

# MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Tourism Trends in The Whitsundays: International Visitor Growth Amidst Slowing Domestic Tourism

The latest insights from the National and International Visitor Survey (NVS and IVS) for the year ending March 2024, reveal a promising outlook for international visitation, despite challenges in the domestic market. Air visitation remains high, however, there has been a noticeable decline in the drive market segment.

International visitation to The Whitsundays has consistently increased over the past four quarters, with the region welcoming 177,000 visitors, signaling a strong resurgence among international travellers to explore the region. This growth is reflected in higher international visitor expenditure compared to the previous quarter. The region also maintains a notably high average cost per night.

In contrast, the domestic market has seen a decline in both average length of stay and visitation from interstate and intrastate travellers over recent quarters. This decline, particularly from the drive market, is attributed to factors such as cost of living pressures, broader economic challenges, and competition from international destinations.

Despite these challenges, The Whitsundays continues to attract significant domestic visitation, with 722,000 visitors in the past year. Domestic travellers remain the largest contributors to visitor expenditure in the region, contributing a total of \$1.2 billion in overnight expenditure.

Rick Hamilton, CEO of Tourism Whitsundays, remains optimistic about the future despite the decline in domestic visitors.

"Despite some challenges noted, particularly in the decline of the domestic drive segment, we are pleased to report an increase in international visitor numbers and spend, surpassing state trends. We anticipate this positive momentum to continue over the next 12 months. While we expect some adjustments following our record highs in the Whitsundays, these insights provide a foundation for defining a new normal for our region."

### International Insights

- **International visitation:** Despite global challenges, international visitation to The Whitsundays reached 177,000 visitors for the year ending March 2024, marking increases in each of the last four quarters.
- **Visitor expenditure:** Total international spending amounted to \$171 million, showing a 34% increase from the previous quarter.
- **Average length of stay:** The average length of stay for international visitors decreased to 6.9 nights, down from a peak of 8.6 nights in previous periods.
- **Source markets:** The UK remains a dominant source market with 48,000 arrivals, reflecting a significant 10% increase compared to 2019. The Canadian market also grew by 7.5% in the region.

## Domestic Insights

- **Visitation trends:** Domestic traveller numbers to The Whitsunday region totalled 722,000, a 16% decline over the year.
- **Nights spent in region:** Domestic visitors contributed a total of 2.6 million nights spent in the region.
- **Average length of stay:** The average stay decreased slightly to 3.7 nights, down by 1.8% compared to the previous year.
- **Visitor expenditure:** Overnight visitor expenditure reached \$1.2 billion, unchanged from the last quarter but down over the year.
- **Intrastate visitation:** Intrastate visitors numbered 466,000, up from 424,000 in the previous quarter.
- **Interstate visitation:** Interstate visitation saw a 16% decline to 256,000 visitors compared to the previous quarter.

For more information on NVS and IVS data, please [click here](#).

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

To view The Whitsundays destination video, [click here](#).

**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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