

2ND 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  
published by Cairns Local News Pty Ltd,  
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Printed by Spot Productions

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**Bree James MP Member for Barron River**  
HAPPY 150 years Cairns!

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

This celebration is a chance to honour who we are as a community, to share our stories, celebrate our diversity, and look ahead to the next 150 years of growth, innovation and the unmistakable energy of Cairns.

Looking ahead, there is so much to be excited about, from the world-class

Smithfield Mountain Bike Park launching in 2028, the billion-dollar investment into our Hospital, the Wangetti Trail, upgrades to Barlow Park ready for the Olympics, and many more projects that will strengthen our economy and enhance our lifestyle.

I look forward to Cairns taking its place as Australia's reef, rainforest, riding and adventure capital in the lead-up to the 2032 Olympic Games and beyond.

I am incredibly proud to call this place home, to serve this community, and to share this journey with the people who make Cairns what it is: bold, vibrant, welcoming and full of opportunity.



**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 & 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 someone who has lived and worked their whole life in Cairns, I really appreciate the great city that it has become.

We must never lose sight of the history

of our city and people who worked so hard to build this place to what it is today. 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 the effort they are going to commemorate and celebrate this important Milestone. I hope the public get right behind the many event that make up these celebrations.



**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 honors our past, ensuring this unique place thrives for generations to come.

### 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 Gillispie 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.

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
16 May	Various	Night at the Library: The Unwritten Story By Box Jelly Theatre Co (CCF)	Cairns City Library	ticketlink.com.au
16 - 17 May	9am - 2pm	Cairns Children's Festival	Tanks Arts Centre	tanksartscentre.com
24 May	1pm-6pm	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 - 6.30pm	Cairns Cenotaph - 100 Years	Cairns Esplanade	cairnsrsl.com.au
6 Jun		Harmony Cup 2026	Walker Road Sports Precinct	gopiocairns.org.au
8 Jun	10am	Morning Melodies - Live at Frankies: The Songs of Valli & Sinatra	Cairns Performing Arts Centre	ticketlink.com.au
11 - 14 Jun		Cairns Airport IRONMAN Cairns	Cairns Esplanade, Palm Cove, Great Barrier Reef Drive	ironman.com
12 Jun		Canegrowers Sugar Shin Dig - Dinner & Dance	Junior Leagues Club	
13 Jun	2pm - 8pm	Gordonvale Sugar Solstice Country Fair	Norman Park, Gordonvale	
19 Jun	5.30pm - 9pm	Freshwater Festival	Richmond Park, Freshwater	facebook.com/ freshwaterfestival
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
2 - 5 Jul		2026 U14 Boys State Basketball Championships	Cairns Basketball	cairnsbasketball.com
3 Jul	8am - 6pm	Cairns NAIDOC Friday in the Park	Fogarty Park	cairnsnaidoc.com
3 Jul	5pm - 9:40pm	Boy & Bear	Munro Martin Parklands	ticketlink.com.au
4 Jul	12pm-7pm	CLAMS Masters Swimming Charity Relay Swim	Tobruk Memorial Pool	fundraising.fnqhf.org.au/ event/clams-swim-relay/ home
4 Jul	3pm - 7pm	Cairns Canine Carnival	Cairns City Kennel Club	qld.guidedogs.com.au
7 Jul	10am	Cairns City Heritage Walk	City Library	cairns.qld.gov.au
8 Jul	9am - 3pm	Cairns NAIDOC Edoor Carnival	Watsons Oval	ourfuturementors.com.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
10 - 11 Jul		Nate Myles Cup	Alley Park, Gordonvale	facebook.com/p/Nate-Myles-Cup
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
16 -25 Jul	6.30pm-9.30pm	Shadows from the Past	McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery	cdfhs.org/projects
23 Jul - 2 Aug		Cairns Italian Festival - Italy in the Tropics	Fogarty Park	cairnssitalianfestival.com.au
24 Jul - 1 Aug		Australian Festival of Chamber Music	CPAC Precinct & Bulmba-ja	ticketlink.com.au
24 Jul		Cairns Business Women's Club Gala Awards		cbwc.org.au
25 Jul - 19 Sep		Lani's Story	Northsite Contemporary Arts	northsite.org.au
25 Jul		FNQ Short Course Championships	Tobruk Memorial Pool	fnqswimming.com.au
26 Jul		BDO Arrow Experience: Wangetti Edition 2026	Ellis Beach to Palm Cove	arrowexperience.org.au
26 Jul	8am - 2pm	VEXPO	Tanks Arts Centre	fnqvolunteers.org.au/training-events
29 Jul - 14 Aug		St Andrew's Catholic College - 25th Anniversary Celebrations	St Andrews Catholic College	cns.catholic.edu.au/school/st-andrews-catholic-college
30 Jul	5pm - 6.30pm	HMAS Cairns Ceremonial Sunset	Cairns Cenotaph, Esplanade	
31 Jul - 8 Aug		Thunder in the Canefields 2026	Cairns Speedway	cairnsspeedway.com
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	
1 Aug	9.30am - 1.30pm	HMAS Cairns Open Day	HMAS Cairns Facility	
1 Aug	9am - 1pm	Community Fun Day	Marlin Coast Neighbourhood Centre, Trinity Park	
1 Aug	7:30am - 1pm	The Woolworths Great Pyramid Race	Norman Park, Gordonvale	pyramidrace.com.au
3 Aug	10am	Morning Melodies - Rocketman Flying Solo	Cairns Performing Arts Centre	ticketlink.com.au
8 Aug	10am - 8pm	Kenfrost Homes Northern Pride Women in League Round	Barlow Park	northernpride.com.au
8 Aug	9am - 1pm	Trash To Treasure 2026	Portsmith Transfer Station Buy Back Shop	cairns.qld.gov.au
12 Aug	10am	Cairns City Heritage Walk	City Library	cairns.qld.gov.au

