

SHORT The Whitsundays DRIVES

A natural playground full of hidden gems



The Whitsundays

THE HEART OF THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

tourismwhitsundays.com.au

BEHIND THE WHEEL OF DISCOVERY

THE OPEN ROAD, THE CHANGING SCENERY AND THE PROMISE OF NEW THINGS TO DISCOVER JUST AROUND THE CORNER.

These short drive itineraries won't give you car cabin fever! Here you are guaranteed an unforgettable Whitsundays holiday experience.

A mosaic of blue water stretches from the coast, punctuated by beautiful islands. Inland you will find a tapestry of landscapes from the fields of sugarcane and ancient volcanic mountains to lush rainforests and cascading waterfalls – nature lovers will find a buffet of beauty at their disposal.

If you can pull yourself away from nature's creations you'll find quintessential small towns full of character and charm, as well as regional cities that showcase both heritage and modern, dynamic activities and experiences side-by-side. Feel the genuine warmth in smiles from the locals.

With fertile soils, passionate artisans and gifted chefs, there is no way that you'll go hungry on this trip. Markets are full of local produce nurtured by the Whitsunday sun and unique cafes and restaurants offer menus that pay homage to seasonal goodies taken from pasture to plate.

Young kids, young adults or young at heart – you'll drive into a bevy of activities and experiences and some truly unforgettable moments. Welcome to The Whitsundays.

Let's hit the road.

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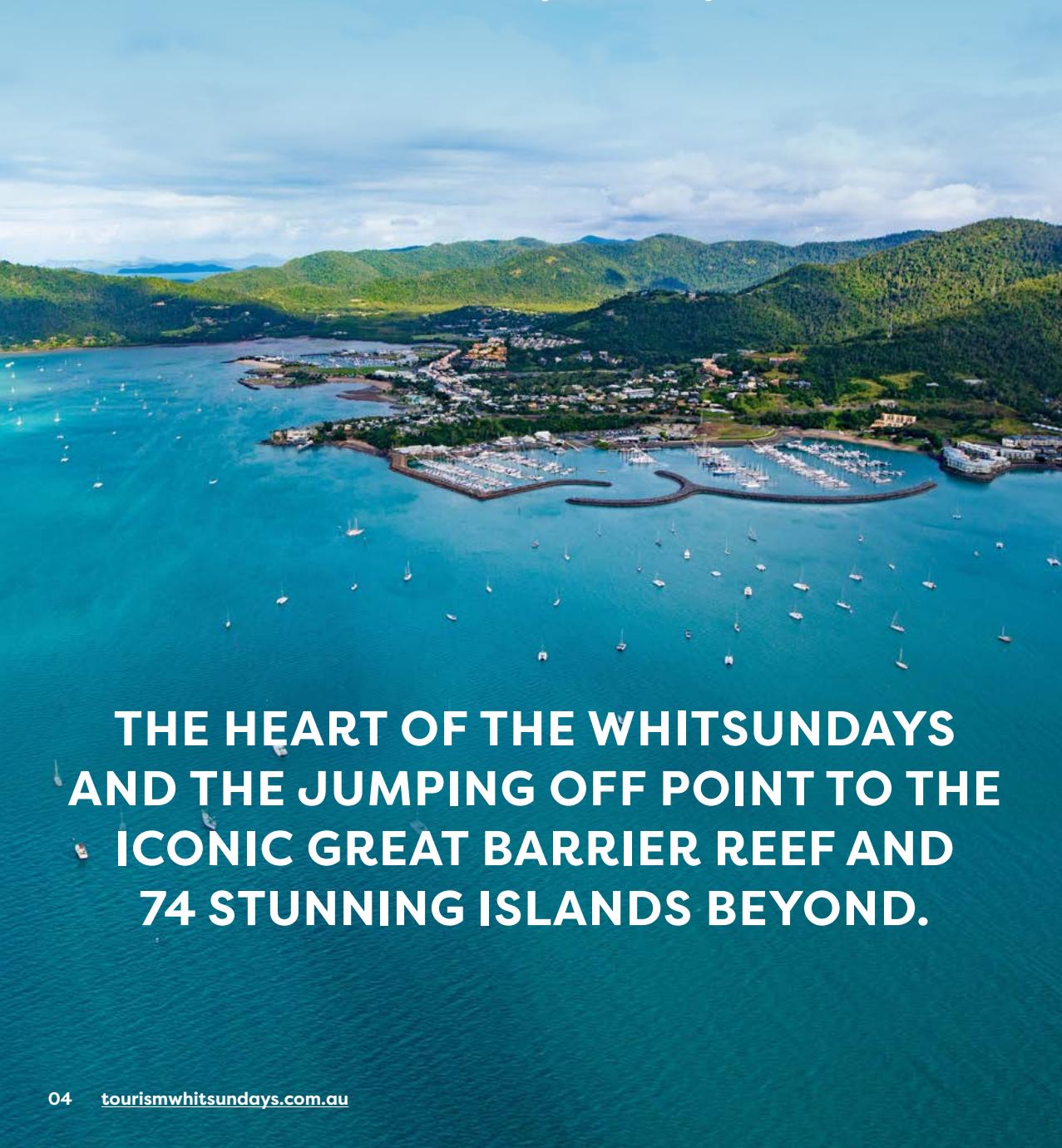
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AIRLIE BEACH

The Whitsundays



THE HEART OF THE WHITSUNDAYS
AND THE JUMPING OFF POINT TO THE
ICONIC GREAT BARRIER REEF AND
74 STUNNING ISLANDS BEYOND.

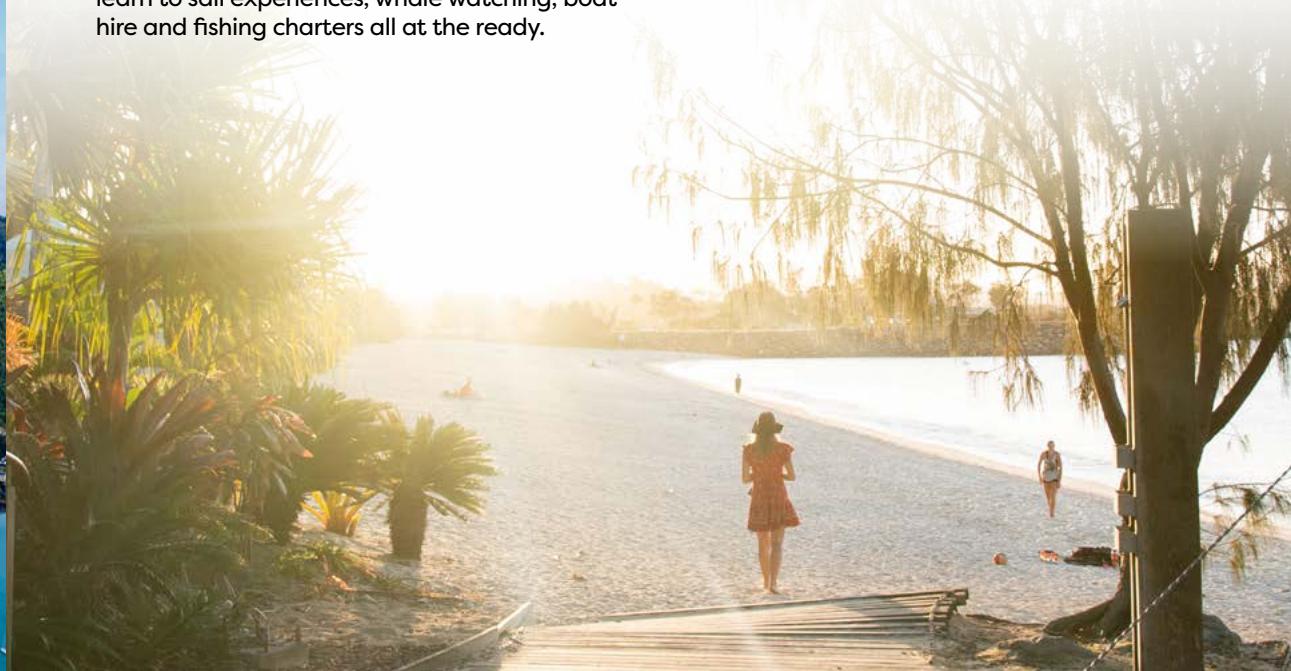
Airlie Beach is a wonderful base for your Whitsundays drive holiday. Accommodation to suit all needs and budgets. Activities to suit all ages.

Airlie Beach is 25 minutes' drive from Proserpine. This year-round summer town is too often forgotten in lieu of jetting off to the reef or islands, but a little time spent in Airlie Beach will uncover a thriving community with plenty to do.

Get sandy without hitting the islands on one of the local beaches - Airlie, Coral, Conway, Wilson or Boathaven Beach. Or join the professionals with diving, snorkelling and sailing day trips, learn to sail experiences, whale watching, boat hire and fishing charters all at the ready.

Back on land a trip with the Whitsundays Crocodile Safari will get your blood pumping. This educational tour is popular with all ages, combining fascinating facts with the thrill of spotting wild crocodiles. Don't forget that Conway National Park's hiking tracks and waterfalls are just minutes away.

Stroll down the main street, popping in and out of boutiques, gift shops and art galleries, punctuated by alfresco restaurants, bars and clubs. European, Indian, modern Australian, Asian or Mexican - there's a place for every tastebud.



