

CARNARVON GORGE • SAPPHIRE GEMFIELDS • EMERALD • BLACKDOWN TABLELAND

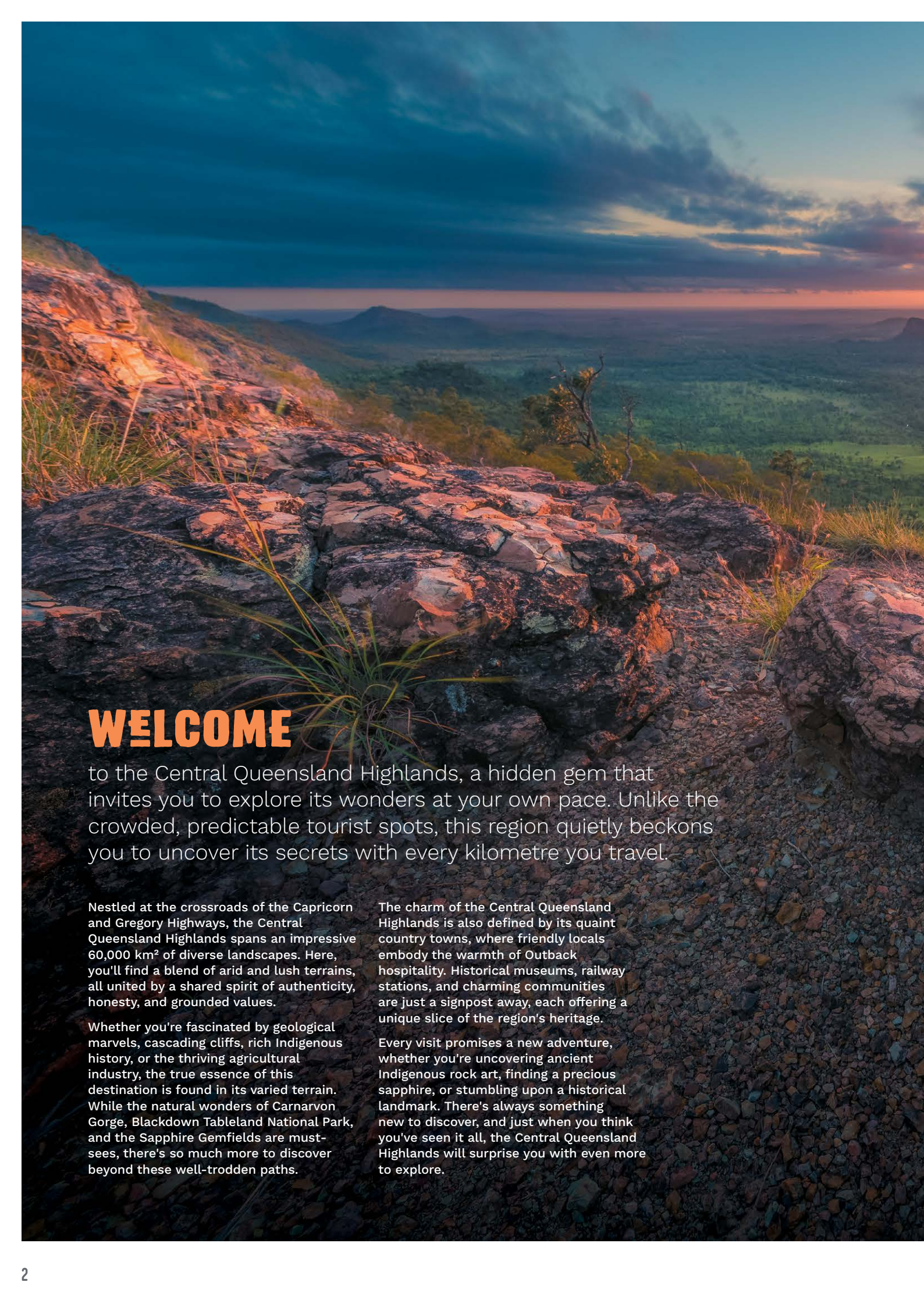
CENTRAL QUEENSLAND HIGHLANDS

EXPLORE
MORE



centralqueenslandhighlands.com.au

Including Bedford Weir, Blackwater, Capella, Comet, Dingo, Duaringa,
Lake Maraboon, Minerva Hills, Rolleston, Springsure and surrounds



WELCOME

to the Central Queensland Highlands, a hidden gem that invites you to explore its wonders at your own pace. Unlike the crowded, predictable tourist spots, this region quietly beckons you to uncover its secrets with every kilometre you travel.

Nestled at the crossroads of the Capricorn and Gregory Highways, the Central Queensland Highlands spans an impressive 60,000 km² of diverse landscapes. Here, you'll find a blend of arid and lush terrains, all united by a shared spirit of authenticity, honesty, and grounded values.

Whether you're fascinated by geological marvels, cascading cliffs, rich Indigenous history, or the thriving agricultural industry, the true essence of this destination is found in its varied terrain. While the natural wonders of Carnarvon Gorge, Blackdown Tableland National Park, and the Sapphire Gemfields are must-sees, there's so much more to discover beyond these well-trodden paths.

The charm of the Central Queensland Highlands is also defined by its quaint country towns, where friendly locals embody the warmth of Outback hospitality. Historical museums, railway stations, and charming communities are just a signpost away, each offering a unique slice of the region's heritage.

Every visit promises a new adventure, whether you're uncovering ancient Indigenous rock art, finding a precious sapphire, or stumbling upon a historical landmark. There's always something new to discover, and just when you think you've seen it all, the Central Queensland Highlands will surprise you with even more to explore.

CONTENTS

Carnarvon Gorge	4
Lake Maraboon.....	9
Emerald	10
Sapphire Gemfields.....	14
Capella & Surrounds.....	20
SpringSURE, Minerva Hills & Surrounds	21
Blackdown Tableland.....	23
Blackwater, Bedford Weir & Surrounds	24
Events & Festivals.....	27
Travel & Trails	28
Self Drive Itineraries.....	30
Camping & Caravanning.....	32
Regional Map	34

Cover: 4WD tagalong tour offering stunning views of the Carnarvon Ranges

Back Cover: Star-filled sky over the Sapphire Gemfields

Photographs courtesy of: Jesse Lindemann, Janice Terrill Photography, Tourism and Events Queensland, Nathan White Images, Frawley Rural, George Syrganidis, Our Gypsy Life, Central Highlands Development Corporation and Central Highlands Regional Council.

This publication is produced by Central Highlands Development Corporation.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this publication is true and correct at the time of publishing. For more up-to-date information, or additional details, please contact one of our visitor information centres before travelling.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands across the Central Queensland Highlands, and we recognise their continuing connection to land, water, and community. We pay our respect to their Elders, past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

CARNARVON GORGE

NATURE'S MASTERPIECE

Immerse yourself in the wilderness of Carnarvon Gorge, a dramatic landscape carved by wind and rain over millions of years. With towering cliffs, lush vegetation, and ancient rock art, this geological wonder invites you to stay longer and explore deeper.

Walking Trails

Lace up your hiking boots and discover hidden side gorges, Indigenous rock art, and rugged beauty. A minimum of three days is recommended to fully experience the walking tracks and trails.

Guided Tours

Join a local operator for a guided day or night tour, seasonal Great Walk departures, or a 4WD tagalong tour to nearby Nyanda Gorge.

Swimming

Refresh yourself with a dip in the Rock Pool, the only permitted swimming spot in the gorge, naturally carved by floodwaters.

Rock Art

Paintings on sandstone overhangs are a fragile reminder of Aboriginal people's long and continuing connection with the gorge. These ochre stencils, rock engravings and freehand paintings are some of the finest Indigenous rock imagery to be found anywhere in the world.

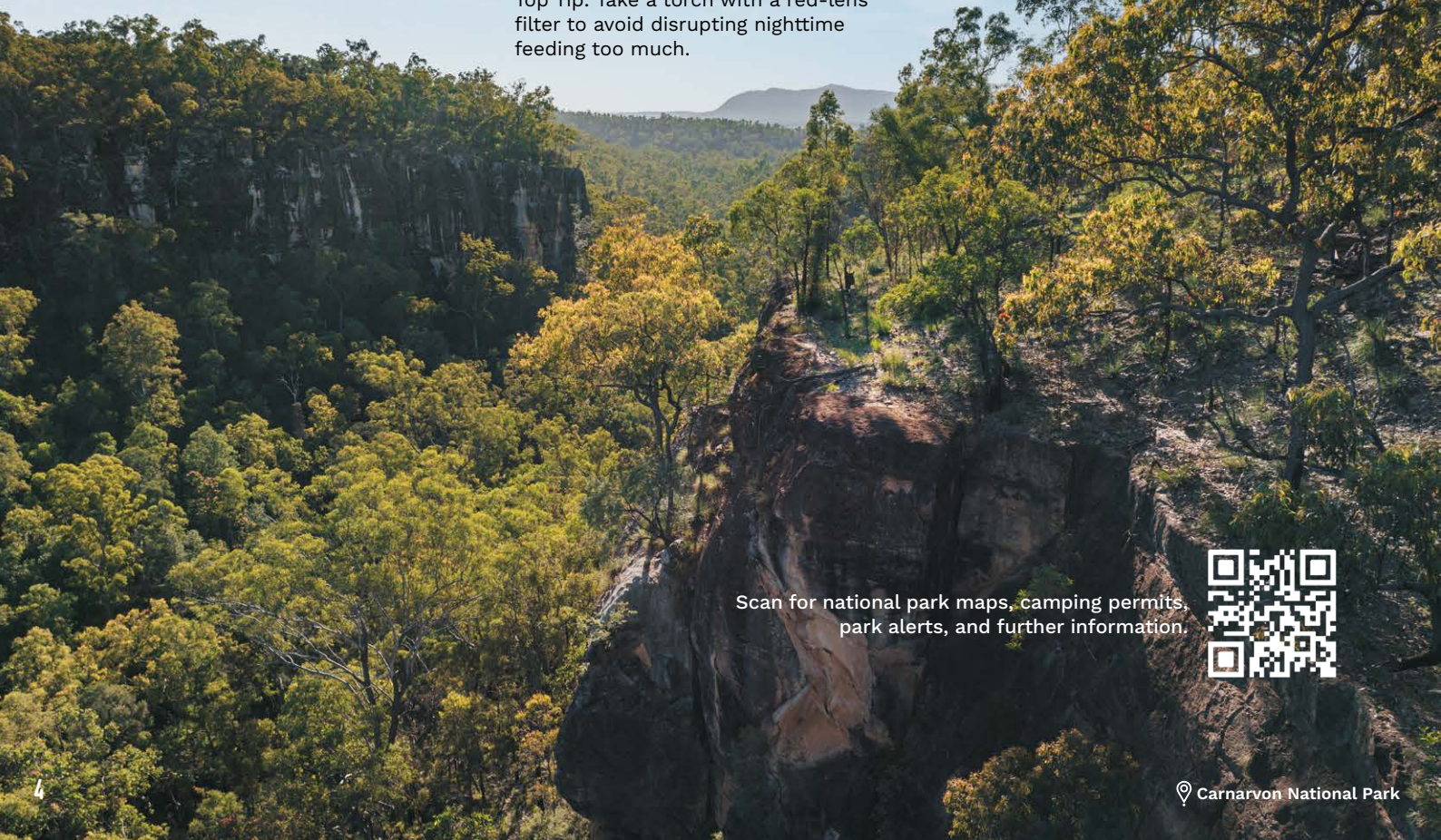
Wildlife

Opportunities for bird watching are plentiful, with more than 170 bird species. Catch a glimpse of platypus, possums and other creek life on an early morning stroll along the Nature Trail. A night walk with a torch can reveal gliders, turtles and bush stone-curlews.

Top Tip: Take a torch with a red-lens filter to avoid disrupting nighttime feeding too much.