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14 Aug	7:30 pm	Horizon by Bangarra Dance Theatre	Cairns Performing Arts Centre	<a href="http://ticketlink.com.au">ticketlink.com.au</a>
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	<a href="http://cairnsmuseum.org.au">cairnsmuseum.org.au</a>
15 Aug		Cairns Japan Bon Dance Festival	Cairns Esplanade	
15 Aug		50th Anniversary Celebration of Bayview Heights Community Kindergarten	6-8 Japer St, Woree	<a href="http://bayviewheightskindy.com.au">bayviewheightskindy.com.au</a>
21 Aug	9am-1pm	Positive Ageing Expo	Cairns Performing Arts Centre	<a href="http://cairns.qld.gov.au">cairns.qld.gov.au</a>
21 - 29 Aug		Cairns Super Carnival	Cannon Park	<a href="http://cairnsjockeyclub.com.au">cairnsjockeyclub.com.au</a>
22 Aug	11am - 6pm	Freshwater Festival 'Tropical Street Fiesta'	Richmond Park, Freshwater	
28 Aug - 6 Sep		Cairns Festival	Various	<a href="http://cairns.com.au/festival">cairns.com.au/festival</a>
28 Aug	5pm-10pm	Canvas of Cairns by Laservision	Cairns Esplanade/ Festival Hub	<a href="http://cairns.qld.gov.au/festival">cairns.qld.gov.au/festival</a>
28 Aug	6pm-10pm	QSO Symphony Under the Stars	Munro Martin Parklands	<a href="http://ticketlink.com.au">ticketlink.com.au</a>
29 Aug		Festival Cairns Grand Parade	Esplanade	<a href="http://cairns.qld.gov.au/festival">cairns.qld.gov.au/festival</a>
30 Aug	2pm & 7pm	ARCO Jnr/Snr	Cairns Performing Arts Centre	<a href="http://ticketlink.com.au">ticketlink.com.au</a>
4 Sep	2pm - 5.30pm	South Side Celebration	Ravizza Park, Edmonton	
5 Sep	9am - 1pm	FNQ Dogs Day Out	Barron Waters Park, Lake Placid Road	<a href="http://facebook.com/FNQdogsdayout">facebook.com/FNQdogsdayout</a>
5 Sep	7:30 pm	Dirty Fame Flash Candles Club	Cairns Performing Arts Centre	<a href="http://ticketlink.com.au">ticketlink.com.au</a>
5 Sep	4.30pm	Jazz Under the Stars	Botanic Gardens	Trybooking or tickets at the door
6 Sep	2pm & 7pm	Are you Lonesome Tonight By Opera Queensland	Cairns Performing Arts Centre	<a href="http://ticketlink.com.au">ticketlink.com.au</a>
6 Sep	9am - 2pm	Carnival on Collins	Tanks Arts Centre	<a href="http://tanksartscentre.com">tanksartscentre.com</a>
11 - 12 Sep		In Her Name Exhibition and WOW Cairns Program Launch	Bulmba-ja Arts Centre	<a href="http://thewowfoundation.com">thewowfoundation.com</a>
12 Sep	2pm - 10pm	Moon Over Machans	Keith Edwich Park, Machans Beach	<a href="http://facebook.com/moonovermachans">facebook.com/moonovermachans</a>
12 Sep - 9 Nov		Exhibition: Decades of Dedication: CAFNEC's Legacy of Environmental Stewardship, Cairns & Far North Environment Centre	Cairns Museum	<a href="http://cairnsmuseum.org.au">cairnsmuseum.org.au</a>
13 Sep	1pm - 6pm	Two Feet & A Heartbeat	Cairns Esplanade	<a href="http://heartkids.org.au">heartkids.org.au</a>
19 Sep	6pm - 10pm	Cairns 150 Year Ball	Cairns Esplanade, Eastern Events Lawn	<a href="http://cairns.qld.gov.au">cairns.qld.gov.au</a>
19 Sep	9am - 2pm	Ganeshotsav 2026	Edge Hill State School	<a href="http://cairnshindusamaj.org.au">cairnshindusamaj.org.au</a>
19 - 21 Sep		Australian Retirement Trust Cardiac Challenge 2026	Cairns to Cooktown	<a href="http://cardiacchallenge.com.au">cardiacchallenge.com.au</a>
21 Sep	10am	Morning Melodies - What's New Pussycat?	Cairns Performing Arts Centre	<a href="http://ticketlink.com.au">ticketlink.com.au</a>

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
25 - 27 Sep	5pm-9pm	Three Moons 150 Years Cairns Chinese Celebration	Cairns Esplanade	cadcai.org.au
26 - 27 Sep		Mudcrabs 7s Tournament	Yorkeys Knob	cairns.qld.gov.au
27 Sep		PNG's Family & Cultural Day – 51st Independence Anniversary	Fogarty Park	cairns.qld.gov.au
1 - 4 Oct	9am-6pm	Ski to Wakeboard World Stage Weekend	Cairns Wake Park	cairnswakepark.com
6 Oct	7:30pm	Macbeth by Bell Shakespeare Co	Cairns Performing Arts Centre	ticketlink.com.au
9 - 25 Oct		Cairns Pride Festival	Fogarty, Tank 4. Tank 3	cairnspridefestival.com.au
17 Oct	10am - 9pm	Cairns Filipino Barrio Fiesta	Fogarty Park	
17 Oct	4pm - 9pm	Barron River Food Fest	Stratford Dolphns Football Club,Cnr Arnold & Magazine Street, Stratford	facebook.com/barronriverfoodfestival
17 Oct	8am-5pm	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	1pm - 6pm	Rotary Beach Vibe	Vasey Esplanade, Trinity Beach	rotarytnq.org.au
23 Oct	6pm - 10:30pm	TNQ Tourism Industry Excellence Awards		tourism.tropicalnorthqueensland.org.au
24 Oct	4pm - 10pm	Cairns Diwali Mela (Fair) 2026	Fogarty Park	cairnhindusamaj.org.au
24 Oct	3pm - 9pm	Big Talk One Fire Cultural Festival	Munro Martin Parklands	umiarts.com.au
30 Oct	12pm-5.30pm	Cairns 7s Rugby Tournament 2026	Stan Williams Park, Cairns	facebook.com/Cairns7sOfficial
6 Nov	6pm - 11:30pm	Cairns Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards	Cairns Convention Centre	cairnschamber.com.au
14 Nov		Material Recovery Facility Open Day	Cairns Regional Council Material Recovery Facility	cairns.qld.gov.au
14 Nov 2026 - 8 Mar 2027		Cairns Museum 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
21 Nov	10am - 10pm	Celebrate the 8th Cairns Thai Cultural Loy Krathong Festival	Cairns Esplanade	
29 Nov	5pm - 8pm	Christmas Tree Light Switch-on	Cairns Esplanade	cairns.qld.gov.au
30 Nov	10am	Morning Melodies - The Best of Buble Christmas Experience	Cairns Performing Arts Centre	www.ticketlink.com.au
6 Dec	8am - 12pm	Friends of Botanic Gardens Large Plant Sale	Saltwater Depot Nursery	botanicfriendscairns.org.au
13 Dec	4pm - 8:30pm	Carols in the Park	Munro Martin Parklands	cairns.qld.gov.au
31 Dec	5pm - 9:30pm	New Years Eve Celebrations	Cairns Esplanade	cairns.qld.gov.au

# Abbott Street

NAMED for Henry Abbott, the Queensland General Manager of the Australian Joint Stock Bank. He arrived in Cairns in October 1876 to open a branch of his bank, just a month after the town began.

Cairns' first 'Golden Blocks' were in Abbott Street, between the wharves and Shields St. In the 19th century they had the best hotels and four banks, but more importantly the street was the administrative centre of town with Customs, police, Court House, and the Post and Telegraph Office. In the 1870s those offices were pretty slapdash – the Post Office was a tent with a brandy box for the mail, and the court house was a spare building in the Customs reserve. However, in the 1880s substantial timber buildings appeared. In the early 20th century they were in turn replaced by brick and concrete structures, most of them now our best heritage buildings. They include the concrete Court House which we know today as the Court House Gallery (1921); the post office at the corner of Abbott and Spence (1907); the City Council Chambers, now the library (1930); and the Public Curator's office, now the Art Gallery (1936). The Anzac Memorial (now on the Esplanade) was erected in the middle of the Shields St intersection in 1926, and air raid shelters regularly positioned up the middle of the street during WWII.

Architecturally, Abbott St had most of the finest buildings in town including both Government and private businesses. It included numerous hotels: re-built over the years with attractive facades along one side as well as the Cairns Post Building, the Bank of New South Wales, the AMP Building, the Temperance and General Mutual Provident Society (T&G for short) building, as well as the most impressive of Cairns'



Corner of Abbott and Shields St looking south towards wharf, with Imperial Hotel, 1961. Pictures: Supplied

early offices, the magnificent Burns Philp building. Further along Abbott Street, there was Munro-Martin home (the first Calvary Hospital) and St Monica's Church and Convent. The majority of these buildings have now disappeared.

Shady trees and the median strip garden beds graced the middle of the street from 1883 onwards, making the street a vision splendid. In the middle of the street near the Court House was a giant Fig Tree. This tree was much loved and photographed yet with the rise of motorcars, became quite controversial. It survived several threats to cut it down, but despite a huge public outcry it was finally felled in 1953 to make way for increased motorised traffic.



