

MEDIA RELEASE

What's New in Tropical North Queensland

TOURS AND ATTRACTIONS

Launching a [new 11-night expedition experience](#), Coral Expeditions invites travellers to explore the world's largest and most ecologically diverse coral reef system. Combining science with conservation and expert-led discovery, the voyage follows the reef's natural arc. From southern coral communities to the tropical north, the experience combines immersive exploration with enriching research projects and conservation experiences.

Strait Experience is offering [a new escape with three days](#) on the northern edge of Australia, bringing meaningful access to rich cultural and immersive experiences. Co-designed with Traditional Owners, packages can include upgrades and add-ons including scenic helicopter tours and heli-charters.

From rainforest, to reef, to Indigenous culture, a new all-inclusive package with Sailaway Port Douglas and Mossman Gorge Cultural Centre invites guests to experience three unique worlds in the Tropical North Queensland region. This [new package](#) seamlessly connects Tropical North Queensland's most iconic natural and cultural sites all in a single day. Guests can choose from two packages: a full day Rainforest to Reef or a half day Rainforest and Sunset Sail package.

[Rainforestation Nature Park](#) celebrated their 50th anniversary in July, with the beautifully timed arrival of the newest addition to the park. Jubilee the Koala joey – whose name pays tribute to the milestone year – was born as part of the park's koala breeding program. The Koala & Wildlife Park at Rainforestation has been connecting visitors with Australia's most iconic native animals since 1996. The park's koala breeding program is a cornerstone of its conservation commitment, contributing to the long-term future of one of Australia's most beloved species.

ACCOMMODATION

[Green Island Resort](#) was awarded Queensland's top hotel award, winning the 'Best Environmental and Energy Efficient Practise' category at the 2026 Queensland Hotel Association (QHA) Awards for Excellence. Located on a remote island in the middle of the Great Barrier Reef, Green Island Resort has an ongoing approach to sustainability. From turning waste into greener energy technologies and advanced water treatment systems, this experience/stay is ideal for the green thumb in your life.

The intimate retreat [Ever Bloomfield](#) will be welcoming its first guests in December 2026. Accessible only by boat or helicopter, the property offers guests' direct access to two UNESCO World Heritage environments within a single stay.

[Shangri-La The Marina](#) in Cairns has upgraded the facilities for guests with the swimming pool now temperature-controlled for the cooler months. Regardless of when guests choose to stay, it can be guaranteed those who choose to enjoy facilities will be in for a comfortable time.

[Glamping at Mareeba Bush Stays](#) launched July 2026, this private retreat has been thoughtfully designed to offer guests the perfect balance of comfort, luxury, and connection with nature. Surrounded by peaceful bushland and breathtaking natural scenery, it provides an ideal escape from the everyday.

[Novotel Cairns Oasis Resort](#) has completed the multi-million-dollar refurbishment, completing the transformation of one of Tropical North Queensland's most loved family resorts. The completion of the project was designed with families in mind, introducing refreshed guest rooms with refurbished bathrooms, beds designed to support a more restorative sleep, contemporary curtains, and stylish new sun loungers around the resort's iconic lagoon pool.

Set across nearly one million acres of private land in Cape York, [Fairview Station](#) is a working cattle property offering a range of comfortable accommodation options including 18 ensuite cabins, five twin single rooms, and powered and unpowered campsites. Fairview Station provides an authentic Cape York experience while delivering comfort, space, and genuine country hospitality in one of Australia's most remote and remarkable regions.

Double Island has been returned to the Tropical North Queensland community, as Australian-owned and run [Morris Group](#) taking over the island's lease. With plans to transform the island into a world-class tourism and hospitality destination, Morris Group unveiled a \$40 million four-stage revitalisation plan to breathe new life into the neglected Cairns landmark, with the public beach bar and restaurant slated for opening by Christmas 2027, followed by the resort accommodation opening by 2029. The group is also behind award-winning luxury regional tourism experiences such as Orpheus Island Lodge, Pelorus Private Island, Mt Mulligan Lodge, Morris Nautical's fleet of superyachts, and Nautilus Aviation.

FOOD & BEVERAGE

A new Japanese whiskey bar, [KOI Bar](#), has opened in Cairns City. Curated as an intimate dining experience, KOI Bar blends a Japanese-inspired atmosphere with carefully curated drinks, distinctive flavours and a touch of the unexpected. With signature and classic cocktails with a KOI twist to whiskey flights designed for exploration, KOI is designed to be more than a bar.

[Alivio Hotel Group](#) is now home to popular local Thai restaurant Finn Finn, at its Sheridan Street property. Led by owner-chef Tom Sangsai, who operates the restaurant alongside his wife Jeab, the restaurant combines traditional Northern Thai cooking with colourful, culturally inspired interiors and a relaxed tropical setting, offering guests the choice of dining indoors among eclectic Thai décor or outdoors overlooking the hotel's gardens and pool precinct.

One of Cairns South's oldest pubs, the [Grafton Hotel](#), has reopened to unveil extensive renovation preserving the historic 116-year-old venue. The renovation was designed to capture the much-loved character while introducing a refreshed bistro, upgraded live-sport facilities, a renovated beer garden and new children's playground. Complementing the refreshed spaces is an Aussie pub menu built around quality, affordability and familiar favourites. The menu covers classic pub meals, steaks, burgers, salads and Grafton Hotel's established woodfired pizzas, with options dedicated to kids and seniors.

[Nude Amigos](#) has opened a new venue in Cairns City, located on the waterfront at Shangri-La The Marina Cairns. The vibrant Mexican dining experience brings great food, exceptional margaritas, and marina views to create the perfect atmosphere whether it's a long lunch or sunset cocktails.

EVENTS

The inaugural [PADI](#) AmbassaDiver Summit has been announced to be hosted at The Great Barrier Reef in late 2026. A first-of-its-kind global gathering of the most influential divers, storytellers, ocean advocates, and celebrities, the PADI AmbassaDiver Summit will offer participants immersive experiences that showcase the region's world class diving, conservation leadership, and Indigenous culture set to the backdrop of the iconic Great Barrier Reef. AmbassaDivers kitting up to join the Summit include one of India's most recognised adventure content creators, Aakash Malhotra; leading Chinese film maker, conservationist, and free diver Doudou; Japanese music band Luv K Raft; and Wildlife conservationist Cha Ocampo from the Philippines.

[Quicksilver Group](#) celebrated 40 years of [Reef Biosearch](#), a milestone in Great Barrier Reef education and conservation. The pioneering environmental division has spent four decades helping shape reef education and monitoring; from piloting Ecotourism Australia's accreditation program to leading collaborative research and stewardship initiatives.

[Kuranda Scenic Railway](#) has celebrated 135 years of operation, having first welcomed passengers to journey between Cairns and the rainforest village of Kuranda in 1891. The railway remains one of Queensland's most ambitious engineering achievements – the 37km journey winds through the World Heritage-listed Wet Tropics rainforest in the Barron Gorge National Park, crossing over 55 bridges and passing through 15 tunnels. Recognised as a Heritage Listed railway and National Engineering Landmark, it continues to be celebrated globally as one of the world's great scenic rail journeys.

For Images, click [here](#)

For more information, go to cairnsgreatbarrierreef.com

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