

**TOURISM
WHITSUNDAYS**

Destination Marketing | Industry Development | Visitor Services

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24



Pit Pony Statue - Collinsville

TOURISM WHITSUNDAYS

Destination Marketing | Industry Development | Visitor Services

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

Who are we

Tourism Whitsundays Limited (TW) is a not-for-profit destination management organisation tasked with marketing The Whitsundays, supporting the tourism industry with product development, and delivering visitor services.

Base funding for TW is provided by Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) via the Queensland Government and the Whitsunday Regional Council (WRC). Tourism Whitsundays' focus is to increase visitation, length of stay and overall visitor expenditure by driving dispersal throughout the five Whitsunday regions, being Airlie Beach, Bowen, Collinsville, Proserpine and the Whitsunday Islands

Our Vision

To collaborate with stakeholders and community to position The Whitsundays region as the globally recognised Great Barrier Reef destination.

Our Mission

To drive economic growth and sustainability of the tourism industry by increasing the visitor economy through marketing, advocacy and industry development.

Goals

To increase The Whitsundays overnight visitor expenditure to \$2.1b in line with the 2032 Queensland Tourism Strategy.



Tourism Whitsundays acknowledges the Gia, Ngaro, Juru, Jangga and Birriah people, the Traditional Custodians of the beautiful Whitsundays region, and recognise their ongoing connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

A WORD FROM THE CHAIR & CEO



Chair, Julie Telford



Interim CEO, Aimee Cameron

The 2023-24 financial year marked a significant turning point for the Whitsundays tourism industry as we transitioned from the highs of post pandemic domestic visitation to traditional travel patterns. While the strengthening return of international travel presented opportunities, the year also saw challenges with the increasing cost of living pressures.

True to our reputation, The Whitsundays demonstrated resilience. We witnessed strong school holiday periods, and an encouraging recovery in international visitation. International arrivals surged from 68,000 in the year to March 2023 to 177,000 in the year to March 2024, highlighting the enduring appeal of The Whitsundays to global travellers.

Looking ahead, Tourism Whitsundays remains committed to strengthening our presence in key international markets, including the UK, Europe, and the United States. We aim to solidify The Whitsundays' position as a top-of-mind destination for international travellers seeking an Australian holiday.

The proactive approach of Whitsunday Coast Airport and Whitsunday Regional Council in securing new flight routes and airlines into Whitsunday Coast Airport is to be commended and has helped to bolster The Whitsundays' visitation amidst a challenging year.

The year ahead promises to be dynamic as we continue our efforts to elevate The Whitsundays' profile both domestically and internationally. We will advocate for the industry's needs, prioritise key projects aligned with our 2032 targets, and enhance our digital marketing and website to drive sales for our members.

On behalf of the Board and the entire Tourism Whitsundays team, I extend our sincere gratitude to our members, industry partners, and financial supporters for your invaluable contributions throughout the year. Your collaboration is essential to our ongoing success. We are confident that by working together, we can continue to position the Whitsundays as a world-class tourism destination for years to come.

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Tourism Whitsundays Board consists of a maximum of 11 directors, made up of seven elected directors and up to four invited directors.

The intended purpose of giving the Board scope to invite up to four directors is to identify specialist Board members such as an accountant, governance specialist or simply vital stakeholders from the tourism industry if the Board deems necessary.



Chair, Julie Telford,
Elected representative
from youth sector



Deputy Chair, Tom Young,
Invited representative



Secretary, Crystal Lacey,
Elected representative
from any sector of the
tourism industry



Treasurer, Sue Watson,
Elected representative
from accommodation
sector



Matt Boileau,
Elected representative
from island resorts sector



Nathan Fleming, Elected
representative from tour
and transport sector



Nicole Graham,
Elected representative
from any sector of the
tourism industry



Phil Browne,
Elected representative
from youth sector



Daniel Gschwind.
Invited representative



Carly Povey,
Invited representative



Mayor Ry Collins,
Whitsunday Regional
Council

Tourism Whitsundays Board and Staff thank outgoing Board Members; Arpad Romandy, Trevor Rees, Craig Turner, Greg McKinnon and Mayor Julie Hall for their contributions and dedication to the tourism industry.

OUR TEAM

The Tourism Whitsundays Team consists of 9 staff covering all areas of operation from finance and operators to marketing, trade relations and visitor information services. The small and highly skilled team executes all tasks in house with minimal outsourcing.



Aimee Cameron,
Interim CEO



Paige Moore,
Finance & Operations
Manager



Laura Knipe,
Marketing Manager



Cait Fleming,
Industry Development &
Trade Manager



Dea Huvonen,
Visitor Services Manager



Jade Yvonne,
Business Development
Executive



Rosangh Gallivan,
PR & Social Media
Executive



Ben Summers,
Digital Marketing
Coordinator



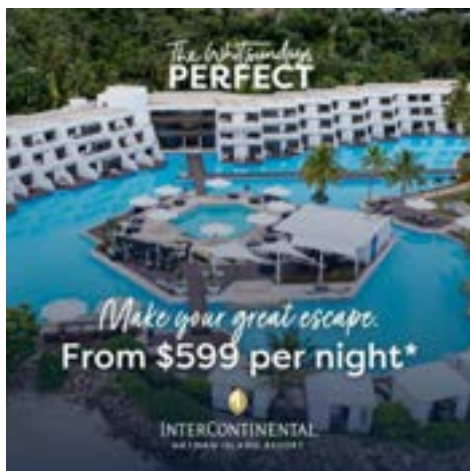
Crystal Walton,
Finance & Administration
Officer

The Board and Staff of Tourism Whitsundays acknowledge and thank outgoing CEO, Rick Hamilton for his contribution and time at Tourism Whitsundays.



Marketing Report

PERFECT CAMPAIGN



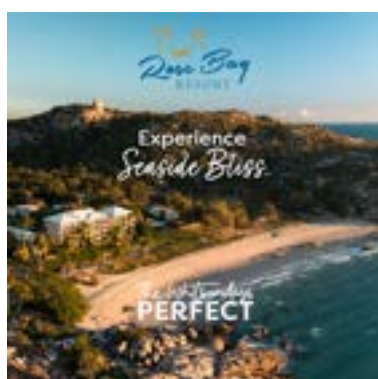
In the first half of 2024, we ran our primary domestic campaign targeting our key drive and flight destinations: Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney, Gold Coast, Newcastle, Sunshine Coast and Northern Regional Queensland. The campaign ran across out of home, radio, television, Google, YouTube, digital programmatic ads, social media (Meta) and media distributors (The Daily Aus).

Metric	Result
Media Investment	\$459,577
Leveraged achieve Media Value of	\$1,628,203
Impressions	60,164,069+
Clicks	97,876+
Quotes	49,348+
Bookings	2,848+
Revenue	\$3,158,102+
Return on Investment	6.8x

Campaign Dates:

Spike 1: February 19 – March 10

Spike 2: April 15 – May 5



REGIONAL CAMPAIGN



In response to feedback about softening across the market in the lead up to the July school holidays, we kicked off a regional deals campaign to promote visitation from residents between Townsville to Mackay. This market was chosen as they have the shortest booking lead-times, and offering deals in these areas are more likely to result in direct and immediate bookings. As many members offer local deals that are eligible for postcodes within this region, we promoted these to prevent members from having to offer additional discounts.