Taxi fleet outside Imperial Hotel, Corner Abbott and Shields St, Cairns, 1918.



Lower Abbott St from Burns Philp wharf with horse and cart, circa 1890s. Photo: Handley & Atkinson.



The air-raid shelter in the middle of the street



Corner of Abbott Street and Shields St with Imperial Hotel c 1970.

# The Cairns Historical Society

'CAIRNS: A Tropical Town Takes Shape' brings to life the genesis of Cairns through its first government-gazetted reserves: places which provided the functions and facilities that brought stability and growth to the district. Prolific north Queensland historian Michael Brumby – on behalf of the Cairns Historical Society – explores how, where and why these key reserves were established, developed and remain in use today.

Displayed in an easy to read, illustrative format, this book is printed in a convenient size, easy to slip into a bag or send to family and friends. The book covers all of the familiar buildings and public reserves such as the iconic School of Arts building, Munro Martin Park, McLeod Street Cemetery and the Botanic Gardens. Other areas equally represented include buildings in Abbott Street such as the former Post Office, Courthouse, Customs house and local government buildings as well as the former Mulgrave Shire Council building on the Esplanade.

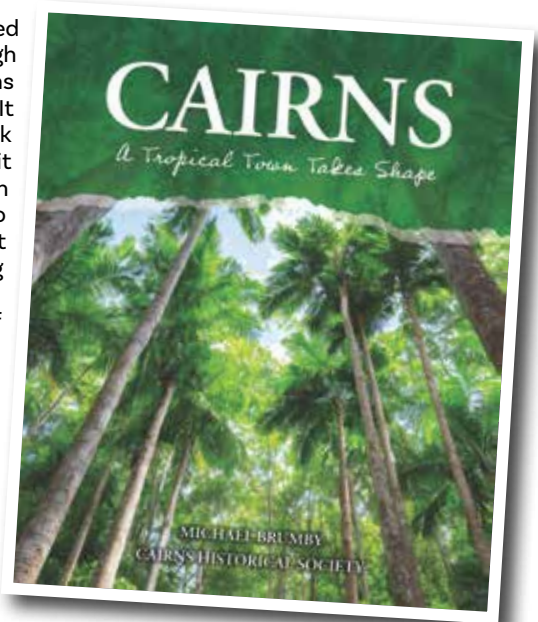
This beautifully designed and richly illustrated book key places, people and

cultural institutions which shaped the region are highlighted through numerous historical photographs and detailed narratives. It provides an engaging look into Cairn's rich heritage as it explores the transformation from First Nations homelands, to burgeoning colonial settlement through to today's thriving tropical hub.

This publication is part of the Society's C150 celebratory events and is proudly sponsored through the generous support of the Cairns Regional Council, Ports North and local Member for Leichhardt MP Matt Smith.

Written, edited, designed, printed and produced locally in Cairns, it is a great keepsake of the Sesquicentennial year and makes an excellent present for visitors and family alike. It is on sale at the Cairns Museum, Corner of Lake and Shields Street, Cairns.

**The publication has been financially supported by the Cairns Regional Council, Ports North and Local MP Matt**



**Smith and written by well-known north Queensland author Michael Brumby (CHS volunteer) produced by the Cairns Historical Society especially for C150. It will retail at \$39.95**

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# Fun in the Sun

WITH Cairns turning 150 this year, the whole community is being invited to help revive one of the city's most iconic traditions – the “Fun in the Sun” parade – for a special one off celebration.

For over sixty years, Cairns has celebrated its place in the Sun and shown itself to be a destination of diversity and fun for all. The festival was the vision of the Cairns Regional Council who wanted to attract visitors to the north. They held their inaugural festival in May 1962, to coincide with the grand opening of a new jetty on Green Island.

‘Fun in the Sun’ was named as a result of a competition conducted by Trans Atlantic Airways (TAA) Magazine Trans Air in 1963. The competition attracted submissions from around Australia and was won by a fellow in Hobart. For his effort he received a free return airfare to Cairns and a fortnights accommodation on Green Island.

From 1972, it grew bigger and bigger to expand from one week to ten days under the guidance of a new Tourist Promotion Officer with international festival experience. The festival connected north Queensland communities across the region and extended tourism right up to the Torres Straits and beyond to Papua New Guinea. This was pushed by TAA, Queensland Tourist Bureau and Local Governments. ‘Fun in the Sun’ was a serious festival affair filled with competing exotic floats, crocodile, crab and cane toad races, beauty Queens and cultural displays. With performances such as Kasue Matsumoto’s Black Belt Karate and signature Watermelon Cut (which consisted of cutting a watermelon on a student’s chest using a samurai sword), and through support from the Army, Navy and Cairns Game Fishing Club, Cairns Regional Electricity Board, and leading businesses such as Hanush’s Cordials, the festival was a favourite calendar event.

The secret to the Cairns Festival longevity remains in its ability to remain community focused, sandwich itself in-between other events such as Cairns Cup and Cairns Amateurs or dovetail onto Cairns Navy Week.

The festival has also proved adaptable and kept up with the social pulse of the times including renaming itself as Reef Festival in the 1990s when far north Queensland was marketed for its natural reef wonderland and more recently in 2002 as Cairns Festival showcasing the cultural and creative diversity of the north.

With over 60 years of bands, lights, performances, floats, and Carnival on Collins, no amount of rain can dampen the spirit of the north and our enjoyment of Fun in the Sun!



Fun in the Sun Parade in the 1960S - the swinger float with people with very large papier mache heads.



Decorated bicycles in the Fun in the Sun Parade.



Miss Cairns 1977 Fun in the Sun being crowned.

## A Retro Look Back at Cairns Festival

Flipping through Cairns Festival program booklets from the past feels like opening a time capsule of colour, creativity, and community spirit.

Each page carries echoes of parades, performances, and moments that shaped our city's vibrant cultural heartbeat.



Cairns Centenary Parade Procession float 1876-1976



# TSS Trinity Bay

## From Dredging to Dining - The Story of T.S.S. Trinity Bay

LAUNCHED in 1912 and entering service in 1913, the T.S.S. Trinity Bay was a twin-screw steam suction dredger built in Germany for the Cairns Harbour Board. She had a hopper capacity of approximately 895 cubic meters and was fitted with two triple-expansion steam engines capable of 8 knots, vital for clearing silt from Cairns Harbour.

Originally coal-fired, she was

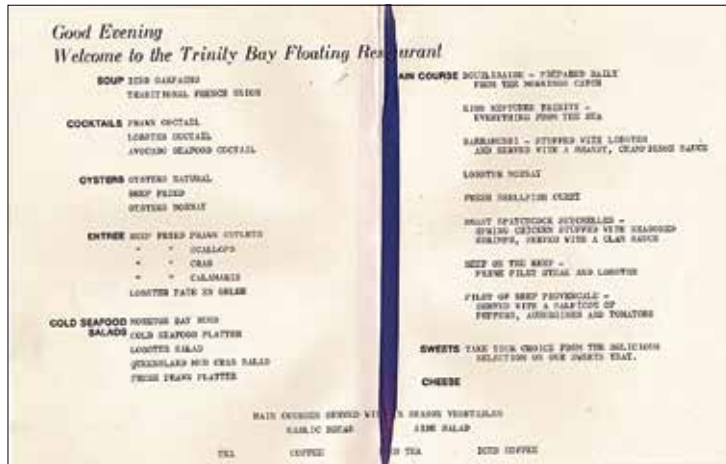
converted to oil in 1959, improving efficiency and reducing operating costs. Her two Scotch Marine boilers generated a combined 408 horsepower. Over five decades, she worked tirelessly to keep the port open and the regional economy moving.

