



Tourism and Events  
**Queensland**

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# VIP Whitsundays

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TODAY**

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## TEQ Kiwi Campaign To Include Whitsundays



Tourism Events Queensland is to include the Whitsundays in its New Zealand campaigning for the first time next year, the NTO has revealed.

The STO's campaign this year has focused on four distinct regions (the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Tropical North and Southern Great Barrier Reef) and next year the Whitsundays will be included in a national campaign to build on organic growth in the Kiwi market.

Year-end arrival figures to Jun show a 9% increase in visitation by New Zealanders, and the STO is looking to attract more Kiwis looking for a winter escape, says TEQ New

Zealand manager Sally Holyer. "The region offers a choice of island stays, with a wide variety of options to suit every budget or options to use Airlie Beach on the mainland to explore the Great Barrier Reef, natural landscapes and friendly towns," she says.

This week the STO is hosting a group of product managers, and *Travel Today*, on a VIP fam to showcase the diverse travel offering available in the 74 islands and Whitsunday Coast.

Those on this week's fam are getting just a small taste of what is on offer in the region, in anticipation of next year's marketing activity, adds Holyer.

### Whitsundays At A Glance

Located in the heart of the Great Barrier Reef, the Whitsundays is a grouping of 74 islands (mostly designated national park) including the famed Whitehaven Beach. Seven of the islands are inhabited with resorts catering for all markets, from the luxe One&Only Hayman Island, to Hamilton Island's houses and Daydream's family-focused playground. Other family experiences range from swimming in the Airlie Beach Lagoon or the water slide at the BIG4 Adventure Whitsundays to fish feeding and mini tennis at One&Only Hayman.



### Getting There In Style

Air New Zealand, in conjunction with alliance partner Virgin Australia offers daily connections between New Zealand and Hamilton Island via Brisbane, Sydney or Melbourne. See the VA agency hub or [airnzagent.co.nz](http://airnzagent.co.nz)



### Luxury Transfers & Bubbly For Kiwi Contingent

HoT's Tim Allen, Flight Centre's Roann Roberts, Air New Zealand's Rachel Pedder, Mondo's Jacqui Dickson and Madeline Fay of HWT transfer to Hayman Is.

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## VIP Whitsundays

# One&Only Hayman Island Explored

**Fresh from an AUD90 million conversion and re-brand, the One&Only Hayman Island is still basking in the glow of re-opening.**

The property, famous for decades as a luxury getaway, welcomes celebrities (Katy Perry stayed recently) and families equally, offering a range of beach activities, pool areas, seven dining experiences and three distinct wings of accommodation, all with a bare-foot luxury feel.

One&Only Hayman Is. sales manager Dominic Mehling says New Zealand is an emerging market for the region, and the property is keen to tap into the luxury market. "The fact that we're a 'new' destination for the market really means some great opportunities. I think that also having an international brand like One&Only Resorts in the region is also going to do great things in terms of boosting the profile of the Whitsundays," he says.

Guests arrive at the property onboard one of the resort's launches, including the Sun Goddess, which departs Ham-



ilton Island and arrives at Hayman just 55 minutes later. Helicopter and seaplane transfers are also an option for clients light on time.

During the days the options are many, lazing by the pool, or heading out on excursions through the island's bush walkways, or out onto the water for snorkelling, sailing or stand-up paddleboarding. Mehling will be returning for next Feb's Queensland on Tour.

### Whitsundays Events

The Whitsundays is home to a wide range of events in 2015

**24 Jan:** Flames of Polynesia.

**25-26 Jan:** Sweeties and Squires

Fishing Comp. **08 Mar:** Outrigger

Whitsundays Regatta Airlie Beach.

**09 Mar:** Outrigger Whitsun-

day Airlie to Daydream Beach.

**04 May:** Hilly Half Marathon.

**12-15 Jun:** Clash of the Paddles

Hamilton Island. **06-07 Jul:** Art

Whitsunday Expo. **24-26 Jul:** Run

Bar Maxi Regatta, Airlie Beach.

### Hydeaway Bay By Limo

Visitors to the region can now explore Hydeaway Bay, said to be one of the Whitsundays' best kept secrets with its secluded beaches.