Campaign Dates:
June 2024 – August 2024

Metric	Results
Impressions	1,981,895
Clicks	32,444
Reach	172,709



BLUEY CAMPAIGN



In June, Tourism and Events Queensland kicked off their largest campaign in a decade, launching and promoting Queensland as 'The Home of Bluey' – a famous, Australian cartoon character from the children's show, 'Bluey'.

This is an international campaign that was rolled out across New Zealand, United States, United Kingdom, Japan and Singapore, as well as domestic activity in Australia. Tourism Whitsundays bought into the campaign to up-weight The Whitsundays creative, which is being rolled out until September 2024.

The campaign was kicked off with 'The World's Biggest Game of Keepy Uppy' (which is a game played in the TV show). As a part of the campaign, we captured content of Keepy Uppy being played in hero destinations all over The Whitsundays, including Hayman Island, Hamilton Island, the Great Barrier Reef, Heart Reef and Whitehaven Beach. This content was rolled out across social media and shared through news coverage globally.

Campaign Dates:

June 2024 – September 2024



WINTER BLUES CAMPAIGN



Tourism Whitsundays launched a 'Winter Blues' campaign throughout June and July, to drive demand for the overnight sailing market throughout winter, and encourage intending travellers from southern states to escape winter and experience The Whitsundays' 'Winter Blues'. This heroes The Whitsundays' iconic shades of blue – from the water to the sky. The campaign ran across media (Urban List), social media, out of home and within universities, to encourage students to visit during their semester break.

Campaign Dates:

June 2024 – July 2024



Metric	Results
Impressions	3,165,328
Link Clicks	16,099
Direct Traffic to Operators	1,692
Tracked Visits to Operator Sites	46,001

ALWAYS ON

Our Always On activity runs all year round along the East Coast, to inspire travellers to visit throughout the year.

Iteration One: July 2023 – February 2024

Our first iteration of Always On focused on key emotive words and engaging descriptive text to inspire travellers to visit



Iteration Two: May 2024 – July 2024

Following our 'Perfect' campaign, we launched refreshed creative to combat ad fatigue. This one was tied into the recent campaign, focusing on the ways in which The Whitsundays is perfect for all travellers.



Quotes:
49,190

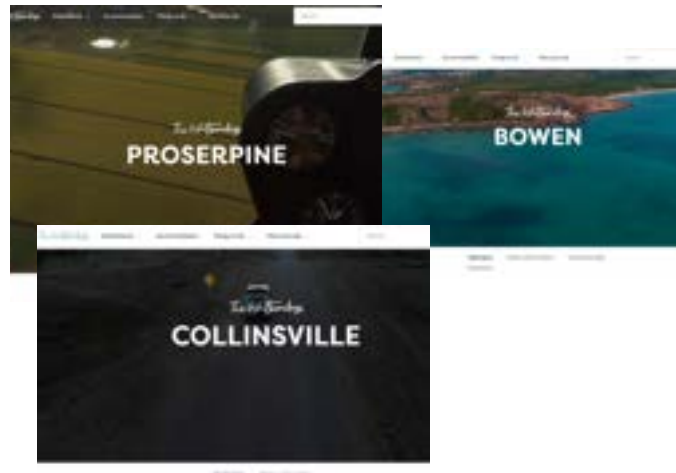
Bookings:
2,996

Revenue:
\$5,181,534

TOWNSHIP ACTIVITY

The Whitsundays encompasses four main townships and the Whitsunday Islands. This provides huge potential for us and our audience when it comes to marketing each individual township. In 2023/24, Tourism Whitsundays townships focused activity saw:

SEO and paid social media performance resulted in over 108K visitors to dedicated region pages on our website.



The production of a new visitor guide with 50,000 copies printed and distributed to visitor information centres and booking agents across Australia.



Dedicated social media campaigns and posts for each township receiving over 7.7 million impressions!



Dedicated content capture of Bowen and Collinsville



DRIVE ACTIVITY

The Drive market is an important market for The Whitsundays, from the Grey Nomads visiting every year for several months, to the families hitting the road since covid times, and the international visitors embracing the self-drive holiday.

Tourism Whitsundays delivered the following to support both the domestic and international drive markets.

Caravan and Camping and 4x4 Shows

Direct attendance and representation by Drive Queensland at Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Gold Coast, Cairns, Townsville and Mackay Caravan and Camping Shows and 4x4 Shows. A total of 11 shows with 251,212 people attending.

Drive North Queensland

- Collaboration between Tourism Tropical North Queensland, Townsville Enterprise, Mackay Isaac Tourism, Tourism Whitsundays and Outback Queensland Tourism Association with a total investment of over \$60,000.
- Through this partnership with Drive North Queensland, Bowen, Proserpine, Collinsville and Airlie Beach were featured in nationally-distributed drive itineraries and advertisements.
- Included content partnerships with Australian Geographic and Motor Media.
- 50,000 copies of the Drive North QLD map were produced for distribution
- Content partnerships with Australian Geographic and Motor Media.

Drive North Queensland activity	Results
Organic social media	Facebook followers: 3,063 Instagram followers: 1,784 Engagement rate: 4%
Website traffic	30K website users
Publisher partnerships	3M reach



An aerial photograph of a coastal event. In the foreground, several people are riding jet skis on the turquoise water, leaving white wakes. In the middle ground, a large white tent with multiple peaks is situated on a rocky peninsula. Behind the tent, there are buildings and a marina with many sailboats. The background features a range of green, forested hills under a blue sky with white clouds.

Event Support

Airlie Beach Festival of Music

REGIONAL EVENT MARKETING & SUPPORT

Tourism Whitsundays recognises the critical role successful events play in driving visitation, dispersal, and length of stay within the region. Beyond the immediate economic impact, vibrant events foster community pride, strengthen social bonds, and contribute to a thriving Whitsundays experience.

Our event support focuses on initiatives that align with our core objectives:

- **Economic Growth:** Generate significant local economic activity and development.
- **Increased Visitation:** Attract visitors from outside the region to the Whitsundays.
- **Community Development:** Drive positive social and cultural outcomes, recognising the link between a strong community and a thriving tourism industry.
- **Destination Appeal:** Enhance the profile and desirability of the Whitsundays as a world-class tourist destination.

In the past year, Tourism Whitsundays actively supported numerous events throughout the Whitsundays by providing:

- **Marketing Guidance:** Sharing strategic expertise to help event organisers amplify their reach and impact.
- **Funding Assistance:** Reviewing event funding applications and providing guidance for successful proposals.
- **Event Mentoring:** Offering valuable mentorship to support event organisers.

We further amplified the reach of local events through comprehensive marketing strategies:

- **Heart of Events Calendar:** Featuring key events on a dedicated calendar on our website.
- **"What's On" Webpage Promotion:** Highlighting events through consumer, trade, and PR e-newsletters. This webpage alone generated 32,936 views in the past year.
- **Whitsundays Visitor Guide:** Including events in the widely distributed visitor guide's calendar.
- **Social Media Exposure:** Promoting events across our social media platforms to reach a broader audience.
- **Press Releases:** Issuing joint press releases to State and National media outlets.
- **ATDW Event Listing:** Ensuring accurate event listings on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW).
- **Blog Coverage:** Sharing engaging content about events on the Tourism Whitsundays website.
- **Targeted Website Banners:** Featuring event-specific banners on our website for increased visibility.

In addition to the in-house activities to promote events, TW also acts as a marketing agency for events with budget to spend on digital and traditional marketing. In 2023/24 TW acted as Marketing and PR agency for three major events in the region.