After retirement, Trinity Bay was transformed into a floating museum and restaurant at the Marlin Jetty. Visitors could explore the bridge, crew cabins, and descend into the original

engine room, still housing the German-built machinery that once powered her through Cairns' muddy waters.

Lunches of reef prawns, lobster mornay, and mud crab were served aboard in a dining space framed by polished timber and vintage brass. The experience offered a glimpse into a bygone era of maritime industry.

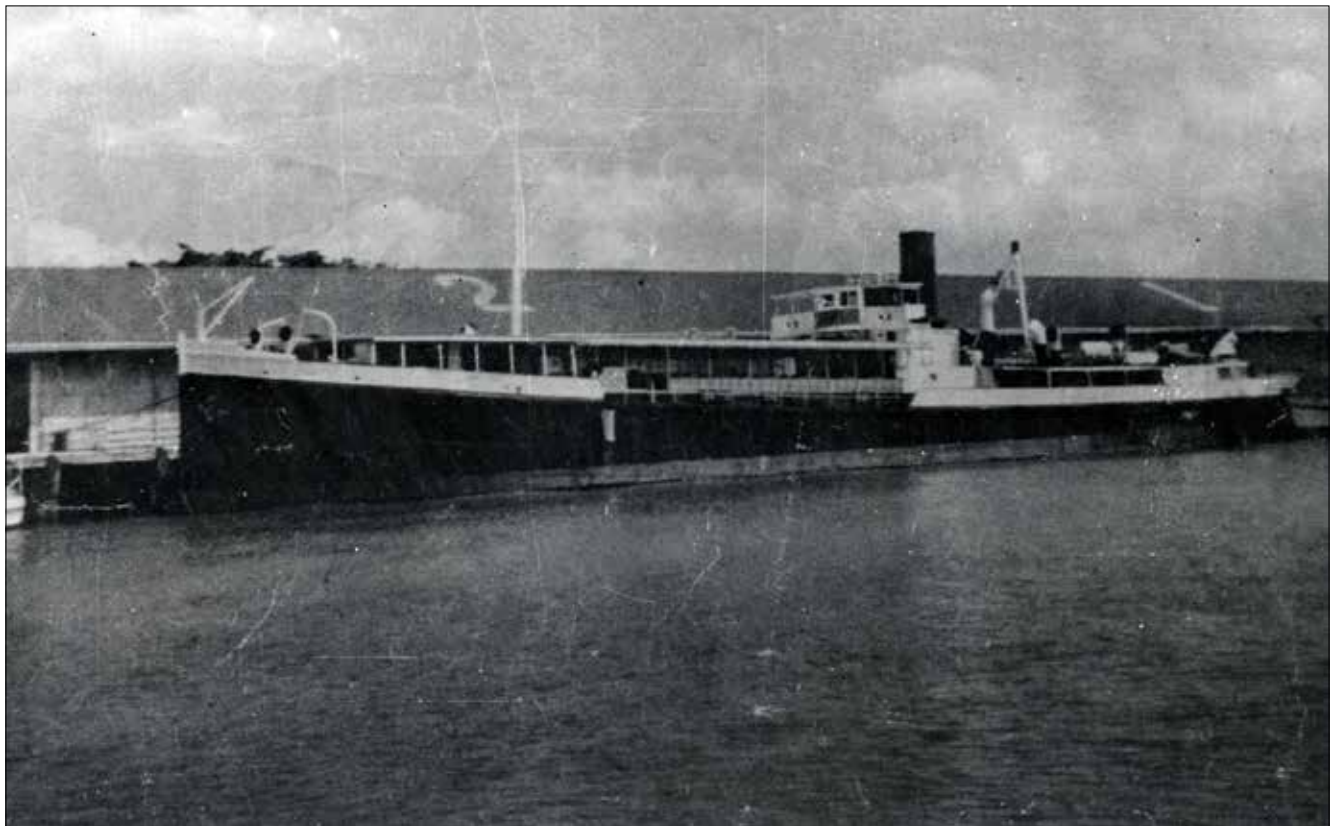
A vessel of iron and heart, Trinity Bay remains a proud symbol of Cairns' working waterfront history.



The menu for the TSS Trinity Bay floating restaurant.



James G Stewart, Captain of 'Trinity Bay' dredge from 1918-22 circa 1920.



Trinity Bay berthed at no.2 wharf, Cairns. It was launched in 1912 and is a twin screw steamship, circa 1912.

# Freshwater Fiesta

**Saturday 22nd August**  
**Richmond Park, Freshwater**



THE Freshwater Festival brings a vibrant family-friendly celebration to Richmond Park and the surrounding street precinct.

Sponsored by Limberlost Nursery & Vines Cafe and supported by Cairns Regional Council and the Freshwater QCWA, the event showcases Far North Queensland's tropical lifestyle. Visitors can enjoy up to 45 stalls featuring food, drinks, arts, crafts, jewellery, plants and pet products, alongside live music and entertainment.

Family attractions include street performers, face painting, jumping castles, a dwarf goat petting zoo and tennis activities at Freshwater Tennis Club.

The QCWA will host market stalls and special raffles celebrating Cairns' 150th anniversary, while Limberlost Nursery will feature tropical displays and specials. The event raises funds for the Freshwater QCWA.



## 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](http://cairnsmuseum.org.au) | Corner Lake & Shields Streets



# Basketball State Championships

**Thursday 2nd July**  
**Trinity Ford Stadium, Manunda**

CAIRNS Basketball will host the U14 Boys State Championships, bringing together some of Queensland's best emerging basketball talent for four days of competition.

The event will feature six divisions, with teams travelling from across the state to compete for the prestigious State Championship title. Division 1 will be the premier competition, with the top three teams earning qualification for the National Championships. Cairns Basketball General Manager Luca Vergari said the event is an exciting opportunity for the region.

"This championship is a fantastic opportunity for Cairns to showcase its ability to host major events while giving young athletes a platform to compete at the highest level," he said.

The tournament will celebrate junior basketball while giving the next generation of athletes the chance to represent their associations with pride.



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](http://www.cairnsjockeyclub.com.au)

# Picnic Resorts

WITH the Great Depression dampening down Christmas for many in the early 1930s, the combination of warm weather, and perfect conditions brought families and friends together to pool resources and travel to the local “picnic resorts” as they were known around the Cairns area.

Places popular to visit on the weekends for locals included

Double Island Beach (Trinity Beach), Yorkies Knob, Freshwater Creek, the Barron Beach, Turtle Bay and Green Island.

Picnickers piled into launches, flatties and all manner of sea craft while on land buses, cars, lorries were fully laden. Note the long sleeves, long skirts or trousers, large sun hats and sturdy shoes.



Picnic Group Double Island Beach

## Looking back at Cairns



# NAIDOC Friday in the Park

Friday 3rd July  
Fogerty Park

JOIN the Cairns community for NAIDOC Friday in the Park, a vibrant celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, achievements and resilience. This free family-friendly event brings together locals and visitors to honour the history, culture and contributions of First Nations peoples.



The day will feature live cultural performances including traditional dance, music and storytelling, alongside community stalls, cultural displays and interactive activities for all ages.

In 2026, the event celebrates the NAIDOC theme “50 Years of Deadly,” recognising five decades of strength, pride and achievement by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

NAIDOC Friday in the Park is an opportunity to celebrate identity, strengthen community connections and recognise the leadership and enduring legacy of First Nations communities in Cairns and beyond.

