



Wotif celebrates Australia Day with the Town of the Year Awards

Monday, 22 January 2018: With Australia Day around the corner, leading online travel site Wotif.com has today revealed the winners of the inaugural **Wotif Australian Town of the Year** awards. In the true Aussie spirit of giving everyone a fair go, the awards unearth the ‘must-see’ local towns across the nation in 2018.

With half of all Australians (49%) looking to make their next trip a local one and two thirds (67%) of us seeing domestic travel as a way to reinvest in the local economy ^{***}, the awards, based on a Wotif pricing and demand index*, call out the local hotspots which should be on every Aussie bucket list this year.

So, who took out Australia’s number one place in 2018?

Hailed as Australia’s sugar capital, this northern gem delivers the charm of a country town with the adventure of a tropical paradise, making it a true blue Aussie holiday. With the Great Barrier Reef at its door, wallabies and kangaroos at Cape Hillsborough National Park and platypuses in the Eungella National Park, there’s no beauty more rich or rare than at Queensland’s **Mackay!**

While we might all have our own way of pronouncing it (Mack-aye anyone?), one thing for certain – you’d be silly to miss the opportunity to experience this Aussie sweet-spot in 2018, with year-on-year interest up nearly 80%**** and a predicted average accommodation rate on Wotif at \$137 per night****.

Tas Webber, General Manager of Mackay Tourism said the region has celebrated four quarters of growth in domestic and international visitor numbers, as well as an amazing events calendar attracting travellers far and wide.

“We are ecstatic that Mackay has taken out the Wotif Australian Town of the Year in 2018,” Mr. Webber said. “The region is a hidden gem full of natural attractions, wildlife, national parks, fishing, beaches, great food and unique events so it’s no wonder more and more Australians are choosing Mackay for their next holiday.”

Wotif Australian Town of the Year*:

[Mackay, QLD](#): a melting pot of all things that make the perfect Aussie holiday.

Wotif Australian Town of the Year Runners Up*:

1. [Shepparton, VIC](#): This Goulburn River town is home to so much more than SPC tinned fruit, such as the multiple art centres, including antique cars to ceramics and paintings you can purchase.
2. [Mildura, VIC](#): Surprisingly famous for producing more grapes than oranges – while the juice misleads all of us, we’re happy to settle for wine.
3. [Bunbury, WA](#): The best place to go for a dip with a bottlenosed dolphin.
4. [Bundaberg, QLD](#): Rum, rum, glorious rum! Need we say more?
5. [Lakes Entrance, VIC](#): Never underestimate the fun you can have at a Shell Museum, and the Ninety Mile Beach, that’s actually 140 miles!
6. [Townsville, QLD](#): Great Barrier Reef. That is all.
7. [Port Macquarie, NSW](#): One of the classic Aussie holiday spots fondly known to many of us as ‘Port Mac’.
8. [Byron Bay, NSW](#): Always has been, always will be the trendiest surf town in Australia.
9. [Batemans Bay, NSW](#): Home to some of the best snorkeling trails in NSW.
10. [Echuca, VIC](#): Known as ‘The Murray’s living legend’, take a trip back in time in this historic town.



As part of the awards, a people's choice category saw the public vote on the most uniquely Aussie towns to celebrate the vast experiences Australia has to offer, and the towns that are the very best in what they offer.

People's Choice: Wotif's Uniquely Aussie Town Awards**:

1. Top Wine Region: [Margaret River, WA](#)
2. Top Adventure: Town: [Cairns, QLD](#)
3. Top Pub Town: [Ballarat, VIC](#)
4. Top Fruit-Picking Town: [Mildura, VIC](#)
5. Top Town To See a Kangaroo: [Kingscote, Kangaroo Island, SA](#)
6. Top Lamington Town: [Beechworth, VIC](#)

Wotif.com Travel Specialist Kirsty La Bruny says: "This Australia Day, we want to bring to the forefront the versatile personalities of our top towns. From those that give your social feed some major hipster creds (looking at you Byron!) to our very own rum capital Bundaberg, every town has a yarn to tell about what makes them famous and worthy of being awarded one of the nation's best."

La Bruny continues, "We know that two thirds of Aussies view a local holiday as an opportunity to reinvest in the local economy and support regional communities **", so this Australia Day, we wanted to provide some AUS-spiration to would-be travellers and encourage us all to get out there and see this great nation.

With boundless plains to explore, there's no better time than Australia Day to plan a local trip in 2018, with the added advantage of saving yourself a few extra dollars and travel time by travelling closer to home. For travel inspiration and the best deals, visit www.wotif.com.

-ENDS-

Assets:

- Sound grabs of Wotif Travel Specialist, Kirsty La Bruny are available for download [here](#).
- High-res images of each destination are available for download [here](#).

For further information or interview requests, please contact pr@wotif.com.

References:

***Wotif Australian Town of the Year:**

The 2018 Wotif Australian Town of the Year and runners up were determined by an index which examined the affordability, demand, increased interest and the number of properties in each town or city available on Wotif.com. For each category, the destination was given a rating between 1-5 and the total score resulted in the Australian Town of the Year. Where destinations received the same score, the destinations were sorted by an increase in year-on-year interest over the Australia Day weekend.

- *******Affordability:** The value of each destination is based on the average daily rate for 3 – 5 star rated and self-rated accommodation demand on Wotif.com from January 2016 to September 2017. Prices are in Australian dollars and are not necessarily the rates displayed on the site. Rates are subject to accommodation selections made.
- **Demand:** Demand is based on domestic accommodation demand on Wotif.com between 1 January 2017 to 15 December 2017 for travel dates including 25 January 2018 to 28 January 2018.
- ******Interest:** Year-on-year interest is based on domestic accommodation searches on Wotif.com based from 1 January 2017 to 15 December 2017, for travel dates including 25 January to 28 January 2018 compared to 26 January 2017 to 29 January 2017.
- **Properties:** The number of properties is based on total listed accommodation on Wotif.com in the specific town or city as of 5:30pm on 4 January 2017.



****Wotif's Top Six Uniquely Australian Towns** are based on responses from more than 1,400 Australians. A shortlist of 10 destinations under each category was created by Wotif.com and Australians voted for the category winners via www.wotif.com/vc/blog from 3 January 2018 – 8 January 2018.

*****Wotif's Australian Travel Research**

The Leading Edge were engaged by Wotif to conduct research into understanding Australian travellers. The study was conducted across August to September 2017 and consisted of two components: 1. Online Community of n=40 Australian travellers 2. Online Survey completed by a nationally representative sample of n=1,036 Australians travellers (who had all travelled and stayed in paid accommodation in the last 2 years on leisure holidays).

The survey was conducted online amongst members of a permission- based panel, between 23rd and 29th August 2017. After interviewing, data was weighted to the latest population estimates sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Data was weighted to National Representative proportions to reflect the age, gender and residential location of Australian travellers.

About Wotif

Wotif.com has been the 'home of holidays' for one in two Aussies since it launched in the Year 2000. Wotif offers travellers access to millions of rooms, hundreds of airlines and thousands of destinations both locally and around the world, with real hotel reviews from more than 9 million travellers, including more than 1.5 million Australians. Travellers can now also access special package savings if they combine a hotel and flights in the same booking on Wotif.com.

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