

1ST EDITION

CELEBRATING 150 YEARS

PROGRAM OF EVENTS



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Mayor's Welcome

IT is with profound respect and immense pride that I welcome you to Cairns Celebrates 150 Years, a moment that honours not only our city's founding in 1876 but the story of all who have called this place home across time.

This anniversary is more than a milestone. It is a mirror, one that invites us to see who we have been, who we are and who we still might become.

Before there was a city, there was Country. The Gimuy Walubara Yidinji, Yirrganydji, Djabugay and neighbouring peoples have cared for these lands and waters for many hundreds of years.

Their custodianship is not the prologue to Cairns' story, it is the heart of it.

Their languages, laws and knowledge continue to shape the way we live, reminding us that the truest measure of progress is found in connection, respect and continuity.

When Cairns was proclaimed in 1876, it was built on courage and conviction, on swamp and spirit.

The settlers, who arrived here did not come for certainty, they came with hope.

They carved streets through mangroves, raised walls against flood

and fever and laid the groundwork for a community that would grow as diverse as it was determined.

From gold and sugar to soldiers and sailors, from cane fields to coral reefs, from the engines of industry to the hum of tourism, Cairns has continually redefined itself.

Yet through every transformation, one truth has endured: the strength of this city lies not in its skyline, but in its people.

Ours is a community forged by challenge and lifted by compassion.

We have stood together in the aftermath of cyclones and floods.

We have grieved together, rebuilt together and celebrated together.

Every time adversity has tested us, Cairns has answered not with defeat but with unity, with the quiet, unyielding belief that we can and will begin again.

As we mark 150 years, we honour every hand that helped build this city, the visionaries and the volunteers, the teachers and tradies, the artists and advocates, the dreamers and doers.

We thank the many community groups, schools, historians and local champions who have brought this commemorative program to life, and the members of the Cairns Celebrates



150 Years Advisory Committee whose stewardship has guided its course.

But most of all, we honour the everyday citizens, the people who rise each morning to serve, to create, to care. You are the living story of Cairns.

May this anniversary remind us that history is not something behind us, it is something we carry forward.

It lives in the way we treat one another, the choices we make for the next generation, and the legacy we leave in the land and sea we share.

Let us celebrate 150 years not as the closing of a chapter, but as a promise renewed, that the courage, creativity and resilience that built Cairns will continue to guide us as we write the next 150.

Mayor Amy Eden
City of Cairns

Let's Celebrate

LET'S Celebrate - Come with us on a journey to celebrate Gimuy/Cairns, walking through history of Yidinji people for over 60,000 years, and Walk with us through a journey of 150 years since the British colonial history in Gimuy/Cairns.

Lets celebrate, with pride, respect and compassion.

Henrietta Marrie AM
Member Advisory Committee
Cairns Celebrates 150 Years



Acknowledgment of Country

CAIRNS Regional Council acknowledges the First Peoples within our region who are the Traditional Custodians of this country: the Djabugay; Yirriganydji; Bulawai; Gimuy Walubara Yidinji; Mandingabay Yidinji; Gunggandji; Dulabed and Malanbara Yidinji; Wanyurr Majay; Mamu and NgadjonJii peoples.

We pay respect to Elders past, present and future and extend that respect to all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians within our region.

CAIRNS CELEBRATES 150 YEARS - PROGRAM GUIDE
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Bree James MP Member for Barron River

It is a privilege to congratulate Cairns on reaching this extraordinary milestone.

Few places in the world are as unique as Cairns, where the reef meets the rainforest, where ancient culture lives alongside world-class innovation – and where community spirit runs deeper than the Coral Sea itself.

This celebration is our moment to honour who we are: a city shaped by pioneers, creatives and adventurers, by families who've called this place home for generations and those who arrived and instantly felt they belonged.

This milestone is a time to share our stories, showcase our incredible diversity, and imagine the next 150 years of growth, innovation, and unmistakable Cairns

energy.

Our people are the heartbeat and the future of this region.

Every day, I am reminded how lucky I am to represent such a passionate, generous, and resilient community as the Member for Barron River.

I am so proud to live here, to serve here, and to share this journey with the people who make Cairns what it is – bold, vibrant, welcoming, and full of possibility.

Thank you, Cairns, for all you've given me: a lifestyle like nowhere else, opportunities that helped me grow, the joy of meeting my husband and raising our children, and a lifetime of memories made between the reef, the rainforest, and the vibrant community that makes this place home.

Congratulations, Cairns!



Matt Smith MP Member for Leichhardt

CAIRNS shines as a place where stories of land, sea, and sky are woven into every horizon.

From the deep cultural roots of the Yirrganydji and Gimuy Walubara Yidinji peoples to the adventurous spirit that shaped a modern tropical city, Cairns stands as a celebration of culture, resilience, and connection.

Here, ancient rainforests whisper wisdom older than memory and the Great Barrier Reef reminds us of the wonder that thrives when nature and community are honoured.

Cairns' history is one of openness – welcoming explorers, dreamers and creators who add their own threads to its vibrant tapestry. Its markets, festivals and streets pulse with diverse voices, each contributing to a shared identity grounded in respect and opportunity.

To celebrate Cairns' 150th anniversary is to celebrate unity, heritage, and the courage to grow.

I'm honoured to be your federal representative. standing proud, looking forward with hope, and remembering that extraordinary stories begin in places just like this.

Terry James MP Member for Mulgrave

AS the member for Mulgrave, it is a great pleasure in congratulating the City of Cairns on its 150th Birthday.

If the people in 1876 could see what the place looks like now, I am sure they would be blown away.

As a born and bred Cairnsite, I have great memories of growing up in what has become this amazing city.

Not only is this one of the most beautiful places in Australia to live, but it houses some of the most amazing people who also make this place so special.

I congratulate the Cairns Regional Council for arranging an amazing array of activities to celebrate this important milestone.

I hope the public enjoy joining us to be part of this celebration.



Michael Healy MP Member for Cairns

Long before Europeans arrived, First Nations groups lived peacefully for thousands of generations in a place they called Gimuy. The first recorded landing of white men near Cairns was on 10 June 1770, when Lt. James Cook and his crew came ashore at Cape Grafton to collect freshwater. Cairns itself wasn't established until 1876, driven by the discovery of gold in the Palmer River region.

From its beginnings as a small

fishing community, Cairns grew into an agricultural hub and later became a world-renowned tourist destination, offering easy access to the Great Barrier Reef and ancient rainforests.

Over the past 150 years, Cairns has evolved into a diverse, multicultural community. People from around the globe now call Cairns home, and as we continue to grow, we invest in a future that honours our past, ensuring this unique place thrives for generations to come.