Hit the esplanade on a Saturday morning to stroll the stalls of locally made jewellery, clothes and crafts at the Airlie Beach Markets. Here's a few of our favourite local artisans to watch out for:

- [Suzy's Deep Gully Goats' Milk Soap](#) – a luxurious, natural soap that leaves the skin feeling fresh and soft.
- Mary-Ann, John and their daughters put the freshest ingredients into their fresh artisan pasta. Find them at the [Pasta Cucina](#) stall.
- Karl and Mars from [Fresh As Sweet As](#) put the sweet in sweet corn, heirloom tomatoes and fresh juicy watermelons.
- Follow your nose to [Mr Bean Cold Brew Coffee](#) for slow filtered ice coffees or the perfect ingredient to take home for your espresso martini.



Food

The Whitsundays is one of Australia's great food bowls. As well as the famous Bowen Mango which is in season in summer, horticultural farms produce much of Australia's winter vegetable crops. And the clean tropical waters provide a plentiful catch of seafood.

Take a look at your options at www.tourismwhitsundays.com.au/visitor-information/where-to-eat

Top 3 Kids' Activities

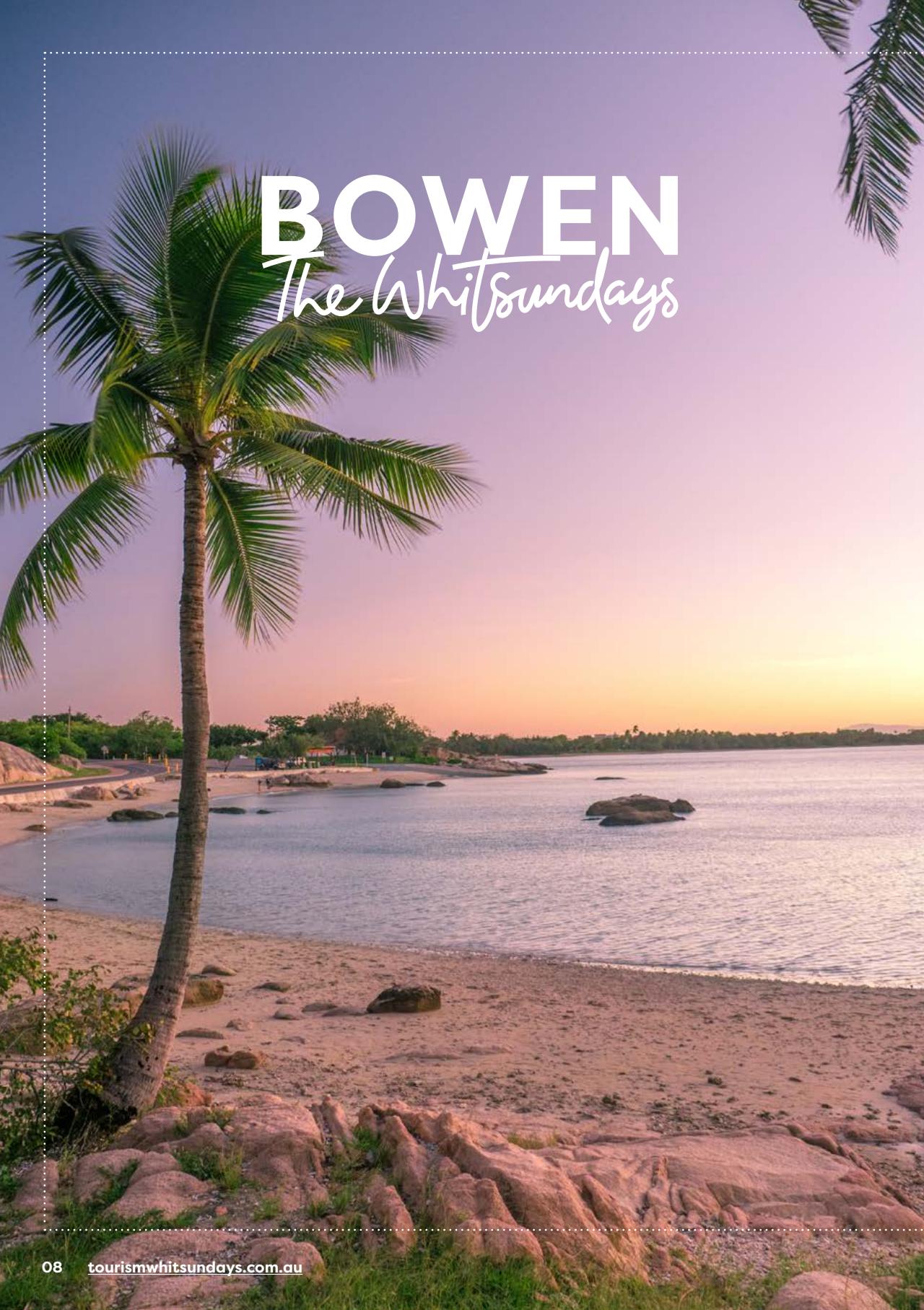
- 1 Jump in the back of a **Just Tuk'n Around** Tuk Tuk for a tour around Airlie Beach that includes all the popular sights plus a few secret ones that only the locals know about.
- 2 Cool off in the **Airlie Beach Lagoon**. Located right in the middle of the main street the lagoon offers an expansive pool with varying depths, overlooking the sea ... and it's free.
- 3 Conquer the **Airlie Beach Foreshore Playground**. Complete its 10.5m high skywalk, explore every sky cabin, scream down all the mega slides and yell pirate curses from the multi-level pirate ship.



Top 3 Young Adult Activities

- 1 Strap on a life jacket and feel the horse power surge as you turn the accelerator up and jetski towards adventure.
- 2 Get swept up in the adventure and adrenalin of white sails and blue waters on a **learn to sail** adventure.
- 3 **Paddy's Shenanigans** is a very popular Irish pub that you mustn't miss out on! A true local favourite, this place offers great live music performances and a balance of seating and open dance space.





BOWEN

The Whitsundays

**SMALL TOWN
HOSPITALITY WITH SOME
OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL
BEACHES THAT YOU'VE
EVER SEEN IN YOUR LIFE.**

Starting from Airlie Beach, in the heart of The Whitsundays, Bowen is a 60-minute drive north. The short distance makes it easy to head north first thing in the morning and take advantage of the cooler part of the day to take on one of the most beautiful short coastal walks in the country.

The 2.5km walk from Rose Bay through granite cliffs offers unforgettable ocean views. Descend to Murrays Bay then on to Horseshoe Bay Lookout. Both Rose and Horseshoe Bays are two of Bowen's most beautiful snorkelling destinations.

After breakfast take a trip through the history of North Queensland's oldest town. Yasso Point, at the northern end of Queens Beach, commemorates the journey of the South Sea Islanders who were brought to the region to work on cane fields.

Head up to Flagstaff Hill for absolutely spectacular views of Cape Edgecumbe Bay, North Head Island and Whitsunday Islands. Then turn around in the opposite direction and the whole of Bowen and

its surrounds are spread out before you, as far as the eye can see. This is one spot you won't want to be without a camera!

There are almost 30 murals located throughout the town depicting a diverse history of early settlement, numerous industries and some of the pioneers who helped shaped the town.

Bowen was established in 1861 and the still-operating salt works attests to its being at the centre of Queensland's salt industry in the 20th century. Be sure to visit Bowen Historical Society and Museum on Gordon Street, and also the Catalina Museum and Memorial at the front beach, which celebrates the brave pilots who used Bowen as a base in World War II.

Stop off at the Bowen Museum and walk through the original Mossvale Station homestead, built in 1872. The home is set up complete with period furniture and an insight into early settler life.

The Grand View Hotel was the setting of the iconic pub from Baz Luhrmann's movie 'Australia'.

BOWEN'S WORLD CLASS BEACHES AT A GLANCE

The afternoon is the perfect time to cool off at the beach. With seven of the most beautiful beaches you've ever seen all within 10 minutes' drive of each other, the problem is choosing which one.



Bowen Foreshore

At the end of the main street, you will find Bowen's stunning foreshore, an incredible playground of activity. Its expansive waters are a hive of water sports and a great place to spot turtles or step onto the sand flats and walk among the soldier crabs. Walk out on to the jetty, along the foreshore and to the harbour.

You'll find a waterpark, skatepark and playground. Picnic tables and free barbeques are also available.

Horseshoe Bay

Bowen's most iconic beach, Horseshoe Bay is protected by two granite outcrops creating a haven for swimmers, snorkellers, divers and fish. Aside from the reef fringing the Bay's rocks, swimmers can also explore Bywa, a 3.4m high underwater sculpture which is part of the Whitsundays Ngaro Underwater Marine sculpture trail. The Horseshoe Bay Café serves a delicious breakfast, lunch and dinner and has a killer cocktail bar.

Murrays Bay

Nestled in between Horseshoe Bay and Rose Bay, Murrays Bay is one of those places that just feels untouched. You'll find local runners completing their daily pilgrimage and the perfect location for finally reading that book and cooling off in azure seas.

Rose Bay

Don't ask the locals if they like Horseshoe or Rose Bay better, unless you're ready for an argument. Explore Rose Bay's rock pools at low tide while you gaze out across views of Gloucester Island. This protected bay is popular for swimming, snorkelling and diving.

