

For immediate release
October 26, 2019

Operators honoured at Whitsunday tourism industries ‘Night of Nights’

The Whitsundays tourism industry was honoured last night at the regions’ premier awards event.

With just shy of 400 people in attendance from right across the Whitsunday region, the industry descended upon the newly reopened Daydream Island Resort to celebrate the annual The Whitsundays Tourism Awards. The awards aim to pay tribute to the tremendous contribution made by the regions’ tourism operators and service providers.

Tourism Whitsundays Chief Executive Officer Tash Wheeler is proud of what the Whitsunday tourism industry continues to achieve each year amongst a changing travel landscape.

“Each year The Whitsundays Tourism Awards continues to grow and out do the previous year. This year we had record attendance which shows us that industry enjoy the opportunity to come together and celebrate their achievements.

“Tonight, is a night of celebration, not just for those who take out gold awards, but for each and every one who works in or contributes to tourism. Whom without, we would not have this dynamic and diverse destination,” she said.

Tash also added, “It was particularly good this year to see representation from every part of this great region. This year we had representation at the awards from the Whitsunday Islands, Airlie Beach, Bowen, Collinsville and Proserpine.”

Taking Gold in the category of Major Tour and Transport Operators for a second year in a row was Red Cat Adventures. Red Cat Adventures are no strangers to the category after last year taking out Gold at The Whitsundays Tourism Awards, the Queensland Tourism Awards and then Gold in the Australian Tourism Awards.

Elizabeth Hackett, Chair of Judges for The Whitsundays Tourism Awards and long-time Whitsundays business owner, believes the awards judging process is held at the highest standard.

“Tourism Whitsundays is committed to abiding by best practice through their judging process and delivering fair results to all entrants. Tourism Whitsundays and the judges understand the mammoth effort involved in both the financial and time commitment made by all of those who enter the Tourism Awards.”

This year’s Young Achiever Award went to Alice Walsgott from Absolute Airlie. Absolute Airlie, the ‘new kids’ on the tourism block are a young driven team passionate about putting Airlie Beach and the beautiful Whitsundays hinterland on display.

The Bob Porter Award for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual this year was awarded to Hamilton Island’s Chief Executive Officer, Glenn Bourke. This award recognises an extraordinary personal and professional achievement and contribution by an individual over many years to the Whitsundays Tourism &/or Business industry. Glenn has done this in spades

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in his time at Hamilton Island, notably Glenn was responsible for the speedy reopening of Hamilton Island in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Debbie. After ensuring all guests and staff were safe, Glenn took to running Hamilton Island's Emergency Control Centre. During a challenging time felt by the entire region, Glenn rallied the Hamilton Island community to remediate the Island and achieve his goal of reopening in ten days in order to bring tourists back to the region and help to generate some much-needed positive publicity.

The Whitsundays Tourism Awards veterans Ocean Rafting this year snapped up the converted People's Choice Award. This is one of the only awards not part of the judging process, this award is voted for by industry peers which is a huge coup for the winning business.

There were several VIPs and dignitaries who attended this year's award ceremony, including Whitsunday Regional Council Mayor Andrew Willcox, State Member for Whitsunday Jason Costigan Cr. Jan Clifford, Cr. Nicola Greiger, Cr. Ron Petterson, Whitsunday Regional Council CEO Ken Donohoe Queensland, Tourism Industry Council Deputy CEO & General Manager, Business Strategy- Brett Kapernick and Dominic Mehling Industry Relations Manager at Tourism Australia

Whitsunday Regional Council Mayor Andrew Willcox said he was proud of the region's tourism stakeholders whose efforts ensure that The Whitsundays is Queensland's premier holiday destination.

"I do not envy the judges job! The Whitsundays tourism industry is one of the strongest in the country, the calibre of which is evident by how many Whitsundays operators go on to win state and national awards," he said.

"The quality of service they provide is what gives The Whitsundays a great name and markets us as one of the best holiday destinations in the world."

While the champagne flowed at the Gala Dinner, guests were also treated to a three-course meal and entertainment Gold Coast band Ramjet as well as a welcoming acoustic set by Tahlia Connie.

The team at Tourism Whitsundays look forward to introducing a new category in 2020 for the product who lives up to embracing the new destination brand!

Acknowledgments to the events sponsors for their support were made throughout the evening.

