

CITY



The Learning Centre
UNLOCK YOUR POTENTIAL

GUIDE

YOUR GUIDE TO LIFE IN THE HEART OF NORTHERN QUEENSLAND



TOWNSVILLE

AALL Conference Dec 2025

Overview

Townsville is Australia's largest tropical city and headquarters for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. Striving for big-city sophistication, Townsville is energetic and young with excellent museums and a thriving nightlife. Just off its shores you can discover Magnetic Island and the Great Barrier Reef, while in town you can explore the parks or walk up to Castle Hill Lookout.

If looking for hidden treasures sounds exhausting, other gems await you right in the middle of town. Catering for sophisticated palates and elegant tropical fun, this city boasts an array of world-class cafes, bars, restaurants, nightclubs, a casino and shops. Whichever one you choose, you'll enjoy Townsville's friendly, unique, relaxed tropical ambience



Population Approximately 204,000

Average Max Temperature

31° C (90°F.) in summer and 25°C (77°F) in Winter

Average Days of Sunshine

300 per year

Location

4.5 hours drive south of Cairns

a 2 hour flight from Brisbane

Environment and Region

Located in the Burdekin Dry Tropics region:

- Peak rainfall ~150mm in January
- 90% Cattle Grazing land
- Produces 1/4 of Australia's sugar cane
- 25 National Parks
- 16 Traditional Owner groups

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Ambulance

13 12 33

Police

13 14 44

Townsville Hospital

07 4433 1111

For all Emergency and Fire

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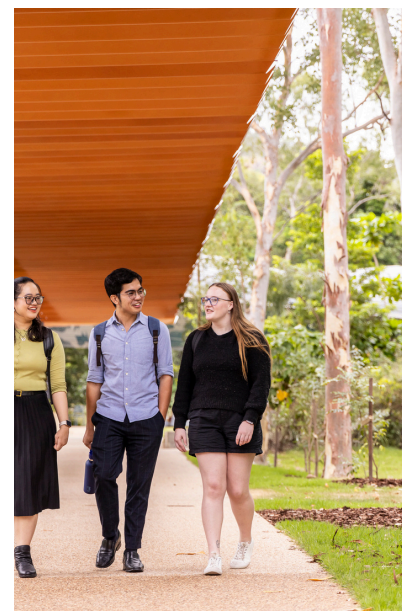
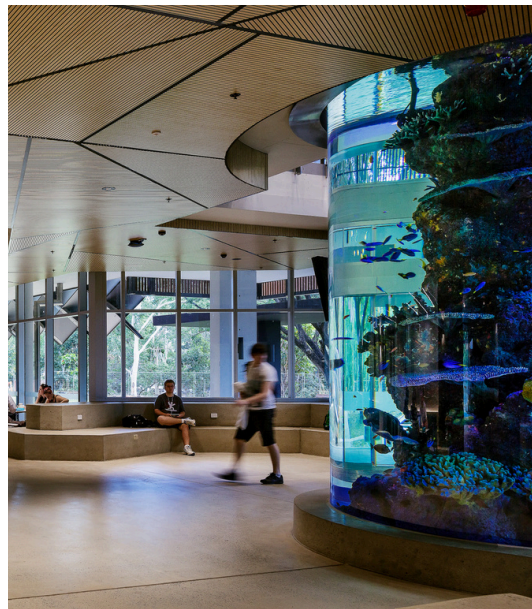


JCU Townsville Overview



James Cook University's Townsville campus, officially known as Bebegu Yumba (“Place of Learning” in the Birri-Gubba language of the Bindal people), is situated in the tropical city of Townsville, Queensland. Located approximately 13 km from the city centre, the campus spans 386 hectares of natural bush and parkland, providing a serene and conducive environment for learning and research.

JCU Townsville is renowned for its focus on disciplines critical to the region's development and global significance, including marine biology, environmental science, engineering, health, and Indigenous studies.





