

MEDIA RELEASE

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The Whitsundays Sees Record International Spend as Domestic Travel Patterns Shift

The latest National and International Visitor Surveys (NVS and IVS) for the year ending December 2024 confirm The Whitsundays status as one of Australia's strongest-performing tourism regions, achieving a combined \$1.65 billion in visitor expenditure across domestic and international markets. Despite shifts in travel patterns, particularly in the interstate market, the region continues to thrive, outperforming the state average in key areas.

Domestic Tourism

Domestic visitation remains the backbone of The Whitsundays tourism economy, with 709,000 visitors contributing \$1.4 billion in total expenditure, up 17% year-on-year.

Intrastate travel was particularly strong, with 443,000 Queenslanders choosing to holiday in The Whitsundays, a 4.5% increase over the year. However, external factors led to a decline in interstate travel, down 11.4%, as Australians may have opted for closer-to-home holidays or chosen to travel overseas. Despite this, spending per visitor continued to rise, reaching \$1,989 per trip (+19.5% year-on-year), with an average spend per night of \$446 (+15.1% year-on-year).

Domestic Summary:

- **Visitation:** 709,000 (-2.1% YoY)
- **Visitor expenditure:** \$1.4 billion (+17% YoY)
- **Total nights:** 3.2 million (+16% YoY)
- **Average spend per visitor:** \$1,989 (+19.5% YoY)
- **Average length of stay:** 4.5 nights (+.7% YoY)
- **Intrastate visitation:** 443,000 (+4.5% YoY)
- **Interstate visitation:** 266,000 (-11.4% YoY)

International Tourism

International tourism continues to rebound, with The Whitsundays emerging as one of Queensland's strongest-performing regions. The Whitsundays welcomed 188,000 international visitors, a 20.3% increase year-on-year; however, it is still recovering to pre-pandemic levels (-14.7% vs. 2019.) Spending has surged, with overall visitor expenditure reaching a record \$252 million (+73.4% year-on-year, +65.5% vs. 2019.)

The UK remained the region's largest source market, with 51,000 visitors (+18.4% year-on-year), followed by North America (33,000 visitors, +32.5%). Visitation from Asia saw a significant 55.5% uplift over the year but is still down 67% compared to 2019.

International Summary:

- **Visitation:** 188,000 (+20.3% YoY)
- **Visitor expenditure:** \$252 million (+73.4% YoY)
- **Total visitor nights:** 1.3 million (+18.1% YoY)
- **Average spend per visitor:** \$1,342 (+44.1% YoY)
- **Key markets:**

- UK: 51,000 (+18.4% YoY, +18.7% vs 2019)
- North America: 33,000 (+32.5% YoY, +5% vs 2019)
- Germany: 24,000 (+18% YoY, -21.1% vs. 2019)
- France: 10,000 (+16.7% YoY, -11.5% vs. 2019)
- Asia: 11,000 (+55.5% YoY, -67% vs. 2019)

Tim Booth, CEO, Tourism Whitsundays, said the latest quarter's results are promising.

"We're seeing strong growth in domestic spending, particularly from Queenslanders choosing to holiday intrastate. While cost-of-living pressures have impacted interstate travel, overall visitor expenditure continues to rise as people invest in high-quality experiences.

"Internationally, The Whitsundays has outpaced much of Queensland regarding recovery, setting a record for visitor expenditure. This increase in international spending could reflect a shift in market dynamics, with different traveller demographics staying longer and spending more per trip than before.

"As we look ahead, our focus remains on attracting high-value visitors, strengthening our presence in key markets, and ensuring The Whitsundays continues to shine on the global stage."

Whitsunday Regional Council, Mayor, Ry Collins said these results show that The Whitsundays continues to punch well above its weight as a tourism powerhouse.

"Despite shifting travel trends and global challenges, our tourism sector continues to thrive.

"This is driven by the dedication of our local operators, the strength of the Whitsundays brand, and the unrivalled natural beauty of our region."

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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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