bora Bora & Tahiti really cements The Whitsundays as a world class destination. We now have more islands resorts open than in the previous years. The Whitsundays is the Heart of Island Escapes!”

The Whitsunday Islands located along the northern Queensland coastline, in the Heart of the Great Barrier Reef are no stranger to taking out awards, having award-winning Whitehaven Beach in our beautiful region, as well as world-famous Heart Reef.

The Whitsunday Islands have been enjoying a boom with more island resorts available to visitors than in the past few years, by far the majority of the Whitsunday islands are designated national park, leaving them uninhabited and in their purest natural state for all to enjoy. Of the 74, we have seven island resorts on five Whitsunday Islands offering a range of accommodation and attractions, making The Whitsundays the Heart of Island Escapes.

The region has revelled over the past few months as the \$140m Daydream Island Resort redevelopment and the \$135m Hayman Island restoration have all been completed as well as the opening of the new boho-luxe resort Elysian Retreat. With many of the other island resorts located in The Whitsundays continuing to invest and innovate to ensure The Whitsundays is the premier island getaway destination. Stalwart of the Whitsunday Islands landscape Hook Island is in planned development for a new Eco-style resort due for completion in the coming months, which will mark eight island resorts open on six islands.

In a Great Barrier Reef Marine Park first the Whitsundays Underwater Public Artwork Project was completed in early August. At just over a \$900,000 investment from the Tourism Recovery Fund, the artwork provides an exciting new experience for tourists to The Whitsundays. Renowned Australian and local artists worked tirelessly on their incredible marine sculptures which were installed in key locations around the Whitsundays.

Also, as part of the Federal and State Government Tourism Recovery Fund Coral Gardening was introduced in The Whitsundays Marine Park in late December 2018. Initially installed were

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THE HEART OF THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

coral nursery frames and propagated corals at Blue Pearl Bay and Manta Ray Bay. A total of 425 coral fragments were planted on the coral nursery frames, corals represented are from four different genera and over 10 species. In the months following, reef restoration activities have continued positively at both Blue Pearl and Manta Ray Bays. All coral nurseries are performing well, with over 2,000 corals planted. The corals are maintaining a survival rate of 80% across all methods and locations. Recent research on the 188 outplanted corals have indicated they are doing well with survival as high as 92% in Manta Ray Bay in the two months since outplanting onto the natural reef.

The Whitsundays will certainly wear the Conde Nast Traveler, number one spot on the Top 5 Islands in Australia & the South Pacific badge of honor proudly.

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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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