Grays Bay

Grays Bay is stunningly picturesque and an impressive sunset location. This wide bay is protected and home to a two-lane boat ramp, making it perfect for water sports, paddleboards, canoes or kayaks. Adjacent to Grays Bay is an Instagram perfect pocket beach with shaded picnic tables and free barbeques.

Kings Beach

This expansive beach is a little more castaway in style with views over Gloucester, Middle and Stone Islands. The beach offers the contrast of granite boulders and huge sweeping stretches of sand, dotted with the occasional fisherman or kite-surfer.

Queens Beach

Every King needs a Queen. The longest beach in Bowen, Queens Beach is popular for walkers taking advantage of its 5km natural walking track. You'll find the mouth of the Don River and historic Yasso Point at one end and a large playground, skatepark, basketball courts, and the beginning of a bicycle circuit at the other.



Top 3 Kids' Activities

- 1 **Playground Olympics**, you could easily spend a day just visiting all the different playgrounds in Bowen, our favourites are the Harbour playground which is minutes' walk from the foreshore skatepark and waterpark. Don't forget there's a little playground at Le Sorelle Coffee House (good for kids and parents).
- 2 Go retro! **Hire some skates** and go for a sunset roller skate with the local PCYC from 5.30pm every Friday night. The skate rink has a view spanning across the foreshore and harbour.
- 3 Go mango hunting. Don't be fooled by the giant mango that sits on the Bowen foreshore, the real **Big Mango** is at the town's entry. After your Instagram mango moment, head to the Information Centre for the best mango sorbet you've ever tasted.

The Bowen area is the 'salad bowl of the north'. As well as the famous **Bowen Mango** which adorns local plates throughout summer, a tapestry of farms spread across the area providing an annual harvest of winter vegetable crops. Make sure you stop in at the marina for freshly caught local seafood from local boats. Take a look at your options at www.tourismwhitsundays.com.au/visitor-information/where-to-eat.



Top 3 Young Adult Activities

- 1 Movie buffs shouldn't miss the **Summergarten Theatre**. It's Queensland's oldest privately-owned cinema and is full of charm and character...as well as a series of blockbuster and family favourite movies.
- 2 See who will be the first to spot all **19 murals** chronicling more than 150 years of Bowen's history.
- 3 Bring along your **kayak** or **stand up paddle board** and take in the view of Bowen's stunning beaches and bays from an all new angle. Grays Bay and the pocket beach are one of our favourite spots.



WELCOME TO THE FORGOTTEN PARADISE. PRISTINE STRETCHES OF SANDY BEACHES. CLEAR WATERS AND FRINGING CORAL REEFS. NOT ANOTHER SOUL IN SIGHT.

A 45 minute-drive north of Airlie Beach through cattle country will uncover a string of hamlet communities that are kissed by mother nature but forgotten by the rest of the world.

Untouched kilometres of sand merge into the blue ocean masterpiece for lazy days of beachcombing and reading, plus incredible snorkelling, fishing, kayaking and paddle boarding.

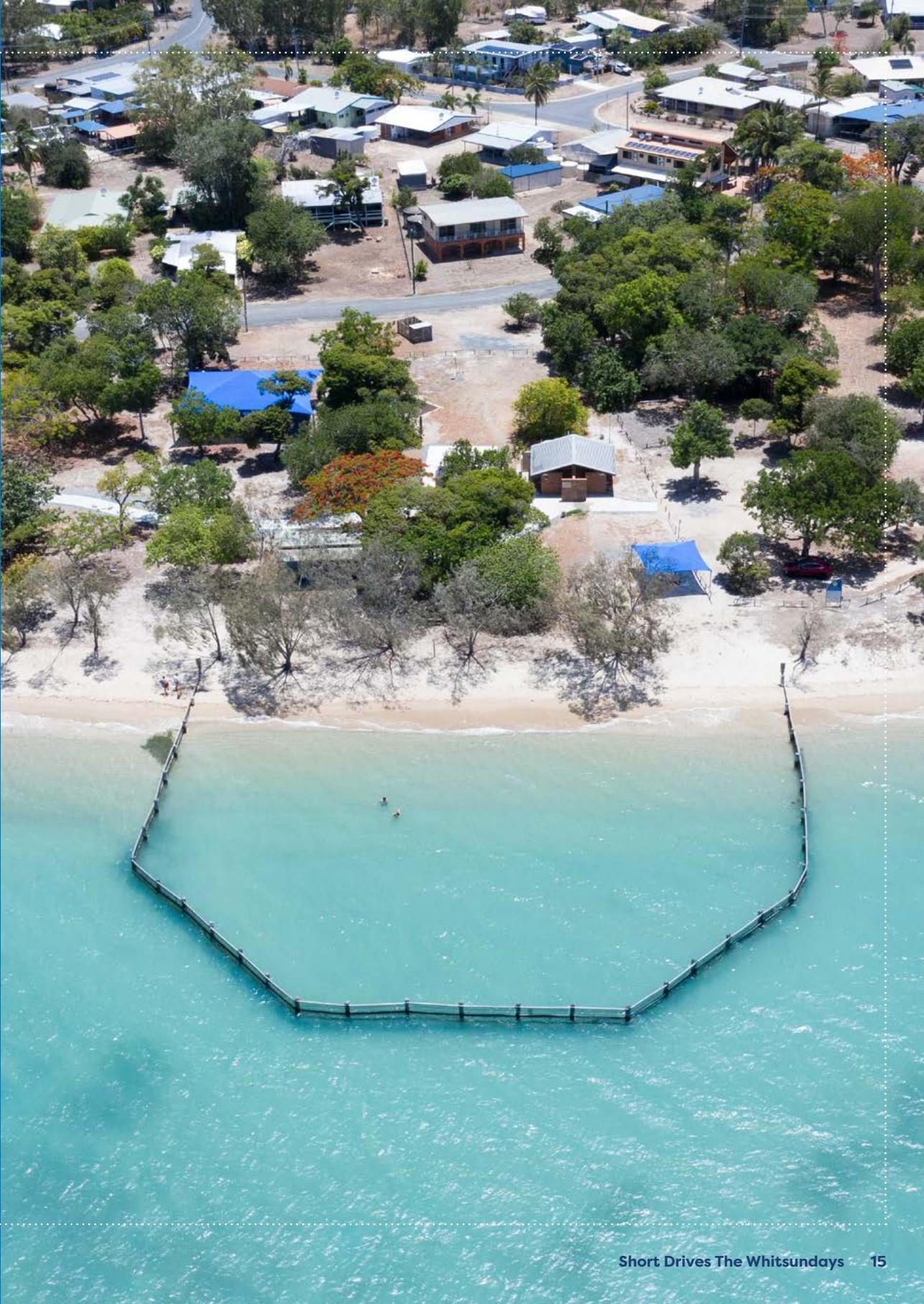
Dingo Beach

First stop is a small community and shady stretch of white sand known as Dingo Beach. Discovered by an adventurous motorist in 1926, Dingo Beach became a weekend spot for the people of Proserpine and Bowen.

Not much has changed since then and that's the way the locals like it. There is an easy, 'no worries' attitude to this town, which is little more than a collection of houses, each with a boat in front, a corner store and the beloved **Dingo Beach Pub**.

Hire a 'tinnie', that's what the locals call a small boat, and make the short motor across to beautiful **Saddleback Island**. Pack a picnic lunch and take the snorkelling gear and you'll likely find you have this untouched island to yourself and may even get the chance to swim with the majestic manta rays.

The Dingo Beach Pub is definitely worth stopping at for a meal among friendly locals before you leave.