Cairns Celebrates 150 Years

A year-long celebration of stories, spirit and special moments

IN 2026, Cairns marks a once-in-a-lifetime milestone – 150 years since the founding of our city.

What began in 1876 as a small port serving the goldfields has grown into one of the world's most loved tropical destinations – a vibrant community framed by rainforest and reef, shaped by culture, creativity and connection.

Cairns Celebrates 150 Years is a city-wide celebration that honours our past, embraces our present and looks boldly to the future.

Locals and visitors alike are invited to take part in an exciting calendar of events, exhibitions and experiences that showcase the people and stories that make Cairns extraordinary.

Throughout the year, storytelling themes highlight key parts of Cairns' identity – from agriculture and architecture to sport, science, music, multiculturalism and tourism – inspiring community participation and collaboration.

Businesses, community groups and organisations across the region are getting involved by hosting events, launching special experiences, and celebrating local stories.

The three pillars of the Cairns Celebrates 150 Years celebration are:

- 1. Recognising Cairns' Past:** Honouring the stories, traditions, and achievements that built the foundations of the city – from First Nations histories to pioneering industries and iconic moments.
- 2. Celebrating Cairns Today:** Showcasing the vibrant, diverse and creative spirit of modern Cairns – its people, schools, communities, businesses and natural beauty.
- 3. Looking Forward to the Next 150 Years:** Imagining the future we want to create – through innovation, sustainability, inclusion, and bold community vision.

THE REEF HOTEL CASINO CELEBRATING 30 YEARS



**CONGRATULATIONS CAIRNS! 150 YEARS IN 2026
IT'S GOING TO BE A PEARLER OF A YEAR**

| DATE | TIME | EVENT | LOCATION | CONTACT |
|-----------------|--|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 31 Dec 25 | 5pm-9.30pm | New Years Eve Family Concert & Launch of the Cairns Celebrates 150 Years Program | Fogarty Park | cairns.qld.gov.au |
| 10 Jan - 2 Mar | | Exhibition: Yirraganydji: Saltwater Art - Patricia Singleton, Aboriginal Artist & Curator | Cairns Museum | cairnsmuseum.org.au |
| 23 Jan - 8 Mar | | 2026 Cairns Chinese New Year Celebrations | Various | cadcai.org.au |
| 26 Jan | 4.30pm-8pm | Australia Day Awards & Family Concert | Munro Martin Parklands | cairns.qld.gov.au |
| 31 Jan | 6.30pm | Harry James Angus & Friends | Tanks Arts Centre | tanksartscentre.com |
| 12 Feb | 6.30pm-8.30pm | Cairns Taipans - Cairns Celebrates 150 Years home game | Cairns Convention Centre | tickets.taipans.com |
| 14 Feb | 6.30pm | The Terrys | Tanks Arts Centre | tanksartscentre.com |
| 16 Feb | 10am | Morning Melodies - Bloom sings Eva Cassidy | Cairns Performing Arts Centre | ticketlink.com.au |
| 21 Feb | 6.30pm | Example (UK) | Tanks Arts Centre | tanksartscentre.com |
| 21 Feb | | Cairns Historical Society Free Public Lectures: Luggie Bort of the Torres Straits, Nerelle Nicol From the Indian Empire to Far North Queensland: Indians in Cairns, Dr Sandi Robb | Cairns Museum | cairnsmuseum.org.au |
| 24 Feb | 10am & 6pm | Where's the Green Sheep? | Cairns Performing Arts Centre | tickelink.com.au |
| 27 Feb - 29 Mar | Weekdays: 9am-4.30pm Weekends: 10am-2pm | Flame 2026 Exhibition: Future 150 | Tanks Arts Centre | tanksartscentre.com |
| 28 Feb | 6.30pm | The Grogans | Tanks Arts Centre | tanksartscentre.com |
| 7 Mar | | Cairns Regional Council International Women's Day Awards | TBA | cairns.qld.gov.au |
| 7 Mar - 4 May | | Exhibition: Twin Beginnings: First Settlement at Smithfield - Dr Sarah Collins, Curator | Cairns Museum | cairnsmuseum.org.au |
| 12 Mar | 6.30pm | Willie Watcon | Tanks Arts Centre | tanksartscentre.com |
| 13 Mar | 6.30pm | Mad Professor Dubs Down Under | Tanks Arts Centre | tanksartscentre.com |
| 14 Mar | 6.30pm | Kevin Borich Express | Tanks Arts Centre | tanksartscentre.com |
| 14 Mar | | St Patricks Day Family Festival | North Cairns Tigers Football Club | facebook.com/cairnssirish |
| 1 Apr | 10am-12pm | Copperlode Falls Dam 50th Birthday Morning Tea | Copperlode Falls Dam | cairns.qld.gov.au |
| 2 Apr | 6.30pm | Steve Poltz | Tanks Arts Centre | tanksartscentre.com |
| 13 Apr | 10am | Morning Melodies - Beggars sing The Seekers | Cairns Performing Arts Centre | ticketlink.com.au |
| 18 Apr | 2pm-10pm | Cairns Churches Celebrate 150 Years | Fogarty Park | cairnchurches.net.au |