EVENT SUPPORT

Tourism Whitsundays acknowledges the effort and man hours it takes to put on the events in The Whitsundays. The team are willing and able to assist events with PR, marketing and strategy where appropriate.

Great Barrier Reef Festival

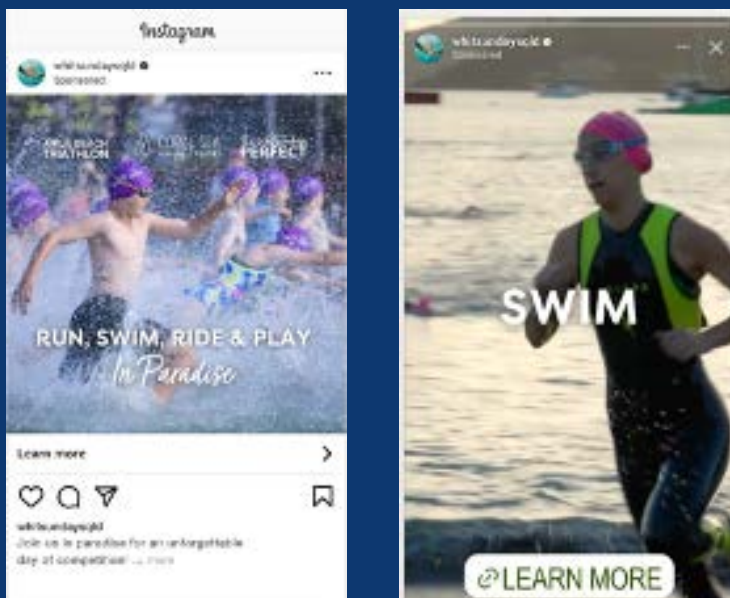
Tourism Whitsundays was engaged to assist the Great Barrier Reef Festival committee in promoting the festival via Meta in the lead up to the 2024 festival.



Metric	Result
Impressions	370,180
Reach	103,979
Clicks	4,112

Coral Sea Marina Airlie Beach Triathlon

Tourism Whitsundays were engaged to manage paid social media during the key booking window of May – June, including creative design, copy and optimisation for two key segments: professional athletes and those participating for fun.



Metric	Result
Impressions	551,934
Reach	198,736
Clicks	5,487

EVENT SUPPORT

White on Whitehaven

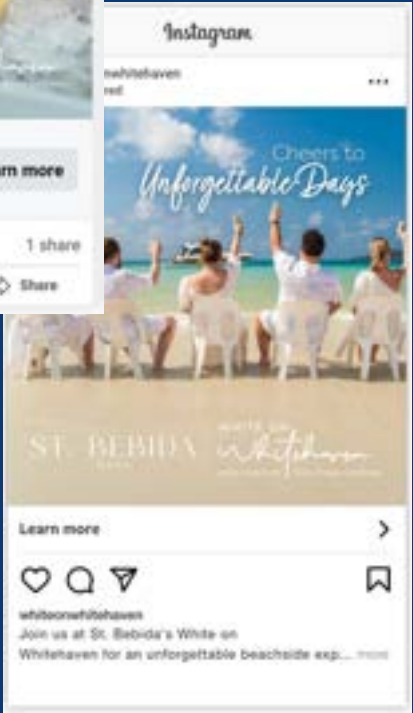
Tourism Whitsundays were engaged to manage organic and paid social media (Facebook and Instagram), including content calendars, creative design, reel creation, copy and optimisation from May - September.

Paid social media

Metric	Result
Impressions	691,257
Reach	218,374
Clicks	16,999

Organic social media

Metric	Result
Posts and stories	115
Impressions	754,411
Reach	15,341
Clicks	2,899



An aerial photograph of a campsite at Lake Proserpine. The camp is situated on a grassy field with several white motorhomes and cars parked. To the left is a dense forest, and to the right is the lake with visible water lilies. In the background, there are rolling hills under a clear blue sky.

Digital Channels

Lake Proserpine Camp Grounds

CONSUMER FACING CHANNELS

The Whitsundays consumer-facing social channels (Whitsundays QLD Instagram (IG), Facebook (FB) & TicTok (TT), as well as Adventure Airline on IG & FB) continued to experience substantial growth, now reaching a combined audience of over 60 million people. This financial year, we increased our posting frequency by 50%, including a significant amount of video content, which saw a total of 4,559,892 views across platforms. Although our engagement rate has decreased, which may be down to changes in the algorithm that favour original content over reposted content, it is important to note that an engagement rate of 1-5% is still considered strong for organic reach.

	Published Posts	Total Impressions	Engagement Rate	Audience
Combined Social Channels	1,167 (+50.6%)	60,834,823 (+5.3%)	1.2%(-74%)	1,197,141 (+8.5%)

Visit Whitsundays
Instagram: @whitsundaysqld

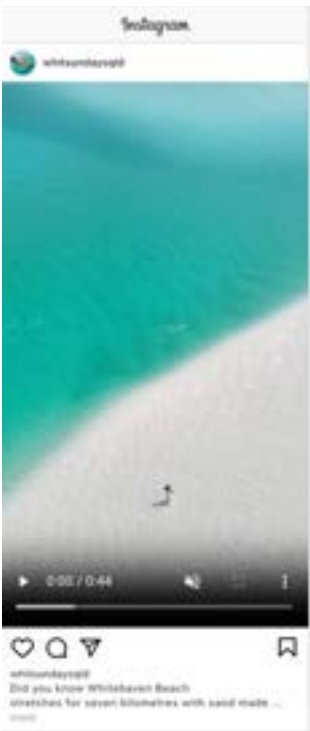
Published Posts	Total Impressions	Engagement Rate	Audience
387 (55%)	12,219,906 (-25%)	1.3% (+42%)	183,225 (+2%)

Top performing post stats:
left to right

Reach: 63,339
Interactions: 4,965
Impressions: 67,101

Reach: 42,251
Interactions: 4,041
Impressions: 45,189

Reach: 39,161
Interactions: 1,645
Impressions: 41,366









VISIT WHITSUNDAYS

Visit Whitsundays Facebook

Published Posts	Total Impressions	Engagement Rate	Audience
230 (+25%)	46,789,407 (+20%)	1.2% (-77%)	991,149 (+10%)