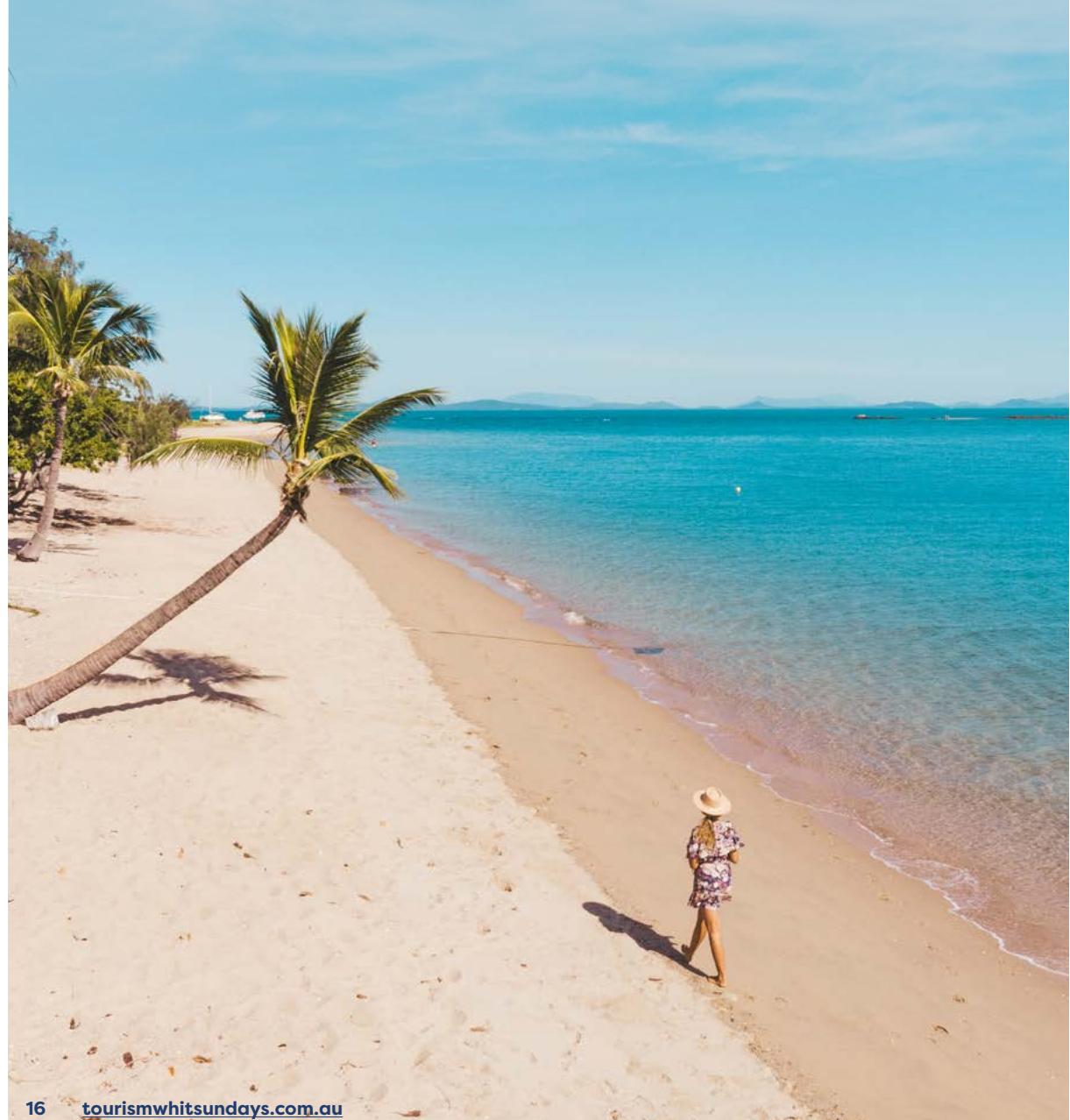
Hydeaway Bay

Just a little further up the road you'll watch cattle country turn into dry bushland that breaks open to dramatic ocean views that are fit for a movie set.

Originally a series of summer shacks for local fishermen and farmers, there are now a few hundred houses scattered along the beach and the nearby hill.

Most are either holiday houses or a family's pride and joy facing out on to million dollar views.

There are five public access points onto the beach which is always quiet. You may not see another person but you'll likely spot dugongs, dolphins, turtles and even whales during the migration season.



Cape Gloucester

A few more kilometres down the road and the Queensland coast juts out into the Whitsunday passage, stretching its arms out towards nearby Gloucester Island.

The island shelters the main beach of the cape. The sands lie on the eastern side of the foreland and stretch for 1.2km in length.

The beach itself offers another secret patch of sand to read a book in stunning solitude or soak in the Pacific Ocean.

If you're yearning to speak with friendly locals, nearby Cape Gloucester Resort is home to a popular restaurant and bar that often offers live music as a soundtrack to a lazy, long Sunday lunch with one of the finest views you've ever seen.

There are plenty of shady grass areas for the kids to run and, of course, the beach is always popular for sandcastle competitions and exploration. Watch out for the local wallabies.

CONWAY NATIONAL PARK & CEDAR CREEK FALLS

GET LOST IN PREHISTORIC NATURAL SETTINGS, MARVEL AT SKIES FULL OF BIRDS, FEEL THE WATERFALLS AND DIVE INTO CRYSTAL CLEAR WATERS. IT'S TIME TO CONNECT TO NATURE.

CONWAY NATIONAL PARK

Only 15 minutes from Airlie Beach, **Conway National Park** protects the largest area of lowland tropical rainforest in Queensland outside of the tropics. The coastal location of this peaceful national park means that its typography and experiences on offer are very diverse.

As you approach, you'll see the park's natural peaks rise steeply out of forests that for thousands of years were harvested by the local Ngaro and Gia people.

From rainforest-clad hills and panoramic views over the Whitsunday passage to jagged rock cliffs and secluded beaches – Conway National Park offers plenty of ways to explore it.

Walk to the Mount Rooper lookout for an instant reminder of just how close you are to one of the most celebrated island groups in the world, The Whitsundays gorgeous 74 islands.

Walk or boat to the secluded Swamp Bay bush camping area. Located beside a hidden pebbly beach, you'll feel happily marooned as you gaze across ocean views and Daydream Island.

Conway National Park is popular for bird watchers with bushwalkers often frozen in their tracks as they marvel at skies littered with a multitude of birds including emerald doves and sulphur-crested cockatoos. Or keep your eyes at ground level and spot the mounded nests of Australian brush-turkeys and orange-footed scrubfowls.



OUR TOP 3 CONWAY NATIONAL PARK WALKS

Honeyeater Walk – 8.2km

This up and downhill return track takes you through eucalyptus forests and grass shrubs that open out to a stunning lookout over Airlie Beach and the Whitsunday passage at the top.

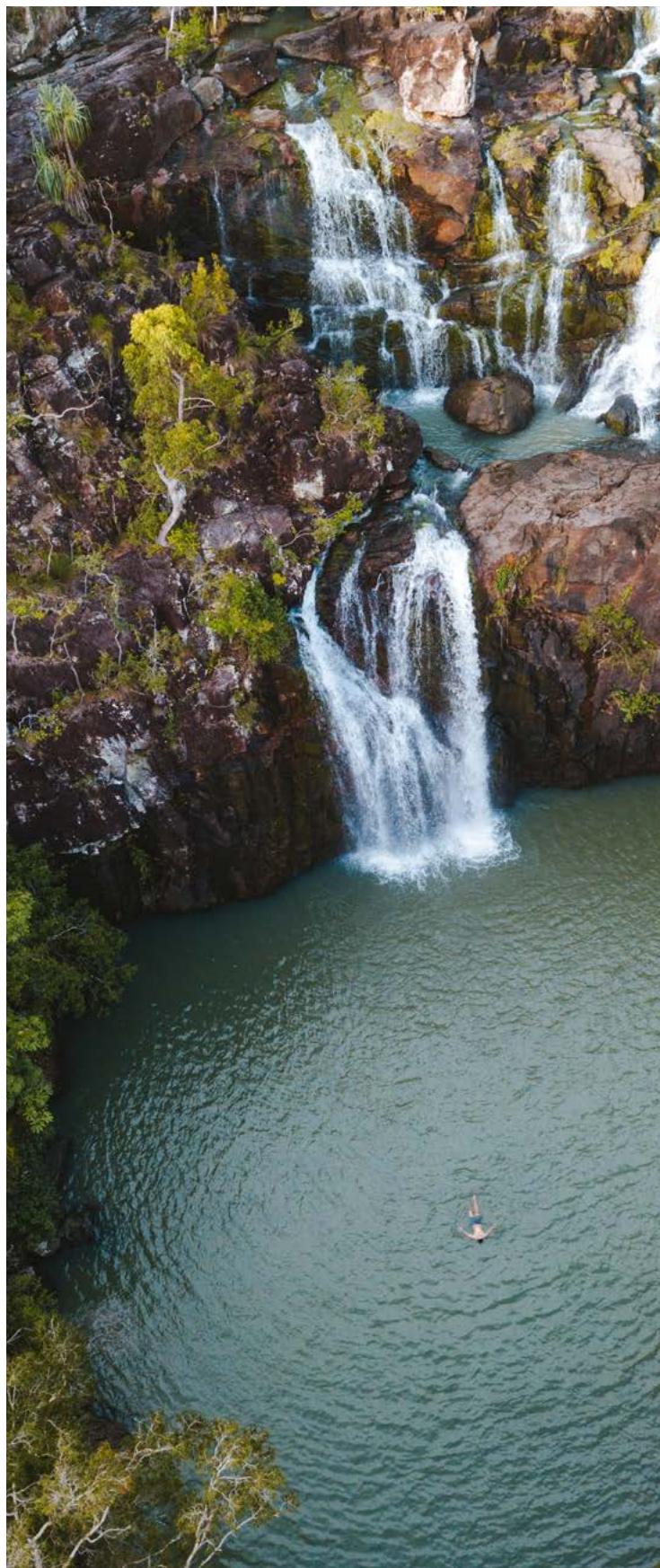


Coral Beach Track and Lookout – 3.4km

Located near Mount Rooper, this track is a great family walk that offers a higher than average opportunity to see wildlife. There is good tree coverage throughout the walk and the chance to cool off at the beach. There is also a lookout 600m from the beach that is worth the extra steps.

Swamp Bay Hike Loop – 5km

Watch the sun filter through the grass trees, fanning the track. The pathway opens occasionally to surprise walkers with sea views. Leave a little time to explore the rocks once you reach Swamp Bay.



Cedar Creek Falls

Drive down Saltwater Creek Road, halfway between Airlie Beach and Proserpine to find an easy walk to an unforgettable natural experience.