Airlie Limos has launched coach tours to the so-called hidden gem, which is located a 45-minute drive from Airlie Beach.

Clients can then explore the coast by kayak or canoe, snorkel the fringing reef or even head off on an Ecojet Safari Tour. There's also a number of restaurants visitors to the bay can dine at. Details see [airlielimos.com](http://airlielimos.com)



### Reluctant Farewell To Hayman Island

Departing One&Only Hayman Island after a whirlwind one-night stay is Tourism Events Queensland's Rachael Titter, Air New Zealand's Rachel Pedder, House of Travel's Tim Allen, Madeline Fay of Harvey World Travel, First Travel's Melissa Dearing, Flight Centre's Roann Roberts, HoT's Rachel Mancini, Mondo's Jacqui Dickson and One&Only Hayman Island's Dominic Mehling.



## Daydream Island's Diverse Appeal



**Daydream Island is a hive of activity just off the Whitsunday Coast, an hour's sailing from Airlie Beach.**

Originally named West Molle, the island's name was officially changed in 1989 to reflect its history as a resort island. It was officially opened as the Daydream Island Resort & Spa in 2001 and now offers a range of family-friendly accommodation, and a plethora of activities both on and off the water.

As the Whitsundays region begins to enjoy more exposure in the New Zealand market, its popularity is spreading as a mid-range affordable

stay, says the resort.

"New Zealand represents Daydream's fourth largest international market behind Europe, the UK and USA," says Daydream. "Year-to-date Daydream has experienced solid growth from New Zealand as more and more travellers see the Whitsundays as a great alternative to Fiji, Bali and Thailand."

### ... Adventure

Clients after an adrenaline rush can take jetski trips, banana boat rides, parasailing, helicopter rides to Whitehaven Beach or day excursions to the Great Barrier Reef, and come back to the resort in time for a movie on its giant outdoor cinema screen, taking advantage of a bottle of wine, food and premium seating with the gold class option (at a cost of AUD30).

### ... Kids, Living Reef

Daydream has the kids sorted, with mini-golf, watersports, its many pools, and the Living Reef. The reef attraction is one of the world's largest man-made reef attractions, home to rays, sharks, barramundi, coral and sea creatures that guests can interact with on a guided fish feed experience with one of the resort's four on-site marine biologists.

### Daydream's Mermaids

Three mermaid statues (pictured left) mark the spot where Captain Cook is said to have been entranced by a mermaid's siren on his first journey through the Whitsundays (which he named so because he thought he arrived in the region on the holiday White Sunday, it was actually a Mon, local time). Cook was lured ashore one night by a woman's call for help, and saw 'mythical atlantis', says Daydream, but was sworn to secrecy. Now the mermaids Serenity, Aphrodisia and Infinity are perched at the point Cook's ship struck the reef, and guests dine at Mermaids restaurant overlooking them.

### Rejuvenation Spa

Daydream is home to an expansive rejuvenation spa, which offers 16 treatment rooms and treatments from Vichy water massages, thermal wraps, a hair salon, mani and pedi stations and a relaxation space overlooking the three mermaids. Day trippers to the resort can use the facilities as well.

### Wedding Dreams

There's two on-site locations for weddings on Daydream. For an outdoor option there's Lover's Cove, or the airy chapel on the island's south end for an intimate indoor ceremony, which can be broadcast on-line to family and friends who can't attend.



### Camira Adventure To Whitehaven Beach

A trip to the Whitsundays isn't complete without witnessing the silica sands of Whitehaven Beach, and the 85ft Camira catamaran is a fun way to see the beach and take to the water for a day. Camira departs Airlie Beach daily at 0800, diverting to Daydream Island enroute to a snorkelling spot and Whitehaven Beach. The all inclusive trip provides food and drinks including a BBQ lunch and beer and wine. Passengers get a good amount of time at Whitehaven, where they can explore the pure white beach, play beach cricket with the crew, or indulge in a 'spa treatment' by exfoliating their skin with the silica sand.

