



MEDIA RELEASE **STRICTLY EMBARGOED until 10:30pm Friday 8 November 2019**
8 November 2019

Success at Queensland Tourism Awards as Whitsundays Region Wins Big

Whitsundays tourism operators have again proven that the iconic destination is a holiday favourite – taking out Gold, Silver and Bronze in both the *Adventure Tourism* and *Major Tour and Transport Operators* categories.

The region had a remarkable night taking home the second largest collection of accolades at this year's Awards with 13 Awards. Red Cat Adventures won big – securing two Golds in its categories for the second year in a row and Cumberland Charter Yachts topped it's 2018 Silver Award, securing Gold in the *Unique Accommodation* category.

Presented at the newly constructed \$10 million Sunshine Coast Convention Centre at Novotel Twin Waters Resort, more than 900 guests gathered to celebrate the achievements of Queensland's best tourism operators.

A total of 83 Awards, including 26 Gold, 25 Silver, 24 Bronze, four highly commended and two individual Awards were presented across 28 categories, as well as two RACQ People's Choice Awards.

See attached a complete list of this year's 2019 Queensland Tourism Awards winners.

QTIC Chief Executive Daniel Gschwind said the 35th annual Queensland Tourism Awards had brought together an outstanding selection of operators that truly reflected the diverse range of the State's quality tourism offerings.

"This year's entrants, across the 28 business, event and individual categories, demonstrate the extraordinary dedication and innovation of tourism operators across the State – all of whom are helping the Queensland tourism industry to thrive," Mr Gschwind said.

More than 27.2 million international and domestic visitors flocked to the Sunshine State in the year ending June 2019, with 17.6 million of those tourists being intrastate visitors, which is an 11.9 per cent increase on the previous year's intrastate visitation.

"Thanks to these visitors, the Queensland tourism industry's contribution to the State's gross product has been boosted to \$27.2 billion and these visitation results continue to support more than 237,000 jobs across all regions of Queensland.



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“For many of our Queensland operators, this year’s severe weather events has had a serious impact on their businesses, so these Awards are a reflection of the resilience and resourcefulness of all the operators and their staff in the industry.”

Tourism Industry Development Minister Kate Jones said the Queensland Tourism Awards provided an opportunity to celebrate the effort that goes into making the Sunshine State a favourite with domestic and international tourists.

“Congratulations to all Whitsundays winners and entrants, their contribution not only supports their local economy, but contributes to the backbone of Queensland’s \$27.2 billion tourism industry,” Ms Jones said.

“The Palaszczuk Government is committed to championing local tourism operators and Whitsundays operators are a shining example of why the industry continues to grow.”

Queensland Airports Limited CEO Chris Mills congratulated Whitsundays tourism operators for showcasing the diverse array of tourism offerings in their region at this year’s Queensland Tourism Awards.

“We are seeing an ongoing refresh of tourism product and the development and delivery of new offerings, which is essential for the success of the sector domestically and internationally. Well done to those operators who were recognised as part of the Awards tonight,” Mr Mills said.

“As the owner of the aviation gateways to the Gold Coast, Townsville, Mount Isa and Longreach, we are acutely aware of the importance of excellence in the sector for us, the business sector and communities across the state.”

Each year, the Queensland Tourism Awards are judged by a panel of industry experts who volunteer their services to assess submissions and travel across Queensland to experience firsthand the amenities and services of the nominated operators.

Queensland’s Gold Award winners will gain automatic entry into the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards, which will be held in Canberra on Friday 6 March 2020. Next year the Queensland Tourism Awards will be held at Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre on Friday 13 November 2020.

– ENDS –

Whitsundays winners include:

| | | |
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| Gold Awards | Red Cat Adventures | <i>Major Tour and Transport Operators</i> |
| | Red Cat Adventures | <i>Adventure Tourism</i> |

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|----------------------|---|---|
| | Cumberland Charter Yachts | <i>Unique Accommodation</i> |
| Silver Awards | Local Tickets Pty Ltd | <i>Specialised Tourism Services</i> |
| | Ocean Rafting | <i>Major Tour and Transport Operators</i> |
| | Whitsunday Jetski Tours | <i>Adventure Tourism</i> |
| | BIG4 Adventure Whitsunday Resort | <i>Caravan and Holiday Parks</i> |
| | Whitsunday Coast Airport | <i>Specialised Tourism Services</i> |
| Bronze Awards | Cruise Whitsundays | <i>Major Tour and Transport Operators</i> |
| | Ocean Rafting | <i>Adventure Tourism</i> |
| | Cruise Whitsundays Reefsleeper | <i>Unique Accommodation</i> |
| | Airlie Beach Volunteer Cruise Ship Ambassador Program | <i>Outstanding Contribution by a Volunteer or Volunteer Group</i> |
| | Highly Commended | Northerlies Beach Bar and Grill |

Notes for Media:

- Media are asked to refrain from contacting award recipients **until after 10:30pm on Friday 8 November 2019.**
- A full list of Queensland Tourism Awards winners is attached.

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QUEENSLAND
TOURISM INDUSTRY
COUNCIL

Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) is the peak industry body for tourism in Queensland representing more than 3,000 members. QTIC is a private sector, membership-based organisation which, since 2001, has worked to influence and shape the state's tourism business environment that directly contributes \$27.2 billion to the Queensland's economy and employs more than 237,000 Queenslanders.

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