# Wet tropics coast

# Cardwell to Cairns



Visitor Guide

## **Featuring**

Clump Mountain National Park
Djiru National Park

Eubenangee Swamp National Park

Girramay National Park (Edmund Kennedy; Murray Falls)

Russell River National Park

Tully Gorge National Park

Wooroonooran National Park (Walshs Pyramid; Goldsborough Valley; Josephine Falls; Palmerston;

Goldfield trail)

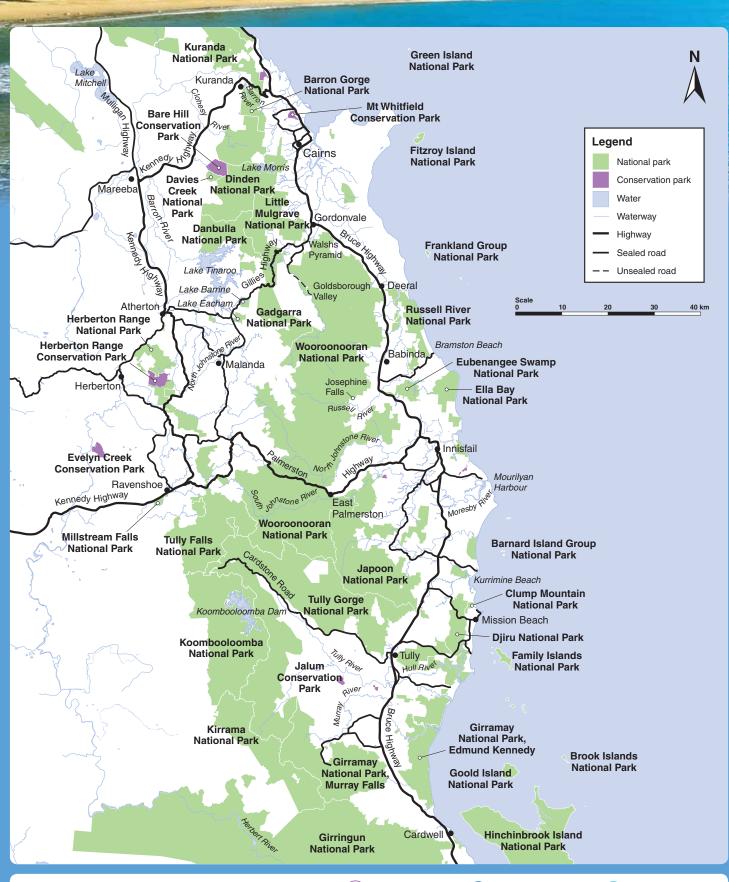
and island national parks







## Wet tropics coast national parks



## **Legend for** brochure symbols

These symbols are used throughout the brochure to organise information.



Access

Be cass-o-wary

Be crocwise



Canoeing

Cycling





Fishing





Nature



Swimming



Walks



Wildlife viewing



Camping



Day-use area

Places to visit

# Exploring the wet tropics coast

... where ancient rainforested mountains provide a mist-shrouded backdrop to a landscape of waterfalls and gorges, coastal rivers and wetlands—the meeting place of two world heritage areas, the Wet Tropics and the Great Barrier Reef.

# A cultural landscape

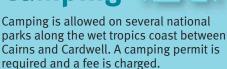
The parks and forests of the wet tropics coast are part of the traditional country of several rainforest Aboriginal clan groups. These clan groups have a spiritual connection with the land and sea, and their culture is recognised as a unique and irreplaceable part of the heritage of the Wet Tropics. Rainforest Aboriginal people share spiritual beliefs on the creation of the landscape and have custodial obligations and responsibilities for using and caring for their land and resources. Cultural sites, such as ceremonial sites and story places, as well as camping and hunting sites, are located across the coastal plain and escarpment landscape, linked by a network of trails. Many of these trails have now been developed into highways, roads and modern day walking tracks.

# When to visit

The best time to visit the wet tropics coast is during the (relatively) dry winter season, from about May to September. Temperatures and humidity are lower, and the drier conditions are more suitable for enjoying the parks. Summer is generally hot and very humid, with extended wet periods, flooding and occasional cyclones.



## **Camping**



For most parks on the wet tropics coast, camping permits can be obtained **in** advance:

- online at <www.qld.gov.au/camping>
- over-the-counter at a Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing (NPRSR) business centre or approved booking office
- by phoning 13 QGOV (13 74 68).
   Mobile phone charges may apply.

In some parks, camping permits can be obtained **on-site** from self-registration shelters. Under this system, campers write their own permits, insert their camping fees (cash, cheque, credit card number) into an envelope and deposit it into a locked box at the self-registration shelter. Campers must display a tag with their booking number at their camp site. Camp site availability cannot be guaranteed.\*

### Where to camp

Camping is allowed at:

- Girramay National Park (Murray Falls)
- Russell River National Park (Graham Range)
- Tully Gorge National Park (Tully Gorge and Cochable Creek)
- Wooroonooran National Park (Goldsborough Valley, Henrietta Creek and South Johnstone).

Camping is also allowed on some island national parks (see page 20).

Detailed information about all national park camping areas is available online at <a href="www.nprsr.qld.gov.au">www.nprsr.qld.gov.au</a>.

\* Parks that currently offer this facility are changing to advance bookings for camping permits. Visit www.nprsr.qld.gov.au>
for up-to-date camping information.



## **Camping requirements**

Most camping areas, unless stated otherwise, cater for tents, camper trailers and caravans.

The use of generators is permitted at Henrietta Creek, South Johnstone and Graham Range camping areas (between 8 am and 7 pm) and Tully Gorge, Murray Falls and Cochable Creek camping areas (between 9 am and 12 noon). Noise levels must be less than 55 dB at a distance of 7 m from the generator. The use of generators is not allowed at any other parks.

Fuel stoves are recommended. Open fires are not allowed, with the exception of Goldsborough Valley, Murray Falls and Russell River camping areas. Fire rings must be used (where provided) and firewood must be purchased or collected from outside the park.

## **Camping code**

- Camp only in the sites provided.
- Do not feed wildlife or leave food or scraps around camp sites or day-use areas.
- Minimise your use of soaps and detergents as they can affect water quality.
- Do not place rubbish or contents of chemical toilet tanks in the toilets foreign material or chemicals will seriously disrupt the operation of the toilet system.
- Where toilets are not provided, use a trowel to bury human waste at least 15 cm deep and 100 m away from camp sites, tracks and watercourses.

## **Pets**

Dogs and other pets are not permitted in national parks. Domestic animals can harm native wildlife—fines apply.

## **Fishing**

Fishing regulations apply to all fishing and collecting in national and marine parks. Obtain information on restrictions from Fisheries Queensland website at <a href="www.fisheries.qld.gov.au">www.fisheries.qld.gov.au</a> or by phoning 13 25 23.

Freshwater fishing is possible in these locations:

- Mulgrave River, Goldsborough Valley, Wooroonooran National Park
- Tully River, Tully Gorge National Park.

Marine fishing is possible in these locations, depending upon marine park zoning restrictions:

- Russell River National Park
- Girramay National Park (Edmund Kennedy)
- Fitzroy Island, Frankland Islands,
   Barnard Island Group, Family Islands,
   Goold Island and Hinchinbrook Island national parks.

The Great Barrier Reef and the Great Barrier Reef Coast marine parks protect coastal and tidal waters of the wet tropical coast. Obtain zoning maps for information on fishing and other permitted activities from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority website at <a href="https://www.gbrmpa.gov.au">www.gbrmpa.gov.au</a> or by phoning (07) 4750 0700 before entering or conducting any activities in the marine parks.



# Be crocwise in croc country

## Staying safe is simple—be crocwise in croc country

Crocodiles are native to Australia and play a valuable role in keeping our waterways healthy—but they are also dangerous animals.