**1** Flight Centre's Roann Roberts, House of Travel's Tim Allen and Air New Zealand's Rachel Pedder at Whitehaven Beach. **2** Mondo's Jacqui Dickson with House of Travel's Rachel Mancini relax onboard Camira en route to Whitehaven Beach. **3** HoT's Tim Allen and Flight Centre's Roann Roberts.

### Stinger Advice

Tiny 'marine stingers' are found in the waters around Queensland year-round, but the 'high-season' is around Oct-May. Most operators have 'stinger suits' for clients to wear, and a supply of vinegar should they get stung while not wearing a suit.

Some locals are said to swim year-round without being stung at all—but the risk of an unpleasant sting is there, hence why many resorts have many swimming pool options for clients to keep cool. See [marinestingers.com.au](http://marinestingers.com.au)

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## Underwater Reef World Adventure

Travellers to the Whitsundays can experience a day on a pontoon perched at the edge of the Great Barrier Reef's Hardy Reef.

Cruise Whitsundays takes visitors to the Reef World pontoon, leaving the Port of Airlie or Hamilton Island in the morning, and making the three-hour journey there.

Clients can spend time perusing the different options for underwater, and even airborne (more on that shortly), experiences—gaining advice from the crew on snorkelling, diving and even a massage on the pontoon.

Once onboard the pontoon, there's diving experiences for both learner and certified divers, snorkelling, guided snorkelling tours to some of the crew's favourite spots, and sun loungers up top to soak up the warmth and overlook the incredible scene.

Underneath the waves there's the chance to see bright corals, schools of iridescent fish and even turtles for the lucky ones. The day trip returns to Hamilton Island and Port of Airlie in the early evening, allowing clients enough time to freshen up before dinner. Cost is AUD250 for the fully-inclusive reef experience. Diving is AUD110, snorkel tours are AUD35 and massages are priced from AUD55.

Tip: \*Clients should book their massage as early as possible while on the



ferry, there's only one therapist and her schedule fills quickly.

\*If clients suffer from sea sickness, recommend they ask the crew for seasick tablets at the beginning of the ferry ride, once the sickness sets in, it's too late for the pills.

### ... Sea To Air

The Great Barrier Reef is the only one of the seven natural wonders of the world found beneath the waterline, but it is still spectacular viewed from the air.

Just a 10 minute helicopter ride above the water is enough to inspire awe, and flying over the famed heart reef is also incredibly romantic—many a beau is said to have proposed while flying over its distinct shape.

A tip for clients: try and book a flight on arrival on the pontoon, or on the

ferry trip over if the chopper company rep is on their service. Flying in the air over the pontoon gives a great perspective of the tiny part of the reef that snorkelers experience. In addition, if they're lucky flyers can get back to the pontoon and jump in the water for a snorkel when the crowds have come back onboard for lunch, so it seems like they have the reef to themselves, even just for a little while. Flights are AUD135 for 10 minutes, AUD250 for 20 minutes and a fly-back service to Hamilton Island, and over Whitehaven Beach, is AUD399pp.

**1** Team R: TEQ's Rachael Titter; Roann Roberts, Flight Centre; Rachel Pedder, Air New Zealand and Rachel Mancini from House of Travel. **2** *Travel Today's* Jess Harkins on a fly-over of the Heart Reef. **3** Reef World from the air.

## Reef Overnighter

Cruise Whitsundays now offers clients the chance to sleep under the stars onboard the Reef World pontoon on the Great Barrier Reef. Only a dozen clients can stay onboard each night, and when the ferries depart at 1500, they have the pontoon, reef and the night sky all to themselves.

The next day a breakfast is served before the ferries arrive with the next batch of guests, and clients have another day to take advantage of all the activities available, perfect their diving, take a chopper flight or book a massage. Sleeping options include under the stars (from AUD399 single, or AUD399 s/t) and a double room (from AUD449pp s/t).



## Coral Sea Resort

Airlie Beach's Coral Sea Resort sits on the water's edge and along the Bicentennial Walkway, a short walk to the Airlie Beach village and Abel Point Marina. It offers one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments, penthouses and beach houses, all with water views. The spa suites feature a Jacuzzi on a balcony that also boasts a hammock. Hotel facilities include the award-winning Clipper restaurant and a private dining gazebo, 25m pool, wedding chapel, function room and a range of activities.

