A self-guided walk through Freshwater's history

THE FRESHWATER HERITAGE TRAIL

START
At the Rock Plaque - The community of Freshwater evolved in the 1880s due to the presence of a permanent freshwater creek which provided the first reliable water supply for travellers after leaving Cairns. In 1891 the rail line was extended and land cleared for crops, services and houses. The grassed reserve opposite the station was once known as Railway Square.

1. Bullocks waterhole at Freshwater creek - always a reliable water supply. The creek’s Aboriginal name is Bana Gamburra, a story-telling water site.

2. Freshwater Creek swimming hole has always been a favourite cooling off spot for families and friends.

3. Packing shed at 301 Kamerunga Rd, built in the 1920s by Frank Martin Snr to pack and store his crops.

4. Queenslander houses at 3, 5, 7 & 9 Martin St built circa 1930s by Frank Martin Snr with timber from the old Mareeba Hospital.

5. Sacred Heart Catholic Church Duffy St built in 1938.

6. Last remaining farm barracks Duffy St circa 1920s.


8. Freshwater Cottage, Cnr Maree St built in 1923 by Tom Maree Snr as the dream home for his wife.


10. Uniting Church (previously Mason Memorial Methodist) Vallely St, built in 1937 on land donated by the Mason family.

11. From 1956-81 Freshwater Post Office operated from 11 Valley Street with the Post-Mistress living at Number 13.

12. The area’s first Provisional School was built on this site in 1895 and operated till 1918 when it closed.

13. In 1923 Freshwater State School reopened in this building after a post-WW1 period where no school existed.

14. George Moule built this cottage at 233 Kamerunga Rd in 1919. He lived here with his wife, sister-in-law and eight children.

15. The Freshwater Hotel stood on this corner from 1956-2006.

16. The giant mango trees on Old Smithfield Road were planted circa 1890.

OTHER MARKED TRAIL SITES

5. Freshwater's railway building once stood on the other side of the line with station mistress, Minnie Le Grande, working there from 1915-55. In 1984 the station was remodelled into Freshwater Connection and their Tea Rooms serve refreshments to visitors and those travelling on the historic Kuranda rail line.

6. European settlement in Freshwater Valley began in 1877. Bullock teams, horse-drawn carts and gold diggers travelled north-west along the stock route known as Smith’s Track.

7. The Freshwater CWA Hall was built  here in 1957.

Friends of Freshwater acknowledges the assistance of the Cairns Regional Council, Angela Murphy, Paul Matthews, Alys Wall, Graham Warden, SAFCA and the many other Freshwater friends who offered oral histories, old photos and support.

John Benfer’s publication ‘A History of Freshwater’ also provided wonderful insights into the history of this suburb.

This trail is best enjoyed walking or driving. It does not conform to wheelchair accessible standards.
