

# Welcome to Barron Gorge National Park and surrounds

Escape into a World Heritage-listed paradise—a place truly like no other. Journey through the world’s oldest-surviving tropical rainforests, rising above the city of Cairns. Walk in the footsteps of the Djabuganydji—the area’s Traditional Owners—to discover the rich history that shaped this colourful landscape.

“I am fortunate to work in such a top place, with so much to see and do, all close-by. From majestic Barron Falls, it is only a stones-throw to some of Queensland’s best walking tracks, such as the Douglas and Smith tracks. Each day I am reminded of the important role national parks play to protect these special places.

*Ranger Theo*

## Djabugay country

Barron Gorge National Park is the traditional land of the Djabugay Aboriginal people. The people are known as Bama—rainforest people. The Djabuganydji Bama welcome you to their country—*Nyrrumba nyandu mayin bulmba djabugay-nygu* to all of be happy on Djabugay country.

“Din Din contains important creation stories and is significant in our existence. This is where Gudju Gudju took the form of Budadji the carpet snake and created the waterways including the falls. Us Djabugay people, we are the owners of that country and we need to manage and look after this. The water, the plants and animals, all of it.

**Djabugay Aboriginal Corporation Chairman William Duffin**  
*(pers. comm 2018)*

Djabugay elder Glipin Banning explains that Gudju Gudju the Rainbow Serpent created the waterways from Yaln.giri (Crystal Cascades) including Di:wunga (Stoney Creek) and Waalara (Surprise Creek) and Din Din (Barron Falls).

## A living natural wonder

Barron Gorge National Park lies within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.


Despite comprising a very small proportion of the Australian continent, the Wet Tropics supports the highest biodiversity of any region in Australia. It is a site valued worldwide for its exceptional diversity, evolutionary history and superb scenic beauty. Covering nearly 900,000ha, this unique place stretches 450km along Queensland’s north-east coast between Townsville and Cooktown.

## Wildlife to spot

The diverse forest communities in Barron Gorge National Park are a vital, living habitat for more than 147 animal species.

See brilliant blue Ulysses and vivid green Cairns birdwing butterflies flit among the trees. If you’re lucky you may catch a glimpse of a Lumholtz’s tree-kangaroo resting in a tree branch above you, or a musky rat-kangaroo as it bounds along the forest floor. Though seldom spotted, the park is home to many nocturnal mammals, including striped possums, long-tailed pygmy possums and spotted-tailed quolls.


Birdwatchers will delight! Listen for the distinctive ‘wallock-a-woo’ call of the elusive wompoo fruit-dove echoing down from the rainforest canopy. Vibrant rainbow and scaly-breasted lorikeets screech from the trees, while quieter emerald doves and southern cassowaries explore the forest floor. Seasonal visitors, such as the buff-breasted paradise kingfisher, nest in north Queensland’s rainforests and delight those fortunate to spot them with their distinctive long white tail feathers.

 (Top) Cairns birdwing butterfly; (right) Buff-breasted paradise kingfisher

(Top) © Jodie Bray;  
(right) © Daryn Storch



Mandy Heales © Qld Govt

 © Steven Nowakowski

Budadji, the carpet snake  
Artist Martha Brim





## Start your journey

Barron Gorge National Park is north-west of Cairns in north Queensland. To reach the lower sections, and the southern access to the extensive walking track network, drive from Cairns 15km along Kamerunga Road to the Stoney Creek Road turn-off, then continue along Stoney Creek Road to the end.

Alternatively, drive along Lake Placid Road to Lake Placid, a popular local spot for family picnics at the base of Barron Gorge.

Take the Barron Gorge Road turn-off and drive a further 3km into the gorge for stunning views of the mid-gorge area near the Barron Gorge Hyrdo-Power Station.

You can also access the park from Kuranda and Speewah Conservation Park on the Atherton Tableland. From Kuranda village, 27km from Cairns, drive 3.5km along the Barron Falls Road to access Barron Falls lookout and drive a further 1.4km to Wrights lookout. To reach Speewah from Kuranda, drive a further 6km along the Kennedy Highway to Speewah and follow the signs to the conservation park. This road is not suitable for caravans or trailers.

Nestled in Kuranda is Jumrum Creek Conservation Park. This small park protects a pocket of dense rainforest along Jumrum Creek and is part of the Kuranda Village walk. Drop into the Kuranda Visitor Information Centre on Coondoo Street and pick up a handy map.

For a taste of Kuranda and Mowbray national parks, take a drive along Black Mountain Road. Stretching 43km, this road connects the Kennedy Highway near Kuranda to Mossman–Mount Molloy Road near Julatten.