SURVIVING IN THE TROPICS

QUICK GUIDE

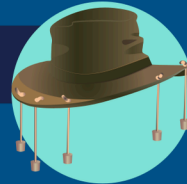


STAY HYDRATED

DRINK MORE WATER THAN USUAL OR YOU MAY FEEL SICK, THIS CAN INCLUDE HEADACHES AND NAUSEA

WEAR A HAT

THE AUSTRALIAN SUN IS A KILLER WITH HIGHER UV THAN YOU ARE USED TO SO WEAR A HAT



EXERCISE

EXERCISE IN THE MORNING OR EVENING, AVOID THE HEAT OF THE DAY

COVER YOUR SKIN

WEAR THIN, LOOSE CLOTHING TO ALLOW GOOD AIRFLOW, WHICH HELPS SWEAT EVAPORATE, AND PROTECTS FROM SUN EXPOSURE



USE SUNSCREEN

WEAR A HIGH PROTECTION UVA & UVB SUNSCREEN AND REAPPLY OFTEN WHEN OUTSIDE OR SWIMMING

Top 5 Free Things To Do in Townsville

Jezzine Barracks Walking Tour Walk all the way from The Strand to Rowes Bay and take in the history of the area along the way including Indigenous and war history.

Riverway

The Riverway Lagoons cover an area the size of three Olympic swimming pools. The lagoons are nestled among shady raintrees, right on the picturesque Ross River, along with free BBQs and a stadium. There is also an arts centre, and movie nights. Entry is 100% free and within walking distance to JCU.

Markets

Weekend markets provide great access to fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as local handicrafts. Choose from Cotters Markets in the city and Willows Rotary Market closer to the Uni, opposite Riverway.

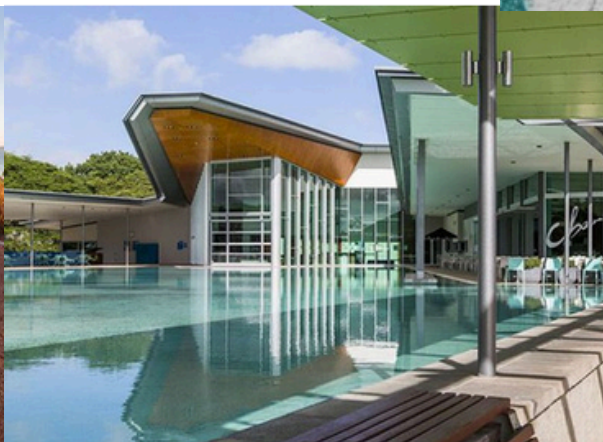
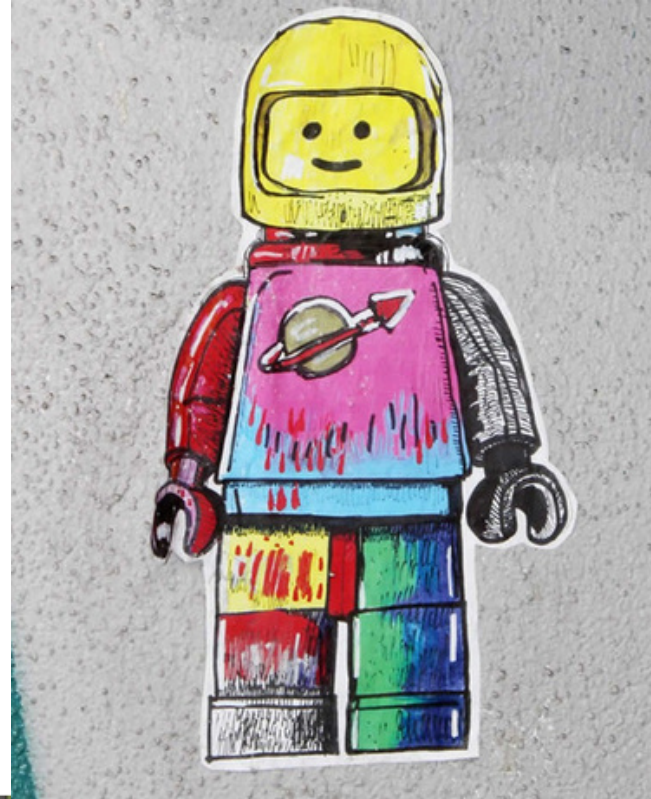
The Strand night markets offer food trucks, and all the usual handicraft market goodies on the 1st Friday of each month.

