

# Hayley Morris

FOUNDER OF



## Empowering Women through Sisterhood Womens Travel



Travel possesses a transformative power that shapes the lives of people in profound ways. Unfortunately for women, numerous barriers impede their ability to explore the world. Whether stemming from societal expectations, safety concerns, or personal circumstances, these obstacles can often limit women's travel opportunities, denying them the opportunity for personal growth and expanding their friendship circles. Breaking these barriers becomes imperative, as travel not only expands horizons but also nurtures mental, physical, and emotional well-being. Empowering women to journey beyond these constraints opens avenues for self-discovery, personal growth, and the cultivation of enduring connections, ultimately contributing to a more fulfilling and enriched life.

Enter the trailblazing force behind Sisterhood Womens Travel, Hayley Morris. In 2005, driven by an unwavering passion for empowering women through exploration, Hayley

founded the company. As the proprietor of a small country retail travel agency in Victoria, she astutely recognized the unmet need for supportive small-group travel exclusively tailored for women, particularly those in rural communities. The spark ignited when she orchestrated a resoundingly successful 'sample' itinerary to Hong Kong for 12 women, unveiling the profound impact of such journeys on women's mental and physical well-being. Today, Hayley Morris stands as a beacon of change through Sisterhood Womens Travel, providing women with a transformative and enriching travel experience.

### Pioneering Women-Only Travel

In the initial phases of establishing Sisterhood Womens Travel (SWT), a significant hurdle emerged—confronting the perceived discrimination tied to offering women-only travel experiences. To address this challenge, Hayley Morris pursued an exemption from the Equal Opportunity Act



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1995 through the Victoria Civil Administration Tribunal (VCAT). A meticulous process unfolded, leading to a hearing where compelling evidence was presented, highlighting the societal importance of women-only travel. She garnered letters of support from influential figures, including parliamentarians, women's groups, and a male client who lauded his positive experiences travelling with his wife in a group setting that included solo women travellers. With this collective endorsement, Hayley Morris achieved a historic milestone, securing SWT's position as the first women-only tour company granted such an exemption. This triumph marked a crucial step in the journey towards establishing one of Australia's most successful women's tour companies.

#### **Curating Extraordinary Adventures**

Hayley Morris's extensive travels, particularly her initial journey to Morocco with Sisterhood Womens Travel (SWT), have profoundly influenced the company's distinctive

approach to tailoring tours for like-minded women. Morocco acted as a catalyst, revealing the appeal of 'off the beaten' track destinations within a group setting, fostering safety and camaraderie. Hayley's enduring connection to Morocco has resulted in numerous successful tour groups exploring this captivating country over the 17 years of SWT's operation.

Carefully selected destinations define SWT's tours, each featuring hands-on activities tailored to women's preferences. From immersive cultural experiences to indulgent spa visits, these meticulously planned itineraries reflect 17 years of understanding what women truly enjoy. As Hayley Morris aptly invites, "Join the Japan tour for a sushi-making class or a flower-arranging session, or relish a cooking class and a perfume workshop in Morocco." These thoughtfully curated inclusions exemplify her commitment to offering a unique and enriching travel experience, showcasing the visionary leadership that has guided SWT throughout its 17-year journey.



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### **Beyond Tours, Building Connections**

Hayley Morris is devoted to building a lively community of travel-loving women through Sisterhood Womens Travel (SWT), ensuring that the connections formed during the organised trips continue beyond the tours. Over years of operation, SWT has evolved into a hub for fun-loving women with a shared enthusiasm for travel. The offerings extend beyond the traditional offerings of small group and international tours to include mini breaks, day trips and events, catering to a diverse range of women.

The mini breaks in particular serve as an enticing introduction to the unique travel style of Sisterhood Womens Travel. Beyond destinations, SWT facilitates connections through various events, fostering a collective spirit among women united in the joy of exploring the world with companions. Monthly morning teas at the Sisterhood Central office

provide a warm space for women to connect, especially those who may not have a partner for travel or prefer the security of a small group led by experienced tour hostesses. The recent acquisition of a small minibus, affectionately named “Rosa,” introduces a new demographic of travellers to the Sisterhood Womens Travel community, exemplifying Hayley Morris’s dedication to expanding and enhancing travel experiences for women.

### **The Spirit of Sisterhood Womens Travel**

The leadership style within Sisterhood Womens Travel (SWT) seamlessly aligns with the organisation’s core values and ethos, emphasising the creation of distinctive experiences for women travellers. As a people person and empath, Hayley authentically promotes Sisterhood’s values simply by being herself. Her team, sharing her passion, is wholly aligned with the goals of SWT, evident in the



enthusiasm they bring to their roles. Hayley sees her purpose as the innovator, supporter, and mastermind behind encouraging women to “take the plunge” into adventure.

Reflecting on her journey, Hayley states, “If you build it, they will come.” Over 17 years in business, she proudly notes that SWT has changed many women’s lives, offering them the chance to step slightly out of their comfort zones. Beyond tours, the aim is to demonstrate that life continues after the loss of a partner or husband, instilling confidence in women. Hayley Morris’s visionary leadership is not just a testament to the success of Sisterhood Womens Travel but a beacon for women seeking transformative travel experiences.

### **Unleashing Horizons**

In shaping the future of Sisterhood Womens Travel, Hayley Morris envisions a path of continual growth and refinement. With the women-only travel market experiencing exponential expansion, the focus remains on elevating services, maintaining a competitive edge, and preserving distinctive offerings. While firmly rooted in Victoria, she is steering the company towards a multinational presence, attracting women from various states. Coordinating and offering add-on arrangements for interstate travellers



has resulted in a surge of bookings beyond Victoria. The burgeoning demand in Sydney has sparked discussions about potentially establishing an office there and extending tour departures to other East Coast cities like Sydney and Brisbane. The ongoing consideration of whether to expand further will ultimately determine the future trajectory of Sisterhood Womens Travel under Hayley Morris’s guidance.

### **Wisdom for Women in Entrepreneurship**

For women entering the realm of entrepreneurship, Hayley Morris imparts invaluable advice: embrace the leap, for the rewards far exceed the risks. Essential to this journey is surrounding oneself with industry mentors, absorbing their wisdom to carve a unique path. It involves embracing risks, trusting instincts, and relentlessly pursuing the extraordinary. The discovery of passion and purpose marks a revelatory moment in this entrepreneurial odyssey. With Sisterhood Womens Travel’s 17-year impact as a source of pride, Hayley advocates aligning one’s work with genuine love, echoing the timeless sentiment, “Build it, and they will come.” This conclusive guidance encapsulates Hayley Morris’s entrepreneurial narrative, offering inspiration for women to embark on their ventures with unwavering passion and resilience. ■