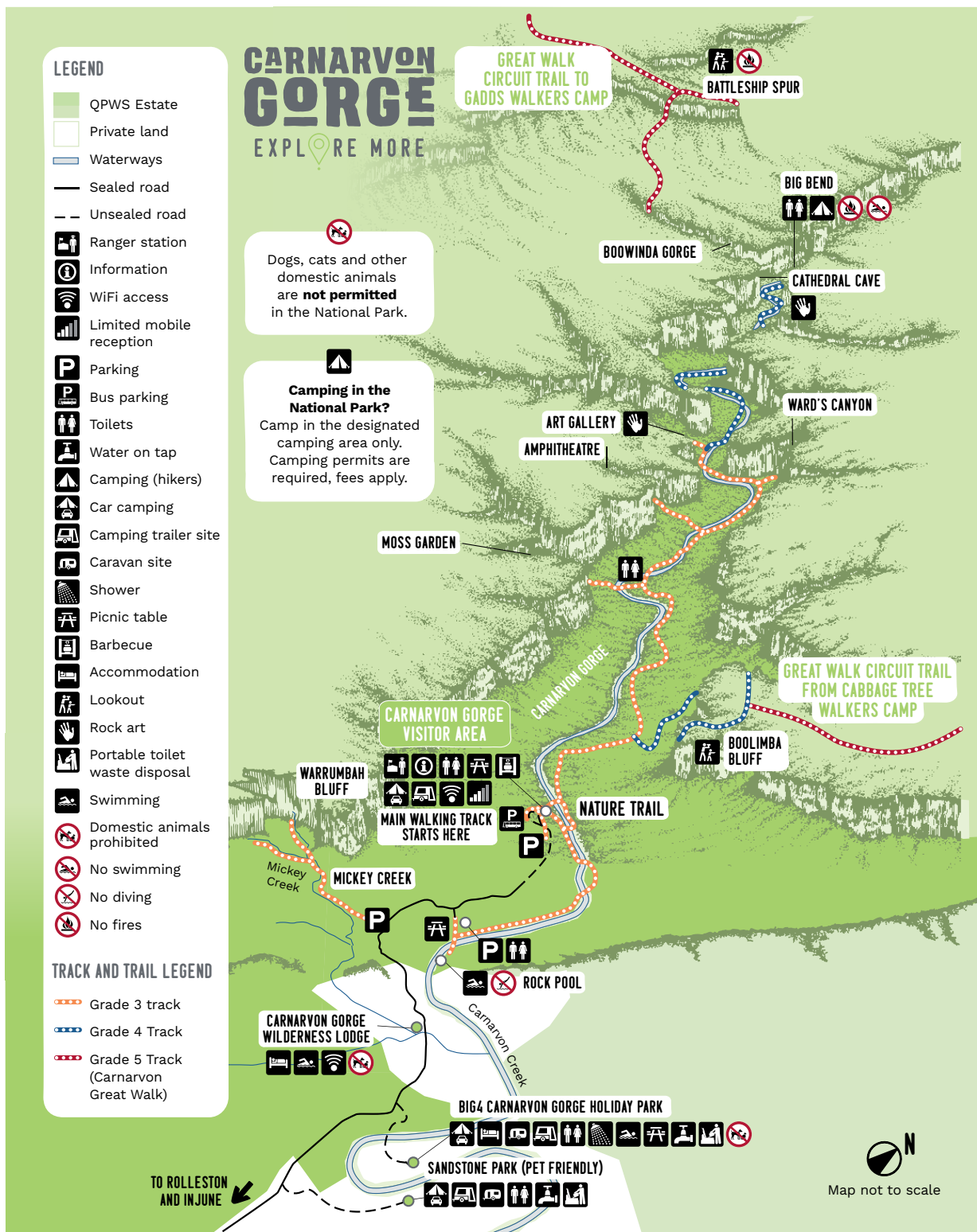


Amphitheatre



Scan for national park maps, camping permits,
park alerts, and further information.





JOURNEY PLANNER

Boolimba Bluff 6.4 km return, 3 hr

Moss Garden 7 km return, 2.5 hr

Moss Garden and Amphitheatre 10 km return, 3 hr

Moss Garden, Amphitheatre, and Ward's Canyon 11.7 km return, 4 hr

Moss Garden, Amphitheatre, Ward's Canyon, and Art Gallery 14 km return, 5 hr

Moss Garden, Boowinda Gorge and Big Bend 21 km return, 7 hr

Moss Garden, Amphitheatre, Ward's Canyon, Art Gallery, and Cathedral Cave 22 km return, 8 hr

Grade 3: Suitable for most ages and fitness levels. Tracks may have short steep hill sections, a rough surface, and many steps.

Grade 4: Walking experience recommended. Tracks may be long, rough, and very steep.

Grade 5: Very experienced walkers. Tracks are likely to be very rough, very steep and unmarked.

5 km

10 km

15 km

20 km

CARNARVON GORGE

SHORT WALKS

Perfect for those short on time or seeking a gentler experience:

Nature Trail

Stroll along the shady banks of Carnarvon Creek. Head out at dawn or dusk for your best chance to spot a platypus.

Distance: 1.5 km return

Time: 1 hr

Mickey Creek Gorge

Wander into narrow side gorges where the trail becomes a fun rock-hopping adventure.

From Mickey Creek car park

Distance: 3 km return

Time: 1.5 hr

Rock Pool

Relax under fig and casuarina trees, watch for fish and turtles, or take a refreshing dip.

From Rock Pool car park

Distance: 400 m return

Time: 20 min

From Visitor Area

Distance: 3.6 km return

Time: 2 hr

GREAT WALK CIRCUIT TRAIL

For experienced hikers, the Great Walk circuit trail links Carnarvon Gorge with Mount Moffatt.

Distance: 87 km circuit

Duration: 6–7 days

Note: Requires good preparation and advanced bushwalking skills.

SUGGESTED JOURNEYS

The Big Four

If you only have one full day, don't miss the gorge's iconic "Big Four":

1. Art Gallery
2. Ward's Canyon
3. Amphitheatre
4. Moss Garden

Distance: 14 km return

Time: 5 hr

Boolimba Bluff

Often tackled separately due to its steep Grade 4 track with stairs and ladders. Best at sunrise – plan to walk as early as possible for breathtaking morning views.

Distance: 6.4 km return

Time: 2–3 hr

Upper Gorge

Start early and hike directly to the upper gorge to visit Cathedral Cave, Boowinda Gorge and Big Bend.

Distance: 20 km return

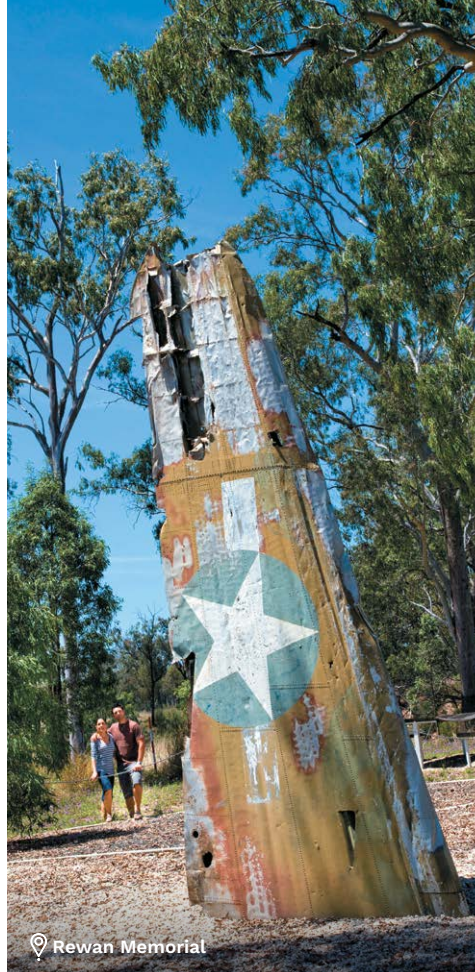
Time: 8 hr



📍 Art Gallery



📍 Boowinda Gorge



REWAN MEMORIAL

On your way into Carnarvon Gorge, stop at the Rewan Memorial, commemorating 14 Australian and five U.S. military personnel who died in a World War II air crash.

MORE TO DISCOVER

If you loved Carnarvon Gorge, explore other stunning sections of Carnarvon National Park:

Salvator Rosa (via Springsure)

Dip into spring-fed waters of the Nogoa River, winding through a picturesque valley beneath sandstone outcrops.

Note: 4WD required.

Ka Ka Mundi (via Springsure)

Drive through sandstone country and admire bottle trees emerging from silver brigalow forest. Camp by the springs and enjoy birdwatching.

Note: 4WD recommended.

Mount Moffatt (via Injune)

Discover remote, wild landscapes and take in spectacular views from Consuelo Tableland, Queensland's highest plateau.

Note: 4WD required.

ESSENTIALS

Access

Located between Injune and Rolleston, the 45 km sealed access road is suitable for all vehicles.

Visitor Centre

Open daily from 8 am to 4 pm, the unstaffed centre features informative displays.

Picnic Areas

At the entrance to Carnarvon Gorge, a large, grassy picnic area is set among towering eucalypts and cabbage palms. Wheelchair-accessible toilets, tables, and gas barbecues are available.

Fuel

There are no fuel stations at Carnarvon Gorge. Remember to fill up at Injune or Rolleston.

Supplies

You will need to bring your water, food, and gear. A small shop at BIG4 Carnarvon Gorge Holiday Park is open to all travellers.

Mobile Reception

Limited coverage so use the opportunity to disconnect from your mobile and reconnect with nature. Free Wi-Fi is available at the visitor centre, along with a public phone.

Accommodation

At the gorge, you'll find camping, caravan sites, safari tents, and eco cabins offered by privately run providers. Contact operators directly to book.

Nearby options: Rolleston (100 km), Springsure (170 km) and Nuga Nuga National Park - camping only (125km, unsealed).

Camping

Camping is available in the visitor area during Queensland school holidays (Easter, June-July and Sept-Oct) and year-round at Big Bend camping area (19.4 km return). Camping permits are essential for both locations and can be booked online or at the CQH Visitor Information Centre, Emerald.



SANDSTONE PARK
CARNARVON GORGE

360° VIEWS. ZERO FUSS.

RECONNECT WITH NATURE AT CARNARVON GORGE'S MOST
SPACIOUS OFF-GRID CAMPGROUND.



1800 87 4444



www.sandstonepark.com.au



info@sandstonepark.com.au



Facebook and Instagram

PLAN YOUR ESCAPE



Firepits



Drive Through Sites



Pet Friendly



Dump Point



Potable Water



CARNARVON GORGE - WILDERNESS LODGE

Relax, unwind & immerse yourself within The Gorge

Superior appointed cabins with tranquil surroundings.
It is the perfect place to relax by the pool & discover Carnarvon Gorge
on your doorstep.



4043 O'Briens Rd
Carnarvon Gorge QLD 4702
www.wildernesslodge.com.au
(07) 4984 4503



LAKE MARABOON

FRESHWATER ADVENTURES

MUST EXPLORE

Fishing

Begin your freshwater fishing adventure at Lake Maraboon – the only water body in Central Queensland that was once stocked with Murray Cod. Today, it's home to Yellowbelly, Silver Perch, and Barramundi, offering rewarding fishing experiences.



A Stocked Impoundment Permit is needed and can be obtained online at dpiqld.austpost.com.au or from the Emerald Post Office.

Boating

With expansive waterways, inlets, and open bays, Lake Maraboon is perfect for water sports like:

- Water skiing
- Wakeboarding
- Tubing
- Jet skiing

Prefer a slower pace? Explore the lake by kayak, canoe, or paddleboard. Boat and kayak hire is available.

Recreation

Relax under a shady tree and enjoy a picnic with stunning water views. Time your visit to catch one of Lake Maraboon's famous sunsets.

Picnic tables and electric barbecues are available at the visitor area. Stroll along the lake's edge to spot birdlife, sandstone escarpments, and native bushland or cool off in the designated swimming area.

HOW TO CATCH RED CLAW

Lake Maraboon is renowned for its abundant Red Claw crayfish.

Trapping Tips

- Use opera house traps (max. 4 per person)
- Label traps with your contact details
- Bait options: fruit, partially cooked vegetables, or pet food
- Place traps at depths of 3–6 metres near weed beds, submerged trees, or rocks
- Leave traps for a few hours or overnight

Handling

- Transport in ice water to slow them down
- Purge in clean water once home

No permit required, and there are no size or bag limits.



ESSENTIALS

Accommodation

Camping is not permitted around the lake, however camping and cabin facilities are available at the privately run accommodation provider nearby.

Fairbairn Dam

While the water is called Lake Maraboon, an Indigenous word for 'where the black duck fly', the wall and spillway are called Fairbairn Dam.



EMERALD

DISCOVER THE HIGHLANDS HUB

Serving as the hub to all the attraction spokes of the Central Queensland Highlands is Emerald. With towns named Rubyvale and Sapphire, you wouldn't be the first to think precious stones are what gave this central business district its moniker, but it was the green fields after heavy rain that earned its title.