The Strand

Parks, beaches, pools, cafes, restaurants, volleyball, drinks... The Strand has it all. Not to be missed.

City Walking Tour and Street Art

Grab a walking tour guidebook from the Tourist centre and check out all the historic places on a city walking tour. On the way check out the street art project down the laneways.

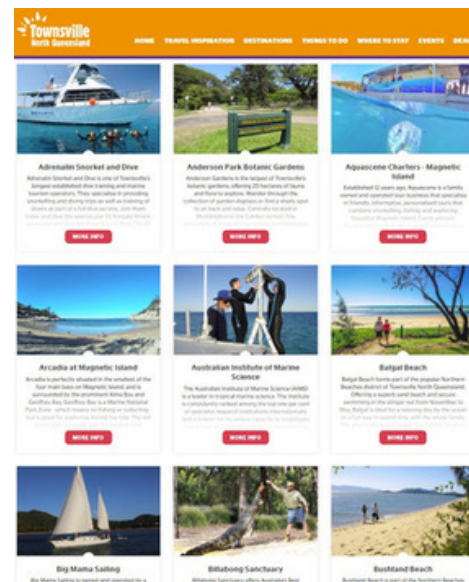


Seeing and Doing

Magnetic Island
Renegade Handmade Market
Museum of Tropical Queensland
Crystal Creek and Paluma rainforest
Billabong Wildlife Sanctuary
Kissing Point Army Museum
Harvey Range Tea Rooms
Charters Towers Gold Mining Town
Perc Tucker Regional Gallery
Riverway Sports Complex and Pools
Full moon drum circle
Italian Festival Ingham
Townsville Cultural Festival

The area in and around Townsville is jam packed with things to do. Make sure you check all your options at:
<https://www.townsvillenorthqueensland.com.au/>
<http://www.tropicalnorthqueensland.org.au/>

RAAF Museum
Palm Island
Townsville Showday
V8 Supercars
The Strand Night Market
Castle Hill
The Strand
ANZAC Day Parade
Wallaman Falls
Reef HQ Aquarium



The Wallaman Falls, a cascade and horsetail waterfall on the Stony Creek, is located in the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Wet Tropics in the northern region of Queensland, Australia.

Palmer Street

Palmer Street is one of Townsville's premier dining and lifestyle precincts, located just across the river from the CBD in South Townsville. Known for its tree-lined boulevard, relaxed vibe, and scenic proximity to the marina and Ross Creek, Palmer Street blends historic charm with modern hospitality. It's home to a diverse mix of restaurants, bars, and boutique accommodation, making it a popular destination for both locals and visitors looking to enjoy everything from fine dining to casual eats—all within walking distance of The Strand, the stadium, and key city attractions.

- JAM Corner – An award-winning riverside restaurant offering modern Australian cuisine with a focus on local seasonal produce.
- Levanti – A stylish spot serving Mediterranean-inspired dishes with a modern Australian twist.
- Copper Bar & Grill – A relaxed yet contemporary venue known for its diverse, high-quality menu and welcoming atmosphere.
- IMC Steak House – A favourite for hearty, perfectly cooked steaks in a classic steakhouse setting.
- Bridgewater Restaurant – An elegant dining destination offering creative dishes in a scenic, creekside location.
- Masala Indian Cuisine – A go-to for authentic Indian flavours and a wide variety of traditional dishes.
- The Pub on Palmer – A lively venue with classic pub meals, cold drinks, and a fun social vibe.
- The Metropole Hotel – Established in 1887, this iconic Townsville pub offers a relaxed atmosphere with modern decor, waterfront views, and a diverse menu suitable for casual dining.