Host Venue Sponsor – Daydream Island Resort

Platinum sponsors – Paradise Outdoor Advertising, Cruise Whitsundays, QLD Weekender & Lion Australia, Byron Bay Brewery

Gold Sponsors – Expedia Group, Whitsunday Transit, Brisbane Airport Corporation, Hamilton Island Enterprise and InterContinental Hayman Island Resort

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Bronze Sponsors - Queensland Tafe

Event sponsors - KB Designs, Graphic House, Angels Signs, Whitsunday Tickets, R Jean Photography, AV Partners

2019 Whitsunday Tourism Awards Winners

Major Tourist Attraction	Coral Sea Marina Resort	Silver
Festivals and Events	Grand View Hotel	Highly Commended
The Steve Irwin Award for Eco Tourism	Whitsunday Segway Tours	Gold
Specialised Tourism Services	Whitsunday Coast Airport	Gold
Specialised Tourism Services	Airlie Beach Tourism	Silver
Specialised Tourism Services	Local Tickets	Bronze
Specialised Tourism Services	Above and Below Photography Gallery	Finalist
Visitor Information Services	Airlie Beach Tourism	Gold
Visitor Information Services	Bowen Tourism and Business	Silver
Major Tour and Transport Operators	Red Cat Adventures	Gold
Major Tour and Transport Operators	Explore Group	Silver
Major Tour and Transport Operators	Prosail Whitsundays	Bronze
Major Tour and Transport Operators	Cruise Whitsundays	Finalist
Major Tour and Transport Operators	Ocean Rafting	Finalist
Tour and Transport Operators	Whitsunday Jetski Tours	Gold
Adventure Tourism	Ocean Rafting	Gold
Adventure Tourism	Red Cat Adventures	Silver
Adventure Tourism	Whitsunday Jetski Tours	Bronze
Adventure Tourism	Prosail Whitsundays	Finalist
The Richard Power Award for	The Joshua's Wedding	Silver

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Destination Marketing	Campaign	
The Richard Power Award for Destination Marketing	Bowen Tourism and Business	Highly Commended
Tourism Restaurants and Catering Services	Northerlies Beach Bar and Grill	Gold
Tourism Restaurants and Catering Services	Fish D'vine	Silver
Tourism Restaurants and Catering Services	Peach & Pear Events Catering	Bronze
Caravan and Holiday Park	BIG4 Adventure Whitsunday Resort	Gold
Caravan and Holiday Park	BIG4 Whitsundays Tropical Eco Resort	Silver
Caravan and Holiday Parks	Queens Beach Tourism Village	Bronze
Unique Accommodation	Cruise Whitsundays ReefSleep	Gold
Unique Accommodation	Cumberland Charter Yachts	Silver
Self-Contained Accommodation	Accom Whitsundays	Silver
Self-Contained Accommodation	Sunlit Waters Studio Apartments	Bronze
Standard Accommodation	Palm Bay Resort	Gold
Standard Accommodation	Mantra Club Croc	Silver
Deluxe Accommodation	Mirage Whitsundays	Gold
New Tourism Business	Freedom Shores	Bronze
Outstanding Contribution by a Volunteer or Volunteer Group	Volunteer Marine Rescue Whitsundays	Gold
Outstanding Contribution by a Volunteer or Volunteer Group	Cruise Ship Ambassadors	Silver
Outstanding Contribution by a Volunteer or Volunteer Group	Bowen Tourism and Business	Bronze
Outstanding Contribution by a Volunteer or Volunteer Group	Collinsville Community Association	Finalist
Outstanding Contribution by a	Grand View Hotel	Finalist

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Volunteer or Volunteer Group

Young Achievers Award Alice Walsgott Winner

Bob Porter Award for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual Glenn Bourke Winner

Backpackers Accommodation Magnums Backpackers Gold

Excellence in Sustainable Tourism Whitsunday Segway Tours Gold

Excellence in Sustainable Tourism Cruise Whitsundays Silver

Best Tourism Support Business Shiift Gold

Best Tourism Support Business Inspired Impact Silver

Outstanding Customer Service Magnums Backpackers Winner

Whitsunday Business of the Year BIG4 Adventure Whitsunday Winner

Whitsundays Favourite Place to Eat Whitsundays Sailing Club Winner

Whitsundays Health and Wellness Business of the Year Wes Bau Personal Training Winner

Whitsundays new Business of the Year The Garden Bar and Bistro Winner

Whitsundays Photographer / Videographer of the Year Riptide Creative Winner

Whitsundays Reservations / Booking Service of the Year Airlie Beach Tourism Winner

Whitsundays Retailer of the Year Court and Spark Boutique Winner

People's Choice Award Ocean Rafting Winner

- ENDS -

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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