| DATE | TIME | EVENT | LOCATION | CONTACT |
|-----------------|--|---|---|------------------------|
| 18 Apr | 1.30pm-3.30pm | Cairns Historical Society Free Public Lectures: The History of Cairns from 1876 to 1896 Will Always Be a Moving Feast, Michael Brumby Not for the Faint Hearted: Women of FNQ Dr Jan Wegner | Cairns Museum | cairnsmuseum.org.au |
| 24 - 26 Apr | 7.30pm | Melbourne International Comedy Festival Roadshow | Cairns Performing Arts Centre | ticketlink.com.au |
| 25 Apr | Various | ANZAC Day & ANZAC Day Regional Events | Various | cairns.qld.gov.au |
| 2 May | 6.30pm | Eric Bibb | Tanks Arts Centre | tanksartscentre.com |
| 2 May | 9am-5pm | Foley Shield 2026 | Jones Park | fnqrl.com.au |
| 5 May - 31 Dec | | Exhibition: 150 Years of Farming in the Cairns Region | Babinda Museum | babindamuseum.com.au |
| 17 May | 2pm-8pm | Rotary Beach Vibe | Vasey Esplanade, Trinity Beach | rotarytnq.org.au |
| 28 May - 22 Jun | Weekdays: 9am - 4.30pm Weekends: 10am - 2pm | Exhibition: Flickers of Time: Stories from Living Spaces | Tanks Arts Centre | tanksartscentre.com |
| 29 May | 5.30pm | Exhibition Launch: Flickers of Time: Stories from Living Spaces | Tanks Arts Centre | tanksartscentre.com |
| 31 May | 8am-1pm | Cairns Celebrates 150 Years Tanks Market Day | Tanks Arts Centre | cairns.qld.gov.au |
| 31 May - 6 Jun | | 2026 Hekili Great Barrier Reef Ocean Challenge & Mini G | Yorkeys Knob to Ellis Beach | hekilioutrigger.com.au |
| 2 Jun | 10am | Cairns City Heritage Walk | City Library | cairns.qld.gov.au |
| 4 Jun | 9am-3.30pm | Celebrating 25 Years - Business Liaison Association of Cairns Careers Expo 2026 | Cairns Showgrounds | bla.org.au |
| 5 Jun | 5pm-8pm | Cairns Cenotaph - 100 Years | Cairns Esplanade | cairnrsrl.com.au |
| 8 Jun | 10am | Morning Melodies - Live at Frankies: The Songs of Valli & Sinatra | Cairns Performing Arts Centre | ticketlink.com.au |
| 14 Jun | | Cairns Airport Ironman Cairns | Cairns Esplanade, Palm Cove, Great Barrier Reef Drive | ironman.com |
| 20 Jun | | Cairns Historical Society Free Public Lecture: Meston's Wet Dream in the Scottish Tropics, Dr Jonathan Richards William Bairstowe Ingham: Cairns' first entrepreneur, Dr Sarah Collins | Cairns Museum | cairnsmuseum.org.au |
| 21 Jun | 10am-6pm | Ecofiesta | Munro Martin Parklands | cairns.qld.gov.au |
| 3 Jul | | WOW - Women of the World Festival Cairns | Bulmba-ja Arts Centre | thewowfoundation.com |
| 7 Jul | 10am | Cairns City Heritage Walk | City Library | cairns.qld.gov.au |

| DATE | TIME | EVENT | LOCATION | CONTACT |
|-----------------|---------------|--|--|--|
| 9-12 Jul | | Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF) | Tanks Arts Centre | ciaf.com.au |
| 10 Jul | 9am-6pm | UNITY CUP 2026 - Multicultural Soccer Carnival | Leichhardt Jr Soccer Club | facebook.com/himalayanccs |
| 11 Jul - 7 Sep | | Exhibition: Marsh's Butcheries - A Fourth Generation Butchery! Louise Marsh | Cairns Museum | cairnsmuseum.org.au |
| 12 Jul | | 7 Cairns Marathon | Cairns Esplanade | cairnsmarathon.com.au |
| 15-17 Jul | | Cairns Show | Cairns Showgrounds | cairnsshow.com.au |
| 15-17 Jul | | Exhibition: Celebrating 150 Years - Cairns Regional Council | Cairns Showgrounds | cairns.qld.gov.au |
| 23 Jul - 2 Aug | | Cairns Italian Festival | Fogarty Park & various locations | cairnswitalianfestival.com.au |
| 24 Jul - 1 Aug | | Australian Festival of Chamber Music AFCM 2026 | Cairns Performing Arts Centre Precinct | ticketlink.com.au |
| 25 Jul - 23 Aug | 6.30pm-9.30pm | Shadows from the Past | MsLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery | cdfhs.org/projects |
| 25 Jul - 19 Sep | | Lani's Story | Northsite Contemporary Arts | northsite.org.au |
| 1 - 2 Aug | | Celebrating Aviation Weekend including the 75th Anniversary of the 104th Squadron City of Cairns, Aviation Careers Day and various RAAF Events | Various | |
| 3 Aug | 10am | Morning Melodies - Rocketman Flying Solo | Cairns Performing Arts Centre | ticketlink.com.au |
| 8 -15 Aug | | St Andrews Catholic College - 25th Anniversary Celebrations | St Andrews Catholic College | cns.catholic.edu.au/school/st-andrews-catholic-college |
| 12 Aug | 10am | Cairns City Heritage Walk | City Library | cairns.qld.gov.au |
| 13 Aug | 9am-1pm | Positive Ageing Expo | TBC | cairns.qld.gov.au |
| 15 Aug | | Cairns Historical Society Free Public Lectures: Roads to Cairns from the mining fields 1876-77, Dr Ruth Kerr The Cannon Family, David Cannon | Cairns Museum | cairnsmuseum.org.au |
| 21 - 29 Aug | | Cairns Super Carnival | Cannon Park | cairnswjockeyclub.com.au |
| 26 - 31 Aug | | Cairns Ukelele Festival - Reunion Edition | Various | facebook.com/CairnsUkeleleFestival |
| 28 Aug - 6 Sep | | Cairns Festival | Various | cairns.com.au/festival |
| 28 Aug | 5pm-10pm | QSO Symphony Under the Stars | Munro Martin Parklands | ticketlink.com.au |
| 6 Sep | 9am-2pm | Carnival on Collins | Tanks Arts Centre | tanksartscentre.com |

| DATE | TIME | EVENT | LOCATION | CONTACT |
|-------------------|------------|---|--|-------------------------------|
| 12 Sep - 9 Nov | | Exhibition: Decades of Dedication: CAFNEC's Legacy of Environmental Stewardship, Cairns & Far North Environment Centre | Cairns Museum | cairnsmuseum.org.au |
| 19 Sep | | Cairns 150 Years Centenary Gala Ball | Cairns Esplanade | cairns.qld.gov.au |
| 21 Sep | 10am | Morning Melodies - What's New Pussycat? | Cairns Performing Arts Centre | ticketlink.com.au |
| 25 - 27 Sep | 5pm-9pm | Three Moons 150 Years Cairns Chinese Celebration | Cairns Esplanade | cadcai.org.au |
| 1 - 4 Oct | 9am-6pm | Ski to Wakeboard World Stage Weekend | Cairns Wake Park | cairnswakepark.com |
| 17 Oct | | Great Barrier Reef Ocean Swim | Moore Reef | greatbarrierreef-swims.com.au |
| 17 Oct | | Cairns Historical Society Free Public Lectures: Recent Archaeological Investigations of Chinese Gold Mining Communities in the North, Dr Kevin Rains Architecture of Cairns, Roger Mainwood | Cairns Museum | cairnsmuseum.org.au |
| 18 Oct | 2pm-8pm | Rotary Beach Vibe | Vasey Esplanade, Trinity Beach | rotarytnq.org.au |
| 14 Nov | | Material Recovery Facility Open Day | Cairns Regional Council Material Recovery Facility | cairns.qld.gov.au |
| 14 Nov - 8 Mar 27 | | Exhibition: - Future Tense, Cairns Historical Society | Cairns Museum | cairnsmuseum.org.au |
| 21 Nov | 7pm | Understory Film Festival: Screening & Awards Presentation | Tanks Arts Centre | tanksartscentre.com |
| 29 Nov | 5pm-8pm | Christmas Tree Light Switch-on & Twilight Christmas Market | Cairns Esplanade | cairns.qld.gov.au |
| 30 Nov | 10am | Morning Melodies - The Best of Buble Christmas Experience | Cairns Performing Arts Centre | ticketlink.com.au |
| 13 Dec | 4pm-8pm | Carols in the Park | Munro Martin Parklands | cairns.qld.gov.au |
| 31 Dec | 5pm-9.30pm | New Years Eve Family Concert & Closing of the 2026 Cairns Celebrates 150 Years Program | Cairns Esplanade | cairns.qld.gov.au |