Flinders Street

Flinders Street in Townsville is a bustling thoroughfare known for its vibrant mix of dining, shopping, and entertainment. Running through the heart of the city, it features a blend of heritage buildings and modern establishments, offering a range of restaurants, cafes, and bars that cater to diverse tastes. The street is a popular spot for both locals and visitors, with its lively atmosphere, colorful street art, and proximity to key attractions like the Strand and the marina. Whether you're looking for a casual bite, a fine dining experience, or a night out, Flinders Street provides a dynamic backdrop for any occasion.

- A Touch of Salt – Sometimes called the best restaurant in Townsville, this fine dining restaurant offers modern Australian cuisine with a focus on fresh, locally sourced ingredients.
- The Balcony Restaurant – A relaxed, heritage-listed venue offering all-day breakfast, lunch, and private event options with a fully licensed bar.
- Restaurant 1889 – A historic bistro blending modern Australian cuisine with fine dining, located within the Townsville Brewing Co.
- City Lane & City Arcade – A lively precinct with a variety of eateries like Polola, Born Wild, and Sakana Modern Asian, perfect for casual dining.
- 237 Flinders Street – A rooftop bar offering food and cocktails in a relaxed setting, ideal for a laid-back evening.
- Hooch and Fellow - A stylish cocktail bar known for its expertly crafted drinks and vibrant atmosphere, ideal for a nightcap or pre-dinner drinks.
- Molly Malone's Irish Pub: Located at 87–95 Flinders Street, this heritage-listed pub provides a traditional Irish experience with live music, hearty meals, and a welcoming beer garden.
- The Brewery, located at 252–270 Flinders Street, Townsville, is a historic pub housed in a heritage-listed building with a clock tower, offering craft beers, meals, and a unique setting.



The Strand

The Strand in Townsville is a scenic 2.2 km beachfront promenade with stunning views of Magnetic Island. Lined with palm trees, it features sandy beaches, a swimming lagoon, parks, playgrounds, and a variety of cafes and restaurants. It's the perfect spot for a walk, swim, or seaside meal in tropical North Queensland.

- Watermark Townsville – Stylish beachfront dining with fresh seafood and modern Australian fare.
- Shorehouse – Trendy Asian-fusion restaurant with ocean views and creative cocktails.
- The Spirited Goat – Popular café turning restaurant with a focus on seafood and local flavour.
- Longboard Bar & Grill – Laid-back surf-style bar serving burgers, seafood, and cold drinks.
- Juliette's Gelateria – Iconic beachfront café known for artisan gelato, coffee, and sweet treats.
- C-Bar Café – Popular all-day café serving breakfast, brunch, and coffee with unbeatable sea views.
- Seaview Hotel – a historic beachfront pub on The Strand in Townsville, offering relaxed dining, live music, and panoramic Coral Sea views.

Gregory St

Located off the Strand, Gregory Street is a vibrant, tree-lined street offering a mix of trendy cafés, restaurants, boutiques, and beautiful views of the Coral Sea.

- Tide Cafe – A local favorite café offering fresh, seasonal dishes in a relaxed setting.
- Vitti Cafe on Gregory – Charming spot for quality coffee and a great breakfast and lunch menu that offers gluten free.
- Spicy Heaven – A highly rated Indian and Sri Lankan restaurant, praised for its authentic flavors, generous portions, and attentive service.



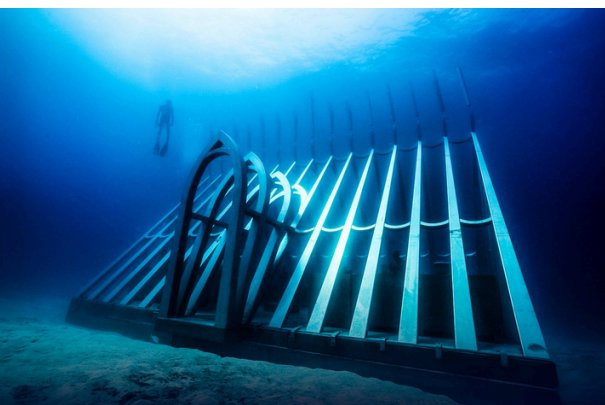
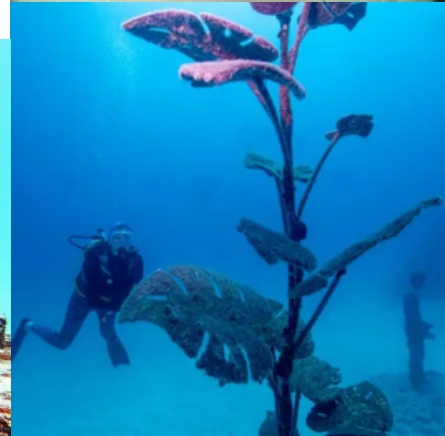
Places to visit: MOUA