Top Performing posts for 2023/24

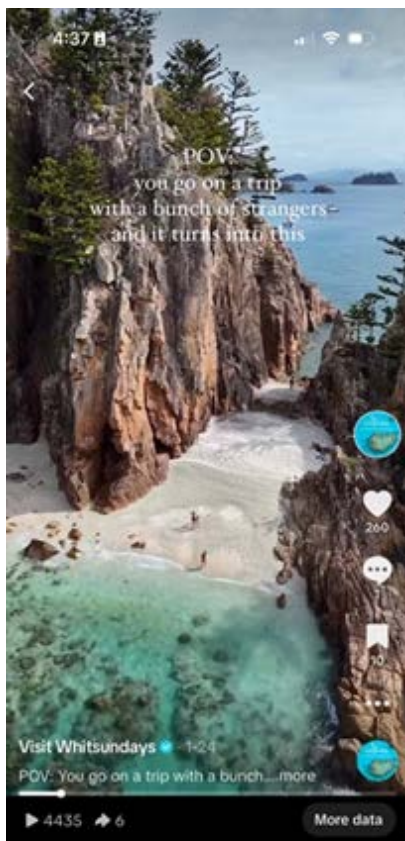
<div><div><div><div><div></div><div>Visit Whitsundays, Queensland, Australia</div><div><div>Published by Sprout Social</div><div>19 July 2023</div></div></div><div><p>Did you know Whitehaven Beach stretches for seven kilometres with sand made up of 98% pure, tiny silica beads? 🏖️</p><p>The magic of the beads of sand is that they don't retain heat from the sun. This makes it the perfect sand for beach strolls without burning the soles of your feet!</p><p>The fineness of the beads also makes it perfect for exfoliating – a free spa day whilst at the beach! 💙</p><p>See more</p></div><div></div></div></div><div><p>Reach: 745,546 Interactions: 28,539 Impressions: 775,894</p></div></div>	<div><div><div><div><div></div><div>Visit Whitsundays, Queensland, Australia</div><div><div>Published by Sprout Social</div><div>26 July 2023</div></div></div><div><p>See the Reef, Love the Reef, Protect the Reef 💙</p><p>Kiana Sail & Dive is proud to join 25 other marine tourism operators along the length and breadth of the @gbrmarinepark to take part in the Tourism Reef Protection Initiative.</p><p>Kiana Sail & Dive #ExploreTheUnexplored regions of the #GreatBarrierReef, discovering awe-inspiring coral diversity and marine life. The dedicated team transport guests to the magical underwater world and share the wonders of the Great Barrier Reef throu...</p><p>See more</p></div><div></div></div></div><div><p>Reach: 440,098 Interactions: 11,741 Impressions: 441,883</p></div></div>	<div><div><div><div><div></div><div>Visit Whitsundays, Queensland, Australia</div><div><div>Published by Sprout Social</div><div>16 February</div></div></div><div><p>The Whitsundays. Endless paradise. 🌊</p><p>Blue Pearl Bay is one of our favourite hidden gems. It is located on the northwestern side of Hayman Island and is renowned for its vibrant coral beds and abundant marine life.</p><p>📍 Blue Pearl Bay, Hayman Island</p><p>📸 @tomiarsonneur</p><p>#... See more</p></div><div></div></div></div><div><p>Reach: 414,565 Interactions: 11,142 Impressions: 414,565</p></div></div>
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VISIT WHITSUNDAYS

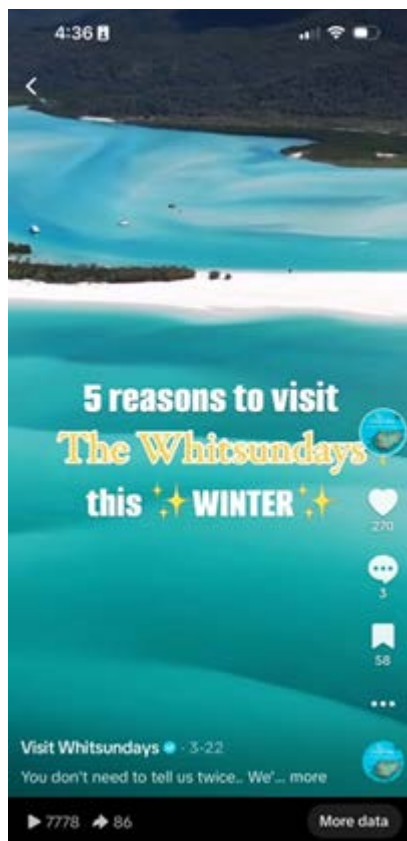
Visit Whitsundays TikTok

Published Posts	Total Impressions	Engagement Rate	Audience
86 (+21%)	124,685 (-83%)	4.6% (-62%)	7,088 (+18%)

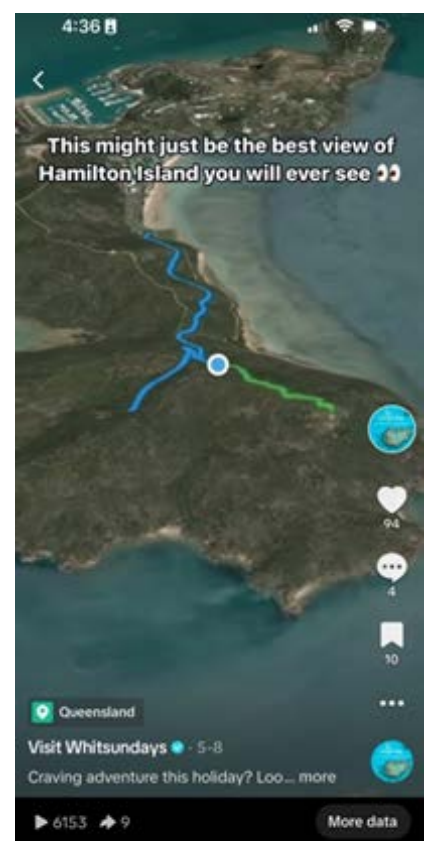
Top Performing posts for 2023/24



Reach: 4,435
Interactions: 260
Impressions: 6



Reach: 7,778
Interactions: 270
Impressions: 86



Reach: 6,153
Interactions: 94
Impressions: 9

ADVENTURE AIRLIE

Tourism Whitsundays continued to market to the youth and adventure audience under the #AdventureAirlie brand on Facebook and Instagram.

Instagram: @adventureairlie

Published Posts	Total Impressions	Engagement Rate	Audience
254	1,034,244	0.6%	3,442

Facebook: Adventure Airlie

Published Posts	Total Impressions	Engagement Rate	Audience
210	657,581	1.7%	12,098


Top Performing posts for 2023/24

Reach: 4,435
Interactions: 260
Impressions: 6



The image shows a screenshot of an Instagram post from the account @adventureairlie. The post features a vibrant tropical beach scene with turquoise water, white sand, and lush greenery. Overlaid on the image is the text "this is the life IN HAMILTON ISLAND" in a white, sans-serif font. The Instagram interface elements, including the profile picture and username, are visible at the top.

Reach: 7,778
Interactions: 270
Impressions: 86



The image shows a screenshot of a Facebook post from the page "Adventure Airlie Beach". The post includes a video thumbnail of a tropical beach with a sandy shore and clear water. The text of the post reads: "Rose Bay, Bowen", followed by a description: "This sandy beach offers views of Gloucester Island and Mother Beddock and is known to be one of the best spots to watch the sunrise in Bowen. Have you been to Rose Bay?... See more". The Facebook interface elements, including the page name and post date, are visible at the top.

