

MEDIA RELEASE

What's New in Cairns & Great Barrier Reef this winter

TOURS AND ATTRACTIONS

Australia's oldest coffee plantation and the country's largest supplier of papaya, [Skybury Farms](#), has launched its first behind-the-scenes Kraken Tour of the farm. Departing daily with just 10 guests in a farm Troopie, the guided experience visits the Skybury nursery to learn about propagation and tissue culture technology, the papaya packing shed which distributes more than 50% of Australia's papayas, and the coffee and papaya plantations for a true paddock-to-plate insight. Return to the café to see the on-site roastery and linger for coffee and dishes including Skybury's chicken papaya curry.

The Eastern Kuku Yalanji people have expanded cultural tourism at Cape Tribulation with the opening of the Bamaga Muruku Tourism Hub visitor centre and launch of [Yalada Tours](#). Operated by Jabalbina Corporation, the Daintree National Park charter tours are unique eco-cultural journeys through Eastern Kuku Yalanji country where the two World Heritage areas of the Wet Tropics Rainforest and the Great Barrier Reef meet. The visitor centre is the first stage of the Cape Tribulation tourism hub which will provide direct employment, visitor accommodation and event and training spaces.

With one of just eight Great Barrier Reef long-distance roving permits, the private luxury charter vessel [Allure](#) can take up to eight passengers on day trips or four people overnight on extraordinary diving and fishing sites away from other vessels. The 14m Riviera is fully equipped for diving, snorkelling and fishing with a personalised crew to explore the Great Barrier Reef at leisure. It is operated by Cairns family-owned Passions of Paradise, which has been taking visitors to the Great Barrier Reef for 37 years.

Explore Tropical North Queensland in style with two new tours from [Cairns Luxury Car Hire](#). Drive a one-of-a-kind Mustang on a one to three-day guided adventure exploring Port Douglas, the Daintree, Paronella Park, Kuranda and the Atherton Tablelands. If you prefer to be chauffeured the Guided Experience in a luxury touring vehicle has three options to explore north, south or west of Cairns with a gourmet picnic or two-course lunch.

No walking is required for a 360-degree virtual reality experience of the world's oldest rainforest at the [Daintree Discovery Centre](#). The new [VR Zone](#) allows guests to virtually move through key locations within the Centre and across the surrounding region including a sunrise perspective from the Canopy Tower and the Jurassic Forest, aerial journeys over Alexandra Lookout, Daintree River, Mackay Reef with Ocean Safari and Snapper Island.

[Tusa Reef Tours](#) has launched a half-day morning snorkelling tour of the outer Great Barrier Reef for people with time constraints. Guests snorkel for two hours at either Saxon or Hastings Reef, depending on the conditions of the day. Optional extras include an introductory dive and a picnic lunch box to enjoy on the 90-minute return to Cairns.

The newly launched [Cairns Luxury Guides](#) crafts unforgettable one-of-a-kind experiences in the Daintree, Cassowary Coast and Atherton Tablelands. Go beyond the usual visitor spots to experience Tropical North Queensland at your own pace and following your unique interests with a customised itinerary and a local guide.

Mt Mulligan Lodge has launched a purpose-built [spa](#) and bathing experience inside an intimate tent with thoughtful rituals that ground each visitor in the sense of place at this outback oasis. Seasonal native botanicals are infused into signature foot baths as a mindful pause before or after treatments. At the heart of the spa experience is a one-of-a-kind private mineral bathing pool to ease muscle tension and joint pain, improve circulation and aid sleep quality.

[Heather's Private Transfers & Tours](#) has introduced a new way to explore Tropical North Queensland with bespoke private touring experiences in a premium vehicle with a professional driver-guide. Discover the region's most iconic landscapes from the Daintree Rainforest and Cape Tribulation to the waterfalls of the Atherton Tablelands at a relaxed pace and with a flexible, tailor-made itinerary. Alongside seamless airport and attraction transfers, the private tours are designed for travellers seeking comfort, discretion and a personalised journey.

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation has returned to Dunk Island with the launch of [Dunk Island](#) Beachfront Eco Tents and a newly scheduled ferry service from Mission Beach. Marking a significant step in the island's gradual revival as a low-impact, nature-led destination, the tents offer guests direct beach access and uninterrupted ocean views. The accommodation builds on the reopening of the beachfront restaurant and the popularity of bayside camping. The twice-daily ferry service operates Wednesday to Sunday and is supported by free mainland shuttles, improving accessibility for day trips and overnight stays.

The intimate retreat [Ever Bloomfield](#) opens in November 2026 in the Daintree Rainforest with just 14 bungalows overlooking the Bloomfield River. Experiences are curated to each guest's interests, mood and conditions of the day and may include fishing from the jetty, guided beach foraging, coastal cruises, rainforest hikes or a visit to a vanilla bean plantation. Meals unfold both on site and beyond, from communal tables to beachside picnics and rainforest dining.

The [Hilton Palm Cove Cairns Resort & Spa](#) is set to open in September 2026. Formerly the Grand Chancellor, the hotel will be fully refurbished and include an outdoor pool, two dining outlets, an all-day dining restaurant, two bars, a kids club, fitness centre, spa and 450sq.m of function and meeting space.

8 May 2026



FOOD & BEVERAGE

[Gin Social](#) at Hilton Cairns has unveiled a refreshed, share-style menu that celebrates the bold flavours, local produce and native ingredients of Tropical North Queensland. Designed for relaxed, social dining, the new offering brings together refined comfort dishes, standout regional plates and vibrant salads, finished with locally sourced desserts and cheeses. Paired with Gin Social's signature cocktail list, the menu reinforces the venue's position as a contemporary waterfront dining destination where flavour, atmosphere and connection take centre stage in the heart of Cairns.

Get a taste of cowboy culture at the [Wild Pony Saloon](#), the newest bar created by the team behind Three Wolves, The Hospo Group. The Group's seventh bar in Cairns is wildly different with shuffleboard, a popcorn machine and a drink list that includes bourbon peach sweet tea and an exclusive house lager.

EVENTS

The [Australian Festival of Chamber Music](#) arrives in Cairns in 2026 from July 24 to August 1, marking a new chapter and location for the internationally renowned event. Over nine days, the festival presents world-class chamber music performances in venues across the city with international artists, Australian premieres and intimate concerts alongside free community events and artist talks. Set against a tropical backdrop where rainforest meets reef, the festival offers a distinctive cultural experience that blends exceptional music with the spirit of Tropical North Queensland.

For Images, click [here](#)

For more information, go to cairnsgreatbarrierreef.com

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