Crocodiles will hunt anything they can overpower. They are highly observant ambush predators, relying on stealth, surprise and speed to catch their prey. They hunt during the day and night and often target prey that use the same spot regularly.

### Don't be ambushed

Stay out of the water and away from the water's edge.

Most crocodile attacks occur when people are swimming, wading or lingering near the water's edge.
Crocodiles can approach unseen even in shallow water. They lunge from the water and seize prey with lightning speed—victims seldom see them coming.

Crocodiles can be attracted by fishing activities. Never stand in or near the water when fishing or cleaning fish. If you must go to the water's edge or enter the water (for example, to launch a boat) work quickly while keeping a good lookout. Avoid returning to the same spot regularly.

## Watch children closely

Children may find it difficult to understand and reliably follow crocodile safety advice. They can be easily distracted and may forget the potential danger. Adults need to stay close to children and make sure they are always crocwise.

## Camp as far from the water as possible

Crocodiles have entered camp sites at night. Camping as far from the water as possible will make it difficult for a crocodile to visit your camp.

## Don't leave food scraps or fish waste around

Crocodiles have an excellent sense of smell and will come on land to scavenge. Bait, fish waste and meat scraps left around boat ramps and camp sites can attract crocodiles and endanger lives.

## Never approach, feed or harass crocodiles

People have been attacked feeding crocodiles or getting close for a better look or a photo. Stay well away from all crocodiles. It is illegal and very dangerous to feed or disturb crocodiles—even small ones.

Your safety is our concern but your responsibility.



## Be cass-o-wary

The wet tropics coast is cassowary habitat. The endangered southern cassowary is Australia's largest rainforest animal. Cassowaries are potentially dangerous. Avoid unnecessary risks and help protect cassowaries by following these guidelines in cassowary country.

- Never approach cassowaries.
- Never approach chicks—male cassowaries will defend them.
- Never feed cassowaries—it is illegal and dangerous, and has caused cassowary deaths.
- Always discard food scraps in closed bins.
- Always slow down when driving in cassowary territory.
- Never stop your vehicle to look at cassowaries on the road.

## **Hungry cassowaries?**

Cyclone Yasi destroyed large areas of cassowary habitat between Cardwell, Mission Beach and Innisfail. To supplement the cassowaries' diminished food source, and to draw the birds away from residential areas as they search for food, the NPRSR has established feeding stations throughout the rainforest. Visitors who encounter foraging cassowaries can best help the birds by not being tempted to feed them. Cassowaries that learn to expect food from humans can become aggressive and dangerous, and are attracted into residential areas where they are vulnerable to dog attacks and road accidents.



# Parks around Cardwell

Discover the extraordinary beauty of a coastal wetland—even after a cyclone—and enjoy a rainforest picnic by a scenic waterfall.

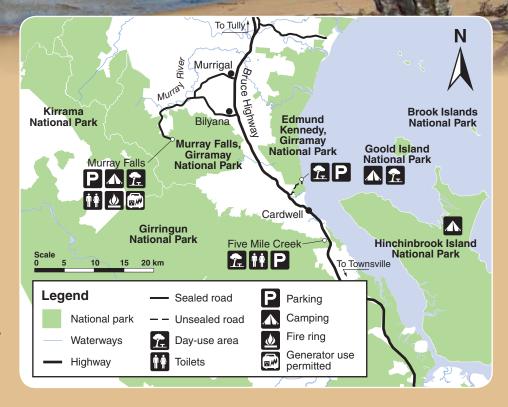
## **Girramay**National Park

The Murray River originates in the rainforest-clad mountains and meanders across the plain into coastal wetlands, linking the two main sections of this park.

This park is part of the traditional country of the Girramay Aboriginal people. They traditionally moved about this land according to seasonal availability of food, often travelling from the coast to the cooler high country to the west in the wet season. This country not only provided food and materials, it sustains their spirituality. The Girramay people today maintain their strong connection to country. For more information, visit <a href="https://www.girringun.com.au">www.girringun.com.au</a>.

## **Edmund Kennedy\***

Wet season rains flow from coastal ranges to flood this wetland. This once-tranquil setting of tannin-stained creeks threading through pandanus and melaleuca (paperbark) woodland, sedge swamps and mangroves was ravaged by Cyclone Yasi. Twisted and torn stands of paperbarks, with sprouts of green, lend an eerie beauty to this scenic coast.



## Wreck Creek beach walk

4 km (2 hr) return Grade: easy

At low tide, visitors can walk north from the car park near the beach front at Rockingham Bay, along the beach to the mouth of Wreck Creek. The beach is strewn with driftwood and flotsam from the paperbark and mangrove swamps.



## **Arthur Thorsborne arboretum**

Explore the diversity of rainforest plants.

\* Formerly Edmund Kennedy National Park.

Flotsam on the beach near Wreck Creek.

Coastal waters adjacent to the park are within the Great Barrier Reef and Great Barrier Reef Coast marine parks.

Zoning restrictions and fishing regulations apply (see page 4). Fishing from the beach is not recommended as estuarine crocodiles may be present.



Be crocwise in croc country (see page 4).



## **Safety**

You are responsible for your own safety (see page 19).

 Wear insect repellent and protective clothing, especially in summer.

Turn off the Bruce Highway, 4 km north of Cardwell, and drive 1 km along Clift Road to the park entrance. The unsealed access road continues for 3 km to the car park and beach. The road is suitable for conventional vehicles with caution although it can be slippery or flooded in the wet season. Leave caravans outside the park.



## Hinchinbrook Island **National Park**

One of Australia's largest island national parks, Hinchinbrook Island is uninhabited (except for a small resort at Cape Richards) and inaccessible by vehicles. Access to the island is by private boat or commercial operators from Cardwell and Dungeness (Lucinda). The world-renowned long distance wilderness walk, the Thorsborne Trail, extends for 32 km along the eastern side of the island. Numbers of trail walkers are limited and bookings are essential. For more information, obtain the Thorsborne Trail guide from a visitor information centre (see page 19) or from NPRSR (see page 20).

## **Goold Island and Brook Islands** national parks

Goold Island, a small granite island clad in eucalypt woodland and patches of rainforest, lies 17 km north-east of Cardwell. Camping and picnic areas are provided. The Brook Islands lie further offshore, 30 km north-east of Cardwell. These four densely-vegetated islands support significant breeding colonies of pied imperial-pigeons and terns. Access onto the Brook Islands is prohibited to extensive fringing reef offers excellent snorkelling. Goold Island National Park can be reached by private boat from Cardwell.

## **Murray Falls\***

Rising in the Cardwell Range, the Murray River cascades over huge slabs of water-sculpted granite at Murray Falls. Water gums, golden pendas and weeping bottlebrushes line the river banks.

Murray Falls camping area, a large open, grassy area with tall trees, has wheelchair-accessible toilets, cold showers, picnic tables and fire rings. Generators are permitted (see page 3). A barbecue and picnic tables are also provided in the dayuse area nearby.

**Camping permits** are required and fees apply. Obtain camping permits in advance (see page 3).



## River boardwalk

300 m (20 mins) return Grade: easy

Starting from the top end of the camping area, the boardwalk provides a safe way to view the falls. The first 75 m of the boardwalk is wheelchair accessible (with assistance).



## Yalgay Ginja Bulumi walk

1.8 km (1 hr) return Grade: moderate

From near the entrance to the camping area, this walk through open forest and rainforest leads to a lookout with views of the falls. Learn about the culture of the Girramay people from signs along the track.



## Safety

You are responsible for your own safety (see page 19).