Cairns Council history from 1879

THE Cairns region has an interesting local government history since the first body was formed in 1879. Since then, there have been amalgamations and de-amalgamations.

The first local government of Cairns, the Cairns Divisional Board, was established in 1879. In 1885, the Divisional Board was split into two parts. One remained the Cairns Divisional Board while the other became the Cairns Municipal Council.

In 1923, the Municipal Council became the Cairns City Council.

The Cairns Divisional Board existed until 1902 when it became the Cairns Shire Council, which in 1940 became the Mulgrave Shire Council.

The Mulgrave Shire Council operated until 1995 when it was amalgamated with Cairns City Council.

Cairns City Council amalgamated with Douglas Shire Council in 2008 to become Cairns Regional Council, and then de-amalgamated with Douglas in 2014.



The current Cairns City Council Building on Spence Street.

Pictures: Supplied



Mulgrave Shire Council – 1968

Front row seated L-R: Mr G. Friend (Building Inspector), Mr H. Emery (Health Inspector), Mr H. Henderson (Deputy Shire Clerk), Mr R. Rudge (Shire Engineer), Cr. K. Alley (Chairman), Mr A. Forno (Shire Clerk), Cr. D. Christensen (Deputy Chairman), Mr S. Crichton (Chief Health Surveyor), Mr D. Chalmers (Deputy Shire Engineer).

Second row standing L-R: Cr. R. Rossi, Cr. D. Lucy, Cr. R. McKauge, Cr. R. Percy, Cr. T. Pyne, Cr G. Ghidella, Cr. S. Scoines, Cr H. Harwood, Cr C. Joy, Mr. S. Morris (Stores Purchasing Officer).

Third row standing L-R: Mr A Harvey (Wages Clerk), Miss E. Bragg (Pay Master), Miss K. Anderson (Clerk), Mr G. Malcolm (Rate Clerk), Mr S. Abercrombie (Draftsman), Miss D. Dungavell (Clerk), Miss T. Moore (Clerk), Miss D. Wegert (Clerk), Mr T. Day (Cost Clerk).

Back row standing L-R: Mr L. Beck (Rates Clerk), Mr R. Reilly (Wages Clerk), Mr G. King (Clerk), Mr G. Dolan (Senior Clerk), Mr B. Peever (Draftsman), Mr T. Palmer (Draftsman), Mr D. Hudson (Plumbing Inspector), Miss G. Favelli (Clerk), Mr G. Ryan (Clerical Officer), Mr D. Campbell (Wages Clerk), Mr J. Phillips (Cost Clerk), Mr J. Radford (Clerk).

The Cairns Historical Society



Cairns Historical Society's president Dr Clive Skarott AM. Picture: Supplied

FOR more than 60 years, the Cairns Historical Society and Cairns Museum have cared for the stories, photographs and objects that capture our region's social history. Our members and volunteers have worked to preserve the memories of those who built this community and shaped life in the tropics.

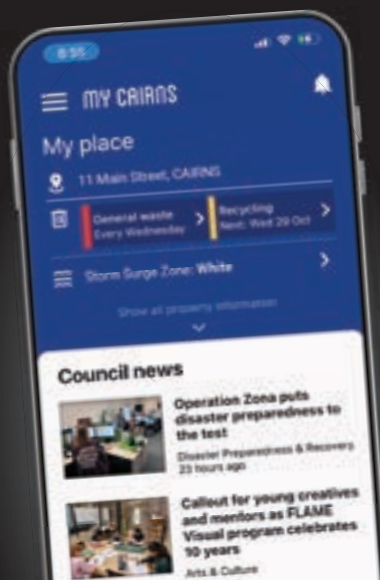
In 2026, Cairns celebrates 150 years since the establishment of the colonial township, a milestone led by Cairns Regional Council and embraced by the whole community. As part of these celebrations, the Historical Society and Museum are presenting a year-long program of exhibitions, lectures and events that explore the people, places and moments that have defined our city.

From pioneering families and local industry to political life, art and everyday Cairns life, each story reflects a shared sense of identity and connection to place. Many of these exhibitions and events have been developed in partnership with community groups, local families and individual storytellers, which is something we're very proud of.

This anniversary is not only a chance to look back. It is also a moment to recognise the living story of Cairns, a diverse and resilient community that continues to grow, change and carry its history forward.

*Dr Clive Skarott AM, HonDUniv
President, Cairns Historical Society & Cairns Museum*

The new-look My Cairns app



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to take advantage of new
features and improvements.



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Australia Day Awards

Date: Monday 26th January

**Location: Munro Martin
Parklands**

CELEBRATE Australia Day with a vibrant afternoon of community spirit at Australia Day in the Park, at Munro Martin Parklands on Monday 26 January 2026.

This free family event invites everyone to come together, soak up the tropical atmosphere and enjoy an afternoon of fun, music and celebration.

The afternoon begins with the Australia Day Awards, running from 5pm-6pm.

This special ceremony honours remarkable individuals and groups who make outstanding contributions to the Cairns community.

Each year, these awards recognise those who dedicate their time and passion to local clubs, sports, volunteering, charity work, cultural organisations, youth programs and community advocacy.

Following the ceremony, the festivities continue with a lively community concert from 6pm to 8pm.

Enjoy an evening of live music, cultural



performances and family-friendly entertainment in the beautiful parklands.

Children can enjoy free face painting, a jumping castle, fun activities and a free sausage sizzle, while adults relax and enjoy the stage program in a welcoming

outdoor setting.

All activities are free and open to the public, offering the perfect opportunity to come together, celebrate Australia Day, and share in the spirit of Cairns' 150-year milestone as a community.



Cairns is 150.

Our history is still
being written.

