

MEDIA RELEASE



For Immediate Release
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Sounds of Success

Tourism town packs out for 10th anniversary Airlie Beach Festival of Music

If you had visited Airlie Beach in early November prior to 2013, you would have found a tropical tourism town in a lull before the Christmas rush. Fast-forward to 2022 and the weekend after the Melbourne Cup has become anything but quiet. In fact, from a plethora of rooms for rent 10 years ago to scarcely any space at the inn, the turn-around has been nothing short of monumental.

At the root of the transformation is promoter Gavin Butlin's Airlie Beach Festival of Music, which from Friday, November 4 – Sunday, November 6, welcomed 3,000 people a night to its waterside main tent. With a further 600 people attending the pre-festival 'Passport to Airlie' event, and about half this amount again expected at today's After Party, The Whitsundays has been well and truly alive with the sound of music.

Mr Butlin said he was still grasping the enormity of the metamorphosis and the \$2.5 million his party in paradise is conservatively estimated to have injected into the local economy this year alone.

"This year, ticket sales accounted for about two thirds of the attendees each night, with the rest made up of the bands, their entourages, the volunteers and crew we bring to town," he said.

"Actual sales haven't yet returned to pre-Covid levels but the only thing holding us back is the shortage of rooms we're experiencing post pandemic, with some of our permanent and holiday accommodation having been withdrawn from the rental pool.

"That being said, over the past decade the Airlie Beach Festival of Music has hosted more than 600 bands and welcomed over 70,000 attendees, generating somewhere between \$15-18 million in total revenue for The Whitsundays.

"There's been blood, sweat and tears to get to this point and although none of us knew quite how popular the festival would become, we did know Airlie Beach was the perfect setting.

"We've got jaw-dropping views across the Coral Sea from our main tent at the Whitsunday Sailing Club and I don't think I'm exaggerating when I tell people this is the most beautiful music festival in the world.

"Add to that the mix of headline artists and emerging talent we've become renowned for, and this has also gained a reputation for being a real music lovers' festival.

"With a multitude of additional venues spread across Airlie Beach, there is music wherever you go, and the atmosphere is electric."

Tourism Whitsundays Chief Executive Officer, Rick Hamilton, said there was no doubt the Airlie Beach Festival of Music had successfully established The Whitsundays as the Heart of Live Music on the Great Barrier Reef.

Tourism Whitsundays

PO Box 479 | Cannonvale QLD 4802

1/5 Carlo Drive | Cannonvale QLD 4802

+617 4948 5900

www.tourismwhitsundays.com.au

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“Coming to the Airlie Beach Festival of Music is one of those iconic, bucket-list experiences, comprising the perfect mix of quality music and incredible venues, all set against the backdrop of our 74 islands and World Heritage-listed Great Barrier Reef,” he said.

None of this has been lost on anyone attending the festival this year, with even the headline artists leaving a piece of their hearts in Airlie Beach.

Ben Lee described the festival as “a really nice production, with a good, diverse, line-up of bands”, while original member of The Animals, John Steel, said it had “great vibes”.

“This has been the last gig of our tour in Australia this year and it’s been the best gig – the best way to end the tour – thank you for having us,” he said.

In addition to The Animals and Ben Lee, main stage performances at the Whitsunday Sailing Club included the likes of Eskimo Joe, Jon Stevens, Rogue Traders, The Badloves, Masters of Pop and Mi-Sex.

The festival was preceded by the Grand Final of its annual, national talent search, ‘Passport to Airlie’, on Thursday, November 3, which was won by Brisbane band, Perry Street Park.

The program wraps up today with the official festival After Party, hosted by Northerlies Beach Bar and Grill and headlined by Superjesus frontwoman Sarah McLeod.

Early Bird tickets costing \$275 for a three-day pass, are now on sale for next year’s festival, to be held from November 10-12, 2023. To purchase tickets, or for more information, visit www.airliebeachfestivalofmusic.com.au, and follow @airliebeachfestivalofmusic on Facebook and Instagram.

The Airlie Beach Festival of Music is supported by SeaLink Whitsundays and the Queensland Government through Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ). It is featured on the *It’s Live! In Queensland* events calendar and is currently the 2022 Queensland Music Awards ‘People’s Choice’ Festival of the Year.

This media release is in partnership with the Airlie Beach Festival of Music.

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

To view The Whitsundays Heart of Events video, [click here](#).

Notes for Editors

- The Airlie Beach Festival of Music is where live music meets the Great Barrier Reef.
- With jaw-dropping sea views from the main tent at the Whitsunday Sailing Club, the festival is a party like no other in a tropical paradise.
- Watch big name acts and discover new talent - there is something for every musical taste.
- Experience a town coming alive to the sound of music. With the music spread throughout multiple venues, the atmosphere is electric.
- *The festival is currently the 2022 Queensland Music Awards ‘People’s Choice Award Festival of the Year’*

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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.

FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES, CONTACT:

Cait Fleming
Marketing & Communications Coordinator
Tourism Whitsundays
Ph: +61 417 765 736
Email: pr@tourismwhitsundays.com.au

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