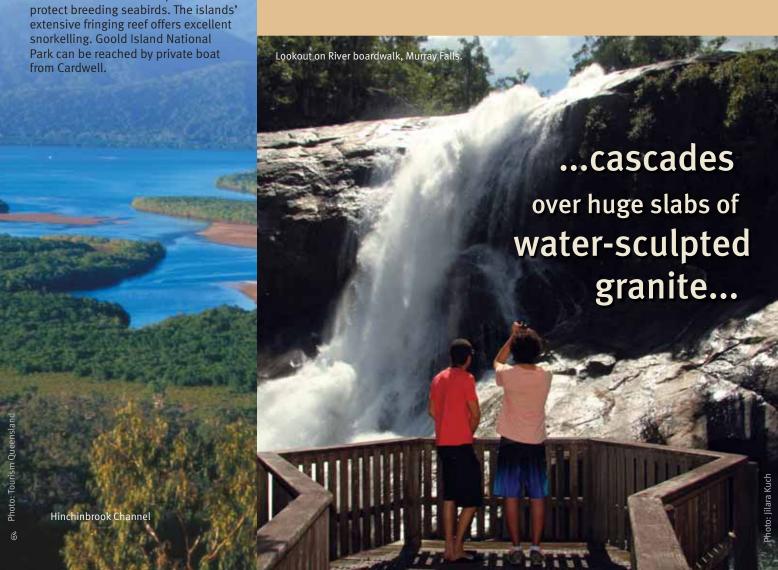
Stay on the track and boardwalk. Access to the falls beyond the river boardwalk is prohibited. Slippery rocks make it dangerous and serious injuries and deaths have occurred here.

Turn off the Bruce Highway, 21 km north of Cardwell at Bilyana, or 16 km south of Tully, and travel west for 20 km, following the signs to Murray Falls. From the park entrance, the last 2 km is unsealed but suitable for conventional vehicles, with caution.

### **Five Mile Creek**

This refreshing swimming hole and picnic area on Five Mile Creek is located 6.5 km south of Cardwell on the Bruce Highway. The sign-posted access road is partly unsealed but can be accessed by conventional vehicle. Toilets and barbecues are provided but camping or overnight stays are not permitted. Five Mile Creek lies within the traditional lands of the Girramay and Bandjin Aboriginal peoples and is part of the Cardwell Forest Reserve. Be aware of stinging fish (see page 19).

\* Formerly Murray Upper National Park.



# Parks around Mission Beach

Explore lush rainforest on a variety of walking tracks, on foot or by mountain bike, and perhaps glimpse a magnificent cassowary.

## **Djiru**National Park

Remnant lowland rainforest, including a rare fan palm forest, is home to endangered cassowaries.

This area is part of the traditional country of the Djiru Aboriginal people. They have a strong connection to their country—to places, animals and plants. They believe that everything is connected—people, environment and

culture. This lowland rainforest was an important hunting and foraging area for the Djiru people. For more information, visit <a href="www.girringun.com.au">www.girringun.com.au</a>.

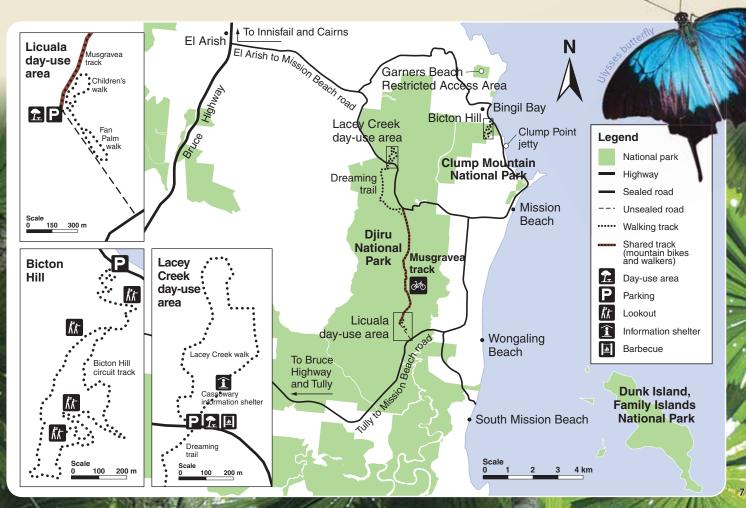
The forest of Licuala (fan) palms, with tall trunks and bright green splayed fronds, is one of the few remaining fan palm forests in the lowlands of North Queensland. Battered by Cyclone Yasi, many of the tall (emergent) tree species have been felled, and vines and epiphytes torn from trunks, but the resilient fan palms, although stripped of foliage, stand tall. In time, this forest will regain its shady canopy of fan-shaped fronds.

## Licuala

Nestled in rainforest, this day-use area has a car park and picnic shelter—tables are surrounded by a fence to prevent cassowaries from joining in. Never be tempted to feed cassowaries (see page 4). The Fan Palm and Musgravea tracks start here.

## **?** Lacey Creek

A pleasant rainforest clearing, this day-use area has a car park, wheelchair-accessible toilets, a barbecue, picnic areas and a cassowary information shelter. The Dreaming trail and Lacey Creek circuit track start here.





## (🏗 Fan Palm walk

1.3 km (20 mins) return Grade: easy

From the Licuala day-use area, this track, with sections of boardwalk, meanders through fan palm forest. The impacts of Cyclone Yasi-fallen trees and sawnoff trunks—are most evident here. Cassowaries sometimes appear from the surrounding forest and then melt away again. A shorter (400 m) loop trackthe Children's Discovery walk—follows 'cassowary footprints' to the 'nest'.



## Musgravea track

6 km (2.5 hrs) one way Grade: moderate

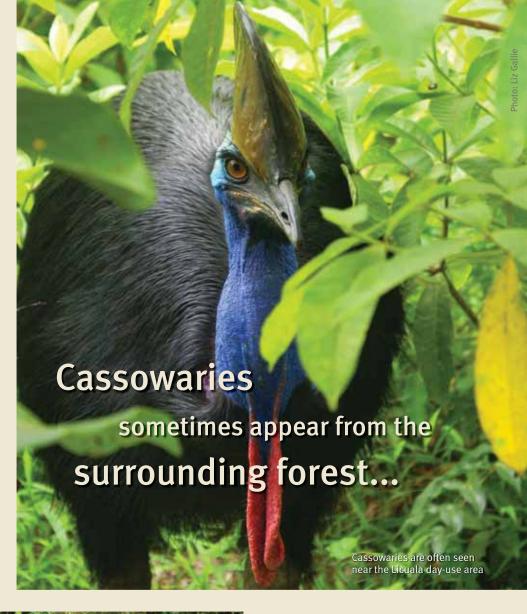
From the Licuala day-use area, this oneway track heads north, traversing through rainforest and exiting on the El Arish-Mission Beach road, 2 km east of the Lacey Creek day-use area (same exit as the Dreaming trail). The track is suitable for dry weather access and requires a medium level of fitness.

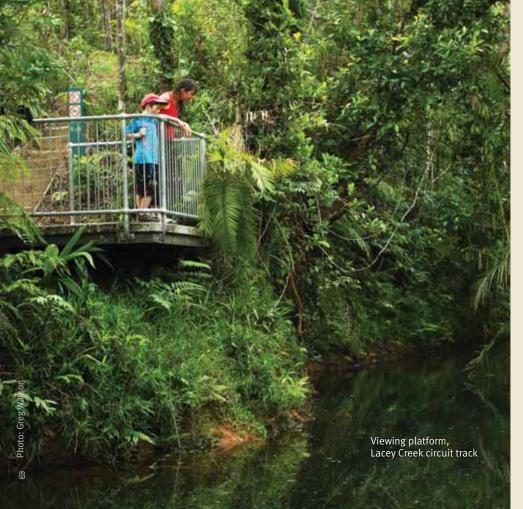


## Lacey Creek circuit track

1.5 km (45 mins) Grade: easy

From the Lacey Creek day-use area, this track loops through rainforest, and along and across Lacey Creek. Lookouts over the creek allow for fish and turtle spotting. It is best to start from the cassowary information shelter and walk in an anticlockwise direction.