The Museum of Underwater Art (MOUA) in Townsville is the Southern Hemisphere's first underwater art museum, featuring a series of sculptures by renowned artist Jason deCaires Taylor. Located in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, its installations include the Coral Greenhouse, the world's largest underwater art structure, and the Ocean Sentinels, a snorkel trail of sculptures honoring marine scientists and Indigenous leaders. These artworks aim to promote reef conservation and education, offering visitors a unique blend of art, culture, and marine science.

The Museum of Underwater Art (MOUA) in Townsville showcases several remarkable installations:

- The Coral Greenhouse: The world's largest underwater art structure, designed to promote reef rehabilitation and environmental awareness.
- The Ocean Sentinels: A series of eight underwater sculptures blend human figures with marine elements to symbolize the fusion of art and science.
- The Ocean Siren: Situated on The Strand, this illuminated sculpture changes color in response to live variations in water temperature, acting as a visual representation of real-time changes.

These installations aim to raise awareness about the Great Barrier Reef's ecological significance and the importance of marine conservation.



Places to visit: Magnetic Island



Magnetic Island, affectionately known as "Maggie," is a tropical paradise located just 8 km off the coast of Townsville, Queensland. Accessible by a 20-minute ferry ride, the island offers a blend of natural beauty and laid-back charm.



With 23 pristine beaches and bays, visitors can enjoy swimming, snorkeling, and sunbathing. The island's landscape is characterized by rugged granite boulders, hoop pines, and eucalypt woodlands, providing a picturesque backdrop for outdoor activities. Abundant wildlife, including koalas and rock wallabies, can be spotted in their natural habitats.



Magnetic Island's rich history is reflected in its heritage sites, such as the Forts Walk, which offers panoramic views and insights into the island's military past. Whether you're seeking adventure or relaxation, Magnetic Island offers a unique and memorable experience.





James Cook University (JCU)

As Queensland's second oldest university, James Cook University (JCU) is world renowned for its research and instruction focused on the tropics. The University is surrounded by numerous ecosystems including the Great Barrier Reef, rainforests of the Wet Tropics, and the Dry Tropics, where students can apply their studies within a diverse environment. At JCU there are many study areas for students to choose from, many offering exciting, hands-on field components. Popular study areas include:

- Marine Biology
- Tropical Biology and Zoology
- Rainforest and Coastal Science
- Earth Sciences/Geology
- Indigenous Australian Studies

