

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Whitsundays Welcomes \$1.6 Billion in Visitor Spend, Driven by Strong Domestic Recovery and Growth in Key International Markets

The latest National and International Visitor Surveys (NVS and IVS) for the year ending September 2024 reveal encouraging growth for The Whitsundays tourism industry, highlighting its resilience and appeal across domestic and international markets. With a combined total of 930,000 visitors and \$1.6 billion expenditure, the region continues to cement its position as one of Australia's premier travel destinations.

Domestic Insights

Domestic tourism remains strong for The Whitsundays, with 742,000 visitors contributing a total of \$1.4 billion in visitor expenditure, a 12% increase year-on-year. Intrastate visitation led the way with 457,000 visitors—a 10% increase year-on-year—while interstate visitation still has a way to go, seeing a 9% decrease year-on-year. Overnight stays made up 3.3 million nights, up 6% annually, with the average length of stay growing to 4.4 nights. Holidaymakers remain a key driver, with 528,000 holiday visitors contributing to 2.6 million visitor nights.

Spending trends also reflect The Whitsundays appeal. Average spending per night climbed to \$432 (up 6% year-on-year), while average expenditure per visitor rose 10% to \$1,927.

Domestic Summary

- Visitation numbers: 742,000 visitors, up 2% year-on-year.
- Visitor expenditure: \$1.4 billion, a rise of 12% year-on-year
- Overnight stays: 3.3 million nights, reflecting a 6% annual increase.
- Intrastate vs interstate trends: Intrastate visitation grew 10%, while interstate visitation saw a decrease of 9% over the year.

International Insights

International visitation is on a strong recovery trajectory, with 188,000 visitors representing an 85% recovery compared to pre-pandemic levels. Despite total visitor numbers remaining slightly below 2019 benchmarks, international spending reached new highs, with \$196.7 million in total expenditure—a recovery rate of 129%. International visitors spent an average of \$1,047 per trip, up 51%, with spending per night increasing by 61%. Visitor nights totalled 1.1 million, reflecting an 80% recovery. The region also welcomed strong growth from key markets:

- The United Kingdom remained the largest source market, with 56,000 visitors—recovering to 130% of pre-pandemic levels.
- North America followed with 35,000 visitors (112% recovery), driven by record arrivals from the United States.
- European markets such as France and Germany showed mixed recovery rates, with France at 117% and Germany at 70%.
- The Asia market continues to face challenges, with visitation recovering to just 33% of 2019 levels.

While international numbers are still rebounding, the significant growth in expenditure and strong performance in markets like the UK and North America highlight The Whitsundays appeal to international travellers.

International Summary

- Visitation numbers: 188,000 visitors, recovering to 85% of 2019 levels.
- Visitor expenditure: \$196.7 million, marking a recovery rate of 129%.
- Average length of stay: 6.4 nights in region.

- Key markets: The UK (56,000 visitors, 130% recovery) and North America (35,000 visitors, 112% recovery).

Tim Booth, CEO, Tourism Whitsundays says the latest results affirm The Whitsundays resilience and growing appeal across both domestic and international markets.

“Domestically, we are thrilled to see an increase in visitor spending and longer stays, reflecting the value our region offers to travellers. While intrastate travel remains strong, we’re keen to see more of our interstate visitors discover the magic of our stunning region. Internationally, the recovery is accelerating, with key markets like the UK and North America delivering exceptional growth.”

“We are committed to sustaining this momentum by continuing to offer world-class experiences, fostering strategic partnerships, and expanding our reach into new and existing markets. These efforts are vital to ensuring The Whitsundays remains a premier global destination.”

Whitsunday Regional Council Mayor Ry Collins said the survey results confirm what we’ve always known—the Whitsundays remains the jewel in Australia’s tourism crown.

“This level of visitation not only reinforces our region’s reputation as one of Australia’s premier travel destinations but also supports local jobs, businesses, and communities.

“It’s a testament to the resilience of our tourism industry and the ongoing appeal of the Whitsundays on the world stage.”

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To view a Word Document of this release and supporting images, [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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