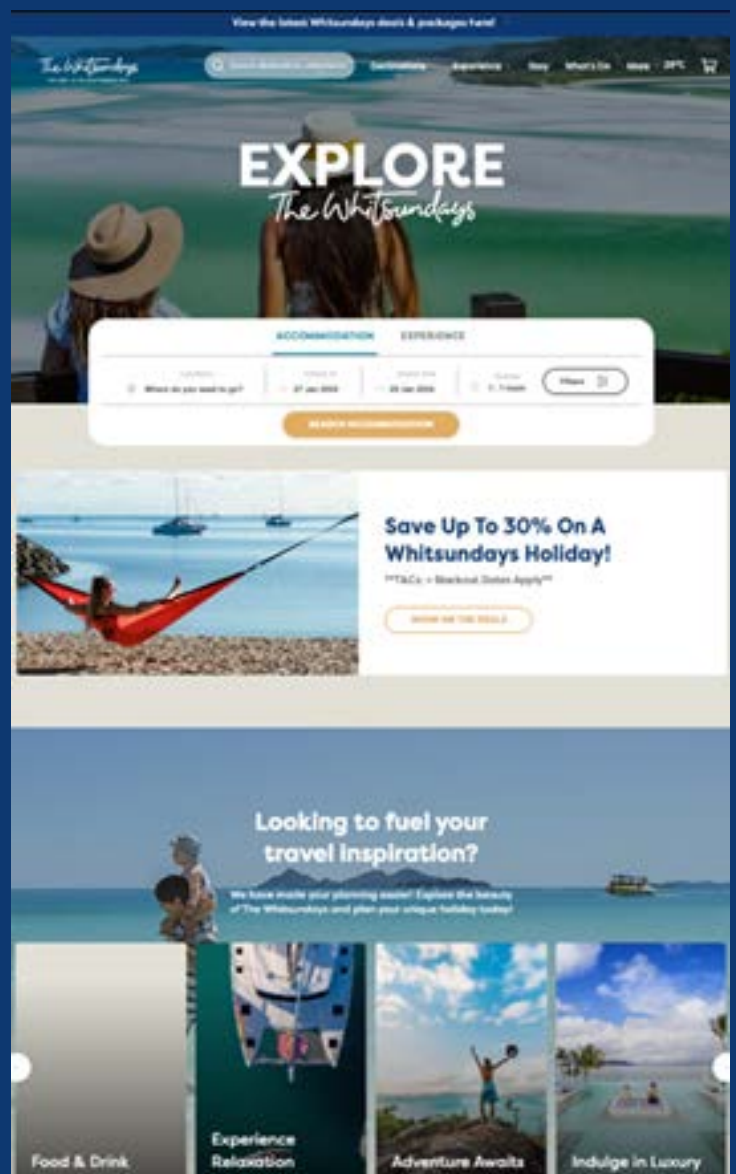
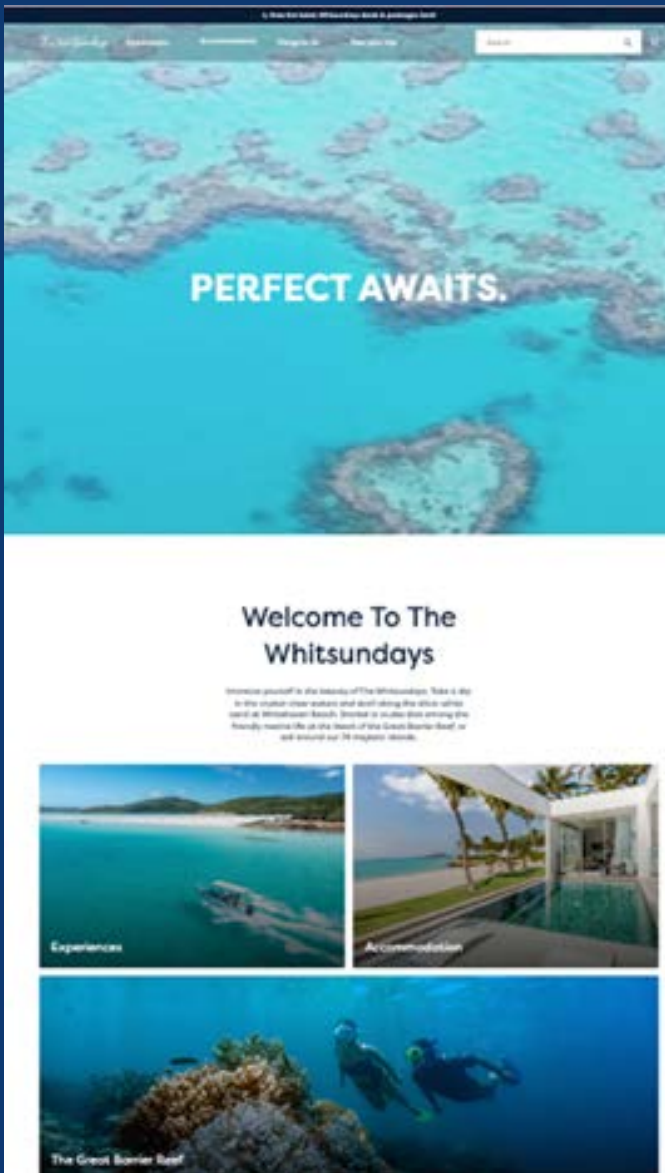
WEBSITE AND DIGITAL

In the 2023-24 financial year, we engaged in an extensive website redevelopment. This included improvements to the website's look and feel as well as significant enhancements to the user experience.

These changes included:

- Simplifying the look and feel of the website
- Creating new website components to better display visual content
- Integrating videos on the site
- Enhancing the navigation functionality

The Tourism Whitsundays website received **1,150,341 page views** over the 2023/24 financial year.