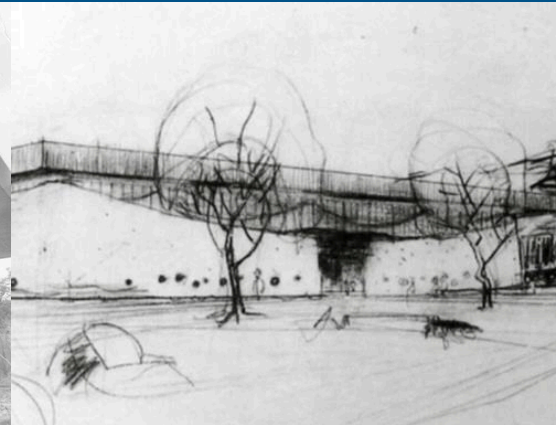
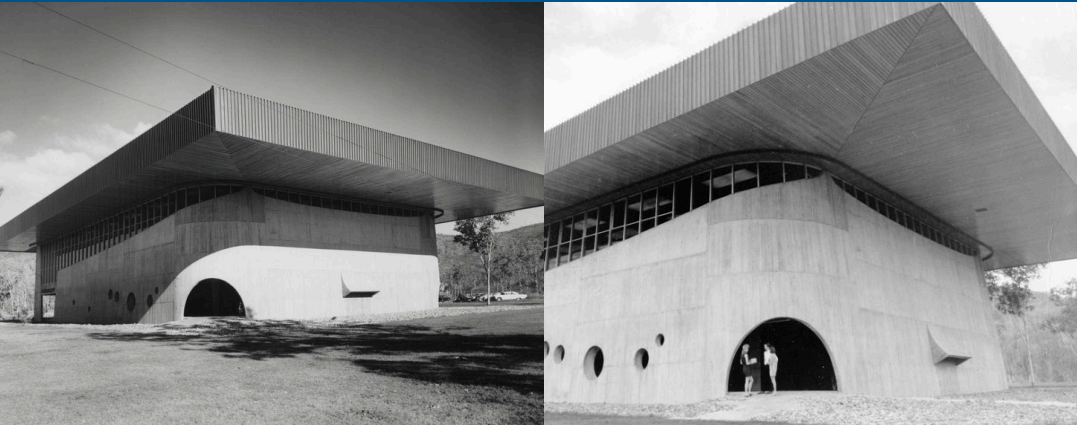
James Cook University's Townsville campus is the University's largest campus, boasting approximately 12,300 students, including over 1,400 international students. The campus surroundings provide students with easy access to everything they will need during their time at JCU, including a large variety of outdoor activities, visits to the Great Barrier Reef and nearby islands and resorts, historic outback towns, and World Heritage listed rainforests. Diverse environments, vibrant communities, and challenging academic programs are just a few of the reasons why so many students choose to study abroad at James Cook University.

JCU is ranked in the top 2% of universities in the pre-eminent global rankings system, the Academic Ranking of World Universities.

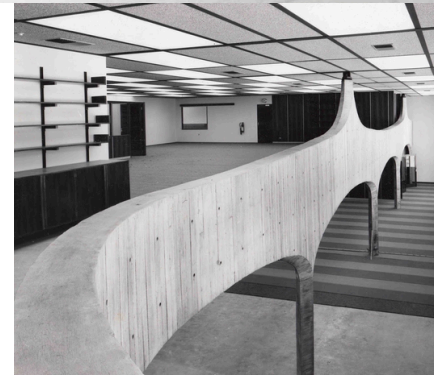
JCU is No. 1 in the world for Marine & Freshwater Biology and No. 2 for Biodiversity Conservation.



JCU Highlight: The Eddie Koiki Mabo Library



The Eddie Koiki Mabo Library is a significant example of Brutalist architecture, designed by Queensland architect James Birrell. Completed in 1968, the library is a central feature of the campus. Queen Elizabeth II was photographed in front of the original library building in 1970, a significant moment in JCU's history, marking a moment of royal recognition. In 2006, the library was awarded the 25-Year Architecture Award by the Australian Institute of Architects – Queensland Chapter, recognizing its enduring architectural value.



It was officially renamed in 2008 to honour activist Eddie Koiki Mabo, a Meriam man from the Torres Strait Islands whose landmark legal case led to the High Court's recognition of native title in Australia. Mabo was employed at JCU as a groundsman and later became a student, guest lecturer, and friend to many at the university. The library serves as a testament to his legacy and JCU's commitment to reconciliation. Be sure to visit the memorial wall on your next visit.



1928 Mabo is employed by the Queensland Government as a groundsman at James Cook University.

1958 Mabo is employed by the Queensland Government as a groundsman at James Cook University.

1968 The Eddie Koiki Mabo Library is completed.

1970 Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip visit the library.

1986 Mabo is awarded the 25-Year Architecture Award by the Australian Institute of Architects – Queensland Chapter.

2008 The library is officially renamed the Eddie Koiki Mabo Library.

2016 The library is awarded the 25-Year Architecture Award by the Australian Institute of Architects – Queensland Chapter.





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