# NAIDOC Edor Carnival

Wednesday 8th July  
North Cairns Tigers Grounds, Behan St, Manunda

NAIDOC Edor Carnival Cairns is a 1-day annual carnival of the Traditional Indigenous Game of ‘Edor’. Originating from Aurukun Aboriginal Community the game has been modernised and played with tags.

It’s a running, tagging chasing game, played barefoot on the grass with one person as the ‘Edor’ dodging through the opposition to get through the goals without being tagged.

It is a competitive fast paced game, played in the Cairns region and throughout Cape York with it growing even more popular in recent years.

The game celebrates the continuation of culture, team spirit and skill for ages 8-17 years.



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# Cairns Celebrations



# ates 150 Years



# Rustys Markets

RUSTY'S Markets has been an iconic community meeting place for over 50 years and first started at the Cairns Tropical Theatre in Shields Street in 1975.

Started by well-known local and lover of motorbikes Emrys "Rusty" Rees, Rusty's Markets has grown from its roots in the "hippie" era of the 1970s and taken on a unique character and flavour ever since.



Rusty's Markets Sheridan Street with customers inspecting displays of fruits 2002



Rusty's Markets selling cane baskets and Asian vegetables, 1994.



View from Sheridan St 2001

# The Reef Hotel Casino

## Cairns' Premier Entertainment Destination

CELEBRATING 30 years at the heart of Cairns' nightlife, dining and entertainment scene, The Reef Hotel Casino marks a major milestone in 2026 as one of the city's most enduring and iconic venues.

Opening its doors on 31 January 1996, the Casino launched with a series of high-profile celebrations. The gala opening in April featured two major events: a spectacular Abbott Street takeover showcasing premier dining and entertainment headlined by Dame Edna Everage and "the Queen" (comedian Gerry Connolly), followed by the vibrant HEAT Festival in Fogarty Park.

Over the past three decades, the complex has continually evolved in response to global, economic and tourism trends, cementing its reputation as a must visit destination for locals and visitors alike.

Christine Aylett, Acting CEO & General Manager The Reef Hotel Casino, said the 30 year anniversary is a proud moment for the entire Reef Hotel Casino community.



The Reef Hotel Casino opened in 1996. Pictures: Supplied

"For three decades, the Casino has been at the heart of Cairns' entertainment, dining and nightlife, creating memorable experiences for locals and visitors alike."

From 5 star accommodation to award winning restaurants and fabulous live entertainment, the complex continues to cater to a diverse demographic.

"From our iconic resident cabaret shows to welcoming nationally recognised performers and supporting hundreds of local musicians, we are

proud of the role we have played in showcasing Cairns' creative spirit.

The continued success of our award-winning Tamarind Restaurant further underscores our contribution to placing Cairns on the national culinary map.

We look forward to celebrating this 30 year milestone with the community throughout the year," Ms Aylett said.

The Reef Hotel Casino will mark its anniversary with a series of events and community celebrations throughout 2026.



# Cairns Hospital

CAIRNS Hospital opened on the 19 January 1878 and began with just a handful of beds in a timber and tin building near the Esplanade. Built through community fundraising and a government grant, this early medical post was a symbol of the city's grassroots spirit. As Cairns grew, so did the hospital. In 1884, a timber and stone facility replaced the original, and by 1912, a grand two-storey building was erected, ushering in a new era of regional healthcare.

Dr Edward Albert Koch was the earliest Hospital Director in Cairns. Attending to the sick and championing community health, through preventative measures against tropical fever, he developed and patented 'Dr. Koch's Celebrated Fever Mixture': a quinine-based treatment that proved effective in managing malaria. Kind and thoughtful, he was known for going the extra mile (literally), often trekking out to treat patients in remote areas and helping those who couldn't pay. His death in June 1901, left a huge hole in Cairns medical practitioners at the hospital. With no single direct successor to his medical practice, Dr R.A. O'Brien, 1904 -1908, and a series of doctors succeeded him until the 1920s.

In 1927, Dr Thelma Black became the "first female doctor" as resident medical officer at the Cairns Hospital. She arrived in Cairns 24 February 1928 with the backing of Doctor Jamieson, the former medical superintendent. Her salary at the time of £200 was well



Cairns Hospital, 1927

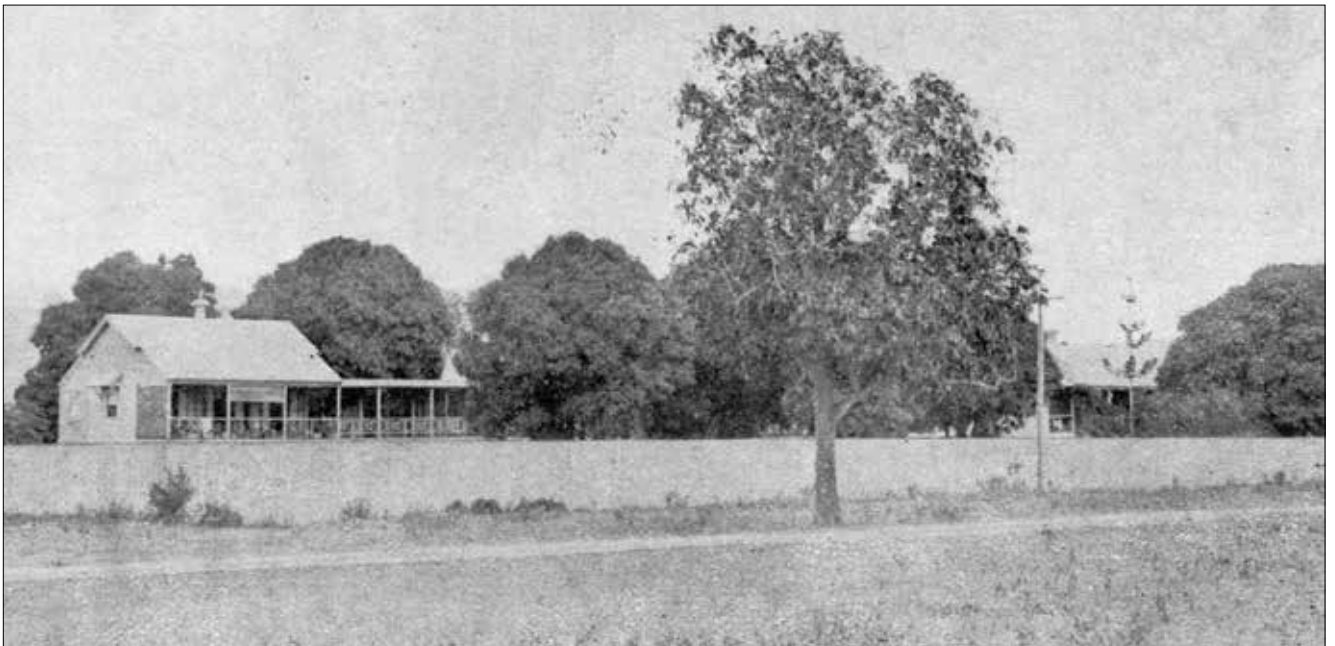
below her contemporary Dr. Sword, who earned double at £450! Her workload increased nearly as soon as she arrived and a little over a month later, she was servicing the Gordonvale community as well. She made a daily journey down to Gordonvale from Cairns. Nine months later, she resigned. In her letter to the Cairns Hospitals Board, effective 17 December 1929, she asked the chairman "to convey her appreciation to the Board members" and returned to Sydney. This was a period where the hospital grew in patients and buildings.

