

# WELLNESS TOURISM SUMMIT

**Media Release  
For Immediate Release**

## **Australia's first ever Wellness Tourism Summit to be held in Noosa. Research identifies 10 million Australian wellness tourism trips each year**

**[Sydney, June 24, 2019]** Noosa is to be the backdrop for Australia's first ever Wellness Tourism Summit early next year aimed at showcasing the rapid growth in the wellness sector and the opportunities for tourism businesses in Australia.

To be held on March 19 and 20, 2020 at the Sofitel Noosa Pacific Resort, the Summit is being convened by Katherine Droga, chair of the Global Wellness Institute (GWI), a non-profit organisation, whose mission is to empower wellness worldwide.

The two-day program will reveal the latest research, consumer trends and best practice in wellness travel and tourism, with more than 20 leading wellness travel experts invited to speak on the main stage to share their insights into the growing wellness tourism sector.

Research carried out by the GWI values the wellness tourism sector at an impressive \$639 billion a year in global visitor spend, with Australia receiving 10 million wellness trips a year from local and international visitors.

And at 6.5% annual growth between 2015 and 2017, the wellness tourism sector is growing at more than twice the rate of general tourism and is one of the fastest growing segments in tourism overall.

In a list of the top 20 wellness tourism destination markets, Australia is ranked 14<sup>th</sup> globally in terms of percentage growth in trips over the past two years. There was an 8.3% growth in Australian wellness trips between 2015 and 2017, with 1.5 million trips added.

The Summit already has a stellar line-up of speakers, with more to come. Confirmed speakers to date include: Emlyn Brown, Accor's Paris-based Vice-President Wellbeing, Luxury and Premium Brands; Joanne Barber, sustainability transformer and wellness thought leader at Singapore-based We Affirm Co.; Sharon Kolka, general manager and wellness director at Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat; Georgia Rickard, Editor-at-Large at Virgin Australia; Janice Williams, publisher of Wellbeing Magazine; and Charles Davidson, founder and chairman of Peninsula Hot Springs.

The opening night, Thursday 19 March, will commence with welcome cocktails and canapes and a chance for delegates to network with industry colleagues and media. Friday 20 March will begin with complimentary morning wellness activities followed by the Summit showcase, a full day of wellness travel immersion with talks and panel discussions on the main stage.

Over the course of the day, delegates will be able to sample wellness experiences in breakout areas with lunch held at Peter Kuruvita's award-winning Noosa Beach House.

Droga – who is also founder of sustainable tourism consultancy Droga & Co and a former senior executive at Tourism Australia – said the Wellness Tourism Summit would be a chance for delegates to really understand the value of the wellness economy and the diversity within the sector.

“Within the top 20 highest spending destinations, the USA attracts the highest average international wellness expenditure per person of any nation with Australia ranking second” Droga said.

“There are huge benefits to businesses engaging in wellness tourism. Wellness travellers often tread lightly, respect the environment, value local community connections, and help mitigate over-tourism issues that many destinations now face.

“Wellness travellers also assist a destination with seasonality flows, stay longer than regular tourists and often spend more” continued Droga.

“This means there's a huge opportunity for operators to tap into the diverse sectors of what wellness travel actually means to the consumer. This ranges from extreme wellness – where hotels are including excursions such as wild swimming in Alpine lakes and mountain-top heli-yoga – to mental wellbeing and happiness, such as silence at wellness monasteries in Quebec or serene paddling in the pristine upper reaches of the Noosa Everglades, home to almost half of all bird species found in Australia.”

The Wellness Tourism Summit is supported by Tourism Noosa, Tourism Australia and Sofitel Noosa Pacific Resort.

Early bird registrations close on August 31, 2019. More information on the Wellness Tourism Summit and how to register can be found at [www.wellnesstourismsummit.com.au](http://www.wellnesstourismsummit.com.au)

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