

CAPRICORN COAST EGUIDE

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The Capricorn Coast is the area of coastline around Rockhampton and named after the Tropic of Capricorn which runs through Rockhampton. Some of the other main towns are Yeppon, Gladstone and Emu Park. Offshore are a number of islands the major one being Great Keppell Island.

Rockhampton

Rockhampton, known by the locals as "Rocky" was first settled in 1853, when the Archer family arrived. Trading commenced when the Ellida arrived with supplies, at a point marked by a monument on the bank of the river in the southern part of the city.

In 1858, gold was discovered in Canonona, sixty kilometres north of Rockhampton and, as the miners were dependent upon supplies shipped through here, the prosperity of Rockhampton increased accordingly. Further goldfields were later discovered at Bouldercombe and Mount Morgan. The railway reached Rockhampton in 1903.

Rockhampton claims that it is 'the beef capital of Australia' with over two and a half million head of cattle to be found within 250 kilometres of Rockhampton.

A stroll along the banks of the Fitzroy River will give a good impression of Rockhampton. The river is attractive and some of the buildings facing it are stately. The Tropic of Capricorn runs through the southern edge of the city and is marked by the Capricorn Spire beside the main highway. Near the spire, still in the southern part of the city are the Botanic Gardens and the Zoo.

Rockhampton Botanic Gardens

The Botanic Gardens date from 1869 and were originally intended to experiment with the cultivation of various plants, to establish what could be grown profitably in this region. There are some especially impressive palms here dating back a century or longer. There is also a Japanese Garden, an Arid Garden and a Tropical Fruits Garden.

Archer Park Station

In the centre of Rockhampton is Archer Park Station now a Railway Museum. It is a handsome station, both from the front (entrance) side and from the Denison Street side where an arched roof covers platform and tracks.

Capricorn Caves

The Capricorn Caves, formerly called Olsens' Caves are located 23 km north of Rockhampton and are a system of above ground caves. Well known for the natural acoustics.

Dreamtime Cultural Centre

Displays relating to region's Aboriginal past. You can learn how to throw a boomerang or play a didgeridoo. *Yeppon Road (07 4936 1655)*.

Kershaw Gardens

In North Rockhampton there are some more gardens. The Kershaw Gardens were started in 1976 on a land fill area, and opened to the public in 1988. They aim at a bush environment and stretch for a kilometre beside the main highway north. The Kershaw Gardens are free and open day and night.

Heritage Village

On the northern outskirts of Rockhampton is the Heritage Village. This is a collection of old dwellings from pioneer times, and includes an exhibition of vintage vehicles and one of various types of clocks.

Mt. Archer

Moving outside the city area of Rockhampton, Mt. Archer rises to a height of 604 metres on the northern edge of the city and offers good views. The mountain is a National Park and there are various walking tracks.

Rockhampton Zoo

Rockhampton Zoo is mainly devoted to Australian animals and birds. There are elevated walkways through the koala compound and the aviary, to permit better observation of the residents.

Gladstone

Gladstone is 550 kilometres north of Brisbane. The deep water harbour here was discovered and charted by Matthew Flinders in 1802. Within the harbour is a large marina full of yachts. Gladstone is home to the largest alumina refinery in the world.

Beaches are at Tannum which is joined to Boyne Island by a bridge. The southernmost tip of the Great Barrier Reef stretches down to Gladstone and Heron Island, lying 73 kilometres off Gladstone.

Tondoan Botanic Gardens

The botanic gardens are in Glenlyon Road, to the south of the city. These gardens are devoted entirely too Australian native plants, mostly local, and are free.

Art Gallery and Museum

There is an Art Gallery and Museum in the old Town Hall on the corner of Goondoon and Bramston Streets.

Yeppon

Yeppon is 30 minutes drive north of Rockhampton. The beach area lying between Yeppon and Emu Bay has led to the seventeen kilometre road between the two being named the Scenic Highway. Yeppon maintains a village style. Just north of Yeppon is the very large Rydges Capricorn Resort set out on 22,000 acres.

Cooberrie Park Wildlife Sanctuary

Native animals are treated and cared for at Cooberrie. There is a daily interactive animal show and lots of chance to hand feed birds and kangaroos. 10 minutes north of Yeppon.

Shell World

A large collection of shells displayed by the Keppel Bay Shell Club. *Visitor Information Centre, Ross Creek Roundabout, Yeppon.*

Yeppon Doll &Antiquity Museum

Yeppon Doll & Antiquity Museum is the largest private doll collection in Australia. *Hidden Valley Road, Yeppon.*

Emu Park

Emu Park is a coastal village with swimming beaches. Emu Park has a range of accommodation, restaurants and pub. Bell Park is popular for picnics and barbecues and home to the Bell Park Picnic Markets which are held on every third Sunday of the month.

Singing Ship

The Singing Ship is a white sculpture on the headland and a monument to Captain James Cook. The design of fluted pipes 'sing in the wind'.

Emu Park Historical Museum

The Historical Museum, next door to the School of Arts has a collection of artefacts and a model of the railway line to Emu Park, a line which closed in 1964.

Koorana Crocodile Park

The first private crocodile farm in Queensland where you can learn all about crocodile farming. *Emu Park Road.*

Great Keppel Island

Great Keppel Island is fifteen kilometres off the 'Capricorn Coast'. Originally known as Wapparaburra by the local aborigines, whose history here dates back 4,500 years, the island was given its European name by Captain Cook as he sailed by in 1770. Great Keppel Island is about 1500 hectares in size and has 17 sandy beaches. It is an island for relaxing on the beautiful beaches, diving, or enjoying various types of water sports.

To reach the island, take a launch from Rosslyn Bay, south of Yeppoon. Launches are frequent and take only 45 minutes to reach the island. To reach Rosslyn Bay, there are bus services from Yeppoon and from Rockhampton.

There are also flights from Rockhampton to Great Keppel Island. There are other islands in the Keppel Group which can be visited. Vehicles can be left in the Great Keppel Island Security Car Park where transfers are organised to Rosslyn Bay Harbour and Keppel Bay Marina.

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