As we celebrate 150 years, explore the stories that built this region and the history still unfolding.

Become a member. Visit. Explore. Contribute.

cairnsmuseum.org.au | Corner Lake & Shields Streets



Cairns Local News

Free. Every Friday.

Proud to be a part of the
Cairns community and
sharing the stories that
matter to locals.

P: 07 4031 7678

W: cairnslocalnews.com.au

A: 268B Mulgrave Rd,
Cairns Q.4870



SCAN ME to read our
FREE online edition.

Chinese New Year

Friday 13th February to Sunday 8th March

CAIRNS Chinese New Year celebrations will celebrate 150 years of Cairns founding and Chinese culture in Cairns with a series of events spread over two weeks of the Year of the Horse.

These events include free, family friendly public events as well as ticketed food experiences.

This will include the Chinese New Year Street food festival at Cairns Hilton, the Chinese New Year Day celebrations at the Esplanade Lagoon Plaza, the Chinese New Year banquet, the Lantern Festival at the Esplanade Lagoon and the Year of the Horse Yum Cha.

For details of each event, please visit our website at cadcai.org.au.



Friday 13th February 6pm
Chinese New Year Street Food Festival at Cairns Hilton

Tuesday 17th February 6.15pm
Chinese New Year Day Celebrations at Esplanade Lagoon Plaza

Saturday 21st February 7pm
Chinese New Year Banquet at Golden Boat Chinese Restaurant

Saturday 7th March 4.30-8.30pm
Chinese New Year Lantern Festival at Esplanade Lagoon Plaza

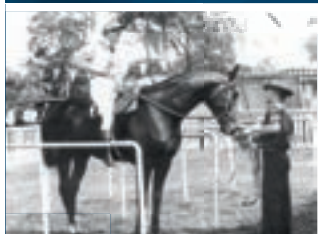
Sunday 8th March 12pm
Year of the Horse Yum Cha at Golden Boat Chinese Restaurant

CELEBRATING OVER

110

YEARS

OF RACING IN CAIRNS

For over 110 years, Cannon Park - gifted by the Cannon family - has been home to the Cairns Jockey Club and its commitment to local racing, cementing itself as an iconic Cairns experience.

www.cairnsjockeyclub.com.au

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Cairns Celebrations



ates 150 Years



The Cairns Celebrates 150 Years Advisory Committee

THE Cairns Celebrates 150 Years Advisory Committee provides support and advice to Cairns Regional Council to ensure the successful delivery of the celebratory program. Advisory Group members have helped shape the program by:

- Providing initiatives, ideas and suggestions as to the content of the Cairns Celebrates 150 Years program.
- Providing advice to Cairns Regional Council regarding program delivery.
- Helping promote the program

through community and business networks.

The Advisory Committee is:

- Mayor Eden, Chair
- Cr. Zeiger, Deputy Chair
- Destry Puia
- George Bell
- Janine Bowmaker
- Jon Fearon
- Henrietta Marrie
- Russell Millage
- Sandi Robb
- Ranjit Singh
- Kesa Strieby



Cairns Celebrates 150 Years – Official Artist: Hayley Gillespie

CAIRNS-based artist Hayley Gillespie has collaborated with Council to add her artistic flair to Cairns Celebrates 150



Years, capturing the essence of our city through her vibrant and distinctive style.

Hayley's work reflects the colour, energy and natural beauty of the tropics – from reef and rainforest to the rhythm of daily life in our community.

Her artwork for the 150-year celebrations brings together the past and present, weaving symbols of local heritage, culture and environment into a joyful expression of what makes Cairns unique.

Her artwork will feature across the Cairns Celebrates 150 Years program, events and promotions throughout 2026.

"I arrived in Cairns on a warm, balmy December day in 1996 as a wide-eyed backpacker from London – and instantly

felt at home. I was captivated by the vivid colours intensified by the tropical sunlight, the lush, oversized foliage and the wonderful wildlife.

"The vibrant iconography of everything that makes Cairns 'Cairns' quickly became my creative inspiration.

"Since then, my artistic journey has evolved to include a wide range of work: from exhibiting in galleries to commercial illustration, from designing sets and costumes for theatre to creating artwork for tourism, public art projects, and private commissions.

"My style continues to celebrate the colour, life and energy of Far North Queensland – the place that stole my heart and continues to inspire every brushstroke."

The Violet - The Official Plant of Cairns Celebrates 150 Years

THE Viola Hederacea, commonly known as the native violet, has been selected as the official plant of Cairns Celebrates 150 Years.

With its soft purple and white blooms and lush green foliage, the violet is a fitting emblem for a celebration that honours Cairns' natural environment.

Its presence in local gardens, parks and public spaces makes it a fitting emblem for a celebration rooted in community and environment.

In true community spirit, the violet is being lovingly propagated and nurtured

by the dedicated horticultural team at the Cairns Botanic Gardens, in partnership with the Friends of the Botanic Gardens.

Together, they are raising hundreds of native violet plants especially for the anniversary year.

Throughout 2026, the native violet will be featured at civic ceremonies, community celebrations and commemorative plantings across the region.

Guests and dignitaries will receive potted Viola Hederacea as a living keepsake of the 150-year milestone, representing the growth and resilience of Cairns over time



As the violet continues to bloom long after the celebrations conclude, it will serve as a lasting reminder of Cairns Celebrates 150 years.



Official Merchandise - Team Elite

TEAM Elite is proud to be the official merchandise partner for Cairns Celebrates 150 Years, helping our community wear its pride and mark this historic milestone in style.

With a reputation for quality, creativity and local spirit, Team Elite has designed a vibrant range of apparel and accessories that capture the essence of Cairns – its people, places and proud 150-year journey.

From shirts and hats to collectable items, there's something for everyone who wants to be part of this once-in-a-century

celebration. Whether you're attending community events, representing your organisation, or simply showing your hometown pride, you'll find merchandise that's both stylish and meaningful.

Community members can explore and order directly from the Cairns Celebrates 150 Years community range portal.

Businesses, clubs and groups seeking bulk or branded orders can visit the corporate and wholesale portal.

Join in the celebration and wear your Cairns pride with Team Elite – the official merchandise partners for Cairns Celebrates 150 Years.

International Women's Day Awards

SHINE a spotlight on the remarkable women who have shaped our region's story.

For a century and a half, women in Cairns have been leaders, innovators, creators, carers, and changemakers – often quietly, often bravely, and always with a lasting impact on the community.

This special event honours their achievements and acknowledges the generations of women whose contributions continue to influence the region we know today.

Held annually in March, the International Women's Day Awards celebrate individuals who demonstrate leadership, resilience, compassion, and community spirit.

