introducing townsville’s northern beaches

Townsville’s Northern Beaches precinct is located just north of Townsville adjacent to the Bruce Highway. The area extends from Bushland Beach to Balgal Beach, encompassing Saunders, Toolakea and Toomulla along the way - a total of five seemingly endless beaches.

The unspoiled coastline, coupled with picturesque natural bushland, enables each beach to offer unique attractions, activities and experiences. The Northern Beaches are the perfect place to visit, stay and explore.

10 things to do

Try your luck catching a prized “barra” in one of the coastal creeks.

Do bird watching, the Northern Beaches is home to the Beachstone Curlew, Pied Oystercatchers and many more. See the Experience Townsville’s Bird Watching brochure for more detailed information.

Enjoy the fresh taste of local fish with views of the Coral Sea at Balgal Beach.

Follow the eight interpretive historical signs at Rollingstone and Balgal Beach.

Energise your senses with a peaceful walk along one of the pristine and uncrowded beaches.

Have a picnic in the shady bush setting of Vincent ‘Bushy’ Parker Park (also known as Rollingstone Park), next to the Rollingstone Creek.

Check out the designated camping areas available at Balgal Beach, Toolakea Beach, Saunders Beach, Rollingstone or Bluewater Park.

Cool down by having a swim; a popular waterhole is located under the Rollingstone Bridge, where you can view murals painted by local artists.

Take a day trip to discover Paluma, Hidden Valley, Jourama Falls or Wallaman Falls – you’ll be glad you did!

Experience Townsville’s Bird watching

The Northern Beaches have a rich and diverse history. The area was originally inhabited by Aboriginals of the Warakami and the Wulgurukaba tribes. Early rural development was concentrated along the creeks of the Northern Beaches. Due to the transportation demands of sugar cane, timber and tin mining, a railway line was constructed from Townsville to Cairns. This railway line was also used in World War II to transport water from Rollingstone Creek to Townsville. Military troops were stationed at Rollingstone to survey the coast line as a Japanese invasion threatened. Today, the Northern Beaches have developed into numerous thriving seaside communities.

TIMELINE

Pre 1880s The Northern Beaches area is inhabited by traditional owner groups the Warakami and the Wulgurukaba tribes.

1880s Early settlement concentrates along local creeks.

1912 Railway development commences.

1915 Rollingstone Railway Station and refreshment rooms open.

1916 Rollingstone School opens.

1924 Isabella Fitzpatrick becomes the first female councillor in Queensland, elected on the Thuringowa Shire Council.

1941’s Rollingstone and Balgal Beach become significant military staging areas – with troops training in the Palmara Ranges and at Mount Halifax.

1992 Rollingstone Railway Station closes.

2008 The Northern Beaches suburbs of Bushland, Balgal, Saunders, Toolakea and Toomulla beaches become suburbs of Townsville after the amalgamation of Townsville and Thuringowa.

2009 Northern beaches communities are home to around 9000 Townsville residents and are constantly increasing in popularity amongst locals, day-tippers and visiting tourists alike.

Try your luck catching a prized “barra” in one of the coastal creeks.

Be Careful

The season for marine stingers is from November – May. During this time of the year, you should only swim in stinger enclosures and wear a full length stinger suit. Estuarine crocodiles can also be seen in tidal rivers along the beach. Make sure you obey warning signs at all times and note that crocodiles may be present in creeks without signage. Finally, remember to always wear SPF 30+ sunscreen and protective clothing. It is also a good idea to use insect repellent to avoid mosquito bites.

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Bushland Beach, North Queensland

Bushland Beach is a thriving, residential community offering many attractions and facilities. Beachfront resort accommodation and a hotel provide stunning ocean views. Parks with amenities, BBQs and playgrounds are available for use and a convenience store is located in the area. Bushland Beach is a great spot for fishing and there is a boat ramp nearby.

Toolakea & Bluewater

Toolakea, a beautiful but quieter beach, presents excellent opportunities for fishing and bird watching. Facilities and camping are located at nearby Bluewater Park which is home to the urban forest and fitness trail. Located just off the Bruce Highway, it has a picturesque, shady recreational area with BBQs, toilets, showers and playgrounds. Bluewater Creek is a scenic freshwater creek found right next to the park. It is an ideal scenic freshwater creek found next to the park. It is an ideal fishing location with a boat ramp just a stone’s throw away, so why not try your hand at reeling in a big one during your stay? Designated vehicle camping is available, for a maximum of 24 hours.

Fishing

In-shore fishing is most popular in this region; along the coastline are fringing reefs which extend 3km off-shore. These areas are home to School Mackerel and Spanish Mackerel, Fingermark, Gurnier, Coral Trout, Estuary Cod and Tuna. The Northern Beaches area is also a delight for anglers, renowned for winter Whiting or “elbow slappers”. For the best spots look for gutters or the mouth of tidal creeks.

In the creeks north of Townsville, Barramundi and Mangrove Jack abound. The Bohle River is one of the most productive Barramundi fishing spots on the east coast, but be aware of the annual closed season between November to February. To catch a famous “barram”, fish an hour before and after low tide using lures or live bait.

Get the latest information on fish take limits, possession limits, and restricted fishing zones from local tackle stores. Contact the Visitor Information Centre on 1800 201 902 for information on a number of local fishing tours. Information is also available on the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries website www.qld.gov.au or from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority website www.qmpa.gov.au.

Fishing – Saunders Beach

With 6km of golden, untouched beaches, this sparkling coastline provides a picturesque backdrop to Saunders Beach Park. Accommodation is available at Saunders Beach providing visitors with the perfect opportunity to relax and enjoy the spectacular beach front at their leisure. The local café/takaway store is set underneath an extraordinary fig tree, and offers basic grocery items and fishing bait. Saunders Beach is an ideal fishing location with a boat ramp just a stone’s throw away, so why not try your hand at reeling in a big one during your stay? Designated vehicle camping is available, for a maximum of 24 hours.

Toomulla

This is a more secluded beach offering excellent bird-watching and native wildlife viewing. Toomulla also has designated vehicle and tent camping available, for a maximum of 48 hours.

Balgal Beach & the Rollingstone District

Townsville’s Northern Beaches, creeks and adjacent ocean are blessed with some of the best fishing in North Queensland. Boat ramps are located at Bushland Beach, Saunders Beach, Bluewater, Toomulla and at the mouth of Rollingstone Creek at Balgal Beach. Check with local tackle and bait stores as access is restricted at low tide from these ramps. The Great Barrier Reef (2km from the mainland) and the Palm group of islands (25km from the mainland) are home to Red Emperor, Nanngai, Giant Trevally and Coral Trout. In winter try trolling around the headlands for Pelagics and, in summer, fish for reef species using fresh or live bait.

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