

Mackay

Eguide

Mackay, named after its first inhabitant John Mackay who arrived in 1862 is a commercial port city but offers visitors beaches and access to various islands on the Great Barrier Reef, of which the best known is Brampton Island.

The city centre has some historical buildings in particular the Courthouse and the Commonwealth Bank, both built in 1880, and art deco architecture. Pioneer River is a Mackay icon best viewed from the Blue River Boardwalk and rotunda. Mackay is a place to dine alfresco, shop or use the many bars and nightclubs. And for the arts visit Artspace Mackay a modern art gallery and museum.

Beaches

Black's beach is north of Mackay and stretches for 6km, it is a beautiful beach for swimming and sunbathing. Close by is Bocasia beach with a safe swimming enclosure.

Eimeo Beach is a part of the beautiful coral coastline and popular with day trippers and tourists, it is very easy to spend a day on this beach. Harbour beach is the best beach in Mackay for swimming, beach play and safety. Illawong Beach is 2km from Mackay and is popular with locals and families, a better swimming beach than Town Beach. Sarina beach is located at Sarina 38km South of MacKay.



Islands

Brampton Island

A 400 hectare National Park island with beaches at the southern entrance of the Whitsunday Passage. There is a resort on the island and day trips to the island not the resort are possible.

Brampton Island is about 32km Northwest of Mackay and can be reached by boat from the Mackay Marina daily, this trip takes about an hour and a quarter. Or you can go by helicopter charter, which leaves from the airport. Once there you can snorkel at Sandy Beach and view some pretty coral, or try out the great walking trails.

Carlisle Island

Joined to Brampton Island at low tide. Carlisle Island has basic camping facilities.

Newry Island Group

A group of islands 50km off the coast from Mackay the largest island being Rabbit Island.



Keswick Island

Keswick Island is fringed by colourful coral reefs and white sandy beaches with some accommodation available. St Bees Island is close to Keswick Island and good for viewing koalas.

Scawfell Island

60 kilometres north east of the Mackay coast with a turtle nesting area. Bush camping is available on the island.

Parks

Botanic Gardens

The Mackay Botanic gardens surround a number of lagoons and are located 3km from the city centre. Highlights here are the themed gardens, one being the Tropical Shade Garden, there is also the Lagoon's Cafe. *Lagoon Street, Mackay (07 4952 7300).*



Cape Palmerston

South of Sarina accessible by 4WD only is fishing and camping area.

Cape Hillsborough National Park

A large park 45km north of Mackay where the rainforest meets the reef. Famous for the wallabies that visit the beach each morning at sunrise.

The headland has a walking trail illustrating Aboriginal history from the Juperia Tribe. *(07 4959 0410).*



Orchid House and Queens Park

The Orchid House is in Queen's Park a park that covers six hectares with a very old Banyan Fig and Royal Palm.

The Orchid House is circular in design with 3000 orchids some more than 50 years old.

Finch Hatton Gorge

Located on the way to Eungella has rainforest walks and swimming is possible at Araluen and Wheel of Fire waterfalls. Forest flying is a great way to see this park; you can get harnessed to a cable suspended 25m above the ground and glide over the rainforest.





Slade Point Reserve

A 73 hectare reserve with walking circuits. Enter from Pacific Esplanade at Lamberts Beach.



Eungella National Park

To the west of Mackay, about 60 minutes drive away is the Eungella National Park.

This park has a lot of tropical and sub tropical vegetation with good views from the Sky Window.

Platypus are often seen in the Broken River particularly during the period May to August.

A platypus viewing platform has been constructed close to the bridge. Eungella has over 20 kilometres of walking tracks.



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