## **Dreaming trail**

3.2 km (1.5 hrs) one way Grade: moderate

Starting across the road from the Lacey Creek day-use area, this trail climbs over quite steep terrain, meanders through rainforest, crosses several creeksone requires wading—and exits 2 km further east along the El Arish-Mission Beach road. This is the same exit as the Musgravea track.

The Musgravea track is also accessible to mountain-bike riders. This is a multi-use track so riders should exercise caution and give way to walkers.



## Be cass-o-wary

(see page 4).



## Safety

You are responsible for your own safety (see page 19).

From Mission Beach township, drive 8 km along the Tully-Mission Beach road to the turn-off to Licuala day-use area; or drive 7.5 km along the El Arish-Mission Beach road to Lacev Creek day-use area.

## Clump Mountain National Park

Bicton Hill was used as a lookout by the Djiru Aboriginal people and, later, as a ship lookout by the Cutten brothers, the area's first permanent European residents.

This park is part of the traditional country of the Djiru Aboriginal people. Clump Mountain overlooks Bingil Bay, a traditional camp site meaning 'a good camping ground with fresh water'. Traditionally the Djiru people seasonally hunted food from the sea and nearby islands using bark canoes and outriggers. For more information, visit <a href="https://www.girringun.com.au">www.girringun.com.au</a>.

The forest canopy on the exposed side of Bicton Hill is dominated by sturdy species such as swamp box and milky pines while Alexandra palms flourish on the sheltered side. Vulnerable Arenga palms and ancient cycads grow near the summit.



## **Bicton Hill circuit track**

3.9 km (2.5 hrs) return Grade: moderate

A steady climb around the hill slopes leads to the summit where a lookout offers spectacular mainland and island views. Cyclone Yasi destroyed the canopy in places and much of the track lacks shade.



## Safety

You are responsible for your own safety (see page 19)

 Be aware of stinging trees (see page 19).

From Mission Beach township, travel 4.6 km north along the Bingil Bay Road to the park entrance, 2 km past Clump Point jetty.

## Barnard Island Group National Park

Lying north of Mission Beach, these seven islands, with rainforested slopes, rocky headlands, sand spits and shallow reefs, are important seabird rookeries. To protect nesting seabirds, access to Stephens and Sisters islands is restricted from 1 September to 31 March each year. Located 5–10 km offshore from Kurrimine Beach, the islands can be reached by private boat or commercial operators (mainly sea kayak tours) from Mourilyan Harbour and Kurrimine Beach. The islands offer bird-watching, camping, snorkelling and fishing opportunities.



## Family Islands National Park

Dunk Island— the largest of the Family Islands—was made famous by the 'beachcomber', E. J. Banfield, who wrote about his life on this tropical island paradise.

This park is part of the traditional country of the Djiru Aboriginal people. They traditionally hunted and gathered food and resources from the islands and reefs.

Cloaked in dense rainforest with woodland on exposed slopes,
Dunk Island is dotted with sandy beaches and rocky headlands, and surrounded by fringing reefs. The Family Islands' forests are recovering from Cyclone Yasi.

From the Dunk Island Spit, stroll to Muggy Muggy Beach (3 km, 1 hr return) or hike the more strenuous Mount Kootaloo track to the 271 m summit for spectacular views (7 km, 3 hrs return).



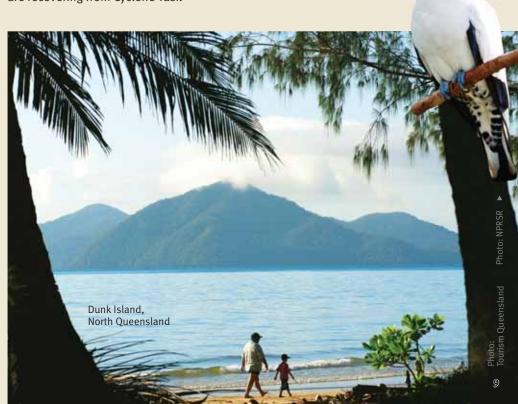
## Safety

You are responsible for your own safety (see page 19). The resort, camping and day-use facilities (including toilets) were damaged by Cyclone Yasi and remain closed. Day visitors must be self sufficient.

 Carry a first aid kit and emergency communication equipment (such as a mobile phone).

Located 4.5 km east of Mission Beach, Dunk Island can be reached by private boat and commercial operators from Mission Beach.

Pied imperial-pigeon



# The story of the wet tropics coast

## Landscape

## **Peaks and plains**

About 360 million years ago, sand, mud and gravel from the sea floor were squeezed up to form huge mountains of metamorphic rocks. Then between 310 and 260 million years ago, large pools of molten rock (magma) pushed up into the metamorphic rocks and cooled to form underground bodies of tough granitethe core of present-day coastal mountain ranges. Erosion over the ages stripped away the softer metamorphic rocks, leaving behind the granite intrusions as today's peaks—Bartle Frere, Bellenden Ker and Walshs Pyramid. The escarpment edge has shifted to the west and sediments have built up a coastal plain. Much more recent volcanic action added basalt to the mix, creating particularly fertile soils in the Palmerston area.

#### Rain and wind

Along the wet tropics coast, high mountains intercept moisture-laden winds from the ocean, and monsoon activity brings heavy downpours in summer, resulting in more rain here than any other part of Australia.

Cyclones are a natural part of the wet tropics landscape. In 2006, Cyclone Larry crossed the coast near Innisfail and in 2011, Cyclone Yasi hit near Mission Beach. All plant communities in the path of these cyclones were greatly damaged; however tropical plants regenerate quickly and many animal species can adapt to cyclone disturbances. Evidence of cyclone damage and recovery will be evident for years to come.







## **Changing** times

#### European exploration



The first European land explorers in the area were Edmund Kennedy and his party. In 1848, they landed on the coast and travelled through what is now the Edmund Kennedy section of Girramay National Park at the start of their ill-fated exploration of Cape York Peninsula.

#### Early settlement



The town of Cardwell (initially called Rockingham) was established in 1864; at the same time pastoralists were moving north along inland routes to settle behind the coastal ranges. The Telegraph Office was built in 1870 as part of the expansion of the telegraph line from Bowen to the Gulf of Carpentaria.

#### Gold and tin



The discovery of gold in the 1870s brought a rush of miners to the area. Alluvial gold was worked along the Mulgrave, Russell and North Johnstone river catchments. Reef mining was also attempted in the 1880s at Goldsborough and 1890s at Jordan Creek in the Palmerston. Tin was found on the tablelands (Herberton) in the late 1870s; tin miners scaled Bartle Frere to work claims near the summit in the 1890s.



From the 1870s, timber getters began harvesting valuable red cedar along coastal river mouths, and, in the late 1800s, followed miners onto the tablelands. After the accessible red cedar was cut out, they sought a wide range of other species.

### Rich soils



By the 1880s, the most fertile land in the area was being cleared and planted with sugar, coffee, tea, bananas and other fruits; or grazed by dairy cattle. Most of the flat land on the coastal plain, and accessible slopes of the ranges, lost their rainforest.

The Tully area was first settled during the 1870s by sugar cane and cattle farmers but the town of Tully did not develop until the sugar mill was established in 1925. The first Europeans settled at Mission Beach in 1882. The Cutten brothers, using Aboriginal labour, cleared the forest near Bingil Bay and farmed fruit, sugar, coffee, tea and tobacco. The lower Johnstone area (near Innisfail) was cleared around the 1880s but settlement of the more inaccessible Palmerston area took place in the early-mid 1900s.

#### **Transport**

Finding a way up the steep ranges between the coast and the tableland to transport gold, tin and timber posed a challenge for early settlers. In 1882, explorer Christie Palmerston, with Aboriginal guides, marked the route from Innisfail to the tin mining town of Herberton, followed part of the way by the Palmerston Highway today. Robson's Track, the approximate route of today's Gillies Highway, was first used by pack teams in 1880 for transporting tin from the tableland to the coast.