By 1932, it was known as Cairns Base Hospital: a name it carried until 2013. The hospital continued to expand from a 136 beds facility to more than 350 beds over the following sixty years. A major turning point came in 1949

with the addition of a five-storey ward block, complete with lifts and modern operating theatres, a first for the region.

Today, Cairns Hospital is the largest public health facility in Far North Queensland, servicing a region from Tully to the Torres Strait. With 531 inpatient beds, a 52-bed Emergency Department, 16-bed ICU, and a new 53-bed mental health unit, the hospital is a regional cornerstone. A \$250 million expansion currently underway will bring 64 more beds and a new surgical and innovation precinct as it transitions into a University Hospital.

From seaside shack to state-of-the-art medical hub, Cairns Hospital's evolution mirrors the story of the city itself: resilient, ambitious, and always growing.



First Cairns Hospital opened 19 Jan 1878

# Redlynch Twilight Markets

**Friday 17th July, 5pm–8.30pm**  
**Xavier Herbert Park, Redlynch Valley.**

THE Redlynch Twilight Markets are a bi-monthly community event held at Xavier Herbert Park in Redlynch Valley, Cairns, typically on Friday evenings. They feature local stalls selling arts, crafts, handmade gifts, plants, and clothing, along with food vans and live music.

- Vibe: A family-friendly, relaxed evening event focused on community,

local produce, and entertainment.

- Offerings: Stalls include jewellery, soaps, cards, plants, perfume, bric-a-brac, and clothing.
- Food and Drink: Various food vans, including Japanese, Thai, Vietnamese, pizza, and coffee.
- Atmosphere: Live music, buskers, and a playground for children.

The markets are known for their picturesque setting by Freshwater Creek and the surrounding mountains. They are a popular social gathering for the Redlynch Valley community.



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# The Rovers Cricket Club

THE Rovers Cricket Club, Cairns, was a popular sporting team in the late 19th Century which provided a collegial base for summertime weekend sporting activities for men from across the region to come together.

While Interprovincial Cricket matches had been ongoing across the region since 1885 between Townsville and Cairns, it was not before the mid-1890s that the Rovers Cricket Club was formed. It was a very successful team with many skilful players, however in 1908, the team was disbanded with the remainder of surplus of £1/1/ (\$126.12) from the club hands of the Cairns District Cricket Association.

But, Cricket runs through the veins of many across the land, and it's to keep a good cricketer away from playing! The Rovers Cricket Club resurrected itself, and a version is still playing after 125 years of success in the north.

Now called The Cairns Rovers Cricket Club Inc. it is one of the oldest continuing cricket clubs in Cairns. Not bad for a game of one ball, one bat and three sticks!



## The mysterious loss of the Valda



The sailing boat Valda mysteriously went missing in 1911.

IN 1911, the sailing boat Valda left Cairns for nearby Green Island - an everyday trip across familiar waters. But what followed became one of the region's most haunting maritime mysteries.

The Valda never returned.

Weeks later, the vessel was found stranded along the coastline. Its young crew of local boys had vanished without a trace. Despite extensive searches, no sign of them was ever found. The Cairns Post lobbied the government for help, leading to a £250 reward for information - a staggering amount for the time.

For perspective, £250 in 1911 is equivalent to around \$40,000-\$50,000 AUD today, highlighting the gravity and desperation surrounding the search. It wasn't just a missing boat; it was a community searching for its sons.

Over a century later, the fate of the Valda's crew remains unknown - a somber reminder of the ocean's power and the fragility of life on the water.

# VEXPO

Sunday 26th July  
The Tanks, Edge Hill

VEXPO returns to the Tanks Arts Centre to celebrate volunteering and community spirit across the Cairns region. This year's event marks several milestones, including Cairns' 150th anniversary, 25 years of FNQ Volunteers and 10 years of VEXPO showcasing volunteer organisations.

The event highlights the important role volunteers play in building and supporting the community, while giving visitors the chance to connect with local organisations and discover volunteering opportunities.

Whether you have a few hours to spare or want to become more involved, VEXPO encourages everyone to explore how they can contribute, develop new skills and make a difference.

Held alongside the Tanks market day, the celebration will include live entertainment, kids' activities, face painting, free coffee and biscuits, and a special celebration cake in Tank 3.



# Japanese Bon Dance Festival

Saturday 15th August  
Fogarty Park

THE Bon Dance Festival is one of Cairns' most vibrant cultural celebrations, bringing the spirit of a traditional Japanese summer festival to the city. Centred around the iconic Bon Odori dance, the event features taiko drumming, music and participants dressed in traditional Japanese attire, creating an authentic matsuri atmosphere.

Local volunteers, community groups and Japanese restaurants will host food stalls offering popular festival-style dishes, while families and visitors can enjoy performances, dancing and cultural activities throughout the event.

As Cairns celebrates its 150th anniversary, the festival highlights the strong connection between the city and its Japanese community, showcasing the region's multicultural spirit.

The Bon Dance Festival is a welcoming celebration of culture, community and shared experiences, inviting people of all ages to come together and enjoy the richness of cultural diversity.



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# Starr Bowkett Centre

ON the 15th December 1953, a new, most modern Cairns business premises opened in the heart of town, called the Starr Bowkett Centre. The Cairns Starr Bowkett Building and Investment Society, located in Lake Street, was a leading investment society in Cairns. It offered low interest loans to the community and capitalised on local investment in the housing market. The Society financially excelled so much since the mid - 1930s, that it was able to construct a new and impressive five floor building with a 30-foot (9.1 metres) frontage to Lake Street. The cost was estimated at £80,000 - or \$3,464,867.90 in today's language. Constructed of reinforced concrete and decorated with brightly coloured tiles, the building stood out in the street as thoroughly modern post war architecture.

The first four floors had an area of 16,000 square feet (1486.5 metres) of floor space and a roof top garden for functions and events. Queen Elizabeth II was entertained on the rooftop of the building when she visited Cairns in 1954. Both the Queen and building were a vision of modernity!

The building has since been demolished but the Cairns Historical Society has in its collection the original plaque which depicts its optimistic opening in 1953.



Starr Bowkett Centre and Commercial Bank of Australia Ltd, Lake St, Cairns, in 1961. Photographer: Judith Jennings

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# Cairns Festival

**28th August to 6th  
September  
Cairns Region**

CAIRNS Festival is a vibrant 10-day celebration running from 28 August to 6 September, bringing the community together through shows, events, live music and art exhibitions, all proudly locally produced to spark joy across the city. Cairns is turning 150 years young in 2026, and we're calling on the whole

community to help bring back one of our city's most iconic traditions, the "Fun in the Sun" parade, for a special celebration this year! For Grand Parade we're honouring the businesses, communities and milestones that have built the city of Cairns, while also shining a light on the bright future ahead. Think tropical colour, coastal vibes, sun-soaked nostalgia and bold Cairns energy. Bright, joyful and uniquely us. Come and join Cairns' most spectacular event of the year!



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# The Cairns Show

THE Cairns Show has been a cornerstone of Far North Queensland culture for over 130 years. First held in 1891 under the banner of the Cairns Agricultural, Pastoral and Mining Association, it began as a way to showcase the region's best livestock, produce, and craftsmanship.

Early shows were modest, but enthusiasm grew rapidly. By the 1930s, the event had moved to its permanent home at Parramatta Park, establishing the showgrounds we know today. The Great Depression and World War II caused temporary cancellations, but the community's passion brought the show back stronger each time.