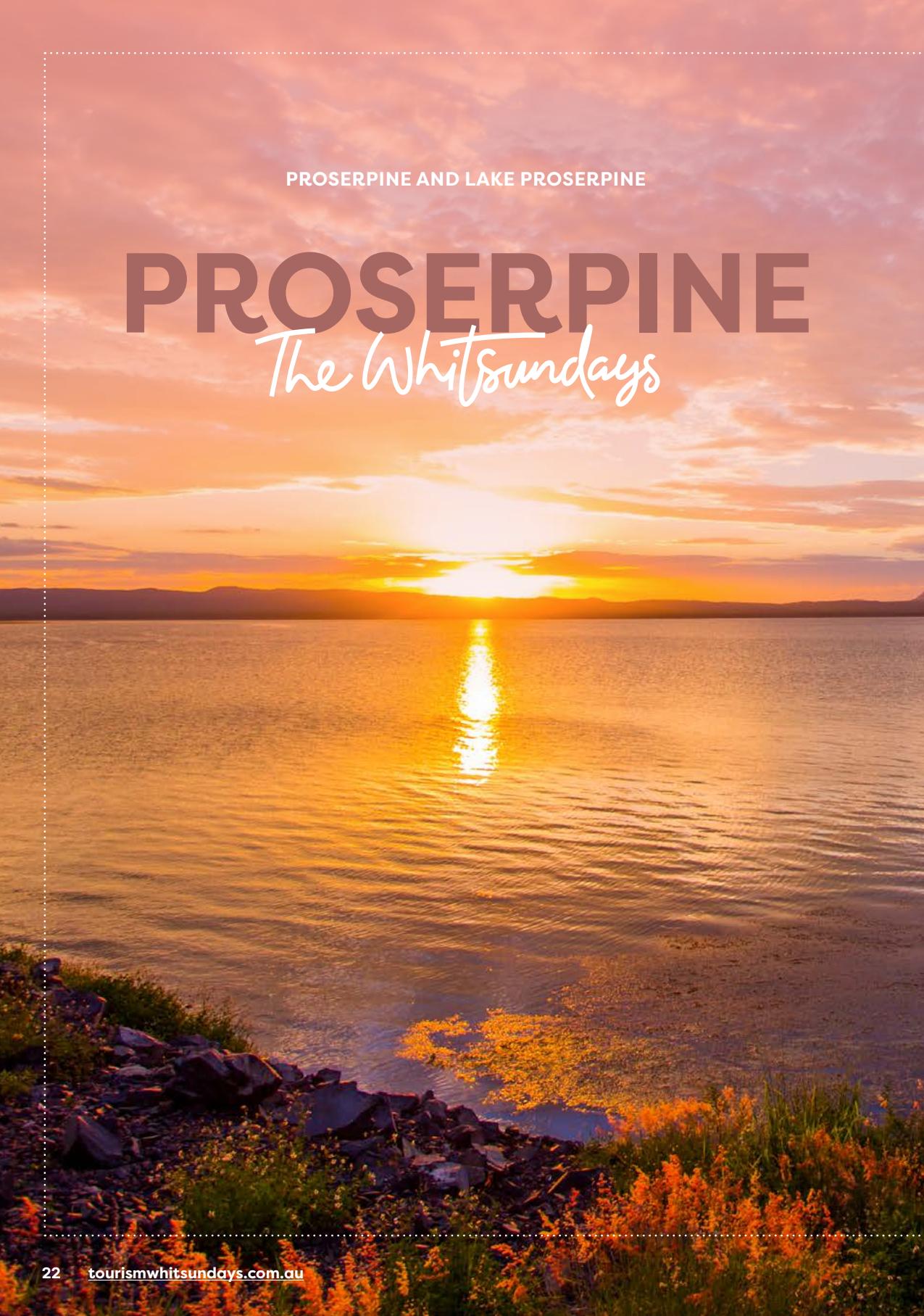
The falls are well hidden behind trees and rocks, like a little secret held close to the chest of locals who regularly indulge in a long-standing love affair with this special place.

The easy walk will take you through a forest of Alexandra palm, beautiful wild orchids and majestic white cedar trees that are full of butterflies and beautiful birds.

Feel your breath catch as the forest opens out onto the cool, clear waters of the waterhole and the natural waterfall tumbling down an amphitheatre of rocks. The curved shape of the rocks creates a natural soundshell that emphasises the mesmerising sound of the waterfall.

The waterhole is home to friendly fish and turtles that live in the rock pools.

You'll be showing friends and family photos of Cedar Creek Falls and closing your eyes to recall the memory of how you felt floating in the waterhole with the sound of the falls in your ears.



PROSERPINE AND LAKE PROSERPINE

PROSERPINE

The Whitsundays

NAMED AFTER THE GODDESS OF GRAIN AND HARVEST, PROSERPINE RETAINS ITS PIONEERING SPIRIT AND EASY SMALL-TOWN CHARM.

It wears its history with pride and celebrates its natural splendour with a variety of ways to enjoy it.

Proserpine is an easy 20 minute drive inland from Airlie Beach. Born from a pioneering history of fertile soils, sugary-sweet crops and cattle, you'll see history showcased in the numerous exhibits of industry and life in times gone by at Proserpine Museum.

History is also on display in the art deco architecture of the shops in the town's main street and the country-style hotels serving up delicious meals and old-fashioned service.

Nestled amongst the sugar cane fields, trees and wildlife, the picturesque 18-hole Proserpine Golf Course is a great place to swing into action. The first 9 holes will feel quite friendly compared to the last nine holes that are dotted amongst the winding creek.

When it's time to cool off, dive into the Proserpine Waterpark and community pool or head to one of the locals' favourite spots Lake Proserpine.

Also known as Peter Faust Dam, Lake Proserpine is a 30 minute drive from town and is a popular spot for freshwater fishing, water skiing, jet-skiing and kayaks. The Lake has undergone a major upgrade and offers toilets, showers, boat washdown bays, fire pits, tables, chairs and barbecue facilities.

Stay a little longer with 72-hour lakeside camping facilities.

Grassy banks slope gently down to the lake, opening out to an expanse of water dotted with underwater forests and lily pads. It's big enough to find a quiet spot or get into the thick of the action.

Stop in at Whitsunday Gold Coffee Plantation, right next to the Whitsundays Visitor Information Centre on the Bruce Highway just north of town, to perk up with great coffee and delicious food. Enjoy wandering through the farm animal enclosures and saying hello to the exotic birds. The kids will also love the indoor playground.

COLLINSVILLE

The Whitsundays



COLLINSVILLE, BOWEN RIVER HOTEL, BURDEKIN DAM & MT COOLON

THIS ITINERARY TRANSPORTS YOU BACK IN TIME THROUGH STORIES OF STRUGGLE AND MATESHIP BEFORE SHOWCASING THE NATURAL BEAUTY AND WONDER OF THE WHITSUNDAY REGION'S BUSHLAND COMMUNITIES, WILDLIFE AND GENUINE HOSPITALITY.

Collinsville

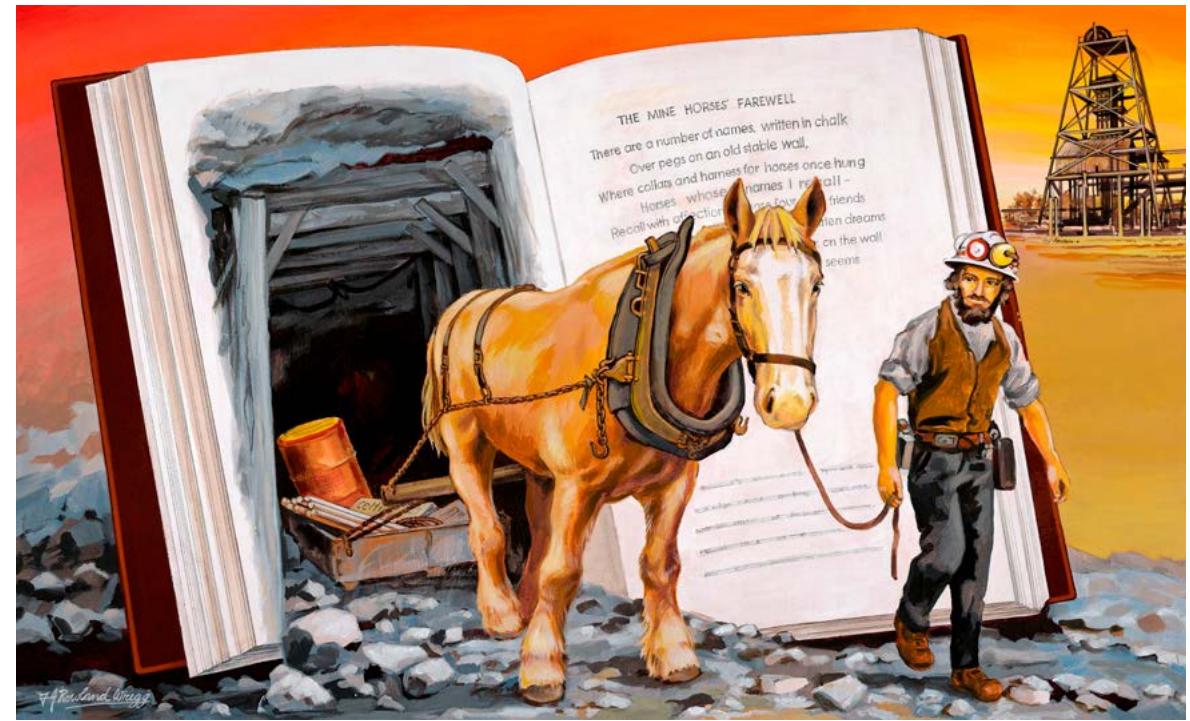
Your journey begins in the foothills of the Clarke Range, in the historic mining town of Collinsville. Collinsville is 1 hour and 50 minutes from Airlie Beach. Its heritage is steeped in mining with coal playing a huge role in the growth of the town and its people.

