

# Cairns

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**Cairns** is a city in the Cairns Region, Queensland, Australia. It is on the east coast of Far North Queensland. The city is the 5th-most-populous in Queensland and ranks 14th overall in Australia.





Cairns was named for Sir William Wellington Cairns, and officially founded in 1876, following the discovery of gold in the surrounding area. However, Captain James Cook had 'discovered' the area more than a century earlier, on his first voyage of discovery in 1770 aboard HM Bark Endeavour.







## Geography

Cairns is located on the east coast of Cape York Peninsula on a coastal strip between the Coral Sea and the Great Dividing Range. The northern part of the city is located on Trinity Bay and the city centre is located on Trinity Inlet. To the south of the Trinity Inlet lies the Aboriginal community of Yarrabah. Some of the city's suburbs are located on flood plains. The Mulgrave River and Barron River flow within the greater Cairns area but not through the CBD. The city's centre foreshore is located on a mud flat.

## History

Prior to the settlement of Cairns, the Indigenous population had existed in Australia for at least 40,000 years. The Yirrganydji speaking group of people were thought to have dominated (peacefully) the western region of Cairns and Port Douglas region, while groups that spoke the Gimuy Yidinji dialect were thought to have lived along the eastern side and the head of Trinity Inlet. The Indigenous owners of Cairns had no trouble whatsoever surviving, with the abundance of fish, flora and fauna within this lush region.

Contrastingly, this wild and uncharted area almost turned the white settlers off returning for good, following Captain Cook's 1770 exploration of the region on HM Bark Endeavour; which unfortunately, ran aground on the reefs. Consequently, not only was the Endeavour River named after this event, but so were Weary Bay, Hope Island and Cape Tribulation





More than a century later, gold was discovered at Palmer River, prompting a rush to the region by fortune hunters who endured the difficult conditions, regardless of the discomfort caused. The large number of gold prospectors led to the development of a port at Trinity Bay, and residential settlements being built on the flat areas surrounding it. The site of Cairns at that time was primarily swamp land; however, after a railway linked the future city to the south and the Atherton Tablelands, the area's rich agricultural viability caused another rush of pioneering fruit, sugar cane and dairy farmers.



The town grew slowly until the area made a name for itself as a holiday destination following World War II. Steady growth in population and tourism has continued up to this day and Cairns now receives millions of national and international visitors each year!







## Demography

- The estimated residential population of the Cairns region was **165,525 persons as at 30 June 2018**. The region has experienced an average annual growth rate of 1.9% over the last 10 years.
- According to the most recent census, most people residing in Cairns are from Australia, England, Japan, New Zealand, India, and Korea, with the top five languages spoken (apart from English) being Korean, Japanese, Mandarin, Italian and German.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 8.9% of the population.
- The median age of the population in Cairns is 39 years of age.





- Cairns is served by five television stations, three commercial television stations which are regional affiliates of the three Australian commercial television networks, and public broadcasters the ABC and SBS services.
- The land around Cairns is still used for sugar cane farming, although this land is increasingly under pressure from new suburbs as the city grows.
- The Barron Gorge Hydroelectric Power Station is located nearby on the lower Barron River, and provides green power for some of the city's needs.

## Economy

- Cairns serves as the major commercial centre for the Far North Queensland and Cape York Peninsula Regions. It is a base for the regional offices of various government departments.
- Tourism plays a major part in the Cairns economy. While the city does not rank amongst Australia's top 10 destinations for domestic tourism, it attracts a significant number of Australian holiday makers despite its distance from major capitals.
- Several shopping centres of various sizes are located throughout Cairns. The largest of these are Cairns Central shopping centre, located in the central business district (CBD), and Stockland Cairns, located in the suburb of Earlvile.
- In 2010, the state government opened the second stage of William McCormack Place, an A\$80 million office building credited as the first 6-star green star-rated building in the city.



Bicycles can be hired from car rental agencies as well, bicycle lanes are clearly marked on city roads. Bicycle riders are all required by law to wear a safety helmet. Cairns Airport has two passenger terminals, one for domestic flights and the second for international.

## Transport

Bus services run regularly from the City Place to all over Cairns including the Northern Beaches.

Taxis are available from the main taxi rank in the City Place or along The Esplanade outside of McDonalds or outside the Reef Casino.

To hire a car some companies insist that the drivers be at least 25 years of age. Other companies require a minimum age of 21. An International licence is all you will need to drive on Australian roads.

Scooters or a motor bike under 50cc can also be hired with only a drivers licence. There is no need for a separate licence. Most of these bikes are limited somewhat in speed and are ideal for City driving but not highly recommended to be taken on open highways.





The majority of children in Cairns attend State Primary and High Schools. These schools offer accessible public education which is high in quality with a broad range of subjects across the curriculum. There are a variety of private schools in Cairns that offer education to students. There are primary-level private schools, secondary schools and colleges that take students from K - 12. University and Tertiary Education is open to both school leavers and mature aged students. Cairns is a great place to go away and study with smaller campuses, relaxed vibe and some great rainforest and ocean when it's time to leave the books. Cairns is a hub for international tourists wanting to explore Far North Queensland. For this reason it has also become a hub for international students wanting to study English. Cairns is the perfect place for international students wanting to get involved in the tourism industry and by studying English here they can learn the language and the tourism ropes.