MUST EXPLORE

CQH Visitor Information Centre

Start your tour of the Central Queensland Highlands at the visitor information centre. The building is an attraction itself due to its straw bale construction. The walls are made from 300 bales of barley straw covered in earthen render.

Be warned - a rather fierce looking, three-metre long, bearded dragon will greet you at the centre. The giant lizard sculpture, dubbed Emerald Dragon, was made by a local artist using scrap metal.



Emerald Pioneer Cottage Complex

Van Gogh Sunflower Painting

If your road trip involves ticking off Queensland's 'Big Things', get the camera ready for one of the world's largest reproductions of a Vincent van Gogh Sunflowers painting. The superstructure is 25 metres high with 13.6 tonnes of steel involved in its construction.

Centenary of Federation Mosaic Pathway

Turn back the clock and journey through Emerald's colourful history along the Centenary of Federation Mosaic Pathway. The footpath features intricately tiled designs that trace the region's history, from the beginning of time to visions of the future. Pick up an interpretive brochure from the visitor information centre.

Pioneer Cottage Complex

Emerald's history is on display at the Pioneer Cottage Complex. Explore the town's lead-lined lockup (1910), St Marks Presbyterian Church (1884), and communications museum, each filled with historical artefacts and memorabilia. Check opening times from Easter to October.

Emerald Regional Botanic Gardens

Bring your picnic blanket and escape to the tranquil haven of the Emerald Regional Botanic Gardens, located on the banks of the Nogoa River. The gardens extend over 42 hectares, with 6 km of walking and biking tracks, leading to picnic areas, playgrounds, mazes, sculptures, and specialised plant communities. Dogs on leash are welcome.



Emerald Regional Botanic Gardens

WELLNESS

Pack your yoga mat and add a little bit of me-time to your travel plans.

Emerald offers a range of yoga, Pilates, Tai-Chi and meditation classes. Book in for a massage, Reiki or Bowen therapy, or be pampered by one of the beauty therapists.

If your version of wellness is hitting the gym, Emerald has five, boasting a range of equipment and classes.

The Botanic Gardens are the perfect spot for cycling or walking and play host to the weekly parkrun.

Other facilities include an Olympic-sized swimming pool, squash and tennis courts, and a golf course.

RETAIL THERAPY

If you're looking to purchase a unique gift, stock up on supplies or need running repairs, Emerald has you covered.

Get your retail therapy in the local boutiques and national chain stores located across three shopping centres and the central business district.

Emerald also has a wide range of services, including medical, banking, and automotive, to meet your needs.

Call into the CQH Visitor Information Centre for souvenirs and local handicrafts.

FAMILY FUN IDEAS

Looking for ways to keep the kids entertained in the Central Queensland Highlands? Base yourself in Emerald and explore these tried-and-tested, kid-friendly activities on your next family getaway. How many can you tick off the list?

1. Sapphire Hunting

Let the kids experience the thrill of fossicking for gems at the Sapphire Gemfields. Follow it up with an underground mine tour or a rock-hopping adventure at Policeman's Knob.

2. Wilderness Wanderlust

Spend a day at Blackdown Tableland National Park. Enjoy bushwalking, swimming in the Gudda Gumoo rock pool, and spotting wildlife. Leave early – it's a 150 km drive one way – to make the most of your adventure.

3. Water Adventures

Hire a boat or kayak at Lake Maraboon. Try your luck catching Red Claw crayfish for a delicious freshwater dinner.

4. Swim, Splash, Repeat

Cool off at the Emerald Aquatic Centre, featuring two pools, waterslides, and a children's splash pad.

Note: Closed from June to August.

5. Botanical Delight

Explore the Emerald Regional Botanic Gardens by foot or bike. Enjoy a riverside picnic and let the kids loose in the adventure playground, complete with a monorail, 25-metre flying fox, and giant mouse wheel.

6. Tee Up

Challenge the family at the Emerald Golf Club. Try the driving range or aim for a hole-in-one. Equipment and electric carts are available for hire.

 CQH Visitor Information Centre, Emerald

EMERALD TOURIST PARK



Emerald Tourist Park offers deluxe villas, self-contained cabins, powered and unpowered sites for your caravan, camper trailer or tent.

P 07 4982 1589
info@emeraldtouristpark.com.au
43 Roberts St, Emerald Q 4720
emeraldtouristpark.com.au

7. Blockbuster Bliss

Catch the latest movies at the local cinema. The toughest decision? Popcorn or choc-top ice cream!

8. Pedal to the Metal

For kids who love wheels, Emerald Skate Park offers half and quarter bowls and two large quarter pipes. Or head to Sunrise Rotary BMX Park for jumps, bumps, and turns.

9. Eventful Happenings

Enjoy weekly library activities, monthly markets, and annual festivals. Check out the latest events at centralqueenslandhighlands.com.au.

10. Playground Adventures

Free fun awaits at these top playgrounds:

- **Emerald Regional Botanic Gardens, Cliffe Street**
- **Emerald Regional Botanic Gardens – Windmill, Rifle Range Road**
- **Lions Park, Corner Yamala and Ruby Streets**
- **Vicki Peters Park, Rifle Range Road**
- **Steve Bell Park, 9 Rogers Street**
- **Centenary Park, 23 Centenary Drive**

LOCAL TASTES

There's no better place than the Central Queensland Highlands – one of Australia's leading beef producers – to enjoy a succulent steak. However, there are plenty of other options at local restaurants.

Cafés leave you spoilt for choice, offering freshly roasted coffee, gourmet burgers, home-baked favourites, and healthy options.

If it's a beer you're after, with four pubs and two sporting clubs in Emerald, there is always somewhere to grab a relaxed counter meal after a day of exploring.



EMERALD

ART, NATURE & ADVENTURE

Emerald Railway Station

Built in 1900, this National Trust-listed landmark features elegant wrought iron lacework and a pillared portico – perfect for memorable photo opportunities.

CBD Artworks

Take a leisurely stroll along Egerton Street to admire Emerald's striking public art installations. For insights into each piece, grab a brochure from the visitor information centre.

Emerald Art Gallery

Be inspired by a vibrant calendar of exhibitions at the Emerald Art Gallery, showcasing talent from local, state, and national artists. Located at the Central Highlands Regional Council office, the gallery is open during business hours.

Nature Trails

Whether you prefer walking, jogging, or cycling, Emerald offers scenic bushland tracks to connect with nature:

- **Rifle Range Reserve**

Explore five interconnected trails winding through 80 hectares of native bushland. Entry points are located on Rifle Range Road, Pilot Farm Road and Mayfair Drive.

- **Nogoa River Nature Trail**

Discover the beauty of the Nogoa River along a 7 km trail.

Southern section: Starts at John Gay Bridge and leads to Selma Weir.

Northern section: Follows the riverbank to the Town Weir (also known as Bottom Weir). Access the trail from the Campbell Street and River Road intersection.

Fishing

Cast a line at the Town Weir, where easy-access and tree-lined banks make for a relaxing experience. Expect catches like Saratoga, Yellowbelly, and Barramundi.



Emerald Railway Station

EMERALD JOCKEY CLUB



Upcoming Race Dates:

22nd November, 2025:
Derby/Christmas Races

23rd January, 2026: TAB (Friday)

7th February, 2026:
Tropical Race Day

4th April, 2026: Easter
Sunflower Festival Races

16th May, 2026: Emerald Cup

29th June, 2026:
TAB (Monday)

September, 2026:
Ladies and Tradies

October, 2026:
Emerald 100



P 07 4982 2029

admin@emeraldjockeyclub.com.au

1 Racecourse Road, Emerald Q 4720

emeraldtraces.com | FB: EmeraldJockeyClub

EMERALD INN



The Emerald Inn is your 'home away from home' in Emerald. Minutes from the CBD, our quiet motel offers warm, friendly service and modern, self contained apartments with highspeed Wi-Fi, comfy beds, smart TVs, full kitchens and washer-dryers.

Our apartments include all the details that really matter, ensuring our guests can relax and feel at home.



Emerald Inn.
BY TRAVELLERS



P +61 7 4980 0600

emeraldinn@travellersgroup.com.au

28-30 Esmond Street, Emerald Q 4720

emeraldinn.com.au

EMERALD CENTRAL PALMS MOTEL



The Emerald Central Palms Motel offers quiet, quality and affordable accommodation, conveniently located just a short walk from hotels, restaurants, cinemas and shops.

- Ground floor Queen, King and Family Suites
- One or two Bedroom fully self-contained apartments
- Private courtyards + Reverse cycle air-con
- Off street and undercover parking
- Free high-speed internet
- Swimming pool + FREE laundry facilities



P 07 4982 3600

admin@centralpalms.com.au

19 Esmond Street, Emerald Q 4720

centralpalms.com.au

THE BEST PIES IN CENTRAL QLD

FAIRBAIRN

Bakery



BREAKFAST & LUNCH

Bread, Pies, Cakes, Sandwiches & Wraps,
Pastries, Fresh Salads, Coffee, Cold Drinks

EMERALD: Clermont St 4982 1103 or Hospital Rd 4982 1485
BLACK WATER: Railway St 4986 1014

MARABOON MOTOR INN



Maraboon Motor Inn has reopened in the heart of Emerald, offering comfortable, well-appointed accommodation perfect for business and leisure travellers. Located right next door to Maraboon Tavern and within walking distance to shops, Emerald Cinemas, and the Botanic Gardens, guests enjoy free Wi-Fi, onsite parking, swimming pool, guest laundry, and air-conditioned rooms with private ensuites. Whether you're exploring the Sapphire Gemfields, visiting Lake Maraboon, or attending a local event, book your stay today for convenience, comfort, and genuine local hospitality.



P 0438 042 161
reception@maraboonmotorinnemerald.com.au
5 Esmond Street, Emerald Q 4720
maraboonmotorinnemerald.com.au

EMERALD CAR WASH



From Dirty Cars and Vans to Muddy Paws
– We've Got You!

- 2 Auto Wash Bays
- 2 Self-Serve Wash Bays
- Powerful Vacuums
- Dog Wash

P 0427 946 307
admin@eyedol.com.au
2 Old Sheep Yard Pl, Emerald Q 4720



Motor Inn



Fully Licensed Restaurant
Conference Facilities
Pool & Spa
Free Wi-Fi & Movies

07 4987 7755



2 Opal Street Emerald

enquiries@route66motorinn.com.au

ROUTE66MOTORINN.COM.AU



Scan to purchase your fossicking license or permit online. Alternatively call MyMines (07) 3199 8133



Tagalong Fossicking Tour

SAPPHIRE GEMFIELDS

GET DOWN TO EARTH

It may seem like the name says it all, but the Sapphire Gemfields offer much more than precious stones. Located just 45 minutes west of Emerald, this region includes the townships of Rubyvale, Sapphire, Anakie, and the Willows Gemfields, and is the largest sapphire-bearing area in the Southern Hemisphere.

Wildlife

Surrounded by bushland, the Sapphire Gemfields are a haven for wildlife. Spot brolgas dancing in the wetlands, kangaroos grazing roadside, and even camels roaming the Miners Common.

Miners Common

Drive carefully – cattle, horses, and camels share the roads around Sapphire and Rubyvale. The Miners Common is the last of its kind in Australia, with unique grazing rights and regulations.

Off-Roading

Explore a network of dirt roads and trails by 4WD or trail bike. Don't miss Tomahawk Creek Fossicking Area, with 2,500 hectares of bush tracks to discover.

Camping

Spend the night under a star-filled sky in designated fossicking areas. Camping permits are available online.

Geo-Caching

Embark on a modern-day treasure hunt using GPS to locate hidden "gems" across the region.

Bush Architecture

Take a drive to admire the creative dwellings built on mining claims. Permanent structures aren't allowed, so locals use recycled and natural materials like billy boulders, bush timber, corrugated iron, and even glass bottles to build their homes.

Local Characters

Meet the friendly locals, affectionately known as Gemmies, who are always happy to share fossicking tips and stories. Many were once tourists who fell in love with the lifestyle and never left.

EXPLORE MORE

Underground Mine Tour

Descend 16 metres below the surface to explore a network of winding tunnels in a former sapphire mine. This guided tour offers a fascinating glimpse into the tough conditions faced by early pioneer miners.