In this milestone year, the awards place a particular focus on recognising women who have played a role in the evolution of Cairns across the past 150 years.

These stories highlight the strength and diversity of the women who have helped shape our shared history.



Guests are invited to enjoy an inspiring and uplifting celebration featuring local entertainment, delicious food, and meaningful moments of recognition.

The event provides an opportunity to connect with community members, honour nominees and award recipients. The International Women's Day

Awards form a vibrant and empowering part of the Cairns Celebrates 150 years program, bringing people together to celebrate the women who continue to make Cairns a dynamic, and thriving region for all.

For full event details, times, and updates, please visit council's website.

**CAIRNS
150**
1876 - 2026

CAIRNS CELEBRATES 150 YEARS

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Smithfield Shopping Centre



SMITHFIELD Shopping Centre will celebrate its 40th anniversary in March 2026, marking four decades as the leading retail and lifestyle destination for northern Cairns. Since opening on 19 March 1986, the centre has evolved through major expansions in 1996, 2006 and 2017.

Anchored by Coles, Woolworths,

Kmart, Event Cinemas and Dan Murphy's, and supported by more than 100 specialty retailers, Smithfield continues to deliver everyday convenience and a vibrant community experience.

A five-day anniversary program will run from Monday 16 March, culminating in a major celebration on Thursday 19 March. Highlights include a one-day 1986

price rollback, a '40 Years of Memories' exhibition, a 40-year time capsule and a Community Celebration Day featuring entertainment and family activities.

For 40 years, Smithfield has grown alongside the local community. Residents are invited to share photos and memories by emailing infosmithfieldcentre@jll.com.

SMITHFIELD TURNS 40

Where every day is a celebration of convenience, community, and connection.



For four decades, Smithfield Shopping Centre has grown alongside the community it serves — a place where everyday life comes together.

From 1986 to 2026, we've shared the moments, memories, and milestones that have made this centre the heart of the Northern Beaches.

Join us from 16–20 March as we mark 40 years with a vibrant five-day program:

- 1986 Price Rollback — One Day Only
- "40 Years of Memories" Exhibition
- 40-Year Time Capsule Ceremony
- Community Celebration Day — Thursday 19 March

Here's to the people, the stories, and the everyday moments that have shaped our community for 40 years.

Thank you for being part of our past — and the future we're building together.

40
YEARS

smithfield

Fun in the Sun

THE event began in 1962 as the Cairns Tourist Festival, launched alongside milestones such as the opening of the new Green Island jetty, designed to draw visitors and promote the region. Just a year later, in 1963, it was renamed "Fun in the Sun," a title that endured for decades and became a defining part of Cairns' cultural identity.

'Fun in the Sun' is now known as the Grand Parade as part of Cairns Festival.



The School of Arts Building



IN the heart of Cairns, on the corner of Lake and Shields streets, stands a building that has watched a small frontier settlement grow into a thriving tropical city.

The Cairns School of Arts building, elegant and enduring, is one of the city's most significant historical landmarks - its story woven through more than a century of learning, culture and community life.

The Cairns School of Arts movement began in the late 1800s, part of a wider push across Queensland to provide adult education, reading rooms and cultural opportunities for working people.

In 1884, only a year after Cairns was

officially declared a town, local residents formed the Cairns School of Arts Committee. Their goal was simple but ambitious: to create a place where the growing population could access books, knowledge and intellectual enrichment.

The first building, a modest timber structure, opened in 1886. It quickly became a hub for lectures, meetings, public debates and, most importantly, a reading room stocked with newspapers and books - luxuries in the remote northern settlement.

As Cairns developed through the early 1900s, so too did the ambitions of the School of Arts.

Timber gave way to masonry, and in 1907 construction began on the two-storey concrete and brick building that still stands today in its current location at the corner of Shields and Lake Street.

Designed by prominent architect Tunbridge, Tunbridge & Lynch, the new School of Arts building opened in 1912.

It was impressive for its time, featuring a library, offices, classrooms and a lecture hall. Its broad verandas, curved parapets and tropical design elements made it both functional and beautiful - a civic symbol of Cairns' pride and progress.

Throughout the early and mid-20th



century, the School of Arts continued to evolve.

The library became the cultural heart of Cairns, attracting everyone from schoolchildren to cane cutters seeking something to read after long days in the fields. Community groups used the rooms for everything from music rehearsals to literary societies and language classes. During the Second World War, the building even served as a social centre for Australian and American servicemen stationed in the region.

Today, the School of Arts remains a cherished link to the city's earliest decades.

Cairns Churches

Saturday 18th April
Fogarty Park

THE Cairns Churches are pleased to present a day of celebration and recognition of the contribution, dedication, grit and determination of so many thousands of people in growing the Cairns community through the activity of the churches in the region.



From the resilience and generosity out of scarcity in those early days, to the vibrancy and diversity in the modern era, we want to celebrate God's faithfulness through it all and recognise the sacrifice and hardship that those that have gone before us have endured.

This event will bring churches, not-for-profits, school and other para-church organisations together to bless our wider community and ask God's blessing for the years to come.

With loads of entertainment, fireworks, give-aways and experiences to see what we do and the way we continue to serve, we hope that all who attend will be encouraged and be inspired.

Babinda Museum

Official Opening: 1st May

CELEBRATING 150 Years of Farming: A Babinda Museum Special Exhibition

As part of the historic Cairns 150 celebrations, the award-winning Babinda Museum invites you to explore the roots of our region's resilience. We are proud to unveil a newly curated outdoor expansion: Celebrating 150 Years of Farming.

Immerse yourself in the agricultural evolution of the Far North, tracing a timeline from the experimental rows of early coffee and tobacco plantations to the emerald waves of sugar cane that defined a century. The display also highlights the region's modern diversification into bananas and exotic tropical fruits.

While this new outdoor precinct is intimate in size, it is monumental in history. We have maximized this boutique space to create a focused, atmospheric tribute to the land.

Please check the Babinda Museum website closer to the date for launch details and program times.



Connecting Cairns to the world for generations

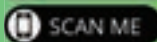
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Thank you, Cairns, for your continued support!

Our journey of sustainable growth continues - building a stronger future for our community.



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ANZAC Day

Saturday 25th April
Various locations
across Cairns

ANZAC Day is a significant and solemn occasion in Cairns, bringing the community together each year to honour Australians and New Zealanders who have served and died in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations.



Across the region, commemorative events provide opportunities for reflection, gratitude and shared remembrance.

This year holds special meaning as the Cairns Esplanade Cenotaph marks its 100th anniversary.