## Education

There are a number of great local public and private primary and secondary schools dotted around the suburb of Cairns. The Queensland school system begins at Prep and runs until year 12. There are 4 Terms to a year with school holidays in between so the kids can get outside and soak up the beautiful weather.

At the end of year 12, school leavers are faced with the choice to go off into the work place, study at university or sign up for a TAFE or other higher learning institution. James Cook University has a campus in Cairns which is one of the most renowned marine science institutions in the world.



You can also take a tour and learn the stories of the National Parks, understand ancient and not so ancient rock art and watch cultural dance which tells the tale of Indigenous daily life.

## Culture

Cairns as a city has grown up a lot over the last few years however you'll see marks of its rich and varied culture and history everywhere you go. There's places where you can learn about the different Aboriginal communities which call the region home, visit the point where Captain Cook had to stop over for repairs and see its heritage as a sleepy port town which concentrated on sugar and timber.

The history of Indigenous people in Far North Qld stretches back for tens of thousands of years & their culture differs to many other tribes across Australia. There are many cultural centres scattered across the region with the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park sharing the stories of the Cairns & Great Barrier Reef people & the Gab Titui Cultural Centre which will enlighten you on the Torres Strait Islander culture.





Another great way to understand the cultural aspects of Cairns is to visit the Cairns Regional Gallery and to visit the many smaller art galleries and boutiques around Cairns. As you can imagine the region acts as a spectacular backdrop for all kinds of artists so the variety of artforms on show is staggering. Choose from oil on canvas, ceramics, glassware, sculpture and photography to take home.

A cruise to one of Australia's greatest treasures, the World Heritage-listed **Great Barrier Reef**, is one of the most popular things to do from Cairns. Stretching for more than 2,300 kilometers, the reef is one of the planet's richest ecosystems, with a dazzling diversity of hard and soft corals and countless species of fish, molluscs, and other marine animals, including dolphins, turtles, and sharks.

## Sights







**Cairns Esplanade** is a fabulous place to enjoy a sunrise or sunset stroll and soak up the vibe of this friendly town. A massive facelift transformed this seafront strip into a vibrant social hub and recreation center catering to both locals and tourists. Stretching along the seafront in town, the esplanade now encompasses lush tropical parks, playgrounds, a swimming lagoon, and foreshore promenade. Birdlife is abundant in the fringing mangroves and tidal flats, and interpretative signs share fascinating tidbits about the region's ecology.

Among the treasure trove of free attractions are a bouldering park, beach volleyball courts, bike paths, a skate park, exercise equipment, water-themed playgrounds, and more. Restaurants and cafés offer a diversity of dining options, and picnickers will find barbecues dotted along the lawns.



Originally laid out in 1886, **Cairns Botanic Gardens** boasts one of the finest collections of tropical plants in Australia. Green thumbs can take a self-guided tour through several kaleidoscopic gardens showcasing more than 4,000 different species of plants. The formal Flecker Garden spotlights tropical habitats from around the globe with jungle and rainforest plants from Southeast Asia, Africa, South America, and Queensland. From here, you can stroll along the Rainforest Boardwalk to Centenary Lakes, a haven for birds with both freshwater and saltwater habitats. From the main gardens, footpaths lead to a patch of rainforest on the slopes of Mount Whitfield, with magnificent views of the town and the coast. Other highlights include the Aboriginal Plant Use Garden, a bamboo collection, fern house, and a Gondwanan Heritage Garden, which traces the evolution of wet tropics plants in Australia.





Tucked in lush rainforest, about a 15 minute-drive from Cairns, **the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park** offers enriching insight into one of the oldest cultures on earth. Dance performances, music, storytelling, and exhibits bring the fascinating culture of the Tjapukai people to life. You can learn how to play a didgeridoo, fling a boomerang, throw a spear, and discover the medicinal bonuses of bush tucker.



Opened in 2017, **Cairns Aquarium** offers a fascinating glimpse of some of the marine ecosystems and creatures of the Great Barrier Reef. The aquarium's mission is to encourage conservation of this World Heritage-listed ecosystems in Far North Queensland's Wet Tropics. More than 15,000 animals live at the aquarium in 10 different ecosystems and more than 70 habitats, including mangroves, tropical rainforest, river systems, the Coral Sea, and the Great Barrier Reef.





Part of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, **Barron Gorge National Park** is another jewel in the crown of Far North Queensland's stunning wilderness areas. Dense rainforest cloaks these misty peaks, and magnificent waterfalls tumble into the Barron River and its tributaries. A particularly striking feature, especially during the wet season, is the 260-meter Barron Falls.



## Facts

As you can imagine Cairns is a pretty marvellous place and there's a few facts below to show you why this region is different to any other:

- The Cairns region is home to the world's longest, single day mail run - the mail run spans 1450km and takes over 9 hours with 10 stops flying between Cairns and Cape York.
- An interesting fact about Cairns Australia is that it has been twinned with Riga, the capital city of Latvia, since 1990.
- The only beach right in town is a man-made 4,000-sq-m (43,000-sq-ft) saltwater lagoon and artificial beach.
- Despite its beachfront esplanade, Cairns has a city atmosphere and instead of sandy beaches there are mudflats, abundant with native birdlife.



Thanks for your attention!