Sapphire Gemfields Interpretive Trail

Embark on a historic journey through the Sapphire Gemfields, stopping at interpretive panels and place markers that reveal stories of colourful characters, quirky capers, and the boom-or-bust nature of the gem industry.

The trail begins at Sapphire Reflections, a striking 12-metre-high art installation adorned with sparkling glass panels, located at the Anakie Crossroads.

Pick up a trail guide from the CQH Visitor Information Centre or online at centralqueenslandhighlands.com.au.

Policeman's Knob

Visit the world's oldest known volcanic basalt plug. Climb to the summit at sunset to spot rock wallabies and enjoy breathtaking views. Please note that high clearance vehicles are recommended and the final pathway includes a rock scramble to the top.

Fun Fact: Policemen once used this vantage point to spot criminals – hence the name!

Sapphire Gemfields Wetland Reserve

Escape to nature at this peaceful reserve. Walk or cycle the 3.6 km flat gravel tracks and enjoy early morning or dusk visits for the best chance to see kangaroos, wallaroos, and abundant birdlife from the camouflaged hide.



📍 Sapphire Reflections



📍 Underground Mine Tour



📍 Gem Shops & Galleries

SAPPHIRE GEMFIELDS



📍 ANAKIE

The oldest town in the Gemfields, Anakie is rich in history and gems.

Visit the 1884 railway station and the Big Gem at Anakie Caravan Park.

Amenities include a pub and a cabin and caravan park.

📍 SAPPHIRE

True to its name, Sapphire is home to gem cutters, jewellers, and fossicking parks. Discover local gems like the RSL, thrift shop, cafés, general store, service station, aquatic centre (August to April), and various accommodation options.

Don't miss the quirky photo ops: Big Ring; Big Spanner; Big Pick, Shovel, and Sieve.

📍 RUBYVALE

Rubyvale offers a mix of attractions and conveniences: gem cutters, jewellers, fossicking parks, mine tours, a pub, cafés, general store, service station, and accommodation.

For something fun, visit the Thong Tree (add your own broken plugger!) or snap a photo of the Tellembuggerem road sign.

📍 WILLOWS GEMFIELDS

Experience quiet bush life at the Willows Gemfields, located 30 minutes west of Anakie. The town is popular for fossicking due to minimal machinery and no corporate mining.

Facilities include a fossicking park, caravan park, general store, and service station.

NEARBY

📍 BOGANTUNGAN

On 26 February 1960, Bogantungan became the site of one of Queensland's most tragic train disasters.

As the Midlander passenger train crossed the flooded Medway Creek, the bridge collapsed beneath it. The accident claimed the lives of four passengers and three crew members, and 43 others were injured.

Visitors can learn more about this significant event by stopping at the historic Bogantungan railway station, where interpretive panels and memorabilia tell the story of the crash and its impact on the region.

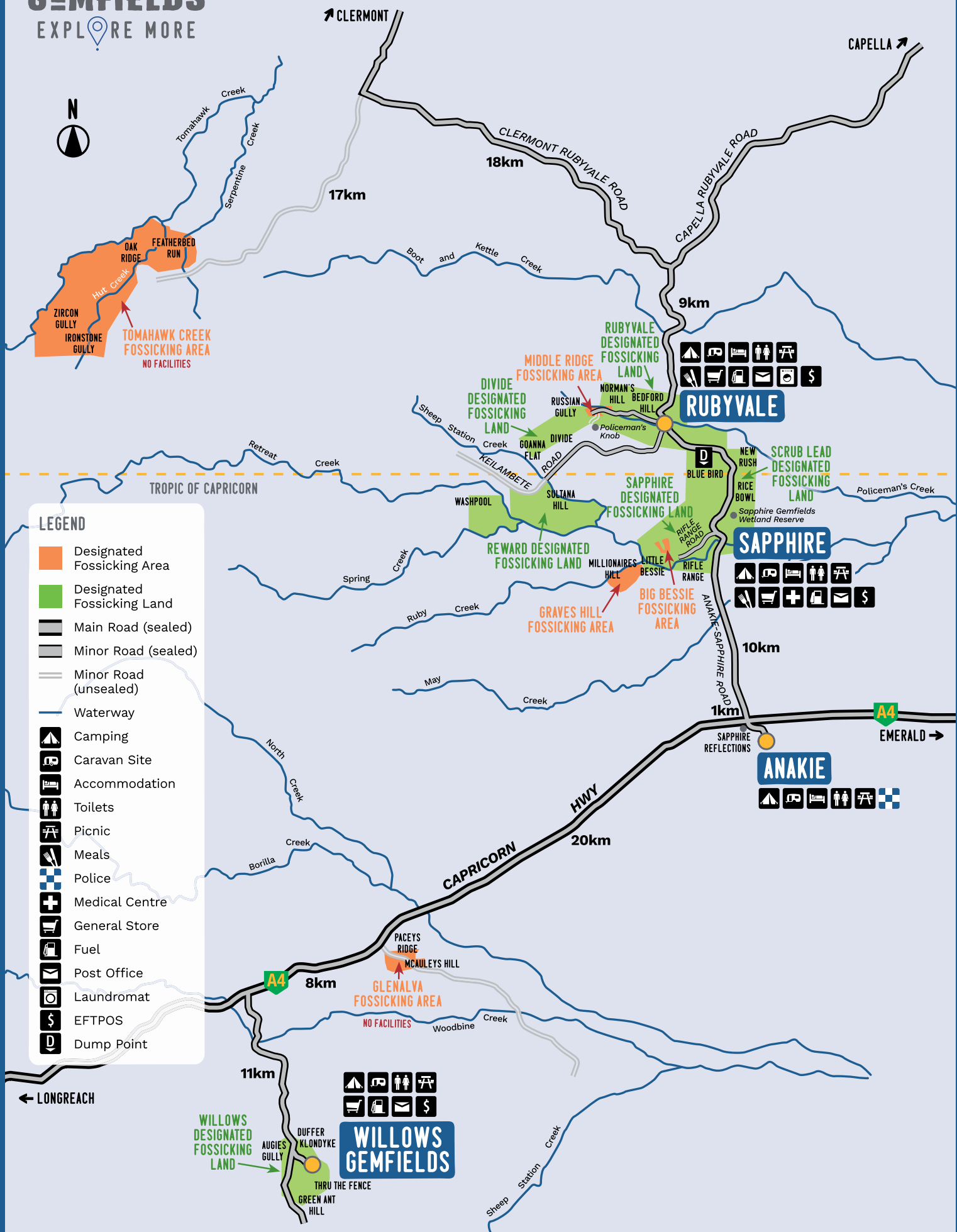
SAPPHIRE GEMFIELDS

EXPLORE MORE



LEGEND

- Designated Fossicking Area
- Designated Fossicking Land
- Main Road (sealed)
- Minor Road (sealed)
- Minor Road (unsealed)
- Waterway
- ▲ Camping
- ☛ Caravan Site
- 🛏 Accommodation
- 🚻 Toilets
- 🔪 Picnic
- 🍴 Meals
- 👮 Police
- + Medical Centre
- 🛒 General Store
- ⛽ Fuel
- ✉ Post Office
- 📺 Laundromat
- 💰 EFTPOS
- 🗑 Dump Point



FINDING SAPPHIRES

Designated Fossicking Areas

Experience the thrill of uncovering a sapphire that's been waiting millions of years to be found. All you need is a fossicking licence, hand tools, and a bit of determination. Choose from about a dozen locations (called 'areas' and 'lands') designated for recreational and tourist fossicking.

Tagalong Fossicking Tours

New to fossicking? Join a guided tour and learn how to dig, sieve, wash, and inspect your finds with help from experienced miners. All equipment and tuition are provided, and you keep what you find!

Fossicking Parks

Prefer a head start? Fossicking parks offer pre-dug bags of wash so you can start searching right away. Friendly staff are available to help you learn how to sieve and sort your sapphires.

Specking

If there has been a downpour of rain, it is time to go specking. Specking is the art of intently scanning the ground to spot sapphires on the surface and is not limited to the fossicking areas and lands. Try specking along dry creek beds or bush tracks.

Gem Shops & Galleries

For guaranteed sparkle, visit local gem shops and galleries. Find locally mined and cut sapphires or have your own find faceted and set into a custom piece of jewellery – perfect as a keepsake or family heirloom.



Tagalong Fossicking Tour

PATS SAPPHIRE CENTRAL



- DIG DISCOVER DELIGHT!
The beating heart of the Gemfields
- Gemfields Original Fossicking Park – established 1979
- Tours, Licensed Café, Bakery, Jewellery & Gem Shop – family and pet friendly

P 0499 186 251
1056 Rubyvale Rd, Sapphire Central Q 4702
patsgems.com.au

GUIDED WALK-IN UNDERGROUND MINE TOUR

World's largest Sapphire tourist mine. 48 stairs, 440 metres of tunnels, 15 metres underground

Tours run hourly on the quarter past | 1st tour is at 9:15am
Open from 9am | Bookings are essential | Minimum of 2 people

JEWELLERY & GIFT SHOWROOM, FOSSICKING, UNDERGROUND MUSEUM, SAPPHIRES



THE MINERS CAFÉ

Situated at Miners Heritage.
97 Heritage Road Rubyvale
P: 0486 029 237

Open from 8am for breakfast & lunch



97 Heritage Road, Rubyvale
P: 07 4985 4444
minersheritage.com.au



Fossicking Park



RUBYVALE GEM GALLERY

Mining sapphires since 1974

Sapphires ★ Jewellery ★ Accommodation

Established 1988

The most outstanding collection of sapphires and designer jewellery

SHARING OUR SAPPHIRE STORY

Main Street, Rubyvale 4702

P 07 49 854 388

E rubyvalegemgallery@bigpond.com

www.rubyvalegemgallery.com



Sapphire Caravan & Cabin Park

More like a retreat than a caravan park – an unforgettable experience. Come and explore the Gemfields and stay in this hidden gem.

One of the best camp kitchens in Australia, undercover BBQ hut with open fire place. Large, spacious, shady sites with bush views and privacy, spotless amenity blocks. Beautiful self-contained and budget Billy Boulder cabins that sleep up to 5 people.



Darrell & Victoria welcome you to their Best of Queensland Experience 2024 Park

Fossicking park & equipment hire

Pet friendly

Swimming pool

Concrete pads & drive through sites available

Barista made coffee



57 Sunrise Road, Sapphire Q 4702 | P: 07 4985 4281

E: sapphirecaravanpark@gmail.com

www.sapphirecaravanpark.com.au



GEM OF A PUB

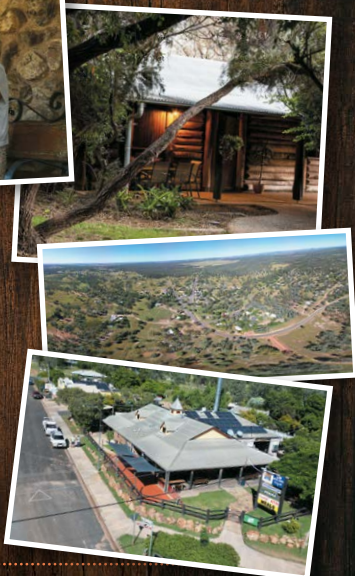
WHERE STRANGERS BECOME MATES AND YOU BECOME PART OF THE STORY



The New Royal Hotel, Rubyvale is a Historic Outback pub that has it all

Classic meals
Cold beverages
Tab, Keno & Pokies
Foxtel
Courtesy Bus

Drive through bottle shop
Cabin style accommodation
Regular entertainment and friendly service



For bookings call: 07 4985 4754 or visit: rubyvalehotel.com.au



DIRECT FROM OUR MINE TO YOU!

Coolamon Mining, a family owned and operated business, welcomes you to view our stunning display of quality, locally-mined sapphires and zircons. Experience personal service and purchase your gems with confidence from the people who mine them, and who have the best interests of the Australian Gemstone Industry at heart.

1052 Rubyvale Road, Sapphire QLD 4702
T 0407 881 551 | coolamon.showcase@yahoo.com



CAPELLA

& SURROUNDS



MORE TO DISCOVER

Capella Parklands

Wander the path from the Pioneer Village past picnic spots, interpretive signage, and Queensland bottle trees to the historic umbrella-roofed railway station.

Historic Bakehouse Oven

Peek inside a 100-year-old wood-fired oven and view vintage baking equipment with stories to tell.

Pole Murals

Stretch your legs along Peak Downs Street and admire 30 murals painted on light poles and walls, each depicting a piece of Capella's history.