## An Aboriginal place

The wet tropics is a cultural living landscape imbued with deeply significant spiritual meaning, useful plant and animal resources, languages, traditional ecological knowledge, cultural sites and human history. For rainforest Aboriginal people, nature and culture are interwoven. All aspects of their lives—social, cultural, economic and spiritual—are intricately entwined with plants, animals and the environment.

Rainforest Aboriginal people have an intimate knowledge of their environment and the country's food patterns. Traditionally, they moved throughout their country to take advantage of seasonally-abundant foods; and were skilled in making tools, clothes, blankets and shelters from natural materials. They know how to treat toxic rainforest seeds to make them edible, and how to use the medicinal qualities of numerous plant species.

While development—such as mining, logging and farming of the wet tropics coast impacted on the traditional way of life of rainforest Aboriginal people, it did not interfere with their strong and enduring connection to country. Today, rainforest Aboriginal people remain active in caring for their country, including assisting with management of parks and forests, and keeping culture strong.

## **Biocultural diversity**

High natural biodiversity is linked with the high cultural diversity of rainforest Aboriginal peoples—the variety of languages, material culture, seasonal calendars, harvesting techniques, and economic, social and belief systems found throughout the wet tropics.

## World heritage

The wet tropics coast is at the heart of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Awarded world heritage status in 1988 for its breathtaking beauty, overwhelming biodiversity and ancient forests, the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area is recognised as one of the last sanctuaries for some of the world's most threatened species-making it a unique and priceless living-window into our evolutionary past.

#### **Plants**

Forests thrive in this wet tropical climate. A diversity of forest types, including rainforests, open woodlands and mangrove forests grow in the wet tropics. About 3000 different species of plants are found here. Representatives of many of the world's primitive flowering plant families live here, as well as many other primitive plant species, including palms and cycads, that are found nowhere else.

#### Animals

Wet tropical forests are home to many different animals, including over 80 endemic species of vertebrates—mammals, birds, frogs and reptiles—that are found nowhere else in the world.

Most mammals are active only at night and therefore usually difficult to see. During the day, musky rat-kangaroos forage on the forest floor and agile wallabies graze in open areas in the late afternoon.

Spectacular insects, such as brightly coloured butterflies, and a diversity of beetles, and other invertebrates, thrive in rainforests. Many kinds of frogs and nearly half of Australia's birds (more than 370 different species) also live here.

While some reptiles, such as the estuarine crocodile and coastal taipan are well-known, others—such as some species of skinks and lizards—are less conspicuous and confined to small areas of cool upland rainforest.

To discover more about the amazing and timeless Wet Tropics World Heritage Area visit <www.wettropics.gov.au>.











andle plant fruits



## **Parks** around

Discover the mighty Tully River, world-renowned for white-water rafting.

## **Tully Gorge National Park**

The Tully River originates high in the Cardwell Range then plunges into the narrow, densely forested Tully Gorge.

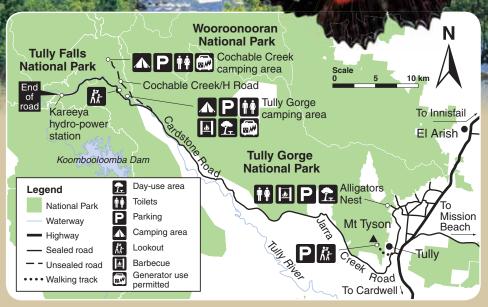
Parts of this park lie within the traditional country of both the Jirrbal and Gulnay Aboriginal people. They have a strong and enduring connection to their land, which involves responsibilities for caring for the country and its resources. Traditionally, they moved about their land, according to the seasonal availability of food, usually moving to cooler higher country during the set season. For more information, visit www.girringun.com.au>.

In the Tully Gorge, one of the wettest parts of the wet tropics, rivers and creeks rush down the range slopes carrying the water back to the sea. Tropical rainforests flourish in a narrow band running along the coast.

Tully Gorge camping area, an open, grassy camping area beside the boulder-strewn Tully River, has wheelchairaccessible toilets, showers, barbecues, picnic shelter and sites suitable for tents and caravans. Generators are permitted (see page 3). The adjacent day-use area has a large changing shed for rafters and access to toilets, picnic shelters and barbecues.

Cochable Creek camping area, on the unsealed Cochable Creek/H Road, has picnic tables and a toilet, and is part of the Misty Mountains walking track network. Generators are permitted (see page 3). For more information, obtain the Misty Mountains brochure from a visitor information centre (see page 19) or from NPRSR (see page 20).

**Camping permits** are required and fees apply. Obtain camping permits in advance (see page 3). For Tully Gorge, camping permits can also be obtained from the selfregistration shelter on site.





## Be crocwise in croc country (see page 4).

Crocodiles are present in the Tully River—do not swim in the Tully River near the camping and day-use areas.



## ( Butterfly walk

375 m (20 mins) return Grade: easy

From Tully Gorge camping area, a short wheelchair-accessible (with assistance) walk leads through rainforest noted for butterflies, which are best seen between September and February.



## Mount Tyson walking track

6 km return (4-6 hrs) Grade: difficult

From the western edge of the Tully township, this very steep and challenging track leads to the 678 m summit of Mount Tyson. The lookout offers views of the Tully township, coastline and Hinchinbrook Island.



## Alligators Nest

Named not for the reptile but a local scout group known as the 'The Alligators', this sandy-floored swimming hole and rainforest-fringed picnic area is located 6 km north of Tully. Facilities include a toilet, picnic table, gas barbecue and swimming platform to access the water.



Fishing is permitted in the Tully River. Fishing regulations apply (see page 4).



## Safety

You are responsible for your own safety (see page 19).

 Be careful near the river's edge the Tully River is used to generate hydro-electricity and water is regularly released from Koombooloomba Dam, upstream, so river levels can change at any time without notice.

For Tully Gorge, turn off the Bruce Highway onto Dean Road, 1.4 km south of Tully. Drive 35 km west-the road becomes Jarra Creek Road then Cardstone Road—to the park entrance. Drive a further 7 km to the camping and day-use areas. Cardstone Road ends at the Kareeya hydropower station, 10 km further along from the camping area. The roads are sealed and accessible by conventional vehicles. There is no road access from here to the Tully Falls Road and Tully Gorge lookout—these sites are accessible from Ravenshoe on the tableland.

For Alligators Nest, turn off the Bruce Highway at Tully onto Butler Street then turn right onto Richardson Street. At the end, turn right onto Murray Street and drive for 5.5 km as it becomes Bulgan Street. At the T-intersection, turn left into Lizzio Road and drive 800 m to the car park.

For Mount Tyson, turn off the Bruce Highway at Tully onto Butler Street and continue along as it becomes Watkins Street. At the T-intersection, turn left onto Branagan Street and continue to the car park at the end of the road.

# Parks around Innisfail

Experience spectacular mountain, gorge and waterfall scenery, and enjoy rainforest walks, picnics and camping.

## **Wooroonooran**National Park

The densely forested foothills, slopes and cloud-swathed peaks of this mountainous park, including Queensland's highest peak, Bartle Frere, shadow the coast from Innisfail to south of Cairns.

## Palmerston (Doongan)

This area is part of the traditional country of the Mamu Aboriginal people. Their country extends from the coast to the rainforested tablelands. Detailed knowledge of the rainforest environment—seasons, plants and animals, and strategies for using resources—has been passed down through many generations. Mamu people have pride in their enduring culture and heritage, and recognise the deep and continuing interrelationships between land, sea, spirituality, community and environment. For more information, visit <a href="https://www.mamu.org.au">www.mamu.org.au</a>.