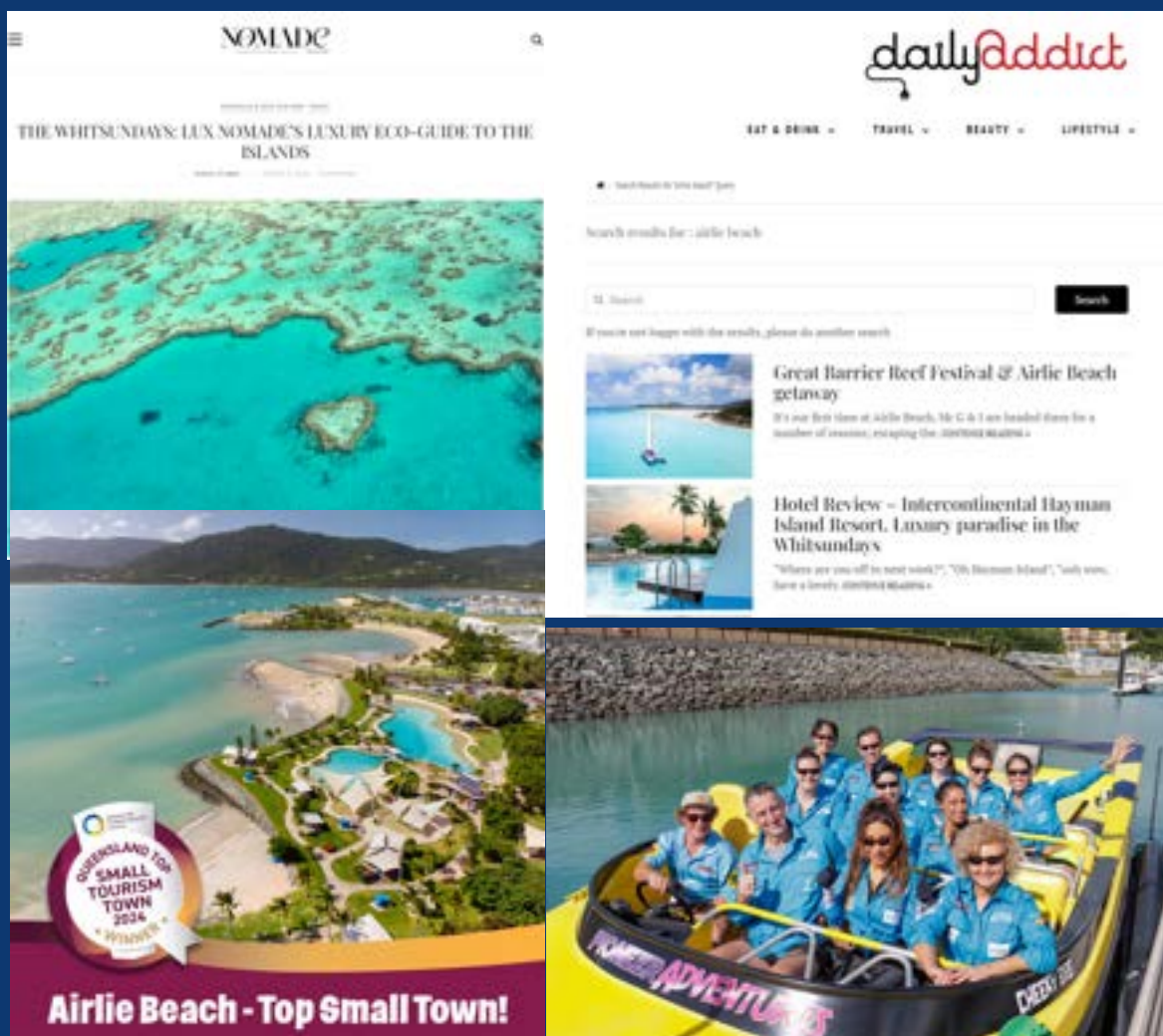
PUBLICITY & CONTENT

Tourism Whitsundays took PR largely in house in 2023/24 due to budget constraints. This enabled the team to develop relationships with media outlets further and to source and organise famils to the region. In house publicity results were remarkable with a publicity reach of 91,631,307 an increase of 29% on last year, and a media value of over \$366 mil.

Highlights of the year in publicity include:

- Partnership with Tipping Point Australia generating over 1 million viewers each episode
- Adventure All Stars filmed in The Whitsundays
- Return of Married at First Sight honeymooners
- Made in Bondi filmed in The Whitsundays
- Love is in the Air movie - filmed in The Whitsundays - was released
- 5 domestic media famils
- 4 international media famil

Airlie Beach was announced as one of Queensland's best holiday destinations in the 2024 Queensland Top Tourism Town Awards, being awarded the Top Small Tourism Town for the third year in a row. These awards are an opportunity for Regional Tourism Organisations, Local Tourism Organisations, and Councils in conjunction with accredited Visitor Information Centres to showcase their local towns as great visitor destinations and raise awareness of what's special and unique about their part of Queensland. Airlie Beach has gained automatic entry to the national Top Tourism Town Awards held later in the year to compete for the crown of best holiday town in Australia.



An aerial photograph of a tropical coastal area. In the foreground, there's a green lawn with several white, sail-like shade structures and blue lounge chairs. A winding path leads through the lawn. To the right, there's a small, irregularly shaped swimming pool. In the middle ground, a sandy beach meets the turquoise water of a lagoon. The water is filled with many small sailboats. In the background, a large, forested hill rises from the water's edge. A dark blue rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing white text.

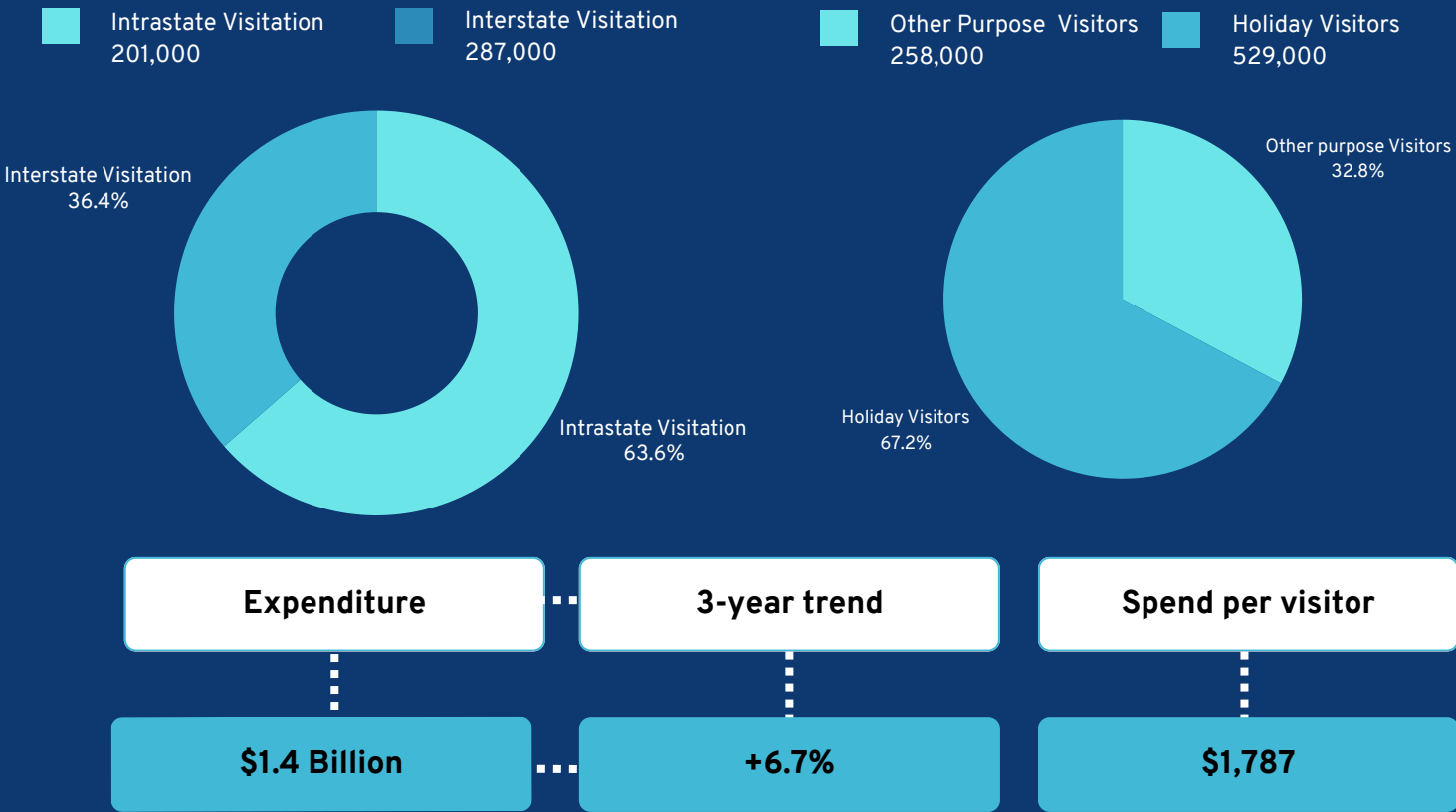
Visitor Statistics, Visitor Services & Cruise