Capella Creek Nature Area

Amble along Capella Creek's firebreak track and try to see how many of the 120 woodland bird species you can spot. Examples of the area's rocks and a fossilised tree trunk can be found in the geo-park near the bridge.

NEARBY

Lilyvale

Once a bustling town on the Cobb & Co route, Lilyvale faded after the railway bypassed it. Today, only fragments of ceramics remain. A shelter marks the original site of the Lilyvale Hotel.

Tieri

Tieri is a vibrant mining community supporting the Oaky Creek coal mine. If you've packed your clubs, enjoy a game of golf on the nine-hole course.

MUST EXPLORE

Peak Range Lookout

Over 30 million years ago, volcanic eruptions formed the scenic Peak Range. For breathtaking views, visit Peak Range Lookout, located just 1 km south of Capella, especially at sunrise or sunset.

Capella Pioneer Village

The 1869 Peak Downs Homestead is a masterpiece of carpentry, constructed without using wall nails! Visit the Capella Pioneer Village to explore this historic site and over 5,000 artefacts spread across 18 buildings, showcasing the region's agricultural, pastoral, and mining heritage. Open Anzac Day to October; check local listings for opening times.

Australian Light Horse Monument

During the Great Shearers' Strike of 1891, Mounted Infantry troopers reportedly added emu feathers to their slouch hats after chasing down the birds during long patrols. Visit the Australian Light Horse Monument in Capella Parklands to learn more about this unique tradition.

Earth Eater

Capella is located in the heart of the Bowen Basin. Snap a selfie with Earth Eater, a 40-tonne dragline bucket that moved over 83 million tonnes of overburden at the BMA Gregory coal mine.

CAPELLA VAN PARK



Family owned/managed quiet and spacious country park set amongst trees, providing shaded sites, birdlife and friendly service.

- All concrete slab powered sites
- Grassed unpowered sites
- Walking distance to all town facilities

P 07 4984 9615
info@capellavanpark.com.au
13 Langton St, Capella Q 4723
capellavanpark.com.au

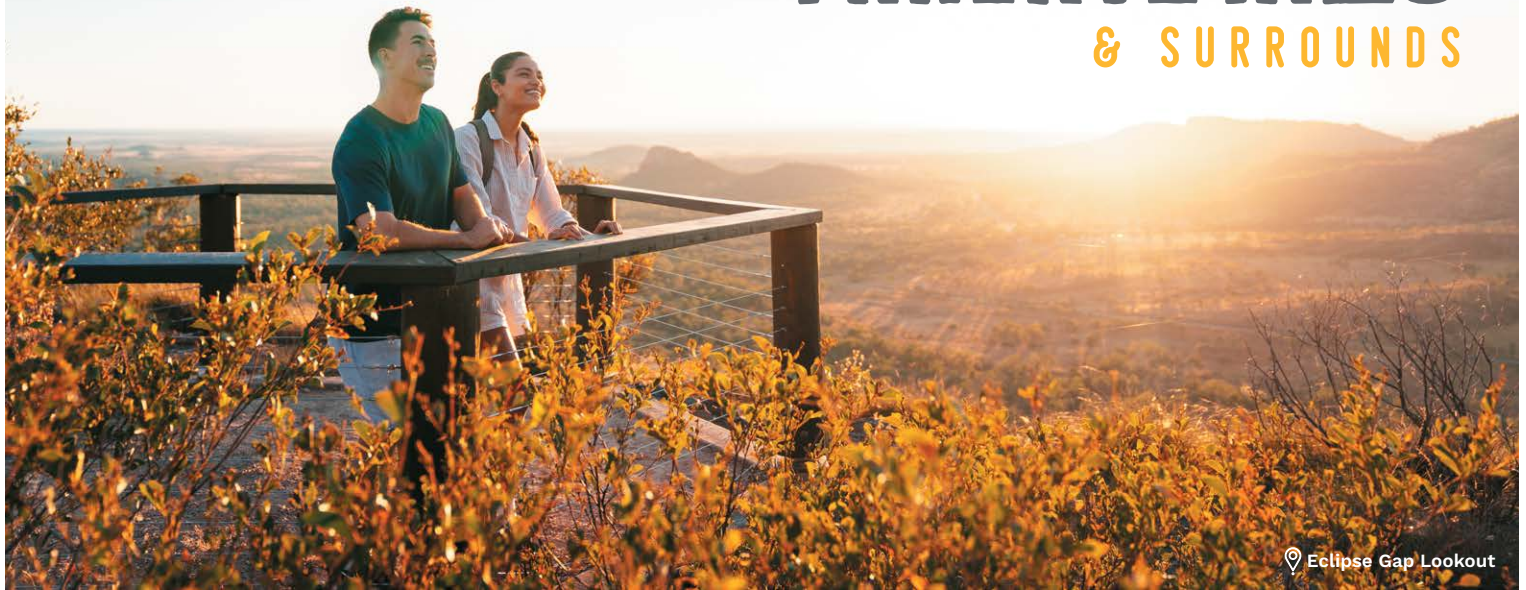
CAPELLA PIONEER VILLAGE



1869 mortise & tenon Peak Downs homestead, > 5000 objects in 18 buildings, country cinema, vintage farming & mining machinery, Capella life. \$15 Adults; \$10 Seniors/Students. Open Wed, Thurs & Sun between 9am & 1pm. Tour/school group bookings welcome anytime.

P 0427 638 866
mhburns@bigpond.com
1 Pioneer St, Capella Q 4723
Find us on Facebook or Google

SPRINGSURE MINERVA HILLS & SURROUNDS



Eclipse Gap Lookout

MINERVA HILLS NATIONAL PARK

Lookouts

Take in panoramic views of the surrounding farmland, Virgin Rock, and the township of Springsure from four scenic vantage points.

Walking

Access Skyline Lookout via a 1.6 km return trail. This level track leads to two viewing platforms offering stunning vistas – south over Mount Zamia and north beyond Eclipse Gap.

Picnicking

Enjoy a picnic with a view at Fred's Gorge, which features sheltered tables, toilets, and drinking water. For a quieter experience, detour to Norwood Creek picnic area and keep an eye out for koalas in the treetops!

Mountain Biking

Explore the park by bike for a full day of adventure on the many trails.

Wildlife Watching

Visit at dawn or dusk for the best chance to spot grazing kangaroos, snoozing koalas, and the rare eastern pebble-mound mice, known for building stone mounds around their burrows.

Access

Minerva Hills National Park is located just 7 km from Springsure. The unsealed road is suitable for high-clearance vehicles in dry weather only and is not recommended for caravans.

Lions Park

Located at the base of Minerva Hills, Lions Park offers the best view of Virgin Rock, which is a natural niche in Mount Zamia resembling the Virgin Mary cradling baby Jesus. Visit at night to see the rock beautifully floodlit.

SPRINGSURE

You won't need a library to uncover the rich history and heritage of Springsure – the town proudly wears its past on its sleeve. Here are five fascinating ways to step back in time:

Federation Woolshed

Start your journey at the Federation Woolshed, a replica of the prefabricated sheds Britain sent to wool-growing colonies in the early 1900s. Inside, you'll find historical photos, antiques, and local stories lining the walls. The Woolshed also serves as the town's information centre and is open daily from Easter to October.

Heritage Walk

While at the Woolshed, pick up a copy of the Heritage Walk Guide. This self-guided tour highlights the historic buildings along Springsure's main street. A must-see is the heritage-listed Springsure Hospital, built in 1868.

Staircase Range

Just 17 km south of Springsure lies the Staircase Range, a naturally formed sandstone escarpment shaped like a staircase. Nearby, marvel at the Old Wagon Road, carved into the rock in the early 1900s by Chinese workers using only picks and crowbars.

Wills Massacre Site

Venture off Garden Creek Road to find the secluded headstones marking the 1861 Wills Massacre site, a sobering reminder of Australia's frontier conflicts. The memorial lies near private property, so please visit respectfully.

Yumba Burin (Keeping Place)

Gain insight into the region's First Nations history at Yumba Burin, located at the cemetery. This cultural site honours the Kairi and Bidjara peoples and features repatriated burial caskets, stone artefacts, scar trees, and a striking art mural.

Note: Visits are by appointment only – contact the Federation Woolshed for more information.

SPRINGSURE, MINERVA HILLS

& SURROUNDS

📍 NUGA NUGA NATIONAL PARK

A hidden gem worth the journey, remote yet rewarding, Nuga Nuga National Park offers a peaceful escape beside a stunning lake nestled between the mountains of Arcadia Valley.

Note: A 4WD vehicle is recommended and essential after rain.

Cultural Significance

The Karingbal peoples believe Lake Nuga Nuga was created by a pair of Mundagurri (Rainbow Serpents), who now reside beneath the two prominent peaks on the lake's northern shoreline.

Bush Camping

Camp under the stars along the lake's edge. No facilities are provided, so visitors must be fully self-sufficient.

A camping permit is required.

Bird Watching

With over 150 bird species, the lake is a haven for birdwatchers.

Photography

Capture the lake's beauty, especially the haunting ghost gums rising from the water and the changing colours at sunset.

Water Sports

Paddle across the lake by kayak or canoe and admire the seasonal display of blooming waterlilies.

📍 ARCADIA VALLEY

Located between the Expedition and Carnarvon Ranges, Arcadia Valley lives up to its Greek-inspired name, Ideal Paradise.

📍 EXPEDITION NATIONAL PARK

Stop at Lonesome Lookout along the Arcadia Valley Access Road for sweeping views of the valley and the Dawson River.

📍 BAUHINIA

Situated along the Dawson Highway, Bauhinia is a charming town known for its warm country hospitality.

Cast a line in Zamia Creek, located 10 km south along the highway, for a relaxing fishing experience.

📍 ROLLESTON

Beazley Park

In the heart of Rolleston, Beazley Park features:

- Historic Purbrook Hut and post office buildings
- Rolleston Coffee Cart (open April to September)
- Playground and skatepark
- Picnic facilities

Heritage Walk

Uncover the stories behind Rolleston's historic buildings on the Heritage Walk. Pick up a brochure from the local library, and while you're there, check out the hand-drawn timeline of the town's history.

Fishing

Try your luck at the local fishing hole along the Comet River, a peaceful spot for anglers of all levels.



BLACKDOWN TABLELAND

A BREATHTAKING OASIS

Mother Nature proves once again that she's the ultimate landscape gardener. Rising dramatically above the surrounding plains, Blackdown Tableland National Park is a cool, elevated oasis featuring deep gorges, breathtaking lookouts, scenic waterfalls, and unique plant life.

ESSENTIALS

Rock Art

Blackdown Tableland is the traditional land of the Ghungalu people. Ancient rock faces display their artwork, offering a vivid connection to their enduring culture.

Four-Wheel Driving

Take the 20 km Loop Road past striking sandstone outcrops adorned with basket ferns and king orchids. Stop at Mitha Boongulla Lookout for panoramic views of the plains.

Wildlife Watching

Wake up with the birds at Munall camping area. During the day, spot skinks, geckos, and goannas basking on sandstone ledges. At night, take a torch-lit walk to see gliders, owls, and bats in action.

Picnic Areas

Yaddamen Dhina Lookout offers picnic tables, gas barbecues, and toilets for day visitors.

Access

Located between Dingo and Bluff, the park is accessed via a steep, winding 6 km sealed road which is unsuitable for caravans, motorhomes or heavy trailers. Most internal roads are unsealed. Gudda Gumoo Gorge carpark is 15 km from Yaddamen Dhina Lookout.

Accommodation

Camp in the peaceful bush setting of Munall camping area.

Book online via the Queensland National Parks website or in person at the CQH Visitor Information Centre, Emerald.

Nearby towns offering caravan and motel accommodation include:

- Dingo (35 km)
- Bluff (40 km)
- Blackwater (60 km)
- Duaringa (70 km)

TOP 3 MOST INSTAGRAMMABLE TRACKS

1. Gudda Gumoo Gorge

4 km return – 2 hr

Descend 240 steps into the gorge and cool off in the spring-fed rock pool below. Don't miss a photo of Gudda Gumoo (Rainbow Falls), named for the shimmering rainbow that appears in the right light.