## Airlie Beach Hotel

The Airlie Beach Hotel offers serviced apartments at the end of town closest to the ferry terminal, but still right amongst the resort town's dining and nightlife district. It features studio hotel rooms with village or ocean views, free Wi-Fi, a number of restaurants and bars nearby, access to a swimming pool, and key access undercover parking for self-drive clients. See [airliebeachhotel.com.au](http://airliebeachhotel.com.au)

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## Airlie Beach Upgrade Refreshes Region



Pic. Tourism & Events Queensland

Often called the heart of the Whitsundays region, Airlie Beach is where many travellers base themselves during their trip to the islands, or to book-end a few nights in their midst.

Fresh from an AUD23 million makeover, the main streets offer a beachy

vibe mixed with dining and entertainment for all budgets and tastes—from backpackers to luxury travellers.

Airlie Beach's town centre overlooks Pioneer Bay and is bordered on the south by Conway National Park.

The region's outer reaches include Bowen, 45 minutes to the north and boasting coral-fringed beaches, and Midge Point, Cape Hillsborough, Mackay and Sarina to the south.

Airlie's main road Shute Harbour Road takes clients towards Proserpine and Cannonvale, or to Shute Harbour and the town has a number of accommodation options for clients.



### Airlie Beach Limos

Charlie and Jen Sturgess (pictured above) of Airlie Limos are Airlie Beach locals who've carved a niche in offering transfers, organising day trips and showing visitors Airlie Beach from a local's perspective. Charlie is a former AAT Kings coach driver, and he puts his local knowledge to good use, advising clients on everything from when to don stinger suits to where the best restaurants and bars are for a night out. They offer airport transfers too (both Proserpine and Mackay airports), VIP tours and special occasions. See [airlielimos.com](http://airlielimos.com)

### Marina Shores Stay

For clients looking for a serviced apartment stay just out of Airlie Beach town, there's Marina Shores, a development overlooking Abell Point Marina and the gorgeous Pioneer Bay. There's one-bedroom to three-bedroom penthouse apartments, which are also home to Airlie Beach locals, so it has a very relaxed atmosphere. The development opens out onto the Bicentennial Walkway for a morning walk, and the Abell Point Marina is also just down the street, where there's a number of fishing and sailing charter companies, and a couple of restaurants. See [marinashores.com.au](http://marinashores.com.au)

### Night Fishing Trip

Coral Sea Fishing Charters has launched a new after-dark fishing trip, advises Whitsundays Marketing and Development. Priced from AUD120, the three-hour charter departs the Port of Airlie 1800 daily. See [gonefishingcharters.com.au](http://gonefishingcharters.com.au)



### Bicentennial Walkway

For some of the best views of Airlie Beach and its surrounding mainland and sea, there's the 3.7km Bicentennial Walkway. Ambling along the coastline, the walkway joins the lagoon precinct of Airlie Beach with the parklands Cannonvale Beach, and as it's well-lit, can be used safely from sunrise to sunset.



### Nightlife—Rum Bar

The Kiwi famil group was told—or is that warned?—that the Mojitos at Rum Bar are famously good, and it was no over-exaggeration. Rum Bar boasts a large wall of some 450 rums from all over the world—New Zealand's Stolen Rum makes an appearance, alongside cane juice rums from Haiti and Martinique. Pictured is, back row from left, TEQ's Rachel Titter, NZ's Rachel Pedder, HWT's Madeleine Fay. Front row, HoT's Rachel Mancini, Flighties' Roann Roberts and Mondo's Jacqui Dickson.



### A Market With A View

Each Sat morning the Airlie Beach markets set up shop on the beachfront across Airlie Esplanade from the Airlie Beach Hotel, from around 0630. Like many markets, it's a combination of local produce—great for self-catering or self-drive clients after a top up of supplies—local artists and jewellers, and the usual market stock, hippy sarongs, hats, crochet tops and lots of tie-dye. A new jeweller at the markets is Jennifer Taylor, who makes delicate gold-plated and silver starfish necklaces (inset), amongst other jewellery—and her stall is a refreshing change. There's also the nearby Proserpine markets, held every third Sun of the month.



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