

## MEDIA RELEASE

### DOUGLAS SHIRE DIVES INTO REEF OPPORTUNITIES

**Port Douglas, 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2017** – The reef tourism sector in the Port Douglas and Daintree region is showing a loud and clear confidence in this billion-dollar industry with extensive investment in dive adventures and diversification in overall reef experiences.

Tourism Port Douglas and Daintree (TPDD) executive officer Tara Bennett said the Port Douglas based-fleet was growing with the addition of specialist research and diving vessels and a luxury sailing catamaran as operators continued to innovate and respond to changes in consumer expectations.

“The Great Barrier Reef is one of Australia’s most celebrated natural assets and the number one draw card for visitors to Tropical North Queensland,” Ms Bennett said.

“Certainly in Port Douglas it is the mainstay of our economy and it is encouraging to see the private sector backing their confidence in this vibrant and vital industry, despite recent coverage following two consecutive coral bleaching events.

“Last month Cairns-based Divers Den expanded into the Port Douglas dive market. Its new purpose built \$5 million vessel is the only one of its kind in this region to offer on-board nitrox filling facilities and buddy diving that delivers a more carefree diving experience.

“We have also seen Reef Sprinter incorporate a new half-day experience to Low Isles as part of its product offering and Tropical Journeys has diversified its product, with sailing to the outer reef from Port Douglas.”

Ecotourism specialist Wavelength Charters recently welcomed a new vessel specialising in research charters in response to growing demand from the science and research sector.

“Sailaway is also offering new season tours to Mackay Reef from Cape Tribulation and the upgrade to luxury catamaran Sailaway VI for the product’s flagship Low Isles day experience and sunset sailing, were launched in July,” she said.

“These additions add to the recent growth in super yachts home berthing from Port Douglas.”

A recent report by Deloitte Access Economics put a total economic, social and treasured asset value of the Great Barrier Reef at \$56 billion. It reported the 2300km coral system supported 64,000 jobs and contributed \$6.4 billion annually to the Australian economy.

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This made the reef a larger full-time 'employer' than many of Australia's corporate giants, including National Australia Bank, Qantas and Telstra.

Quicksilver Group remains Port Douglas' largest employer with 245 staff. More permanent job opportunities will be generated with the completion of its Learn to Dive centre, the first of its kind in Port Douglas, later this year.

It will feature a 13m x 7m dive pool covered by a retractable roof to allow all-weather operations, plus classrooms, a dive specialty retail outlet and offices.

**ENDS**

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