Airlie Beach Lagoon

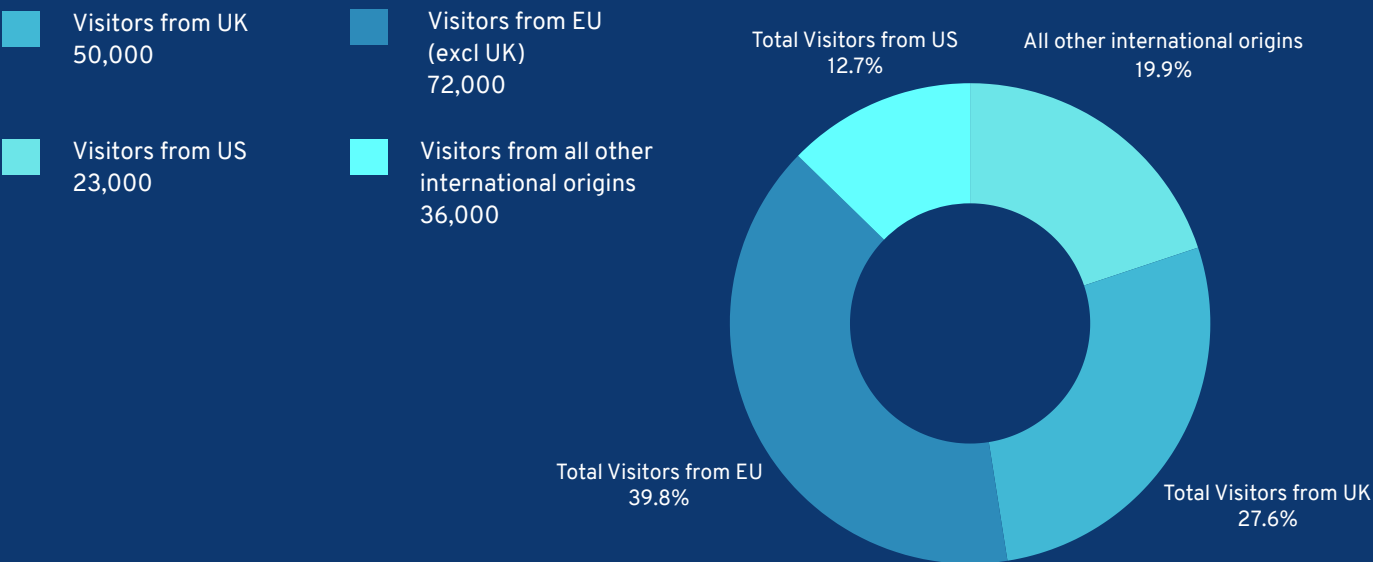
VISITOR STATISTICS

The National and International Visitor Survey data showed strengthening international visitation throughout 2023/24 and a total visitation record of 969,000.

National Visitation Data Highlights



International Visitation Data Highlights



*Data to 30 June 2024

OCCUPANCY & ADR

The Whitsundays occupancy detailed in the table below shows consistent occupancy across the region. Length of stay has decreased in the first half of 2024 and the average daily rate (ADR) has surpassed 2023.



Source: Localis (data from mobile phones, accommodation, and flight booking platforms).

VISITOR SERVICES

The Whitsundays Visitor Information Centre (WVIC) played a vital role in attracting visitors and generating revenue in 2023/24. Over 4,100 travellers sought information and assistance at the WVIC, resulting in over \$201,487 in bookings and \$33,923 in commission generated through the WVIC and Tourism Whitsundays website.

In addition to serving visitors in-person, the WVIC team actively participated in industry events, including the Caravan and Camping Shows in Townsville and Brisbane, to promote the Whitsundays and answer consumer inquiries.

The WVIC is a nationally accredited information centre offering expert guidance, travel information, and booking services to visitors. The dedicated team, led by a Visitor Services Manager and supported by volunteers, provides exceptional assistance seven days a week, ensuring visitors have access to the most up-to-date information and personalised recommendations.

WVIC Enquires 2023/24

Type of Inquiry	23/24	Annual % change
Walk-Ins	4,134	-3.5%
Phone	625	-33%
Website	258	-41%
Email	340	0.3%
TOTAL	5,357	-10.5%



CRUISE

Tourism Whitsundays, with the support of the Whitsunday Regional Council, supports the Volunteer Cruise Ship Ambassador Program in an administrative and funding capacity built over the years by a strong group of volunteers.

In 2023/24 the region welcomed 80 cruise ships into Airlie Beach area, 14 ships anchored at Shute Harbour and 66 came into Port of Airlie. The cruise ships tendered more than 157,000 passengers and crew into the two ports. Of those, over 115,000 spent time exploring Airlie Beach, whilst over 35,000 went on tours booked through the cruise lines shore excursion program.

The Volunteer Cruise Ship Ambassadors were at the port every morning to meet passengers and crew as they came off the tenders. They handed out 35,000 Airlie Beach maps and approximately 1,000 Whitsundays Visitor Guides and shared where to find cruise ship specials at some of our local operators.

Tourism Whitsundays, in partnership with Tourism and Events Queensland and Whitsunday Regional Council, actively support the cruise segment via engagement with cruise lines, inbound tour operators and itinerary and product development.



THE WHITSUNDAYS VOLUNTEER AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Tourism Whitsundays together with their members organised seven Morning Teas, a Volunteer Week celebration dinner at Paradiso Restaurant, annual Christmas Party on Sundowner boat and four touring famils for the group.

The Whitsunday Sailing Club hosted the majority of the morning and afternoon teas, with Anchor Bar and Whitsunday Green also offering their venues and complimentary food and drinks. Their generosity allowed the volunteers to meet, hear updates from Tourism Whitsundays and network together. The community further supports the Whitsundays Volunteer Ambassador Program through free membership to the Whitsunday Sailing Club, airport transfers with Whitsunday Transit and free parking permits (on cruise ship days) through Whitsunday Regional Council. The ambassadors are invited along to all monthly industry networking nights organised by Tourism Whitsundays.

A significant milestone was achieved in April when the Whitsundays welcomed its one millionth cruise visitor aboard the Majestic Princess. The ship was the 639th cruise ship to the region over the life of the program, almost 20 years.

Volunteer Engagement - Total volunteer hours donated 2023/24

Volunteer Engagement

Volunteer location	Total number of volunteers	Number of famils provided	Total volunteer hours (FY)
Visitor Centre	6	3	102

Volunteer Cruise Ship Ambassadors

Volunteer location	Total number of volunteers	Number of famils provided	Number of events organised	Number of cruise ships welcomed to POA and SH (FY)	Number of passengers welcomed (FY)
Visitor Centre	41	4	9	80	157,057

An underwater photograph showing two divers in black wetsuits and yellow masks swimming horizontally in clear blue water. They are positioned in the upper right quadrant of the frame. To the left, a large, textured coral reef structure extends vertically. The water is filled with small, dark fish and some bubbles. The overall scene is bright and clear, suggesting a healthy marine environment.

Trade, Industry Development & Industry Leadership

Hardy Reef, Great Barrier Reef

TRADE

Tourism Whitsundays participated in campaign activity to target and convert travellers to The Whitsundays; the activity was activated in the main inbound source markets of the UK, US and Germany. The activity was a mix of co-op campaigns in partnership with Tourism & Events Queensland. Total investment by Tourism Whitsundays was \$40,000, in four trade campaigns, generating a 20% increase in pax booked to The Whitsundays, via trade distribution channels.

Tourism Whitsundays also went into market in India with three trade campaign. This trial was funded through a contestable grant in co-op with Brisbane Economic Development Agency (BEDA) to test the Indian market's appetite for Queensland and The Whitsundays. The campaigns were still in market at 30 June with results due in 2024/25.

Further trade activity included coordinating and hosting trade famils, attendance at trade events and facilitating travel agent training sessions. All trade activity is conducted to promote The Whitsundays and its members, improve trade product knowledge, and increase the diversity of products contracted through trade programs.