For a century, the cenotaph has stood as a powerful symbol of sacrifice and service, forming the heart of the city's ANZAC commemorations.

Cairns Regional Council, in partnership with the Cairns RSL Sub Branch, will once again deliver the city's official Dawn Service and ANZAC Day March at this historic site.

Thousands will gather at the cenotaph in the early morning light to pay tribute during the Dawn Service, followed by the March which unites veterans, serving personnel, community groups, schools and families in a moving display of respect along the city streets.

ANZAC Day in Cairns extends beyond the city ceremony, with seven regional communities hosting their own services.

Residents are invited to attend events at Yorkeys Knob, Trinity Beach, Stratford, Edge Hill, Edmonton, Gordonvale, and Babinda, each honouring the ANZAC spirit in a meaningful community setting.

For full details, times and updates, visit council's website.



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Cairns Children's Festival



Saturday 16th - Sunday 17th May Multiple venues across Cairns

CAIRNS Children's Festival returns 16-17 May with a weekend bursting with creativity, laughter and hands on adventure for families across the region.

Dedicated to our youngest creatives, the festival puts children aged 12 and under in the spotlight, offering a safe, vibrant and playful environment that

encourages curiosity, imagination and connection.

Across two fun-filled days, families can explore a colourful mix of performances, interactive experiences and creative workshops designed to spark joy and inspire discovery.

From art and nature play to music, movement and storytelling, the program invites kids to learn, make and explore alongside their grown-ups.

Events take place at key cultural hubs including Cairns Performing Arts Centre

(CPAC), Tanks Arts Centre and the Cairns Botanic Gardens, with activities offered both indoors and outdoors.

The festival features a wide range of free entertainment, supported by a selection of ticketed shows for those seeking something extra special.

Proudly presented by Cairns Regional Council, Cairns Children's Festival is the ultimate weekend fiesta for little legends and their families.

For full program details, visit cairns.qld.gov.au/childrens-festival



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Early Settlement

CAIRNS was officially founded in 1876 and named after the State Governor of the day, Sir William Wellington Cairns.

It was formally declared a town in 1903 with a registered population of 3500.

Initial European settlement in the region in the 1860s was driven by beche de mer fishing, and the discovery of gold to the north (Palmer River field) and Atherton Tableland (Hodgkinson River field) saw the population begin to climb.

Throughout the 1870s and early 1880s European and Chinese settlers opened up the region to agriculture generating a large enough population base for the borough of Cairns to be declared a municipality.

The first mayor, R.A. Kingsford, was elected in 1885.

The development of the Cairns to Herberton rail line in 1886, and subsequent expansion from Redlynch to Myola, is widely considered the



The first mayor of Cairns, Richard Ash Kingston. **Pictures: Supplied**

catalyst for the City's expansion.

The rail line made travel through the difficult terrain easier and attracted



a large number of immigrants during construction. Many of these immigrants settled in the region, establishing the sugarcane industry and extensive fruit orchards.

During World War II, Cairns was at the forefront of the Battle of the Coral Sea (1942) and the Pacific offensive (1943).

Anti-aircraft gun emplacements were established along the Cairns Esplanade and Trinity Beach was used as a major training ground for defence forces for amphibious landings.

Cairns Bank

THE roots of Cairns Bank reach back to April 1899, when a group of local citizens - led by the then Mayor - established a "penny savings bank" to give Cairns's residents, including working class families and youth, the opportunity to save. On 22 April 1899, the bank opened its doors as the Cairns Weekly Penny Savings Bank. That first day, 86 accounts were opened, with the smallest deposit being just one penny - exemplifying its mission of accessible, inclusive banking.

Over the decades, the bank evolved through several names: Cairns Cooperative Weekly Penny Savings Bank (1946-1987), Cairns Penny Bank (1987-2004), Cairns Penny Savings & Loans Limited (2004-2020) and finally Cairns Bank in 2020, reflecting a modern brand while honouring its origins.

Despite these changes, its core purpose remains the same: providing simple, reliable banking for locals.

As a 100% customer-owned institution, Cairns Bank has always reinvested profits back into the Cairns community rather than external shareholders.

This mutual structure ensures that the bank's growth directly benefits the people it serves, from supporting local events and businesses to helping families achieve home ownership.

Cairns Bank is more than just a



financial institution - it is a cornerstone of the Cairns community.

Its local presence allows it to understand the unique needs of residents and businesses, providing personal, face-to-face service alongside modern banking conveniences.

For over 125 years, Cairns Bank has withstood the test of time, weathering economic changes, evolving with legislation, and embracing innovation, all while remaining true to its founding values of trust, accessibility, and community support.

Today, Cairns Bank stands strong as a model of true community banking - supporting Cairns residents, empowering the local economy and providing a stable foundation that helps shape a brighter future for generations to come.

IS YOUR NAME HERE!

The Board of Directors of the
CAIRNS CO-OP. WEEKLY PENNY SAVINGS BANK LTD.

are anxious to contact the unmentioned persons for whom accounts were opened on the **FIRST DAY** of the Bank's operation

22nd APRIL, 1899

| Donor | Bank No. | Donor | Bank No. |
|----------------------|----------|---------------------|----------|
| John W. Abbott | 22 | Vigor Deland | 12 |
| Alfred V. Abbott | 23 | Annie M. Wilson | 13 |
| Ernest Barr | 24 | Eugenie Jack | 14 |
| Norman Barr | 25 | Maria Jack | 15 |
| Walter Bax | 26 | James Johnson | 16 |
| Edwin Bernard | 27 | Linda Keating | 17 |
| Annie Bernard | 28 | Mary Keating | 18 |
| Edith Belcher | 29 | Thomas King | 19 |
| Lavinia Brockman | 30 | Lily Mackay | 20 |
| Margaret Brockman | 31 | Edith Mackay | 21 |
| Wilfred Brown | 32 | Freddie Mackay | 22 |
| Lyle Brewer | 33 | Aggie Mackay | 23 |
| Joe Cairns | 34 | Anna Quinn | 24 |
| Edith Cairns | 35 | Susan Quinn | 25 |
| Alfred Cairns | 36 | Alfred Ross | 26 |
| Robt Crooke | 37 | Little Ross | 27 |
| Annie Crooke | 38 | Little Ross | 28 |
| Daniel Crooke | 39 | Robert Swallow | 29 |
| Vivian Davidson | 40 | Robert Swallow | 30 |
| Charles Davidson | 41 | Edward Swallow | 31 |
| Alfred Davidson | 42 | John Swallow | 32 |
| Ellie O'Leary | 43 | Mary Swallow | 33 |
| Fred Johnson Dahl | 44 | Joseph T. Simpson | 34 |
| Daniel Dillon | 45 | Clara L. Simpson | 35 |
| Willie Dillon | 46 | Harry Stone | 36 |
| Thomas Dickson | 47 | Carl Swanson | 37 |
| Thomas F. Dillon | 48 | Edward Swanson | 38 |
| Margie Finlay | 49 | Ivo Swanson | 39 |
| John Hunter Finlay | 50 | Thos Swanson | 40 |
| James Finlay | 51 | Charles Swanson | 41 |
| John Finlay | 52 | Janet Jane Taylor | 42 |
| Elizabeth S. Finlay | 53 | Little Taylor | 43 |
| Joe Giffin | 54 | Williamina Thompson | 44 |
| James Giffin | 55 | Jack Thomson | 45 |
| Edith Giffin | 56 | Harry Thomson | 46 |
| John David Heile | 57 | John Trank | 47 |
| Margie Heile | 58 | Mary Trank | 48 |
| Debbie Heile | 59 | Peter Trank | 49 |
| Vivian Heiler | 60 | Edna Whitaker | 50 |
| Albert Heiler | 61 | Edward Whitaker | 51 |
| Robert Heiler | 62 | Kate Whitaker | 52 |
| Rebecca S. E. Heiler | 63 | | |

