

Blog: Australia's 7 best destinations for groups in 2019

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Arinex' Incentives and Special Events Manager Tania Rauhihi has travelled across Australia to round up the most exciting destinations for group programs in 2019. Have a read of her shortlist....

1. Hayman Island

The private island of Hayman Island, situated on the stunning Great Barrier Reef, will soon herald Australia's most anticipated hotel opening for 2019. Hayman Island by InterContinental will offer a private island experience for groups, giving them a secluded paradise to explore the natural wonders of the iconic coastline; an experience that will not be forgotten. Due to open in July 2019, the 166-room luxury resort will be accessed via Hamilton Island and then by either vessel or helicopter. Hayman Island will provide the best starting point to discover the raw beauty of one of the seven wonders of the natural world, the incomparable Great Barrier Reef.

2. Perth

Dubbed Australia's 'new-age' city, Perth's exciting city sprawls gently to the idyllic West Australian coastline to offer the best of both worlds. The city is a gem to discover, free from the pressures of congestion and population affecting its eastern counterparts. But there's more to explore, with Perth also the gateway to the neighbouring port town of Fremantle as well as Rottnest Island, famed for its untouched beaches and selfie opportunities with the friendly local wildlife, quokkas. If that's not reason enough to visit, the city has become a whole lot more accessible thanks to the new direct London-Perth flights, bringing European groups there within 17 hours.

3. Uluru

Australia's point of difference is without doubt its Aboriginal heritage – and what better place to learn about the oldest culture in the world than Uluru. More than just a photo opportunity, the iconic rock is an awe-inspiring environment in the centre of outback Australia and is home to ancient wisdom and diverse plant and animal life. Hear elders from the Yankunytjatjara and Pitjantjatjara tribes whisper creation stories, explore historic rock art and discover the rock from all angles in a walking or cycling tour. By night, enjoy the most brilliant star show on Earth, with uninterrupted views and non-existent light pollution, surrounded by utter silence and tranquillity. Guests can also marvel at the global art phenomenon by Bruce Munro, Field of Light Uluru, which has been extended to the end of 2020.

4. Port Douglas

Port Douglas offers an unmatched variety of four- and five-star accommodation and fine dining, without being overwhelmed by congestion or pretentiousness. The unassuming coastal town – a pristine 45-minute drive north of Cairns, in far north Queensland – is a gem to discover, with year-round warm weather beckoning people to experience its natural beauty. Explore the stunning Four Mile Beach, snorkel or dive on the Great Barrier Reef and then meet some local wildlife at Daintree National Park. An ultra-luxury hotel by Crystalbrook is planned for the Port Douglas Superyacht Marina, which will include a 100-room five-star hotel alongside a 30-room 'ultra-lux' hotel.

5. Sydney

Popular Sydney remains an inspiring choice for visiting groups. Beautifully wrapped around its magnificent harbour and beaches, it has visual wow factor like few other cities. Scratch the surface and it only gets better. Sydney encapsulates the very best of Australia; endless dining options, fun activities, iconic landmarks and an easy-going, friendly welcome from local residents. Jump on a boat to soak up the world-famous harbour or blend in with the bronzed locals with a surfing lesson at Bondi Beach. Regardless of your itinerary, Sydney's charm captivates all who visit, leaving you feeling giddy with excitement.

6. Melbourne

Last but not least; Melbourne. The Victorian capital is often described by the most easy-going of adjectives – 'liveable' – and it doesn't take long to discover why. Melbourne oozes raw appeal and charm, disarmingly wrapping itself around visitors like a long-lost friend. Whether it's the street art, buzzing laneways, the peaceful Yarra River or the sports-mad locals, Melbourne is a cultural melting pot that is begging to be discovered. Hotel developments are making that easier, with an \$80M Mantra Epping Melbourne slated to open in May 2019, followed by the arrival of Australia's first St Regis Hotel in 2022 and the development of a 'skinny hotel' half the size of a tennis court on a central laneway scheduled for mid-2020.

Tania will be appearing with Katie Beer (Business Development Manager, Incentives and Special Events) at IMEX Frankfurt on 21-23 May 2019. Visit Tania and Katie on the Tourism Australia stand (B320) to learn more about group program options and how they can assist you to create an inspiring experience.