Over the decades, the Cairns Show evolved from a purely agricultural event into a massive community celebration. Wood chopping contests, equestrian events, cattle judging, and produce displays continued, but were joined by sideshow alleys, rides, show bags, fireworks, and art exhibits. The show has become a three-day public holiday



All dressed up for The Show.

event, attracting tens of thousands of visitors.

Despite challenges like cyclones, flooding, and economic downturns, the show remains a symbol of Cairns'

resilience, diversity, and community pride. Today, it's the largest regional show in Queensland and one of the most anticipated events on the Cairns calendar.



Show jumping.



Boxing competitions.



Wood chopping competitions.



Sheba - side show Cairns Show. 1958

# Limberlost

2026 marks a great year for Limberlost Garden Centre as they celebrate 70 years of bringing plants, local knowledge and garden inspiration to the Cairns community.

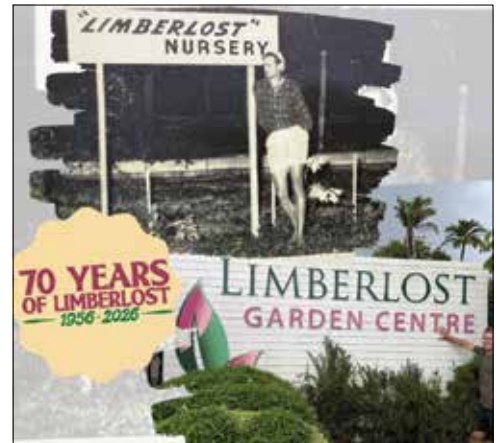
Limberlost was created in 1956 after Cyclone Agnes wiped out fruit orchards owned by Sybill and John Jones. The couple decided to share their passion for plants and collectors Orchids with the Cairns community, bringing Limberlost to life. Their creativity and ingenuity helped pave the way for the makings of a successful garden centre. By making their own pots from recycled beer cans and using egg cups to grow their orchids before plastic pots became more readily available, they were able to produce plants on a large scale. The fruit orchard was re-established, sporting a specialized range of exotic trees such as Durian, Rambutan and many more.

The nursery has grown through local families, being passed down to their daughter Robyn and her partner Lindsay, who bought Limberlost to a new level, adding new buildings, an indoor plant area, and a raw materials

yard to create the footprint they have today. They bought convenience to the Freshwater community by having one place for all their garden needs.

Ross Rankine and Cheryl Fisher took over the garden centre in 2012 saving the land from development. Their drive for continuing the success of the nursery in Cairns saw the introduction of Vines Café with the renovation of the original Queenslander home of the Jones' into a charming and vibrant café.

Now owned by Cheryl's son Ryan Rodgers and his wife Merodia, the garden centre continues to evolve and is now one of Cairns' largest and longest standing nurseries. Workshops run by their creative staff are now regular features on weekends, where new and old gardeners can master a new skill or hobby, or enjoy an informative how to grow session. To celebrate their 70th year, they have got some fantastic events planned and have just introduced their newest attraction - mini goats! They'll be at the nursery on weekends and school holidays for customers to enjoy.



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🌿 Vines Cafe 🌿

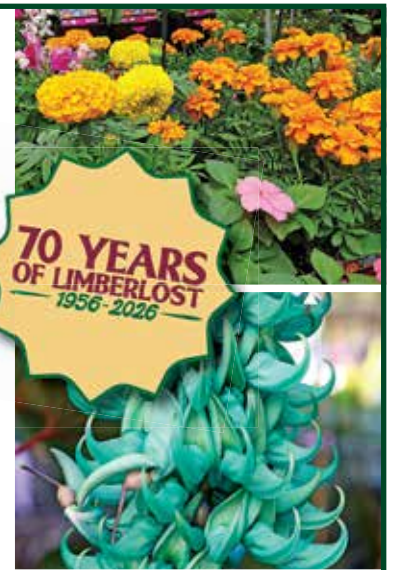
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# Summer stingers

CAIRNS summers have always meant a few trips to the beach for sunlovers, dog walkers and families. This scene at Yorkeys Knob, in January 1939, is a scene like what you might see today - with one big exception - no bikinis!

No stinger net either, despite several deaths having occurred previously from an unknown stinging marine creature.

Research into stingers only began in 1943 when medical officer Dr Southcott investigated injuries to military personnel training with assault craft on the northern beaches.

He involved local medico Dr Hugo Flecker who continued research after the war, identifying the culprit as box jellyfish. This led to the addition of stinger nets to our beachscapes.

However, it was researcher Jack Barnes who identified the smaller thumbnail size jellyfish, *Carukia barnesi*, in 1964 as the cause of what was then called "Irukandji syndrome". In order to prove his theory, he captured the tiny jellyfish and made them sting himself, his son (age 9), and a lifeguard nearby. Luckily they all survived and the mystery was solved.



Cairns Surf Life Saving Club beach patrol member holding a large box jellyfish



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# Dogs Day Out

Saturday 5th September  
Barron Waters Park, Caravonica

FNQ Dogs Day Out is a popular Cairns festival event celebrating dogs, pet owners and the organisations dedicated to animal welfare. Hosted by YAPS and The Festival Guy, the event brings together rescue groups, veterinarians, trainers and pet-related businesses for a fun-filled community day.

Visitors can enjoy obedience and training demonstrations, adoption parades, pet products and services, market stalls, entertainment, food vendors and kids' activities. Rescue organisations including YAPS, RSPCA, NQAR and CAR will provide pet care advice and promote animal adoption opportunities.

This year's event also supports Cairns' 150th anniversary celebrations, with organisers aiming to help facilitate the adoption of 150 dogs through lead-up promotions and the event itself.

FNQ Dogs Day Out is both a family-friendly celebration and an important fundraiser supporting local rescue and animal welfare organisations.



# Carnival on Collins

Sunday 6th September,  
9am-2pm  
Tanks Arts Centre &  
Cairns Botanic Gardens

CARNIVAL on Collins is back and bigger, louder and more electric than ever. This Father's Day, Collins Avenue transforms into a full-scale street party pulsing with colour, flavour and non-stop energy beneath a lush tropical canopy.

On Sunday 6 September, step into a vibrant wonderland packed with over 200 market stalls, irresistible local eats, live music and surprises around every corner. From bold fashion and handcrafted art to plants, produce and street food worth lining up for, every step is a new discovery.

But don't get too comfortable, because the magic moves.

Expect roving performers, pop up moments and surprise acts bursting into life right in front of you. Blink and you might miss a flash mob, a cheeky street performer or an unexpected burst of music and mischief weaving through the crowd.



A large banner for the Cairns Italian Festival. The background is a scenic view of a tropical beach with white sand, turquoise water, and a green hillside. On the left, there is a classical Greek temple. On the right, there is a tall, white, cylindrical tower. The text on the banner reads: "Cairns Italian Festival", "Italy In the Tropics", "23rd July to 2nd August". At the bottom, it says "11 days / 12 events" and "Scan for more info" with a QR code. The Italian flag is visible in the top left corner.