Dive back into the past by strolling past the historical mining murals and uncover a storybook of strife and community spirit in the interactive displays, audio-visual exhibits and theatrettes of the Miners Memorial and Coalface Experience Museum.

Go from living history to natural wonders by hitting the walkway from Collinsville to Scottville – it's also a great bike track if you brought your wheels.

Get a little closer to injured and orphaned Australian wildlife and celebrate the incredible labour of love local couple Carol and Vince Cosentino have put into Wurra Yumba Kangaroo House.

Contact them via kangaroohouse.org to organise a visit.



OUR TOP 8 THINGS TO DO

1. Drop into the [Collinsville Visitor Information Centre](#) at the RV-friendly showgrounds and chat to the friendly staff for the latest information and tips. There is room to leave your caravan here while you explore the town.
2. Whether you're hankering for a hot pie or a hearty big breakfast, Collinsville has an array of breakfast options on offer.
3. Stop at the park on Sonoma Street to take in the [Pit Pony Experience](#). Centred around a life-size bronze sculpture, the project celebrates the lives of Australia's last working mine pit ponies.
4. Head to the [Coalface Experience](#), on Railway Road, a celebration of the town's mining history and a fascinating look at life underground for the many miners who worked there. With interactive displays, historical records, audiovisual exhibits, and theatrettes, you'll want to allow yourself 1-2 hours.
5. While in town, look for the various 'selfie walls' where you can photograph yourself alongside paintings of the much-loved pit ponies.
6. Explore Stanley Street and Scottville Road for shopping and places to eat.
7. Before leaving Collinsville, take Mt Coolon Road heading out of town and check out the scale of the coal mines beside the road before arriving at the [Bowen River](#) – once you cross the river you can turn to the left and follow a dirt road 10 kilometres to the [Bowen River Weir](#) – great for fishing!
8. After seeing the Bowen River, head back through Collinsville and turn left onto Strathmore Road. Thirty minutes along this unsealed road is the historic [Bowen River Hotel](#). Originally built as a homestead in 1862, the hotel is steeped in history and has a couple of spooky stories to tell.



Bowen River Hotel

Next stop on your journey is the Bowen River Hotel, a 35 minute drive from Collinsville. Be aware that this is an unsealed road and may not be suitable for rental cars. This hotel's story began around 1860. For 30 years its pages remained closed as it laid abandoned and unloved before being rebuilt in 2003 to a new glory.

Now a beautiful example of careful bush carpentry, the Bowen River Hotel is a licensed bar with a casual beer garden. It serves lunch and dinner surrounded by heritage and character that is literally plastered to its walls in the form of photographs, paper clippings and memorabilia from yesteryear.

Burdekin Dam

From the Bowen River to Lake Dalrymple, it's time to dive into the Burdekin Dam...literally. Be aware that this is a dry weather 4WD road. Welcome to the largest dam in Queensland. Stocked with barramundi, the Dam is a regular hot spot for fishermen. There are no vessel type restrictions which means jet ski and water ski enthusiasts are at home on these wide blue waters.

Jump on a kayak and paddle out to the morning song of birds as the sun rises while pelicans fish from the banks.

If a day trip isn't long enough, the Burdekin Dam offers accommodation through Sunwater's campground with both powered and unpowered sites and facilities including toilets, barbeques and picnic tables. In wet weather it may not be possible to cross the Burdekin River below the dam spillway to access the campground and the road to Ravenswood. Check conditions with the RACQ.

Whether you're diving into nature, history or a delicious meal, you'll find enough things in this region to soak in until your fingers wrinkle.



NATURE IS UNLEASHED, HISTORIC MYSTERIES RE-LIVED, PALATES AWAKENED WITH THE GIFTS OF FERTILE SOILS AND PASSIONATE ARTISANS, THIS ITINERARY IS FULL OF DISCOVERIES THAT FAMILY MEMBERS OF ALL AGES WILL LOVE TO EXPLORE.

Collinsville may have mining heritage that is still living and breathing, but ultimately, you'll find yourself in a classic, casual outback town with quintessential charm to boot. Collinsville is just 1 hour and 50 minutes from Airlie Beach.

Find out more about Collinsville on page 25.

Mt Coolon

One hour and 45 minutes from Collinsville, you'll find yourself in the real life setting of a murder mystery so captivating that it remains part of the region's folklore today. Welcome to Mt Coolon.

Located on Yangga tribal lands, this community was originally called Koala, but renamed after a gold prospector Thomas Coolon, the villain of our story.

Jackeroo Luke Reynolds discovered gold here in 1913. Thomas Coolon was the first to peg a claim in 1914. Another prospector who was quick on the up take was James Barclay. Thomas and James became close friends.

In November of 1918, Thomas Coolon lost his gold mining claim in court. Coolon went on to shoot the man who instigated the court action, plus three other people before turning the gun on himself.

On the day he shot himself Coolon arranged for Barclay to provide for his wife. **Barclay's Battery**, a gold processing plant, still stands today and is now heritage listed.

Don't forget to bring your trail bike to explore the bush trails and ensure that you stop off at the retro **On the Grind** coffee van. Ashton mans the van from 4am to 11am and offers the best coffee in town.





Eungella

Travel to Eungella from Collinsville along the Exmoor Road. When you get to Blenheim Station turn right towards Turrawulla. Travel along the Collinsville to Elphinstone Road via the pipeline then turn left into Lizzie Creek Road. Your journey will take you through outback forests and picturesque mountain roads. It's about a three and a half hour drive on gravel roads, not really suitable for caravans. [Check road conditions in wet weather.](#)

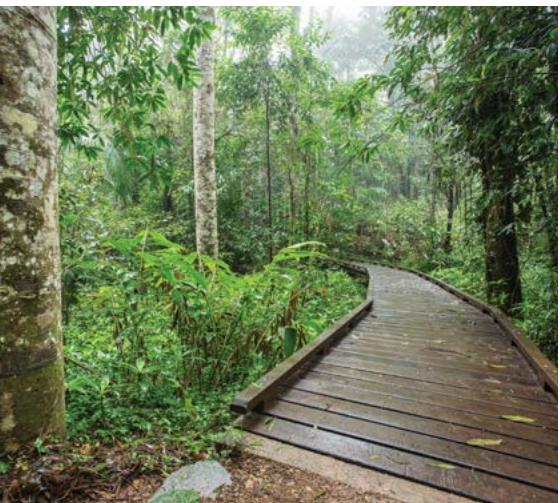
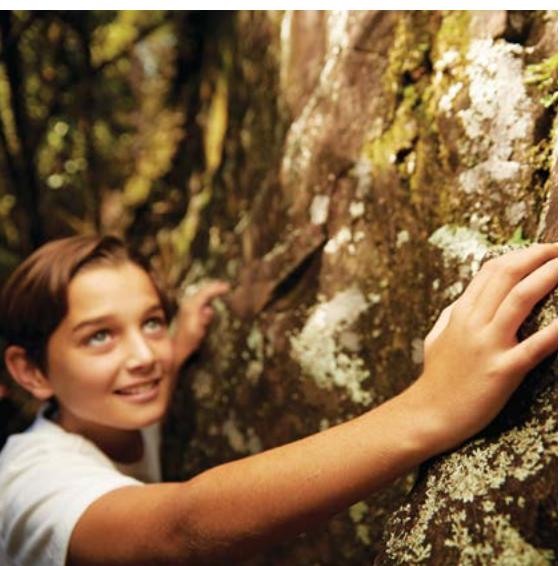
When you'd like to cool off head to [Eungella Dam](#) for a swim, fish or water sports. Get active on the hiking and mountain biking trails or just relax at the campground picnic areas.

High above the surrounding plains you'll find a misty forest-clad mountain refuge in [Eungella National Park](#). It's one of Queensland's most ecologically diverse parks. There are 860 plant species and quite a few unique and unusual animal species including the Eungella dayfrog, Eungella spiny cray and Eungella honeyeater.

Back in the 19th Century when explorers first sent back descriptions of the platypuses they had found, they were written off as a hoax. Today, you'll find purpose-built viewing platforms in the national park at [Broken River](#). Sit quietly and feel your breath catch as you see your first platypus break the water's surface.

There are more than 20km of walking tracks with trails that vary in difficulty and length from 30 minutes to full day walks.

Head to Mackay through the picturesque [Pioneer Valley](#) and watch a masterpiece of waterfalls, volcanic boulders and sugar cane fields expand out in front of you.



Mackay

True bluewater rivers are rare in Australia, but you'll find the regional city of Mackay nestled on the banks of one of Queensland's bluest rivers. While mining is in its blood and still in its future, Mackay is also a dynamic modern city with public-art lined streets and a regional art gallery known as Artspace.

History is celebrated in the [Mackay City Heritage Walk](#), the [Art Deco Walk](#) and [Artspace](#) that showcases the unique architecture of the 1920's and 1930's, when the city was rebuilt following the 1918 flood.

Mackay is full of restaurants, bars and cafes that cater to everything from romantic date nights to casual take-aways.

For more information check out the [Eat Safe Mackay brochure](#).

With full bellies it's time to explore the natural beauty of Mackay. Begin with two easy CBD walks that the entire family will enjoy. [The Bluewater Trail](#) takes in the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens, Cathy Freeman Walk, Bluewater Lagoon and Sandfly Creek Reserve. There is beauty all around and plenty of wildlife to see including 20,000 migratory shorebirds.

