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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HEATWAVE FESTIVAL BUILDS STRONG MOMENTUM AS PORT DOUGLAS PREPARES TO WELCOME ITS NEWEST SIGNATURE EVENT.

Port Douglas is set to dial up the colour, culture and creativity this summer, as the inaugural **Heatwave Festival (13-15 February 2026)** gains powerful momentum across sponsors, talent, and ticket sales ahead of its debut in the Douglas Shire.

A vibrant, **three-day LGBTQIA+ festival** featuring top DJs, iconic drag performers and a full program of events across Port Douglas, Heatwave is already shaping as a major injection of energy, visitation and economic activity at a traditionally quiet time of year for the destination. Tourism Port Douglas Daintree (TPDD) has welcomed the festival as a strategically aligned new event that supports its focus on driving February visitation and building resilience in the local visitor economy.

TPDD Executive Officer Emma Tunnock said the festival's timing offers strong alignment with broader destination goals. "This event provides a great platform to drive tropical summer visitation, and Heatwave is a fantastic new addition that brings colour, culture and creativity to this part of our calendar. The early momentum has been outstanding - we're seeing strong interstate interest and excellent support from local businesses. It's a wonderful endorsement of what Port Douglas can deliver."

Early ticket trends show around 80% of sales are currently coming from Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, highlighting strong demand from domestic travellers seeking unique, experience-led escapes. TPDD and festival organisers will continue building local awareness as the event approaches. Confirmed sponsors include The CaPTA Group, Rattle & Hum, The Tin Shed, Newport, Electric Dreams, Quicksilver and Back Country Bliss, demonstrating growing enthusiasm from businesses across the region.

Ben Woodward, Director of Sales & Marketing at The CaPTA Group, said the company is proud to support Heatwave and sponsor Sparkle, the festival's signature night. "Port Douglas has an incredible capacity to host unforgettable experiences, and Heatwave captures that spirit beautifully. Sparkle is set to be a spectacular celebration of individuality, performance and creativity, and we're thrilled to help bring it to life. Events like this energise the community, support local operators and showcase the destination at its very best."

Founder and Event Director Andrew Dalbertanson said the region's warm hospitality and natural vibrancy make Port Douglas an ideal host destination. "Port Douglas has an energy and openness that makes it the perfect setting for Heatwave. The response so far - from sponsors, the community and interstate audiences - has been incredible. We're excited to deliver a festival that celebrates diversity, connection and joy while showcasing the very best of the destination."

FESTIVAL PROGRAM: 13-15 FEBRUARY 2026

Friday 13 February - Neon Nights @ Sugar Wharf (5pm-10:30pm)

A high-energy, neon-themed waterfront opening party featuring DJs Dan Murphy, Kate Monroe, Hayley Maree and Just Andy, with performances by drag icons Penny Tration and Coco Jumbo. Roaming drag performances across Macrossan Street cafes will also bring colour to the village throughout the weekend.

Saturday 14 February - The Campest Lunch @ Harrisons (12pm-3pm)

A playful long lunch at one of Port Douglas's most celebrated restaurants, combining theatrical drag performance, curated DJ sets and a vibrant daytime atmosphere.

Saturday 14 February - Sparkle @ The Court House (8pm-2am)

The festival's signature nightlife event, proudly sponsored by The CaPTA Group, transforming The Court House into a dazzling party space with premium DJs, standout drag performances and an electric dance-floor experience.

Sunday 15 February - H2OHHHHH Pool Party @ Oaks Resort (12pm-5pm)

Sponsored by Back Country Bliss and Rattle N Hum, this tropical pool party finale brings together top DJs, drag entertainment and the resort's lagoon backdrop for a relaxed yet high-energy close to the weekend.

Sunday 15 February - Closing Dinner @ Oaks Resort (7pm)

A final gathering for guests to reflect and close the festival with a beautifully hosted dinner and final performer appearances.

TPDD has supported the festival's establishment through advocacy and a Value-in-Kind venue partnership with Douglas Shire Council, reflecting its commitment to fostering new, locally led initiatives that enhance the region's cultural offering and inspire year-round visitation.

Emma Tunnock said Heatwave's strong early momentum signals its potential to become a flagship event for the region. "Heatwave brings a vibrant new dimension to our destination, and the strong early response shows how powerfully it resonates with both visitors and the community. It's exciting to see Port Douglas embrace this festival so enthusiastically."

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