Located in the heart of the Great Barrier Reef, the Whitsundays is a tropical paradise made up of over 75 islands. Here, beautiful luxury and island lifestyles go hand-in-hand. Spend two nights in Airlie Beach before discovering the islands on an overnight small ship cruise. Head to beautiful Hamilton Island where the perfect blend of relaxation and adventure awaits. Soak in the views at Whitehaven Beach, get up close and personal to the colourful marine life, take an exclusive helicopter tour to Heart Reef and spend the evening in Australia's first underwater accommodation. This unique part of Australia is an exotic haven and is definitely not to be missed.

INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

In 2023/24, Tourism Whitsundays was able to achieve the following key industry development activities:

- Carnival Cruises Senior Product managers famil and industry contracting sessions.
- Whitsundays Tourism Exchange held in The Whitsundays to promote operators to Inbound Touri Operators (ITOs), Online Travel Agents (OTAs) and trade partners.
- Hosted Whitsundays Roadshow in Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney, Gold Coast and Brisbane promoting Whitsundays products to 350 trade buyers.
- Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE) Ready Program – Tourism Whitsundays took two operators to ATE to introduce them to the format of trade events. Each operator was given the chance to meet with buyers and sit in on buyer appointments.

A dedicated Industry Development resource was appointed to support the development of land based tours in The Whitsundays, and also to work with Mackay Isaac Tourism to build the tourism offerings in neighbouring region, Mackay. This was funded through Tourism and Events Queensland.



INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP

Tourism Experience Mentoring Program (TEMP) Program

In 2023/24, the Tourism Experience and Mentorship Program took place. Participating operators included Driftwood Tours, Bell Tents Whitsundays, Portland Roads Sailing, and The Big Mango. The program offered operators one-on-one sessions with mentor Russell Boswell to help businesses reshape their visitor experiences and meet travellers' changing expectations.

Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) Platform

The Australian Tourism Data Warehouse hosts most of the country's tourism operator information. Tourism Whitsundays has worked alongside operators in the region to ensure The Whitsundays is loaded in the system, ready to be pulled through to websites such as queensland.com and Australia.com. The Whitsundays currently has 120 operators on ATDW with more being onboarded.

Best of Queensland

This program, run by Tourism and Events Queensland, uses a combination of reviews, business presence and offerings to score operators and curate a list of Queensland's best operators. Tourism Whitsundays has spent 2023/24 working with operators to further their understanding of the program and how to best enhance their score. The 2024 Best of Queensland list includes 89 Whitsundays operators.



An aerial photograph of a coastal area. In the upper left, a sandy beach curves along the shore, bordered by a line of palm trees and other tropical vegetation. To the left of the beach is a parking lot with a few cars. The coastline is rugged with rocky outcrops and dense green shrubbery. The ocean is visible in the upper right, with gentle waves lapping at the shore. A winding road is visible in the lower right, cutting through the greenery. The sky is clear and blue, suggesting a bright day.

Tourism Awards & Networking Events

Rose Bay, Bowen

WHITSUNDAY TOURISM AWARDS

The 2023 Whitsundays Tourism Awards showcased the region's vibrant tourism industry, honouring businesses that excel in sustainability, innovation, and exceptional guest experiences.

From eco-tour operators highlighting the Great Barrier Reef's natural wonders to hospitality venues serving authentic local cuisine, award winners represented the diverse offerings that make the Whitsundays a must-visit destination.

The event was a resounding success, drawing over 350 attendees from across Queensland. It not only recognised outstanding achievements but also emphasised the importance of sustainable practices for the region's long-term prosperity.

The 2023 Whitsundays Tourism Awards was held at the newly rebuilt, Proserpine Entertainment Centre (PEC), which offered an outdoor networking area, along with an indoor auditorium for a Hollywood awards style presentation. The awards event was one of the most successful yet, demonstrating how well Whitsunday Regional Council and Tourism Whitsundays work together.



NETWORKING

Tourism Whitsundays facilitates networking nights each month (excluding Oct, Dec and Jan) hosted by various industry or corporate partners. The purpose is to encourage relationship development between industry colleagues, provide an update on recent Tourism Whitsundays activity, and allow the host venue to showcase their product to the attendees.

In 2023/24, Tourism Whitsundays saw the number of attendees Increase significantly across networking events, with an average of 160 members attending each event.

Hosts for 2023/24 Networking were:

Month	Host
July	Reef Gateway Hotel
August	Whisper Restaurant and Gin Bar
September	Coral Sea Resort
November	Reef Gateway Hotel
Februrary	Mantra Club Croc
March	Northerlies
April	Whitsunday Sailing Club
May	Pit Pony - Collinsville
June	Magnums





Funding, Corporate Comms & Membership

Whitehaven Beach, Whitsunday Island

TOURISM FUNDING

Tourism Whitsundays invested significant time and effort into applying for relevant funding and grants throughout the year, as the organisation faced uncertainty around funding for activities. Below is a list of grants that were applied for, including those that were successful.

Tourism Whitsundays acknowledges and thanks Whitsunday Regional Council and Tourism and Events Queensland as the organisation's major funders and advocates.

Funding applications include	Amount	Status
Tourism and Events Queensland Contestable Funding – Engage India	\$90,000	Successful
Brisbane Economic Development Agency – Engage India	\$30,000	Successful
Tourism and Events Queensland Contestable Funding - Capacity Building & Industry Development	\$100,000	Successful
Tourism and Events Queensland Contestable Funding – Destination Tourism Plan	\$25,000	Unsuccessful
Tourism and Events Queensland Contestable Funding – Generative AI Travel Agent	\$400,000	Unsuccessful
Export Market Development Grant	\$90,000	Successful
Tourism and Events Queensland Funding- Cyclone Recovery Funding	\$150,000	Successful
Australian Trade and Investment Commission - Reviving International Tourism Grant – Stream 2	\$8,000	Successful
QLD Government – Department of Tourism, Innovation & Sport – Access Starter Grant	\$5,000	Successful
QLD – Government -Accessible Tourism Elevate Fund – Collinsville App	\$98,956	Unsuccessful
QLD Government - Boosting Accessible Tourism Experiences Grants Scheme – QLD Rural and Industry Development Authority	\$20,000	Successful
Tourism & Events Queensland Great Barrier Reef Awareness Proposal	\$300,000	Unsuccessful

CORPORATE COMMS

Tourism Whitsundays promotes the organisation's activities and achievements through various platforms, including fortnightly industry e-newsletters, media releases, corporate social media channels, and columns in all key newspapers within the region. Some key execution points for 2023/24 include:

- Distribution of 25 industry e-newsletters
- Distribution of 12 Insights updates
- 36 media releases distributed with an average open rate of 38%
- 9,500 followers on Tourism Whitsundays Facebook page
- Fortnightly CEO columns in the Mackay & Whitsunday Life Newspaper

Tourism Whitsundays generated over \$32 million in corporate publicity value via media interviews across radio and television, highlighting the purpose and outcomes of Tourism Whitsundays.

ADVOCACY

Tourism Whitsundays is passionate about engaging in positive and meaningful advocacy work designed to benefit The Whitsundays tourism sector. This year we were able to support our industry through advocating for key infrastructure priorities such as Whitsunday Skyway, eco-tourism developments through Great Barrier Reef education, event support and increased funding to bolster destination marketing to benefit all tourism operators.



MEMBERSHIP

During 2023/24, Tourism Whitsundays increased its already strong paid membership base to over 240. Tourism Whitsundays Limited (TW) is a not-for-profit destination management organisation tasked to market the destination, support the industry with product development and deliver visitor services.

Corporate partners



Ultimate Members