2. Yaddamen Dhina Lookout

200 m return – 5 min

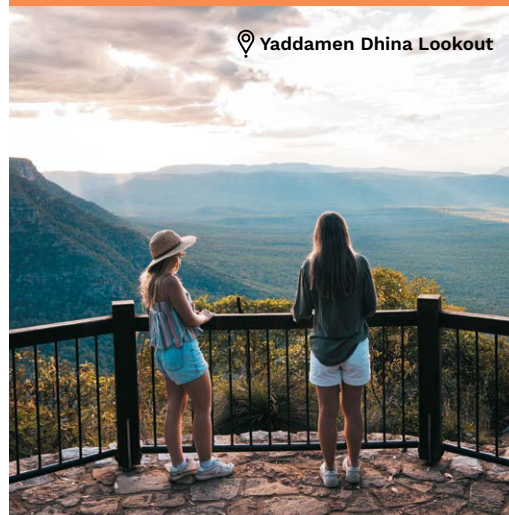
Experience that "edge of the world" feeling with sweeping views of distant ranges and the plains 500 metres below.

3. Mook Mook Track

2.4 km return – 50 min

Best visited at sunrise, this lookout offers stunning views of the morning sun reflecting off sandstone cliffs.

Yaddamen Dhina Lookout



BLACKWATER

Blackwater International Coal Centre

Begin your journey at the Blackwater International Coal Centre (BICC), home to the Australian Coal Mining Museum. Discover educational exhibits, media displays, and simulators that showcase:

- The formation of coal millions of years ago
- The impressive scale of modern mining equipment
- The everyday uses of coal

‘At the Coal Face’ Memorial

Located a few blocks north, this memorial pays tribute to miners who lost their lives in Blackwater’s mines and honours the vital role of coal mining in the region’s history.

Self-Drive Tour

Take a scenic drive along Airport Road or Ardurad Road for a view of the Blackwater Coal Mine – one of the largest in the area. The mine employs over 800 people and produces approximately 14 million tonnes of coal annually.

Although the mine itself is not open to the public, you can still observe large machinery and mining operations from the roadside.

Ghungalu Nunee Gardens

This immersive garden embraces a deeper understanding of the land’s significance and encourages Indigenous tourism with its self-guided “Walking with the Elders” audio tour.

BLACKWATER BEDFORD WEIR & SURROUNDS



📍 Blackwater International Coal Centre



📍 Blackwater Lions Park

Blackwater Lions Park

Just a 500-metre walk from the BICC, this park features one of the largest flag displays in the world. Test your knowledge by identifying the 37 flags, each representing a nationality that contributed to the development of the region's coal mining industry.

Other highlights include:

- A restored steam engine
- A coal wagon
- The historic 1877 railway station

With a bakery conveniently located across the road, it's a great spot for a picnic.

BEDFORD WEIR

Stay a few nights and enjoy the camping facilities, including hot showers and toilets, for a gold coin donation. Maximum stay seven nights.

Fishing

Bedford Weir is an angler's paradise. Cast a line for Saratoga, Barramundi, and Yellowbelly, or drop a pot to catch Red Claw crayfish. No fishing permit required.

Boating

The calm, flat waters of the Mackenzie River are perfect for boating, water skiing, and kayaking.

Picnic Areas

Enjoy shaded riverside picnic spots equipped with electric barbecues and a playground – ideal for families.

Wildlife

The peaceful surroundings attract diverse wildlife. Keep an eye out for wallabies, potoroos, echidnas, bandicoots, and a proud group of resident peacocks.

History

Bedford Weir is near the site of the infamous 1867 gold escort murders. Driven by greed and gambling debt, Gold Commissioner John Thomas Griffin fatally shot Constables Patrick Cahill and John Power in an attempt to steal £4,000.

COMET

Dig Tree

Visit the Coolibah tree trunk marked by explorer Ludwig Leichhardt in 1847 during his second expedition. The engraving "DIG L" and a downward arrow indicated buried letters for family and friends. The tree was felled in the 1950s for preservation and returned to Comet in 1997, now housed in a dedicated display.

Comet Railway Station

Located at Whistle Stop Park, the historic station features local memorabilia, including vintage photographs and bridge plans.

Comet Tales & Walking Trails

Take a self-guided walk through Comet, stopping at 16 historical sites. Storyboards, images, and videos bring the town's rich history to life. Smartphone required.

Book Exchange

Book lovers will enjoy Comet's free book-sharing library, styled like a retro red telephone box. Open 24/7, it's a place to take or leave a book.

Minion Mountain

Don't miss this quirky roadside attraction on the Capricorn Highway between Blackwater and Comet. Created by a local miner using recycled materials like gas bottles and fuel tanks, the Minion family encourages drivers to take a break and enjoy the view.



BLACKWATER, BEDFORD WEIR & SURROUNDS

📍 BLUFF

Visit this major railway interchange for coal trains. Enjoy a drink at the pub across the road and watch the trains roll by.

Coal Train Facts

On the Blackwater Rail Corridor, an average coal train:

- Is pulled by 3 electric or 4 diesel locomotives
- Measures over 1.7 km in length with more than 100 wagons
- Carries 100 tonnes of coal per wagon
- Transports coal valued between \$500,000 and \$1.5 million, depending on market prices

📍 DINGO

Nestled in grazing country at the junction of two major highways, Dingo is named after the wild Australian dog that once roamed the area. Stop by the main street to see the life-sized bronze Dingo Statue.

📍 BINGEGANG WEIR

Located north of Dingo on the Mackenzie River, this secluded spot is perfect for fishing, especially for wild Saratoga. Surrounded by bushland, it's ideal for a quiet day in nature.

Note: Unsealed road

📍 DUARINGA

Duaringa Historical and Tourism Centre

Easily spotted from the Capricorn Highway thanks to a striking mural painted by local artists, the centre celebrates the meeting of the Dawson and Mackenzie Rivers to form the Fitzroy River.

Inside, you'll find:

- A small museum featuring historical items donated by residents
- Locally made arts and crafts for sale
- Fresh, locally grown produce
- A book exchange
- Visitor information and brochures

Open daily from Easter to October.

Mackenzie Park

Home to the unique Budgeroo (Duaringa stringy bark tree), once used by Aboriginal communities to make rope, baskets, and building materials.

Facilities include:

- Camping area (max stay: 48 hours)
- Electric barbecues
- Playground
- Charging tree
- Wi-Fi
- Hot showers (gold coin donation)

Historical Trail

Take a self-guided walking tour of Duaringa's historic buildings and landmarks. Interpretive signage shares insights into the town's rich past.

Brochures are available at the tourism centre.

Mackenzie River Crossing

Locally known as Duaringa Beach, this scenic spot features large sandy banks and shady paperbark trees. Enjoy swimming, fishing, kayaking, and birdwatching in a peaceful natural setting.

Note: Unsealed road



EVENTS & FESTIVALS

Taste Central Highlands

March, Emerald

A biennial field-to-fine-dining experience featuring a curated four-course menu with local produce.

Central Highlands Easter Sunflower Festival

Easter, Emerald

A vibrant street parade with sunflower-themed vehicles and people, plus art exhibitions, horse races, and a rodeo.

Blackwater May Day Fun Fair

Labour Day Weekend, Blackwater

Enjoy a weekend of rodeo action, car shows, rides, market stalls, live entertainment, and fireworks.

Springsure Mountain Challenge

May, Springsure

Walk, jog, or run through the scenic Minerva Hills National Park – all for a good cause.

Capella Country Music Festival

May, Capella

Six days of country music, bush poetry, talent searches, and bush cooking demos.

Central Highlands Agricultural Show Circuit

May–June, Comet, Capella, Springsure, Emerald

Enjoy wood chopping, sideshow alley, fireworks, and community spirit.

AG-Grow

June, Emerald

The region's premier agricultural field day with 300+ exhibitors, livestock sales, and working dog challenges.

Flavour Fest

August, Emerald

A vibrant celebration of multicultural flavours and local talent through food and entertainment.

Gemfest

Second weekend of August, Anakie

Festival of celebrations, musical entertainment, gemstones and artisan displays.

Jewel of the Gemfields

Second weekend of August, Sapphire

Colorful festival celebrations, entertainment, food, gemstones and displays.

World Dingo Trap Throwing Competition

August, Dingo

Watch competitors attempt to throw a dingo trap 48 metres at this quirky world championship, held as part of Dingo Race Day.

Up Down Blackdown

August, Blackdown Tableland

Traverse fire trails by foot or mountain bike in this unforgettable adventure.

Capella Pioneer Village Heritage Day

September, Capella

See history come to life with blacksmithing, steam engines, earth moving, and sheep shearing demonstrations, plus an operating country cinema and tractor parade.

Arts & Culture

Visit exhibitions at Emerald and Springsure galleries.

Enjoy live performances at Emerald Town Hall, Capella Cultural Centre, and local hotels.

MARKETS

Spend a relaxed weekend browsing fresh produce, handmade goods, and local treasures:

- Emerald Lions Markets – First Sunday monthly; Christmas Mega Markets (Second Sunday of December)
- Capella Community Markets – Fourth Sunday of Feb, Mar, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct
- Capella Christmas in July Markets – July
- Rubyvale Markets – Every Saturday (Easter to October)
- Sapphire Markets – Every Sunday (Easter to October)
- Springsure Markets in the Park – Third Sunday of select months

Country Races

Whether you're into racing, fashion, or live entertainment, don't miss these iconic race days:

- Springsure St Patrick's Race Day – March
- Dingo Race Day – August
- Emerald 100 – October

Rodeos & Campdrafts

Experience the thrill of rodeo and campdraft action at these exciting events:

Springsure Campdraft – April

APRA Junior National Finals Emerald – July

Capella Campdraft – August

Comet River Windmill Campdraft – September



Check out our calendar for more details



Central Highlands Easter Sunflower Festival

TRAVEL & TRAILS

GETTING HERE

Road

A classic road trip is one of the best ways to experience the wide-open spaces of the Central Queensland Highlands. Navigating is easy with two major highways running east-west (Capricorn Highway) and north-east (Gregory Highway). Electric vehicle fast-charging stations are available in Emerald and Dingo with additional stations expected to open in 2026.

Air

Short on time? Emerald is only a 90 minute flight from Brisbane. QantasLink and Virgin Australia offer daily services to and from Brisbane.

Car

Major car hire companies operate from Emerald Airport. Booking ahead is recommended. A taxi service is available in Emerald and Blackwater.

Rail and Coach

Alternatively, sit back and watch the scenery go by on a rail or coach service. The Spirit of the Outback operates twice-weekly rail services along the coast from Brisbane to Rockhampton and then west through Blackwater and Emerald to its destination of Longreach.

Daily coach services are available from Rockhampton with Greyhound Australia and from Mackay with Mackay Transit Coaches.

FASCINATING DRIVES

— Arcadia Explorer

Enjoy your relaxing drive through farm and grazing land on your way to Lake Nuga Nuga. Stop for a picnic, watch birdlife and enjoy the serenity of the lake. Continue through Arcadia Valley with scenic views of the Carnarvon and Expedition Ranges. *Note: dry weather only.*

Distance: 245 km return

Route: Rolleston - Lake Nuga Nuga - Arcadia Valley - Rolleston

— Blackdown Beauty

Follow the winding ascent to Blackdown Tableland National Park, where you'll find scenic lookouts, bushwalks, tumbling creeks, and unique plant life. *Note: Not suitable for caravans.*

Distance: 155 km return

Route: Blackwater - Bluff - Blackdown Tableland - Blackwater

— Maraboon H2O

Travel through the Emerald irrigation area and cross the 820-metre-long Fairbairn Dam to reach Lake Maraboon. Enjoy panoramic views from the lookout.

Distance: 50 km return

Route: Emerald - Lake Maraboon - Emerald

— Minerva Discovery Loop

Explore Minerva Hills National Park for breathtaking views and natural beauty. Stop at the Wills Memorial Site and pass the old Minerva coal mine. *Note: 4WD high-clearance vehicle recommended. Dry weather only.*

Distance: 95 km return

Route: Springsure - Minerva Hills - Springsure

NATIONAL PARK TRACKS

Explore the challenging terrain and unexpected beauty of our national parks through the network of designated fourwheel drive tracks.

Note: 4WD only. Some roads may be impassable when wet.

Blackdown Tableland National Park (4WD Track)

Drive past dramatic sandstone outcrops adorned with basket ferns and king orchids. Stop at Mitha Boongulla for panoramic views.

Distance: 20 km

Salvator Rosa, Carnarvon National Park

Take a rough track and a river crossing to discover flowing springs and towering sandstone formations in one of the park's most scenic areas.

