

# MEDIA RELEASE



May 2024

## What's New in Cairns & Great Barrier Reef

### TOURS AND ATTRACTIONS

Jump on a jetski and whizz around Pajinka, the northern-most tip of Australia, with a First Nations-led jetski tour launching on 25 May. Pafetai Morseau from Badu Island has founded [Cape York Jetski Tours](#) to showcase the remote region's culture and history as part of an action-packed jetski tour that can also take in the Torres Strait islands. Fishing and trips to remote art centres are among the options for the tours departing from Seisa in Cape York Peninsula.

Cuddling a koala and seeing woodland creatures while learning about conservation and sustainability can be done in less than half a day in the Cairns CBD with the opening of [Cairns Koalas & Creatures](#). Cairns' newest attraction opened on 3 May providing an educational and family-oriented attraction showcasing Tropical North Queensland's diverse ecosystems from the Great Barrier Reef to the outback.

[Passions of Paradise](#) has launched daily citizen science tours on the Great Barrier Reef for experienced divers departing from Cairns. Certified divers can now choose the Marine Biologist for a Day program on any day of the week and help to monitor coral planting undertaken through the Coral Nurture Program with the Passions crew who have planted more than 9000 corals on Hastings Reef off Cairns.

A private [croc feeding experience](#) and a private [nocturnal tour](#) have been introduced at Wildlife Habitat to give guests an intimate insight into animal behaviour and habitat conservation. A professional croc keeper guides the croc feeding experience and wildlife keepers lead the two-hour Your WildNIGHT Habitat offering encounters with elusive marsupials as they come to life in their natural habitats.

Embark on Wildside Adventures' new ['Get Dunk'ed' tour](#) on Dunk Island. Experience the adrenaline rush of speeding around this tropical paradise to explore sandy beaches, coral reefs, hiking trails, and secret caves against a stunning Jurassic backdrop, and snorkelling or relaxing at Coconut Bay. Limited to 10 people per journey, this 4-hour tour includes friendly guides, snorkelling gear, and refreshments. Departs twice daily from Mission Beach and is priced at \$150.

[Cairns Aquarium](#) has been ranked the favourite experience for shore excursions worldwide by passengers on Viking Cruises. Staff from the Aquarium's education team join passengers on their coach transfers to talk about the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics before they tour its 71 exhibits and hear from wildlife educators at each of the four amphitheatres.

### ACCOMMODATION

The [Cairns Harbourside Hotel](#) has launched after transforming from the Holiday Inn and transitioning to self-management with the appointment of tourism expert Glen Macdonald as General Manager. Situated on Cairns' iconic Esplanade, the hotel boasts stunning water, mountain, and garden views from its 173 rooms, all with private balconies. The hotel's Harbourside Bar & Kitchen offers a Farm-to-Table dining experience, complemented by an extensive organic wine list.

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TripAdvisor has named [The Reef House Adults Retreat](#) the best place to stay in Australia and the South Pacific. Situated in Palm Cove, this multi-award-winning property has clinched top honours as both the No. 1 Luxury Hotel and No. 1 Hotel. The resort has also undergone significant enhancements, including the completion of their new Walk-in Wine Room, where the Sommelier has expanded the already impressive wine selection. In addition, 'Residency at The Reef House' has launched, presenting guests with an elevated bespoke service for extended getaways. This exclusive offering includes limousine transfers to and from Cairns Airport, tailored preparation of your room or suite to personal preferences, weekly meal planning, and tailored advice and curation of personalised itineraries within and beyond Palm Cove.

After a five-month hiatus due to damage caused by Cyclone Jasper, the [Daintree Wilderness Lodge](#) reopens its doors on May 14. This eagerly anticipated reopening brings with it a host of exciting enhancements to the lodge. Visitors can expect refurbished cabins, revamped décor in the restaurant, new outdoor furniture, and an enhancement of the guest experience.

[Castaways Resort Mission Beach](#) is unveiling a fresh new identity with the transformation of its in-house restaurant into Castaways Beach Bar and Grill. Boasting a beachfront location, the revamped venue introduces a new menu and branding, setting the stage for an unforgettable dining experience. With plans for a complete refurbishment of the restaurant area underway, Castaways Beach Bar and Grill is poised to become a must-visit destination for travellers exploring Mission Beach.