CARMA celebrates 25 Years



THE Cairns and Region Multicultural Association - CARMA Festival will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2026, marking a quarter-century as Far North Queensland's largest and longest-running multicultural celebration.

Showcasing the cultures of more than 50 nations, the festival brings together music, dance, food, storytelling, arts and crafts from across the Cairns region and beyond.

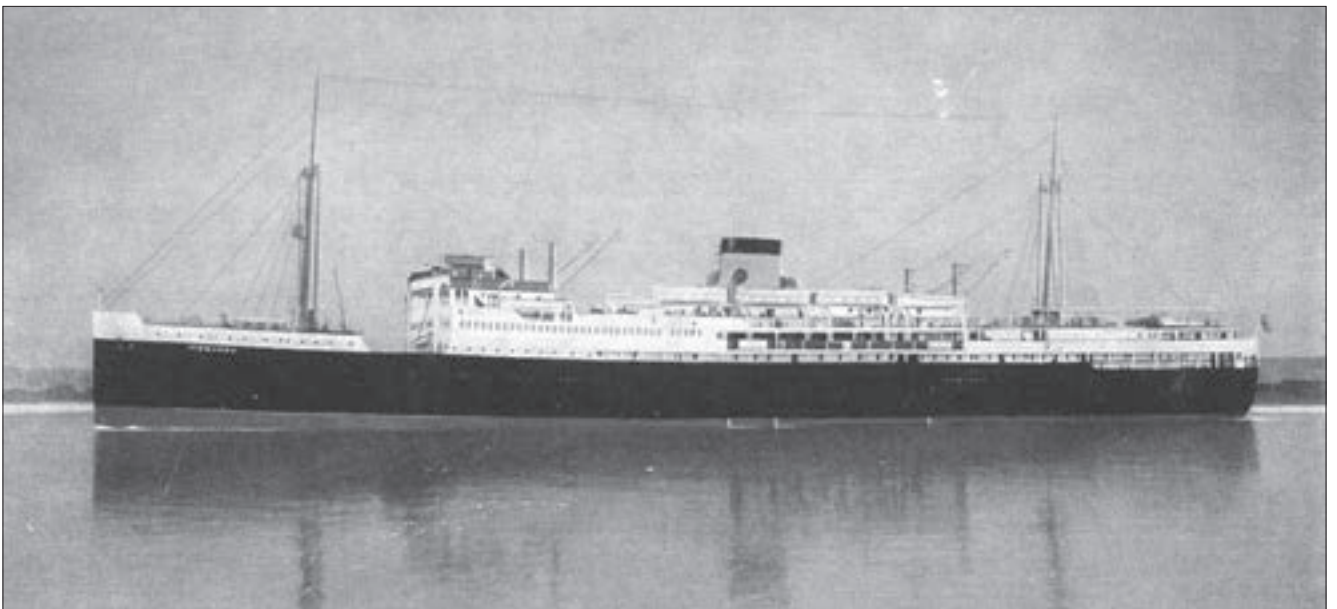
To honour this milestone, CARMA is reintroducing key elements from the original Tropical Wave Festival under the leadership of founder Olive Tau, reconnecting the event to its cultural roots.

Highlights for 2026 include an International Village featuring community-designed cultural huts, more than 30 multicultural performances and a surprise headline act to end the festival.

The program also features the Nations of the World Parade, a large-scale community art project, children's cultural activities, an arts and craft exhibition and an interfaith service to close the celebrations.

The festival continues to grow through community pride, creativity, and collaboration, proudly contributing to the commemoration of Cairns 150th Anniversary.

MV Manunda



AFTER arriving in Australia in June 1929, the Manunda entered the coastal passenger service, operating between major ports such as Sydney, Melbourne, Fremantle - and notably Cairns. For many years she was among the prominent liners transporting passengers and cargo to and from Cairns, helping link the city with the wider Australian coastline. For Cairns, the Manunda was more than just a visiting vessel, she played an active role in connecting the city to national trade and travel routes, supporting the movement of people, goods and communication.

Rotary Beach Vibe

Sunday 17th May, 2pm–8pm
Trinity Beach

GET ready to soak up the sunshine and good vibes at Rotary Beach Vibe, the ultimate community afternoon out at Trinity Beach's beautiful Vasey Esplanade.

Hosted by the Rotary Cairns Northern Beaches Club and proudly supported by Cairns Regional Council and generous local businesses, this family-friendly event brings together everything you love about our coastal community.

Wander through a vibrant lineup

of local market stalls, where talented makers will be showcasing and selling their handcrafted creations.

Make your way toward the delicious aromas drifting from food trucks, local bistros, and beachside restaurants serving up crowd favourite treats.

Then kick back on the foreshore and enjoy live music from local artists, setting the perfect soundtrack for a relaxed tropical afternoon.

Kids will be kept entertained with plenty of fun activities, while the grown-ups can try their luck with raffle tickets

and great prizes up for grabs.

Entry is free, with optional gold coin donations warmly welcomed to support Rotary Cairns Northern Beaches community youth projects.

So, gather your friends, bring the family, and come celebrate the best of our Northern Beaches lifestyle.

Rotary Beach Vibe is your chance to unwind, explore, taste, listen, and enjoy an afternoon full of beachside energy and community spirit.

Join us for the vibes, stay for the memories!



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