Follow us @CairnsItalianFestival  
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www.cairnsitalianfestival.com.au



# Botanic Gardens

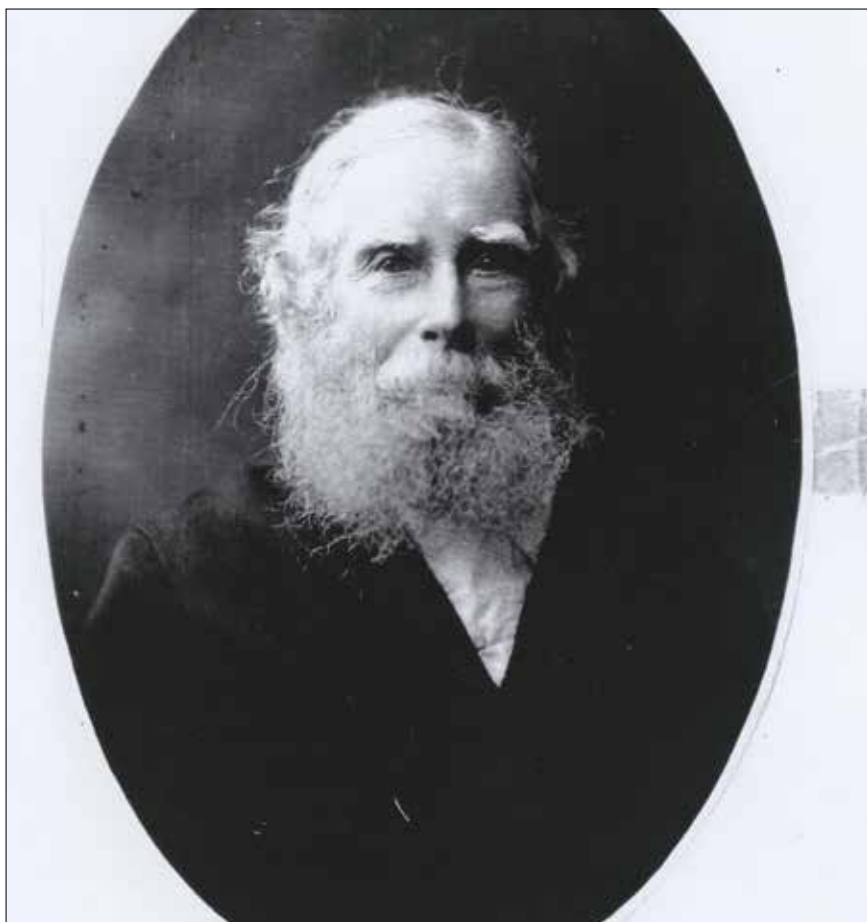
DRIVE up Collins Avenue to the lush Flecker Botanical Gardens and you're unknowingly stepping into the legacy of one remarkable Irishman - Eugene Fitzalan, the visionary gardener who helped sow the seeds of modern Cairns horticulture.

Born in Ireland in 1830 and orphaned at 13, Fitzalan began life as an apprentice gardener on a wealthy estate. Restless and ambitious, he set sail for Australia in 1849, working through Victoria's early gold rush years before joining explorer George Elphinstone Dalrymple on a northern Queensland expedition.

Fitzalan later settled in Bowen, running a thriving nursery for 25 years, but the growing township of Cairns called him north again in 1886. Seeing opportunity in the newly gazetted Botanical Reserve at Edge Hill - once a Chinese market garden - he offered his skills to council and transformed the site into a flourishing public sanctuary.

Under his care, the gardens bloomed with roses, hibiscus, orchids, ferns, citrus trees and mangoes. Locals flocked to wander the paths and enjoy tea, coffee, and cool refreshments served by Fitzalan's daughter at her quaint garden café.

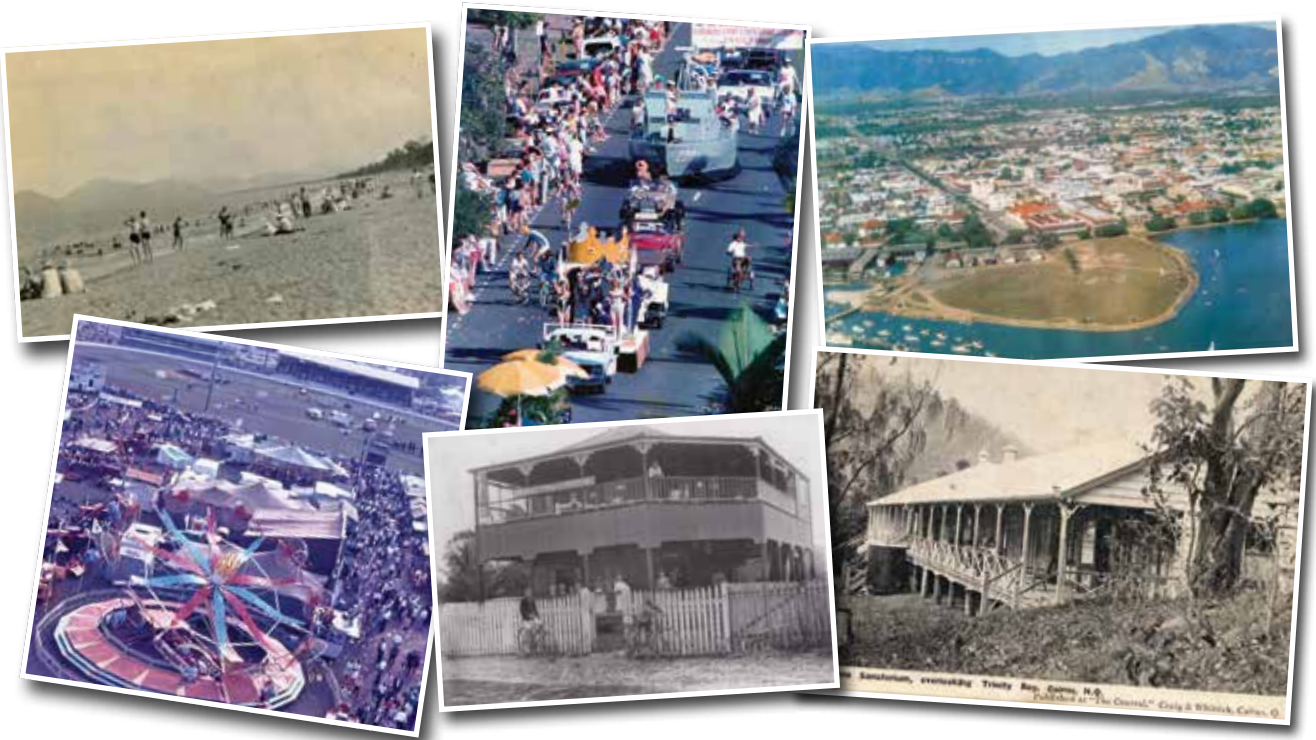
By 1897, illness forced him south to Brisbane, where he opened a florist shop. Fitzalan died in 1911 at 81 having lived an extraordinary life for a once orphaned Irish gardener who helped cultivate the botanical beauty Cairns cherishes today.



Portrait of botanist Eugene Fitzalan, the first curator of Cairns Botanical Gardens. Fitzalan retired in 1897.



# Looking back at Cairns



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# Southern Cross

AVIATOR Charles Kingsford Smith had more links to Cairns than you think.

His mother, Catherine Mary Kingsford, was the daughter of Cairns' first mayor Richard Ash Kingsford, and his father was William Charles Smith, a banker who for a time owned a large selection over what later became Whitfield and part of

Edge Hill.

Though born in Brisbane, Smithy occasionally visited Cairns and this photo shows him with his famous 'Southern Cross' plane at Cairns on 16 July 1932 when he flew from Atherton to Edge Hill and spent the day giving joy-rides.

This was part of a joy-riding tour of NSW and Queensland. In 1935 he sold the Southern Cross, which he had used in the first trans-Pacific flight and the first trans-Tasman flight to New Zealand in 1928, to the Commonwealth government.

It is now on display at Brisbane Airport.



Charles Kingsford-Smith in the "Southern Cross" VH-USU He flew from Atherton to Edgehill salt pan and spent the day giving joy flights.



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# CAIRNS 150

1876 - 2026

Scan the QR code for full program