Escape to [Hitching Rail Retreat](#) for a farm stay experience, where nature meets comfort in a serene setting. Explore the picturesque surroundings with a leisurely stroll through the garden with its windmill, outdoor bath, climbing rose wall, wildlife and encounters with cows and horses. Located just outside Yungaburra on the Atherton Tablelands, this rural oasis provides easy access to nearby natural attractions such as Lake Tinaroo, Lake Eacham, Lake Barrine, and the Curtain Fig Tree. Choose to stay in a glamping tent with a king-sized bed and cosy fire to unwind, or the Railway Cabin which has a full kitchen and stunning views from the private deck.

## FOOD AND BEVERAGE

[Spirit of Cairns](#) has launched a new dinner cruise menu featuring locally sourced produce. Glide along Trinity Inlet onboard the sailing catamaran, soaking in the tropical port city's sights as day turns to night. Savour a refreshing pre-dinner drink before indulging in a delicious buffet, with highlights including Tablelands Smoked BBQ Pulled Pork, Lemon Capers Butter Barramundi, and Atherton Mediterranean Chicken. Save room for dessert with offerings like Mini Tim Tam Cheesecakes, Lamington Sandwiches, and cheeses from [Gallo Dairyland](#).

## SUSTAINABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

[The Crystal Caves](#) has recently undergone significant upgrades to ensure accessibility and inclusivity for all visitors. These enhancements, guided by Queensland's Year of Accessible Tourism 2023-2024 and the Queensland Tourism Industry Council's (QTIC) Accessible Tourism program caters to neurodiverse, hearing, and vision-impaired visitors. New accessibility features include a guidebook for the hearing impaired, an audio guide for the vision impaired, a social script for neurodiverse visitors, improved navigation for wheelchair users, and the introduction of an accessibility page on the website.

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[Quicksilver Cruises](#) is undertaking a \$2 million engine refit on one of its catamarans to allow hydrotreated vegetable oil and other synthetic fuels to be used instead of diesel. It is the second Wavepiercer to undergo the refit so that Quicksilver's fleet will be ready to introduce environmentally-friendly sustainable fuels as soon as they become available in Australia.

[Tropic Wings](#) has been awarded the Environmental Innovation Award at the 2024 Queensland Bus Industry Council Industry Awards for initiatives including introducing 12 new battery electric vehicles and plans to transition 80% of its vehicles to electric by 2028. Tropic Wings has been an eco-certified business for more than two decades and continues to offset emissions by planting trees in local reforestation projects.

## EVENTS

[Crankworx](#), the world's most watched mountain bike event, includes Cairns again on its World Tour after a successful two years. The iconic rainforest tracks at Smithfield Mountain Bike Park will come to life on 22-26 May with a raucous crowd and daredevil racing. Mountain biking devotees won't want to miss the packed schedule of events including downhill, dual slalom, slopestyle, speed and style and the official Australian Whip-off Championships. This year Crankworx introduces 'Party in Paradise' featuring live music to complement the festival experience with bands including Spiderbait, Beddy Rays, Worm Girlz, Late November and DJ sets scheduled throughout the event.

[Port Douglas Carnivale](#) is gearing up to showcase the best of the region with a vibrant lineup of events spanning three days from May 24-26. Celebrating its 30th year, the festival promises an array of experiences, from tropical outdoor dining to orchestral performances and family-friendly fun. New additions include Savour TNQ, a waterfront food festival at Crystalbrook Superyacht Marina, and Paradise Picnic, featuring performances by leading artists like Amber Lawrence.

The [Cairns Indigenous Art Fair \(CIAF\)](#) celebrates its 15th anniversary on 25-28 July. Some 30,000 people will attend more than 20 free and ticketed events with the 2024 theme 'Country Speaking' connecting the art awards, symposium and fashion performance events. An anniversary themed exhibition, 'Not Selling Cakes' featuring outstanding artists who have contributed to CIAF will be presented at the Tanks Art Centre.

For more information go to [cairnsgreatbarrierreef.com](http://cairnsgreatbarrierreef.com)

## ENDS

Images: [https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/sxdjcmayahq3pz3mzndepp/AKJNnmr84VgF\\_h-4T4txFfE?rlkey=9dqdiwpim3z7m4932hgkhbh0x&st=m6ohhrwz&dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/sxdjcmayahq3pz3mzndepp/AKJNnmr84VgF_h-4T4txFfE?rlkey=9dqdiwpim3z7m4932hgkhbh0x&st=m6ohhrwz&dl=0)

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