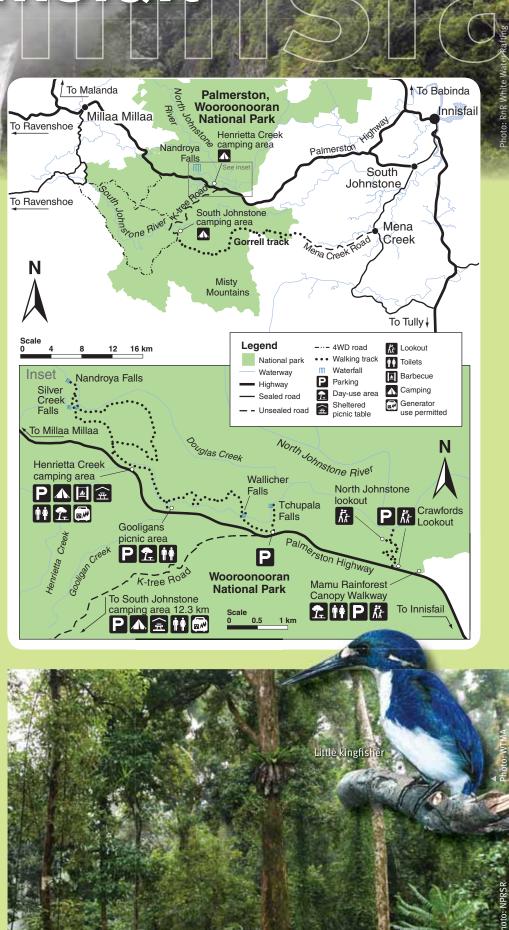
Renowned for beautiful rainforest, wild rivers, steep gorges and cascading waterfalls, this is a place of very high biodiversity, due to its high rainfall and fertile soils derived from basalt rocks.

Henrietta Creek camping area, an open grassy area surrounded by rainforest, has wheelchair-accessible toilets, barbecues and picnic shelters. Generators are permitted (see page 3).

South Johnstone camping area, a shaded grassy area near the river, a short distance from the car park, has hybrid toilets and picnic shelters. Generators are permitted (see page 3).

**Camping permits** are required and fees apply (see page 3). Obtain camping permits in advance or from the self-registration shelter on site.

Lush Palmerston rainforest





#### North Johnstone lookout track

4 km (1.5–2 hrs) return Grade: difficult

From Crawford's Lookout, a steep, winding track drops 500 m in 1.5 km to a lookout that is about 150 m from the main track. An open grassy area here overlooks the North Johnstone River and Douglas Creek. The track then drops a further 500 m in height down to the river.



#### **Tchupala and Wallicher falls**

1.2 km (40 mins) return; 2 km (60 mins) return Grade: easy

This track starts from a car park on the Palmerston Highway, 2 km west from Crawfords Lookout. The right branch of the track leads to Tchupala Falls (400 m) and the left branch leads to Wallicher Falls (800 m). From Wallicher Falls, visitors can continue onto Gooligans picnic area (2 km), crossing the creek via a bridged walkway; and onto Henrietta Creek camping area (another 800 m), which involves wading across the creek.



### Nandroya Falls circuit track

4.6 km return or 6 km circuit (3–4 hrs) Grade: moderate

From the western side of Henrietta Creek camping area, the walking track crosses a footbridge and branches. The left branch leads directly to Nandroya Falls (1.7 km), passing the 10 m high Silver Creek Falls on the way. The right branch is a longer route to the falls (3.5 km). At Nandroya Falls, Douglas Creek drops in a narrow, uninterrupted, 50 m fall from a basalt parapet.



Nandroya Falls



#### **Crawfords Lookout**

On the Palmerston Highway, 1 km west of the Mamu Rainforest Canopy Walkway, this lookout provides breathtaking views over the North Johnstone River gorge. It has been a popular tourist stop since the late 1900s.



### Gooligans

A flat rocky area, where Gooligan Creek flows into Henrietta Creek, has picnic tables and a toilet. It is located on the Palmerston Highway, 4 km west from Crawfords Lookout.



## Be cass-o-wary

(see page 4).



## Safety

You are responsible for your own safety (see page 19).

 Do not attempt to cross strong flowing creeks and streams flooding can occur during and after heavy or prolonged periods of rain.

Turn off the Bruce Highway, 5 km north of Innisfail, on to the Palmerston Highway and travel 28 km to Crawfords Lookout and a further 5 km to Henrietta Creek camping area



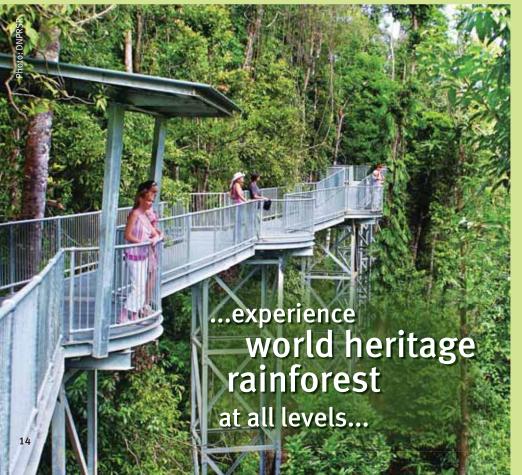
walking tracks

Part of Wooroonooran National Park, south of the Palmerston Highway, is included in the Misty Mountains, a 130 km network of short and long-distance walking tracks and camping areas. For more information, obtain the Misty Mountains brochure from a visitor information centre (see page 19) or from NPRSR (see page 20).

## Mamu Rainforest Canopy Walkway

A major tourism attraction, this elevated canopy walkway and observation tower offer sweeping views of the North Johnstone River gorge and rainforest-clad Bellenden Ker Range. Designed for minimal environmental impact, the wheelchair-accessible walkway allows visitors to experience world heritage rainforest at all levels—from the ground to high in and above the canopy. **Entry fees apply**. For more information, obtain a Mamu walkway brochure from a visitor information centre (see page 19) or from NPRSR (see page 20).





Enjoy rainforest walks and picnics near picturesque waterfalls and explore scenic wetlands, and camp on a secluded part of the wet tropics coast.

## Wooroonooran **National Park**

## **Josephine Falls**

This area is part of the traditional country of the Noongyanbudda Ngadion Aboriginal people, Their traditional life 'revolved around the forests, the animals and the seasons'. They camped beside the upper Russell River and used the rich resources of river and rainforest in the foothills of Bartle Frere. Today the Ngadjon people have legal recognition as native title holders of the area (including Josephine Falls and Bartle Frere) and are represented by the Choorechillum (Ngadjon Jii PBC) Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC.

Josephine Creek starts as a trickle high on the south-east side of Bartle Frere. By the time it reaches the granite boulders of Josephine Falls, the trickle has become a substantial creek, which, at times, turns into a raging torrent, before flowing into the Russell River.

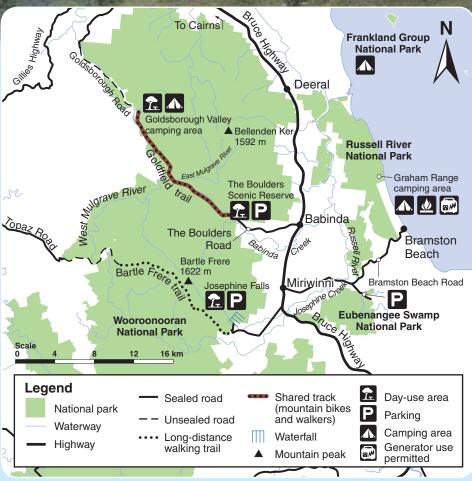
Facilities at the day-use area include wheelchair-accessible toilets, drinking water, barbecues and picnic shelters.



#### Josephine Falls track

1.2 km return (30 mins) Grade: easy

From the car park, a track leads through lush rainforest to three viewing platforms overlooking Josephine Creek and Falls. The viewing platform overlooking the top pool is wheelchair-accessible (with assistance). At the top pool viewing platform, visitors must stay behind the barrier at all times and not venture beyond the platform. Access down into the top pool and surrounding area is strictly prohibited and penalties apply.