Distance: 20 km

Mount Moffatt, Carnarvon National Park

Explore iconic rock formations like The Chimneys, Lot's Wife, and Marlong Arch, or ascend to the high country for sweeping views.

Distance: 300 km



ALL-WHEEL DRIVE ADVENTURES

Unhook the van and explore the Central Queensland Highlands' scenic back roads. These routes offer a mix of natural beauty, cultural heritage, and outback charm. For detailed directions, visit a local visitor information centre. *Note: 4WD is recommended.*

— Pioneers Pathway

Begin at Capella Pioneer Village, then explore the Sapphire Gemfields with their gem shops, galleries, and the Interpretive Trail highlighting local history and characters.

Distance: 115 km one way

— Willows Way

Travel through sapphire fossicking areas, along the Nogoa River, and over a sandstone escarpment with sweeping countryside views.

Distance: 300 km

— Bedford Backwaters

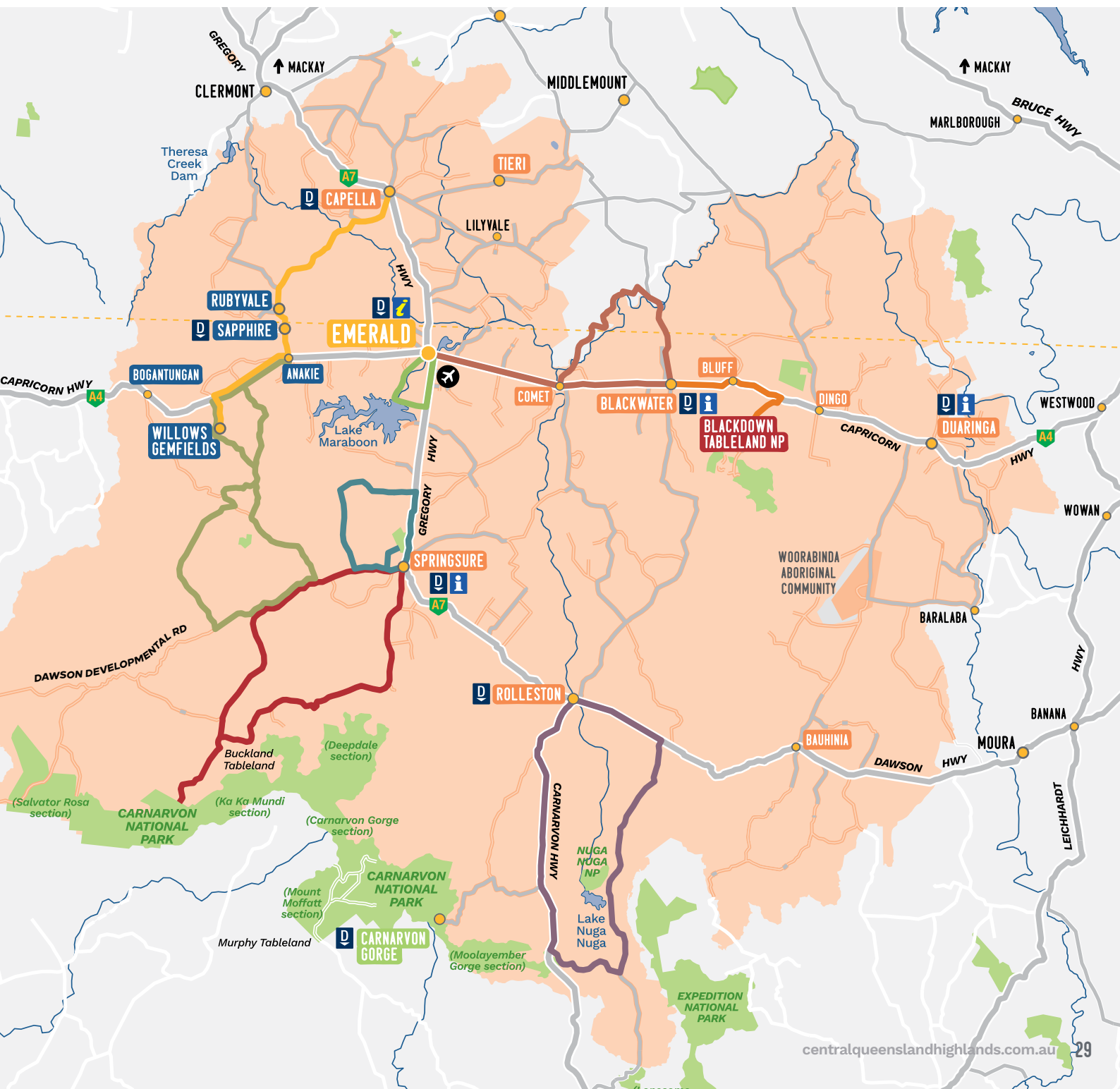
Follow Riley's Crossing Road along the Mackenzie River, with stops for fishing or picnicking, before arriving at Bedford Weir from the north.

Distance: 200 km

— Ka Ka Mundi Adventure

Explore the remote backcountry of Springsure before entering the Ka Ka Mundi section of Carnarvon National Park.

Distance: 250 km



SELF DRIVE ITINERARIES EXPLORE MORE

GET DOWN TO EARTH

ITINERARY 1

Day One: Anakie & Sapphire

Start your morning at the Anakie Crossroads with a locally roasted coffee beneath the towering Sapphire Reflections artwork.

Visit the historic Anakie Railway Station and enjoy a hearty lunch at the nearby Anakie Pub.

Spend the afternoon fossicking for gems in Sapphire, then take a walk with wallabies at the Sapphire Gemfields Wetland Reserve.

Day Two: Sapphire & Rubyvale

Join a tagalong fossicking tour and dig deeper into the Sapphire Gemfields.

Enjoy a refreshing schooner of Fossicker's Ale at the Rubyvale pub.

Take an underground mine tour, descending 16 metres to see how pioneer miners extracted sapphires.

Day Three: Rubyvale

Browse local gem shops and galleries – admiring beautiful jewellery is free!

Stop for a coffee break at one of the friendly stops along the way.

Drive around mining claims and spot quirky short-term dwellings.

Visit Policeman's Knob to see rock wallabies and catch a stunning sunset.

Day Four: Willows Gemfields

Ready to fossick solo? Hire equipment, grab a licence, and spend the day digging for treasures at Willows Gemfields.

Explore More

Four-wheel driving and dirt biking are great ways to explore the Sapphire Gemfields, with a vast network of dirt roads and tracks to discover.

Slow down, look up, and reconnect with the universe. The Central Queensland Highlands invites you to explore at your own pace, with minimal light pollution and clear horizons, every stop offers a glorious view of the night sky.

Tips for Your Journey:

- Bring a torch with a red filter to preserve night vision.
- Dress warmly and bring a blanket or chair for comfort.
- Use a stargazing app or star chart to help identify celestial objects.
- Be patient – some of the most magical moments come when you least expect them.



UNCOVER HISTORY & HERITAGE

ITINERARY 2

Day One: Rolleston & Springsure

Take a self-guided heritage walk through Rolleston, admiring historic buildings along the main street.

End at Beazley Park with a hot coffee from the Rolleston Coffee Cart.

Drive to Springsure (70 km) and visit the Federation Woolshed, filled with historical photos and memorabilia.

Ask about access to Yumba Burin (Keeping Place) to learn about the region's Indigenous heritage.

Day Two: Emerald

On the way to Emerald (70 km), detour to Lake Maraboon for fishing, boating, or a picnic.

Explore Emerald's history through colourful mosaics on the Centenary of Federation Pathway.

Check out the Visitor Information Centre and its sustainable strawbale construction.

Visit the Pioneer Cottage Complex and snap a photo of the National Trust-listed 1900s railway station.

Day Three: Capella

Spend the day in Capella (55 km), starting at the Pioneer Village, which showcases the region's agricultural, pastoral, and mining history.

Wander along the Capella Parklands pathway to learn of the district's past before coming to the Australian Light Horse Monument. Then check out the umbrella-roofed railway station and historic bakehouse oven.

Day Four: Blackwater & Duaringa

Head east to Blackwater (130 km) and learn about coal mining at the Blackwater International Coal Centre.

Visit Lions Park, home to one of the world's largest flag displays. Finish in Duaringa (85 km), exploring historical buildings and sites on the Duaringa Historical Trail.

Explore More

Get to know the colourful characters and stories of Comet's past on the Comet Tales and Walking Trails tour, followed by a tipple at the historic 120-year-old pub.

EXPLORE ICONIC NATIONAL PARKS

ITINERARY 3

Day One: Nuga Nuga National Park

Departing north from Injune, past scenic lookouts, continue to Nuga Nuga National Park (75 km) and set up for a remote bush camping experience.

Spend the afternoon enjoying the tranquillity of Lake Nuga Nuga – explore by canoe or walk along the shoreline.

Note: Access via unsealed road.

Day Two: Carnarvon Gorge

Drive 1.5 hours (125 km) to the Carnarvon Gorge section of Carnarvon National Park.

Enjoy a picnic lunch in the visitor area, then hike to Boolimba Bluff for spectacular cliffs and views of the distant ranges. On your return, cool off with a swim in the nearby rock pool.

Day Three: Carnarvon Gorge

Rise early and walk the Nature Trail – keep an eye out for platypus in Carnarvon Creek.

Book a full-day guided walking tour to visit iconic attractions and exclusive off-track locations.

In the evening, join a night safari to discover the gorge's nocturnal wildlife.

Day Four: Minerva Hills National Park

Travel two hours north (185 km) to Minerva Hills National Park.

Stop at Fred's Gorge for a scenic picnic with panoramic views.

After lunch, explore walking tracks and lookouts overlooking Virgin Rock, Springsure, and the surrounding farmland.

Note: High-clearance vehicles recommended.

Day Five: Blackdown Tableland National Park

Drive 2.5 hours (215 km) to Blackdown Tableland National Park.

Visit Yaddamen Dhina Lookout for sweeping views of the surrounding ranges.

Descend 240 stairs into Gudda Gumoo Gorge, then cool off in the spring-fed rock pool below.

Explore More

Extend your adventure by visiting the Salvator Rosa and Ka Ka Mundi sections of Carnarvon National Park.

CAMPING & CARAVANNING

Camping or caravanning in the Central Queensland Highlands is a great way to dig a little deeper and experience a closer connection to the landscape. Wake up with the birds, bush surrounds and a new place to explore.



CARAVAN PARKS

With over 25 budget-friendly caravan parks across the region, you'll be spoilt for choice. These parks offer:

- Powered and unpowered sites
- A range of cabin options
- Hot showers, camp kitchens, and laundry facilities
- Extras like swimming pools, playgrounds, on-site entertainment, and fossicking facilities

SELF-SUFFICIENT CAMPING

Prefer to go off-grid? The region offers several self-sufficient camping spots:

Bedford Weir, Blackwater

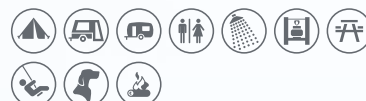


Tranquil bush camping and popular fishing spot.

Location: 25 km north of Blackwater

Stay: Up to 7 nights (gold coin donation)

Mackenzie Park, Duaringa



Spacious, grassed sites shaded by native Budgeroo trees.

Stay: Up to 48 hours (gold coin donation)

Mackenzie River Crossing, Duaringa



Camp along the sandy banks of the Mackenzie River.

Location: 25 km north of Duaringa

Lions Park, Springsure



Great vantage point to view Virgin Rock illuminated at night.

Location: 3 km north of Springsure

Staircase Range, Springsure



Secluded spot near the historic Staircase Range cutting.

Location: 17 km south of Springsure
Note: Suitable for high-clearance vehicles in dry weather only



Munall Camping Area

NATIONAL PARKS CAMPING

Most national parks in the region are best experienced over multiple days. Camping allows you to explore more deeply.

Note: *Camping permits are required.*

Blackdown Tableland National Park – Munall camping area



Quiet, shady bush setting near walking tracks.

Note: *Access road is partially unsealed and unsuitable for towing heavy trailers or caravans.*

Nuga Nuga National Park



Remote bush camping on the banks of Lake Nuga Nuga.

Note: *Access via unsealed road.*

Expedition National Park – Beilba camping area



The Beilba camping area features a shady, open wooded bush camping area with views over a rocky gorge.

Note: *4WD vehicles are recommended and off-road camper trailers.*

Lonesome Camping Area is now closed.