The second walk is a meander through the towering melaleuca trees and wetlands on the [Kommo Toera Trail](#).





OUR 4 FAVOURITE NATURAL SWIMMING SPOTS

3 Mile Creek

Part of the Pelican Creek system, this clear water creek is located 15 minutes west of Collin'sville and has a sweet picnic area to refuel after your swim.

Pelican Creek

Running from the north east of town, Pelican Creek is lined with green trees and shrubbery. Its cool, calm waters provide a pristine sanctuary from hot summer days.

Terry's Creek

Take a short bushwalk under the canopy of eucalyptus forests to this small swimming hole. A low rock plateau runs with a small waterfall that creates a serene atmosphere and beautiful pictures.

40 Foot

At an altitude of more than 480m above sea level, Mount Devlin is home to a waterfall known lovingly at 40 Foot. It's an easy 15 to 20 minute hike and a beautiful location to cool off surrounded by nature's glory.

Be croc-wise in croc country

Always obey crocodile warning signs. Never swim where crocodiles may be present, even if you don't see any signs.

WELCOME TO THE HOME OF ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST ICONIC WILDLIFE EXPERIENCES, AN UNFORGETTABLE NATIONAL PARK AND A VIBRANT REGIONAL CITY WITH ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES.

Cape Hillsborough is 1 hour and 30 minutes' drive through carpets of sugar cane that dissolve into untouched Australian bushland.

From this unique location it's actually possible to walk to one of the Whitsunday Islands. **Wedge Island** is an easy 15 minute walk from the mainland and offers the chance for kids, both young and old, to explore rock pools along the way for hidden crustaceans.

By far the most renowned attraction of the region is **Cape Hillsborough National Park**, a 1012ha of ruggedly beautiful coastal national park flush with lowland rainforest and vine forests growing along creek beds and hillside gullies.

While the area was named by Captain James Cook on his 1770 expedition to Australia, there are traces of the Yuibera people and their connection to the land for thousands of years.

There are 4 short walks ranging in length from 1.2 to 5.2km. Along the way you'll find yourself in the stunning natural habitat of 140 different bird species, 22 mammals and 500 plant species.

The beauty of having a national park on the coast, is the chance to incorporate beach experiences in your park exploration, and the sandy coast of Cape Hillsborough National Park is home to a truly unforgettable and **intimate Aussie wildlife experience**.

Wake up early and descend onto the sand to find families of Eastern Grey Kangaroos and Wallabies that come to the beach to feed on mangrove seed pods. The opportunity to be this close to wild kangaroos is rare, but when you combine it with the truly stunning backdrop of a coast sunrise, you have a memory that will never fade.

Don't neglect the **Andrew's Point Lookout**, which is a 2.8km return walk from the beach.

On your way out of the park, stop in at **The Old Station Teahouse**. This afternoon tea hot spot was transformed from the old Marian Railway Station and is now home to delicious eats set amongst stunning gardens.



Mackay

Less than 45 minutes away you'll find yourself in a regional city with a history in industry, a heart of natural beauty, plates full of memorable dishes and a bouquet of activities and experiences to suit romantic couples, groups of friends and family with young children or young adults. Find out more on page 33.



Dolphin Heads

Don't forget your camera so you can capture the unique natural headlands in the shapes of dolphins.

MACKAY'S BEACHES AT A GLANCE

MACKAY REGION



Blacks Beach

This is the longest stretch of beach in Mackay with 6km of pure golden sand and palm trees providing endless perfect locations for reading. You'll often find fishermen near the creek mouth at the southern end.



Eimeo Beach

Popular with families for its safe patrolled waters, playground and barbecue facilities, Eimeo Beach is pure, good old-fashioned fun.



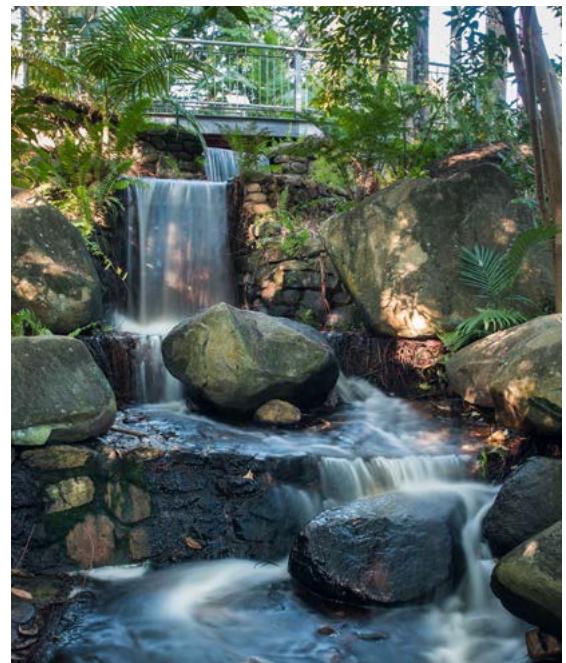
Shoal Point

Low tide creates a field of exploration, giving the intrepid access to Green Island just offshore. Back on the beach a playground and picnic area with barbeques, toilets and showers makes this an easy beach to love.



Bucasia Beach

Drive or walk along the picture-perfect esplanade or stop at a picnic table or playground to take in the beauty. With a nearby boat ramp, this is also a popular fishing spot.



Top 3 Kids' Activities

Swim at Bluewater Lagoon – three lagoon-inspired swimming pools and a water park provide plenty of fun and fancy for young and old. Free admission.

Botanic Gardens – teach your little ones to take in the finer details of the diverse flora. There are free school holiday activities, guided walks and a café to refresh yourselves on after your exploration.

On Goldsmith Street you'll find **Queens Park**, the region's biggest and best playground. This custom-built wonderland includes 7.5m skywalk towers nestled into the trees. Take a break in the picnic space afterwards.

Top 3 Young Adult Activities

WakeHouse Australia – learn the heart-pumping skill of wake boarding in this high-tech park that provides total safety through the use of support cable lines.

Sidetrax Entertainment Hub – Burn some rubber on the indoor go-kart circuit. Turn it into a family challenge with dual karts or single carts built for speed.

Action Challenge Mackay – test your courage and learn things about yourself and your family that you'll never forget as you traverse high ropes courses, take a giant leap of faith on the big swing and laugh around the fireplace of the bush hut.



PIONEER VALLEY, FINCH HATTON AND EUNSELLA (VIA MIRANI),
MACKAY REGION

ON THIS ITINERARY THE JOURNEY IS JUST AS MEMORABLE AS THE DESTINATION. WELCOME TO THE HOME OF PICTURESQUE DRIVES, CLEAR WATERFALLS, OPERATIC HERITAGE AND FAMOUS PIES.

Pioneer Valley

A 1 hour and 20 minute drive south of Airlie Beach, you'll never forget entering the Pioneer Valley. The highway stretches out before you as endless fields of sugarcane wave from either side and the towering green mountains smile down ahead of you like welcoming giants.

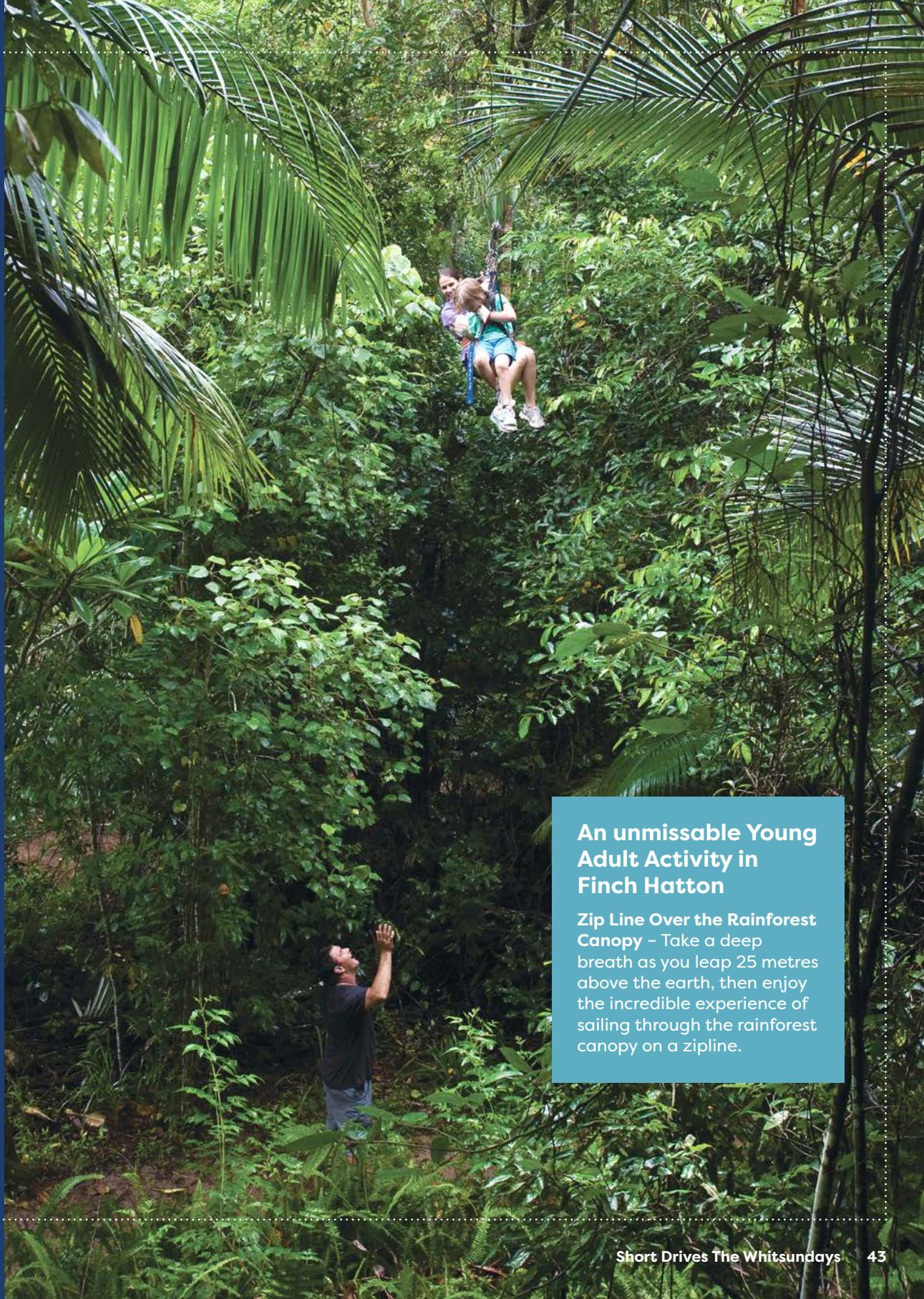
It is one of the richest sugarcane growing areas in Australia, and this valley is by far one of the most picturesque.