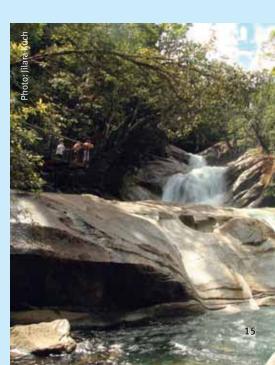


## Safety

You are responsible for your own safety (see page 19).

 Josephine Falls is potentially dangerous. People have been injured and killed here. During and after periods of high rainfall, flash floods—with sudden increases in water levels—can occur without warning. Do not swim during or after high rainfall, or if high rainfall is forecast, because conditions quickly become dangerous.

Turn off the Bruce Highway, 21 km north of Innisfail (8 km south of Babinda), and follow the sealed signposted road for 8 km to the car park.



### **Bartle Frere trail**

A difficult, 15 km walking trail extends from Josephine Falls to the Atherton Tableland, ascending the summit of Bartle Frere, Queensland's highest peak, along the way. This arduous climb should only be undertaken by fit, well-prepared walkers. Bush camp sites are provided along the trail but must be booked in advance. For more information, obtain the Bartle Frere trail brochure from a visitor information centre (see page 19) or from NPRSR (see page 20).

### The Goldfield trail

From the Goldsbrough Valley camping area, the historic 19 km Goldfield trail leads to the Babinda Boulders Scenic Reserve, climbing a low saddle between Bartle Frere and Bellenden Ker and crossing several creeks along the way. A bush camp site is situated half way along the trail. For more information. obtain detailed track notes and a map from <www.nprsr.qld.gov.au>.

## **Babinda Boulders Scenic Reserve**

Administered by the Cairns Regional Council, this picturesque picnic and swimming spot is situated in the shadow of the Bellenden Ker Range. From Babinda, drive 7 km west along the sealed Boulders Road to the car park, picnic area and camping area. Obtain more information from a visitor information centre (see page 19).

## **Eubenangee Swamp National Park**

This scenic wetland is a significant habitat for waterbirds. The park protects some of the last remnants of lowland vegetation—much of the park is paperbark swamp with some rainforest and grassland. Crocodiles can also be seen here.

## ( Swamp walk

1.5 km return (30 mins) Grade: easy

The track follows the rainforest-clad banks of the Alice River then climbs to the top of a grassy hill with views over the swamp and its many waterbirds. Bartle Frere to the west provides a stunning backdrop to this tranquil setting.



Be crocwise in croc country (see page 4).



## Safety

You are responsible for your own safety (see page 19).

Wear insect repellent and protective clothing, especially in summer.

At Mirriwinni (23 km north of Innisfail and 6 km south of Babinda) turn off the Bruce Highway onto Bramston Beach Road and drive 1 km east. Turn right into Cartwright Road and continue for 8 km to the park entrance. These roads are all sealed and accessible by conventional vehicles.

## **Russell River National Park**

This park protects lowland rainforest, paperbark swamps and mangroves, near the estuary of the Russell and Mulgrave rivers. The only accessible part of this park is an unspoilt strip of coast near Bramston Beach.

Graham Range camping area offers secluded bush camp sites next to the beach, surrounded by paperbark and mangrove forests. There are no facilities. Generators are permitted (see page 3).

**Camping permits** are required and fees apply. Obtain camping permits from the selfregistration shelter on site (see page 3).

Fishing is permitted in the Russell River, its tributaries and along the coast in the park. Marine park zoning restrictions and fishing regulations apply (see page 4).



Be crocwise in croc country (see page 4).



## Safety

You are responsible for your own safety (see page 19).

Wear insect repellent and protective clothing, especially in summer.

At Mirriwinni (23 km north of Innisfail and 6 km south of Babinda) turn off the Bruce Highway onto Bramston Beach Road and travel 17 km. Turn left into Sassafras Street and travel along the unsealed road for 5.5 km to the park entrance. Suitable for four-wheel-drive vehicles only, this road continues for 1.4 km alongside the beach to the mouth of Bluemetal Creek. Camp sites are located along this road.



## **Frankland Group National Park**

This group of five high islands, featuring beaches, fringing reefs, dense rainforest and mangroves, lies about 10 km east of the coast at Russel Heads. Bush camping is available on High and Russell islands. The islands can be reached by commercial operator or private boat from Deeral Landing, 16 km north of Babinda, along the Bruce Highway.



## Wooroonooran National Park

The northern part of this large mountainous park features a distinctive landmark and a scenic river valley nestled below one of the state's highest peaks, Bellenden Ker.



## **Walshs Pyramid**

Standing 922 m above sea level, Walshs Pyramid is an independent peak with a distinct pyramid appearance.



This shared area has special significance for the Yidinji clans.

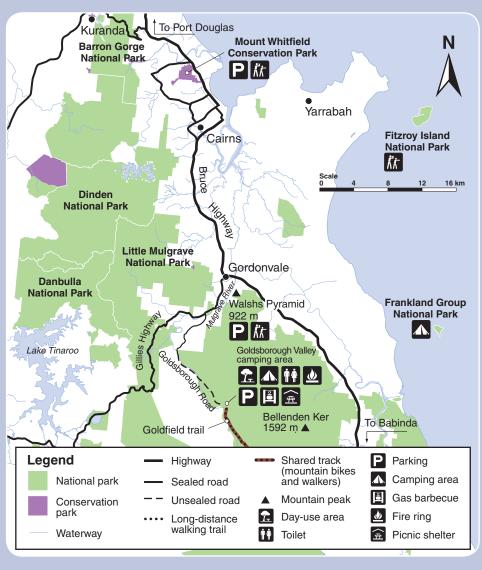
Older, metamorphic rocks above a granite core have been eroded to leave the more resistant granite standing in the form of a pointed hill that is a well-known landmark in the area.



## **Pyramid track**

6 km (5–6 hrs) return Grade: difficult

The steep rocky track passes through eucalypt woodland with little shade on the lower slopes. Towards the summit, trees are more stunted and shrubs dominate, along with grasses and rock ferns. Stupendous views from the summit encompass the coastal lowlands and surrounding ranges.



### **Safety**

You are responsible for your own safety (see page 19).

- Start the walk early to ensure returning before dark.
- Take care to stay on the trail, particularly when descending.
- Mobile phone reception is unreliable.

Travel 36 km north from Babinda (or 24 km south of Cairns) along the Bruce Highway towards Gordonvale. Just 800 m south of the Mulgrave River Bridge, turn (towards the Pyramid) onto an unmarked gravel road bordering a cane field. Follow the signs for 200 m to the small car park. Access is suitable for conventional vehicles. Drive with caution, especially during cane harvesting season.

Nestled below the rugged Bellenden Ker Range, Goldsborough Valley protects lowland rainforest along the scenic Mulgrave River.

This area is part of the traditional country of the Dulabed and Malanbarra Yidinji Aboriginal peoples. They know this area as Malanbarra, which refers to the flat rocks in the upper reaches of the Mulgrave River. Traditionally, they 'went by the season', moving camp to 'go where the food was'. In the wet season, they camped at the top of Kearneys Falls or on the tablelands to collect rainforest foods. The dry season camp was on the river bank to take advantage of the river's rich food resources. Today the Dulabed and Malanbarra Yidinji peoples have legal recognition as native title holders of the area and are represented by the Dulabed Malanbarra Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC.

Open eucalypt forest grows in the lower valley, in the rain shadow of the Bellenden Ker Range, while lusher lowland rainforest grows in the upper valley. The clear flowing water and deep pools of the Mulgrave River support a healthy freshwater ecosystem.