Carnarvon Gorge – Carnarvon National Park

Privately run cabin and caravan parks are available year-round.



Carnarvon Gorge camping area:

Open during Queensland Easter, June–July, and September–October school holidays.



Big Bend camping area: Accessible via a 19.4 km return walk; open year round.



Carnarvon National Park – Other Sections

Bush camping is available in the Salvator Rosa, Ka Ka Mundi, and Mount Moffatt sections.

DESIGNATED FOSSICKING AREAS

Combine gem hunting and camping at one of the dedicated fossicking areas across the Sapphire Gemfields.

Note: *A fossicking licence and camping permit are required.*

ESSENTIALS

Dump Points & Potable Water available at the following locations:

- **Blackwater:** Turpentine Road
- **Capella:** Bridgeman Park
- **Duaringa:** Mackenzie Park
- **Emerald:** Showgrounds
- **Rolleston:** Beazley Park
- **Rubyvale:** Sapphire Rubyvale Road
- **Springsure:** Barcoo Street

TRAVELLING WITH PETS

Bring your fur baby along for the ride and enjoy a pet-friendly holiday in the Central Queensland Highlands. With plenty of outdoor activities and attractions, there are countless paw-some experiences waiting for you and your four-legged friend.

Pet-Friendly Activities

Fossick for gems at designated fossicking areas in the Sapphire Gemfields.

Take an on-leash stroll through:

- Sapphire Gemfields Wetland Reserve
- Capella Parklands
- Emerald Regional Botanic Gardens

Snap a photo with your pooch at the iconic Dingo Statue.

Let them splash at Lake Maraboon and Bedford Weir.

Explore history together on self-guided heritage trails in Rolleston, Springsure, Comet, and Duaringa.

Dog Parks

Let your dog off-leash and stretch their legs at these local dog parks:

- **Blackwater:** Corner of Hunter and Park Streets
- **Emerald:** Rifle Range Road
- **Rolleston:** Corner of Meteor and Brown Streets
- **Springsure:** Dawson Highway (southbound)

Boarding Kennels

Dogs are not permitted in Queensland National Parks, but don't worry – boarding kennels are available in:

- Emerald
- Blackwater
- Carnarvon Gorge

Many offer daycare and grooming services, so your pet can enjoy their own holiday while you explore.

WHAT CROP IS THAT?

The Central Queensland Highlands is an agricultural powerhouse, with the largest beef cattle herd size in Australia, one of the largest mandarin orchards in the Southern Hemisphere, and significant exports of cotton, cereal, and pulses.

Here are some commonly grown crops you might spot on your travels.



Sorghum



Mung beans



Cotton



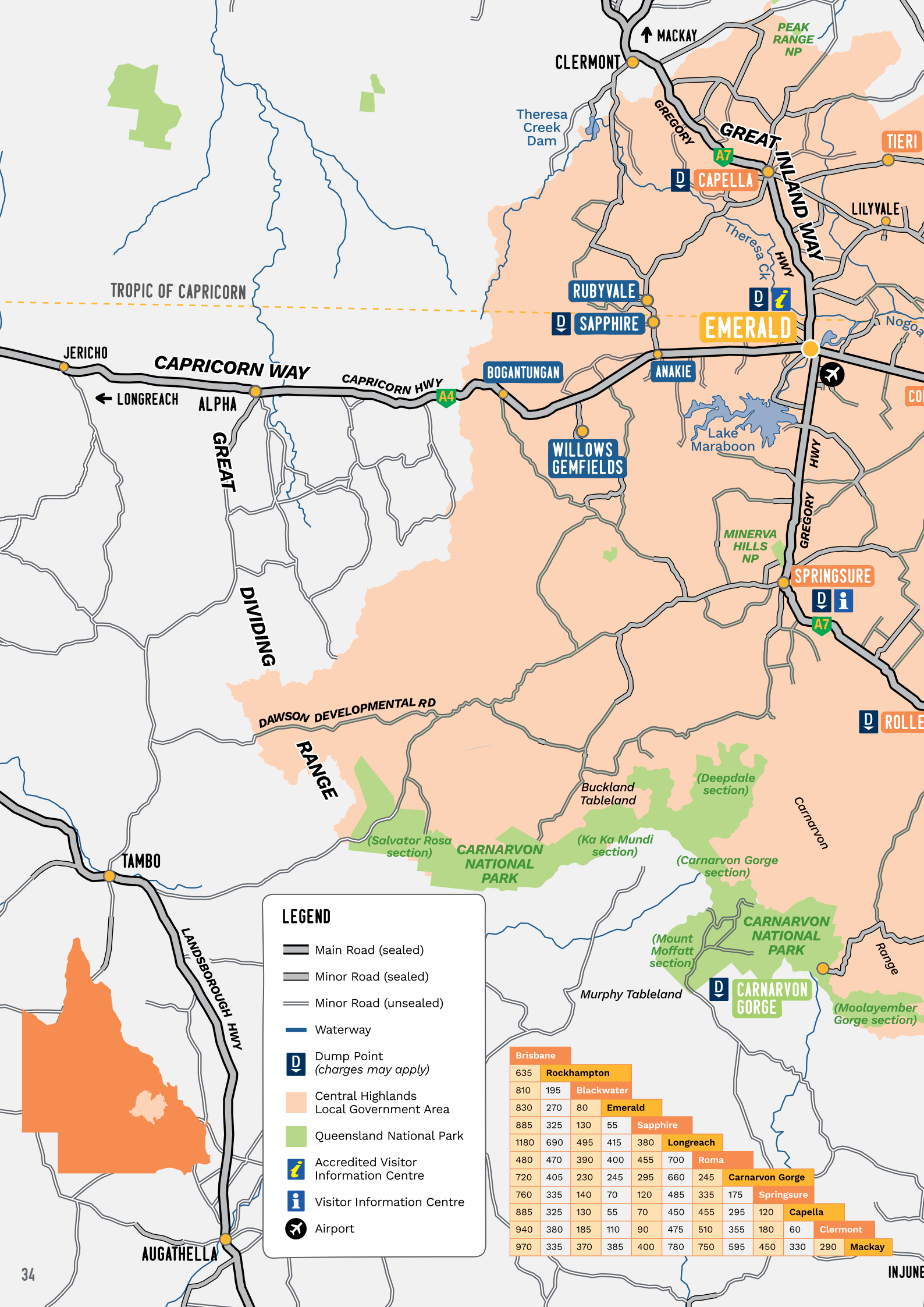
Chickpeas



Wheat



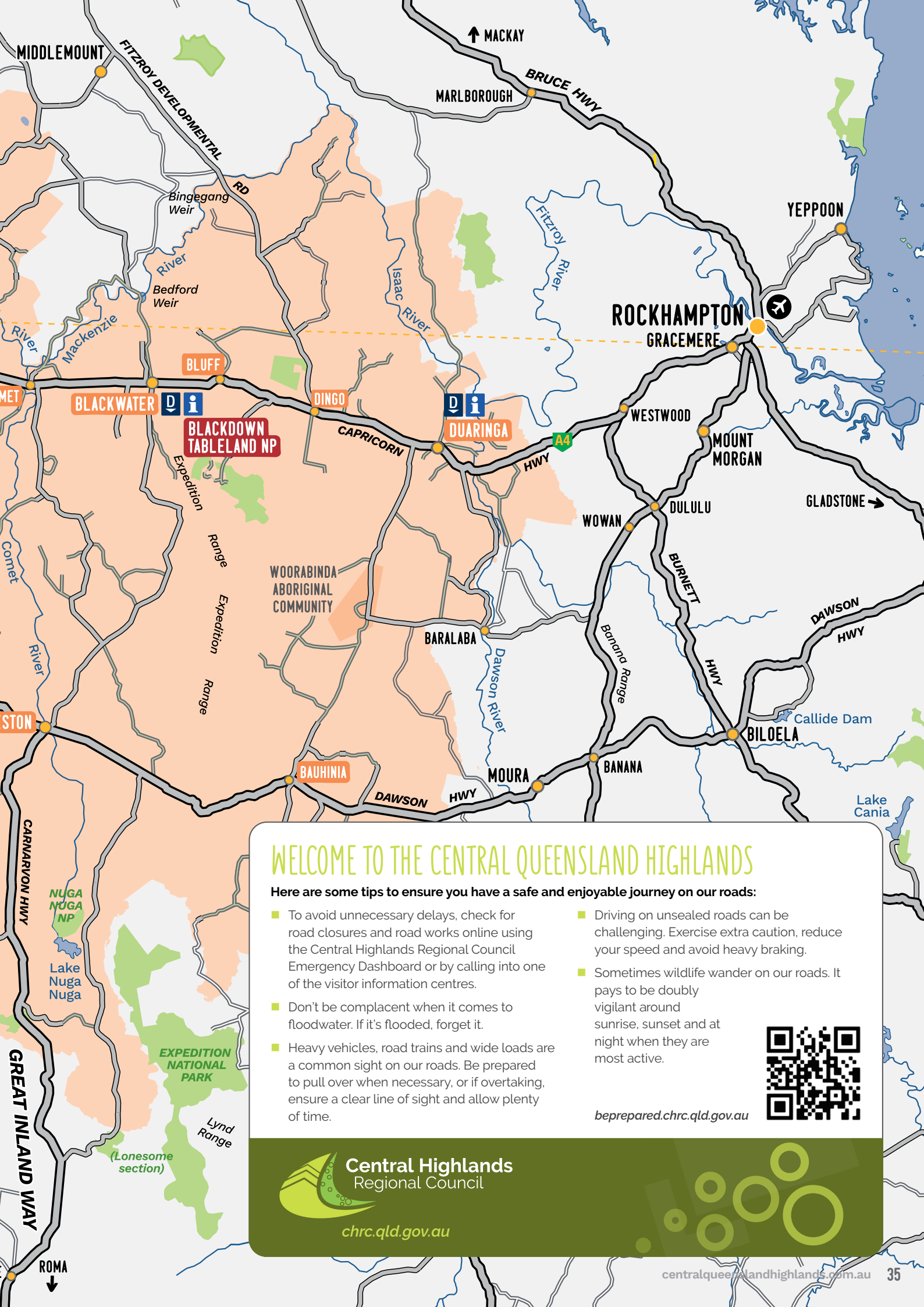
Mandarins



LEGEND

- Main Road (sealed)
- Minor Road (sealed)
- Minor Road (unsealed)
- Waterway
- Dump Point (charges may apply)
- Central Highlands Local Government Area
- Queensland National Park
- Accredited Visitor Information Centre
- Visitor Information Centre
- Airport

Brisbane										
635	Rockhampton									
810	195	Blackwater								
830	270	80	Emerald							
885	325	130	55	Sapphire						
1180	690	495	415	380	Longreach					
480	470	390	400	455	700	Roma				
720	405	230	245	295	660	245	Carnarvon Gorge			
760	335	140	70	120	485	335	175	Springsure		
885	325	130	55	70	455	295	120	Capella		
940	380	185	110	90	475	510	355	180	60	Clermont
970	335	370	385	400	780	750	595	450	330	290
										Mackay



WELCOME TO THE CENTRAL QUEENSLAND HIGHLANDS

Here are some tips to ensure you have a safe and enjoyable journey on our roads:

- To avoid unnecessary delays, check for road closures and road works online using the Central Highlands Regional Council Emergency Dashboard or by calling into one of the visitor information centres.
- Don't be complacent when it comes to floodwater. If it's flooded, forget it.
- Heavy vehicles, road trains and wide loads are a common sight on our roads. Be prepared to pull over when necessary, or if overtaking, ensure a clear line of sight and allow plenty of time.
- Driving on unsealed roads can be challenging. Exercise extra caution, reduce your speed and avoid heavy braking.
- Sometimes wildlife wander on our roads. It pays to be doubly vigilant around sunrise, sunset and at night when they are most active.

beprepared.chrc.qld.gov.au



Central Highlands
Regional Council

chrc.qld.gov.au

VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRES



Emerald

CQH Visitor Information Centre
3 Clermont Street
07 4982 4142
Open daily



Blackwater

Blackwater International Coal Centre
Capricorn Highway
07 4982 7755
Open Monday to Friday, Easter – October



Duaringa

Duaringa Historical and Tourism Centre
Mackenzie Park
07 4935 7077
Open daily, Easter – October



Springsure

Federation Woolshed
Gregory Highway
07 4984 1961
Open daily, Easter – October