Finch Hatton Gorge

Finch Hatton Gorge is home to two beautiful, natural waterfall experiences and is perfect for young adults but loved by all.

Walk through rich tropical rainforest and past large boulders for a little more than 45 minutes and watch as the trees open out to a lookout above the rhythmic flow of the **Araluen Cascades**.

Or bring your swimmers and step into the clear rock pools of the **Wheel of Fire Waterfalls** as the water flows freely from above you.



An unmissable Young Adult Activity in Finch Hatton

Zip Line Over the Rainforest Canopy – Take a deep breath as you leap 25 metres above the earth, then enjoy the incredible experience of sailing through the rainforest canopy on a zipline.

Mirani

Don't miss stopping in the heart of the Pioneer Valley on your way to Eungella.

The town was originally named Hamilton and much argument surrounds its current title with some locals saying it derives from a local Aboriginal word and others sticking with folklore tales that it's actually a dedication of sorts – a combination of the names 'Mary' and 'Annie'.

But this little rural town wears its history on its sleeve. **The Mirani Museum** is home to historic artefacts of industry, an extensive photographic collection,

Indigenous history and even the fossilised remains of a Diprotodon.

Mirani is also home to **Melba House**. Once the home of famous Australian opera singer Nellie Melba, the house, which has been moved twice, now overlooks the Pioneer River and houses both operatic memorabilia and the local **Visitor Information Centre**.

Pull out your swimmers and cool off at **Platypus Beach**, a swimming hole that's popular with the locals.



Fabulous Food Spots

There are heaps of great places to eat and pick up local produce. Call the Mackay Visitor Information Centres in Sarina, Mackay or the Pioneer Valley to see what's in season.

Eungella

From Mirani, Eungella is only another 40 minutes' drive. This natural wonderland is perfect for those who love getting active in nature with walks and swimming both great ways to explore the beautiful diversity of this special place and its unique creatures. Find out more on page 32.



A moment. A snapshot. Stitch them together and you have an incredible memory of your journey through one of the most picturesque regions of Australia.

The sheer variety of landscapes, the potential for dynamic action shots and the truly unique experiences mean that you won't have to search hard for Instagramable moments. But to help you along, here are a few of our favourites.



Breakfast with Skippy

The grey silhouette of a kangaroo or wallaby set against a stunning sunrise reflected across the ocean. Instagram will love breakfast time on the beach of Cape Hillsborough.

INSTA-WORTHY LOCATIONS.

MACKAY REGION



Footprints in the Sand

Capture the castaway feeling snapping a single line of your footprints across the sands of Saddleback Island off the coast of Dingo Beach.



Grabbing an Oar on Lake Proserpine (Peter Faust Dam)

Capture yourself kayaking through the eerie beauty of the flooded dry tree forests of Lake Proserpine, their skeleton forms reaching out of the water.



Chasing Waterfalls at Cedar Creek

Fresh faced, slick wet hair and the majestic crashing flow of the Cedar Creek Falls behind you.



Snap a Platypus at Broken River

Better have the camera ready and the ability to sit quietly among the lush treelined rocks and banks of Broken River. Listen out for the subtle splash of water and 'Snap!', capture a shot of the elusive wild platypus.

FISHING FRENZY

Get ready to add a slew of tales to your repertoire of fishing stories. Central Queensland is home to world-class fishing.

The Whitsundays is a renowned fishing destination with a regular pilgrimage of anglers getting their lines wet every year. With ocean reefs, healthy creeks, winding rivers and plentiful dams, whatever style of fishing you enjoy, you'll find it here.

Bowen

With numerous creek systems, coral studded islands and offshore reefs, fishing is one of Bowen's biggest attractions. Its annual fishing competition is still one of the most popular in the country. Try Adelaide, Duck or Meatworks Creeks to find mangrove jack, bream, whiting and barramundi.

Offshore you'll feel the bite of coral trout, sweetlip and the raging mackerel ... just to name a few. We recommend Stone, Middle and Gloucester Islands where you'll find plenty of reefs and bombies. If you're happy to go a bit further out, head for Holbourne Island. Without a tinnie you can catch a feed off the harbour jetty or at Kings Beach.



Dingo Beach

A 40 minute drive north of Airlie Beach, you'll find the sugarcane fields open out into the coast and Dingo Beach living up to its fishing village heritage. From the beach you can catch a feed of flathead and whiting. Hire a tinnie or join a fishing charter to motor out into trevally and mackerel territory. Catch them as they power through Hydeaway Bay.

Lake Proserpine, Peter Faust Dam

A stone's throw from Proserpine, this picturesque lake spits out barramundi that are regularly more than a metre in length. Acrobatic barramundi can be found lying in wait near bait balls. You'll also find hard hitting sooty grunter and saratoga that are worth the fight. Try using a piece of steak and a float to coax sleepy cod into action.

Burdekin Dam

The Burdekin Dam lies on Lake Dalrymple and is home to eels, archerfish, sooty grunter, sleepy cod, longtoms, grunter, gold perch, silver perch, fork tailed catfish and barramundi. Use medium or heavy tackle with poppers, jigs, soft plastics and chrome lures if you're chasing barra. Barramundi also love live mullet, garfish and yabbies.

Bowen River

The Bowen River wraps inland from the north of Mackay to Home Hill. Accessing it near Collinsville will put you directly in the territory of healthy catfish, sooty grunter and black bream populations. Whether fishing from the shade of the paperbarks on shore or jumping in the tinnie, light to medium gear is your best option.

Don't forget to check with fishing authorities in regards to legal fishing areas, bag and size limits and permit requirements.

Visit: www.qld.gov.au/recreation/activities/boating-fishing/rec-fishing/rules

Eungella Dam

Welcome to the show. Introducing our stars – the sooty grunter. These feisty fish are what keep the locals coming back to the fight. Head to areas of the dam that have flooded forests and drowned tree trunks and use spinnerbaits to capture the sooty's attention. You'll also find barramundi on the bite.

Mackay

Tropical reefs, rainforest streams, bluewater rivers and inland dams – you'll find all these fishing grounds within 45 minutes of Mackay. Kinchant Dam might look small but it is home to some of the largest barramundi you can hook. Teemburra Dam is another great freshwater fishing option just 20 minutes away. You don't have to go far to find hard-hitting pelagics, in fact you can catch mackerel tuna, queenfish and golden trevally from Mackay's Marina. Just make sure you gear up for these heavy hitters.

Pioneer River

This river is 120km of fish superhighway, but there are some easy access points. You can fish near the Hospital Bridge or on dedicated fishing platforms at Forgan Bridge. For some heavier hitters, there are massive queenfish and barramundi cruising near the river mouth.

Cape Hillsborough

Watch the pride and wonder on the kids' faces as they pull in whiting, flathead and bream off the beach. Look out for rocky outcrops to also find finger mark and grunter. This is one of the most picturesque fishing locations in the region. Just remember to keep an eye on your lines.

WELCOME TO THE WHITSUNDAYS & MACKAY



VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRES

Bowen Visitor Information Centre
Big Mango, Bruce Highway
Bowen Qld 4805
P: (07) 4786 4222
E: info@tourismbowen.com.au

Mackay Visitor Information Kiosk
Bluewater Lagoon
Mackay Qld 4740
P: (07) 4837 1228
E: bookings@mackayregion.com

Melba House Visitor Information Centre
Melba House, Eungella Road
Marian Qld 4753
P: (07) 4954 4299
E: pvtda@pioneervalley.com.au

Whitsundays Visitor Information Centre
12505 Bruce Highway
Proserpine Qld 4800
P: (07) 4945 3967
E: info@tourismwhitsundays.com.au

Collinsville Visitor Information Centre
Showgrounds
Railway Road
Collinsville Qld 4804
P: 0418 556 560

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