Goldsborough Valley camping area, an expansive grassy area surrounded by rainforest, is located next to the Mulgrave River. Facilities include toilets, barbecues, fire rings and picnic shelters. The adjacent large shady day-use area has picnic tables, barbecues, wheelchair-accessible toilets and tap water.

**Camping permits** are required and fees apply. Obtain camping permits in advance or from the self-registration shelter on site (see page 3).



#### Wajil walk

1.7 km (1–1.5 hrs) return Grade: easy

From the camping area, this walk passes through the rainforest to Kearneys Falls (Wajil). For your safety, access to the falls, including the rock pools at the bottom of the falls, is prohibited.

Fishing is permitted in the Mulgrave River. Fishing regulations apply (see page 4).

Swimming holes along the Mulgrave River can be accessed from the camping and day-use areas. The water is often fast flowing and the river banks and rocks can be slippery. Do not enter the water during periods of high rainfall, or if high rainfall is forecast, because water levels can rise very quickly and unexpectedly.



Canoeing conditions are ideal after the end of the wet season (April and May) when water levels are high enough for easy passage. During the wet season, the water may be flowing too fast, water levels can increase rapidly and trees can become a threat to canoeists. Commercial operators offer canoeing and rafting trips on the river.

Leisurely cycling is permitted on an 8 km stretch of the Goldfield Trail from Goldsborough Valley to the causeway over the East Mulgrave River; cyclists must not travel beyond the causeway. This trail is closed to all motorised vehicles and horses. Group sizes must be no larger than 10 people.



#### Safety

You are responsible for your own safety (see page 19).

- Wear insect repellent and protective clothing, especially in summer.
- Be aware of stinging trees and stinging fish (see page 19).
- Mobile phone reception is unreliable.

At Gordonvale (36 km north of Babinda or 24 km south of Cairns), turn onto the Gillies Highway and drive 6 km to the Goldsborough Valley turnoff on the left. Cross Peetes Bridge and follow the meandering road for 16 km, through farms and cane fields, to the Goldsborough Valley camping area. The last 5 km is unsealed, narrow and winding but suitable for conventional vehicles, with caution. Please drive slowly and watch for wildlife and oncoming traffic.

## Green Island and Fitzroy Island national parks

Green Island is a small scenic coral cay, 27 km east of Cairns that offers swimming, snorkelling and short walks. Fitzroy Island, a high island 29 km south-east of Cairns, offers a range of easy to moderate bushwalks, as well as swimming and snorkelling. Both islands have resorts and can be reached by tourist operators from Cairns.

## Mount Whitfield Conservation Park

The rainforested slopes of the Whitfield Range protected within this park are surrounded by suburban Cairns. Popular walking tracks climb through rainforest and open forest to the top of Mount Lumley Hill, offering scenic views of the Cairns coastline. This park can be accessed from the car park next to the Flecker Botanical Gardens on Collins Avenue, 5 km north along the Captain Cook Highway from Cairns city centre.



## **Useful contacts**

## **Emergencies**

In case of an emergency, dial Triple Zero (000), or 112 from a mobile phone. For non-urgent incidents, contact Policelink on 13 14 44.

#### **Road conditions**

During the wet season (December to April) heavy rain and strong winds may cause flooding and fallen trees, blocking some roads for short periods. For the latest information on road conditions, go to the Department of Transport and Main Roads (www.131940.qld.gov.au) or phone 13 19 40.

Parks of the wet tropics coast offer many different walks.

### Weather

Obtain up-to-date information on weather conditions with the Bureau of Meteorology on <a href="www.bom.gov.au">www.bom.gov.au</a> or by phoning (07) 4035 9777.

#### Park alerts

'Park alerts' provide the latest information on access, closures and conditions on all national parks. Go to <a href="www.nprsr.qld.gov">www.nprsr.qld.gov</a>. au> or phone 13 QGOV (13 74 68).

#### **Visitor information**

Accredited visitor information centres (displaying this symbol (displaying to symbol)) are located in several towns along the wet tropics coast. They provide information, brochures and advice about national parks as well as tourist accommodation and commercial tourism operators. For centre locations, go to symbol (www.queenslandholidays.com.au).

## Safety on parks

- Keep to the walking tracks, stay clear of cliffs and take care on uneven slippery track surfaces, especially when wet.
- Wear sunscreen, a hat, protective clothing and sturdy footwear and always carry water.
- Never dive or jump into the water. It may be shallower than it looks and there could be hidden, submerged objects.
- Stinging fish called bullrouts live in some rivers and creeks. Wear sandshoes or similar footwear when wading or swimming.
- Beware of stinging trees. The heartshaped leaves, stems and red fruits of these shrubby plants are covered with tiny silica hairs which inject toxins. The very painful sting can persist for months. If stung, and symptoms are severe, seek medical advice.
- Dangerous stinging jellyfish ('stingers')
  may be present in the coastal waters at
  any time, but occur more frequently in the
  warmer months. A full-body lycra suit, or
  equivalent, may provide a good measure
  of protection against stinging jellyfish
  and sunburn.

## Caring for parks

Please assist the Traditional Owners and rangers in preserving the natural and cultural values.

- All plants and animals are protected.
- Do not remove plant material, living or dead.
- Domestic animals are not permitted in protected areas.
- Avoid the spread of weeds—check clothing and shoes regularly for seeds; remove seeds and soil from camping and bedding equipment and wrap before placing in a rubbish bin.
- Take your rubbish with you when you leave.



# Visitor facilities and opportunities

Park	Page no.	Camping	Toilets	Day-use area	Wheelchair access	Lookout/ platform	Walks— short	Walks— long	Swimming	Fishing
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Barnard Island Group NP	9	✓							✓	*
Bartle Frere trail, Wooroonooran NP	16	✓				✓		✓		
Brook Islands NP	6	No access to islands	No access to islands	No access to islands	No access to islands	No access to islands	No access to islands	No access to islands	✓	
Clump Mountain NP	9					✓		✓		
Djiru NP	7,8		✓	✓			✓	✓		
Edmund Kennedy, Girramay NP	5		✓	✓			✓			*
Eubenangee Swamp NP	16						✓			
Family Islands NP	9	Wheeler and Coombe islands only				✓	✓	✓	<b>√</b>	*
Fitzroy Island NP	18	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	*
Five Mile Creek, Cardwell Forest Reserve 2	6		✓	✓					✓	
Frankland Group NP	16	✓	✓				✓		✓	*
Goldfield trail, Wooroonooran NP	16	✓						✓		
Goldsborough Valley, Wooroonooran NP	18	✓	✓	✓	Toilet	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Goold Island NP	6	✓	✓	✓					✓	*
Green Island NP	18		✓	✓	Toilet, boardwalks		✓		✓	
Hinchinbrook Island NP	6	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		*
Josephine Falls, Wooroonooran NP	15		✓	✓	Toilet, boardwalk	✓	✓	✓		
Mamu rainforest canopy walkway	14		✓	✓	Toilet, walkways	✓	✓			
Mount Whitfield CP	18			✓		✓	✓	✓		
Murray Falls, Girramay NP	6	✓	✓	✓	Toilet, boardwalks	✓	✓			
Palmerston, Wooroonooran NP	13, 14	✓	✓	✓	Toilet	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Russell River NP	16	✓								*
Tully Gorge NP	12	✓	✓	✓	Toilet, walking track	✓	✓	✓	Alligators Nest only	✓
Walshs Pyramid, Wooroonooran NP	17					✓		✓		

<sup>\*</sup> Check marine park zoning

# For further information

National parks are managed by the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing. For further information about all national parks, visit <www.nprsr.qld.gov.au> or phone 13 QGOV (13 74 68).

Front cover: Bingle Bay, North Queensland. Photo: Tourism Queensland.

Front cover inset: Tchupala Falls. Photo: WTMA.

Back cover: Rafters on the Tully River. Photo: Greg Watson.

Information provided in this guide is accurate at the time of printing. April 2012.

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