## Ways to explore

With so much to see and do, from white water rafting to cultural tours, you may want to tick Barron Gorge National Park and surrounds off your bucket list with a commercial tour. Visit [queensland.com](http://queensland.com) for more information.



© Skyrail Rainforest Cableway

## Skyrail

Embark on a fascinating journey of discovery over and through the world's oldest continually surviving tropical rainforest with **Skyrail Rainforest Cableway**. Glide just metres above the pristine rainforest canopy in the Barron Gorge National Park before descending to explore the forest floor. For more information visit [skyrail.com.au](http://skyrail.com.au)

## Historic train

All aboard! Take a trip rich in history onboard the **Kuranda Scenic Railway**. This unique train journey takes you over 37 bridges and through 15 handmade tunnels forged by Queensland's early pioneers, more than 125 years ago. Trek past World Heritage-listed rainforest and discover why this is one of the world's great railway journeys. The train departs from Cairns or Kuranda. For more information visit [ksr.com.au](http://ksr.com.au)



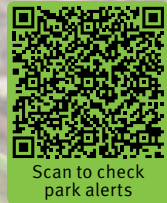
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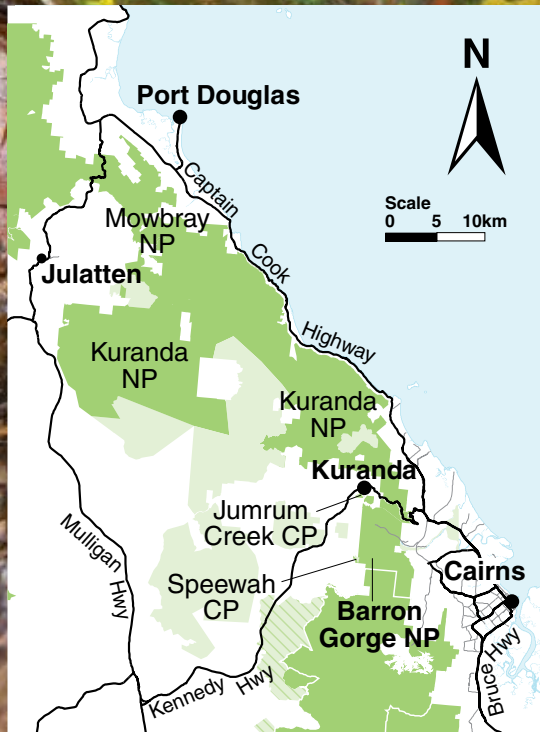


## Further information

-  [qld.gov.au/NationalParks](http://qld.gov.au/NationalParks)
-  [qld.gov.au/Camping](http://qld.gov.au/Camping)
-  [qld.gov.au/ParkAlerts](http://qld.gov.au/ParkAlerts)  
(access, closures and conditions)
-  [qldnationalparks](https://www.facebook.com/qldnationalparks)
-  [@QldParks; #QldParks](https://www.instagram.com/QldParks)



This brochure is also available online at [qld.gov.au/ParkBrochures](http://qld.gov.au/ParkBrochures)



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## Ways to explore

### Camping

While there's no camping in Barron Gorge National Park, you can pitch a tent in nearby **Speewah Conservation Park**. Enveloped by tropical rainforest, the camping area is a convenient base for exploring the nearby long-distance walking track network. There are 3 individual camp sites and a large communal tent area available. You'll need to book and pay well in advance, particularly for long weekends and school holidays. Bookings can be made at [qld.gov.au/Camping](http://qld.gov.au/Camping)

### Scenic drive

Experience World Heritage rainforest from the seat of your car on a scenic drive along **Black Mountain Road**. Connecting the Tableland townships of Kuranda and Julatten, this 43km journey gets rougher and becomes 4WD territory, as it winds north through elevated forest. The road is not recommended for caravans or trailers and watch for logging trucks and trail bikes. Black Mountain Road may be closed during periods of heavy rain. Check [qld.gov.au/ParkAlerts](http://qld.gov.au/ParkAlerts) before travelling this road. See overleaf for more details.

### Mountain biking


If you prefer two-wheel pedal power, explore the Bump track and **Twin Bridges track**. Ride through the pages of history on the Twin Bridges track (the original Black Mountain Road), where

old timber bridges from a busier bygone era remain. On the steep **Bump track** savour views of Mowbray River Falls. You'll encounter walkers on both tracks, as well as horseriders (written authorisation required) on the Bump track. For your safety, cyclists should give way to horses and walkers. See overleaf for more details.

### Bushwalking

From short treetop walks to full-day trails, there's a walk to satisfy every appetite. Experience a bird's-eye view over the rainforest on the **Barron Falls lookout track**. At the start



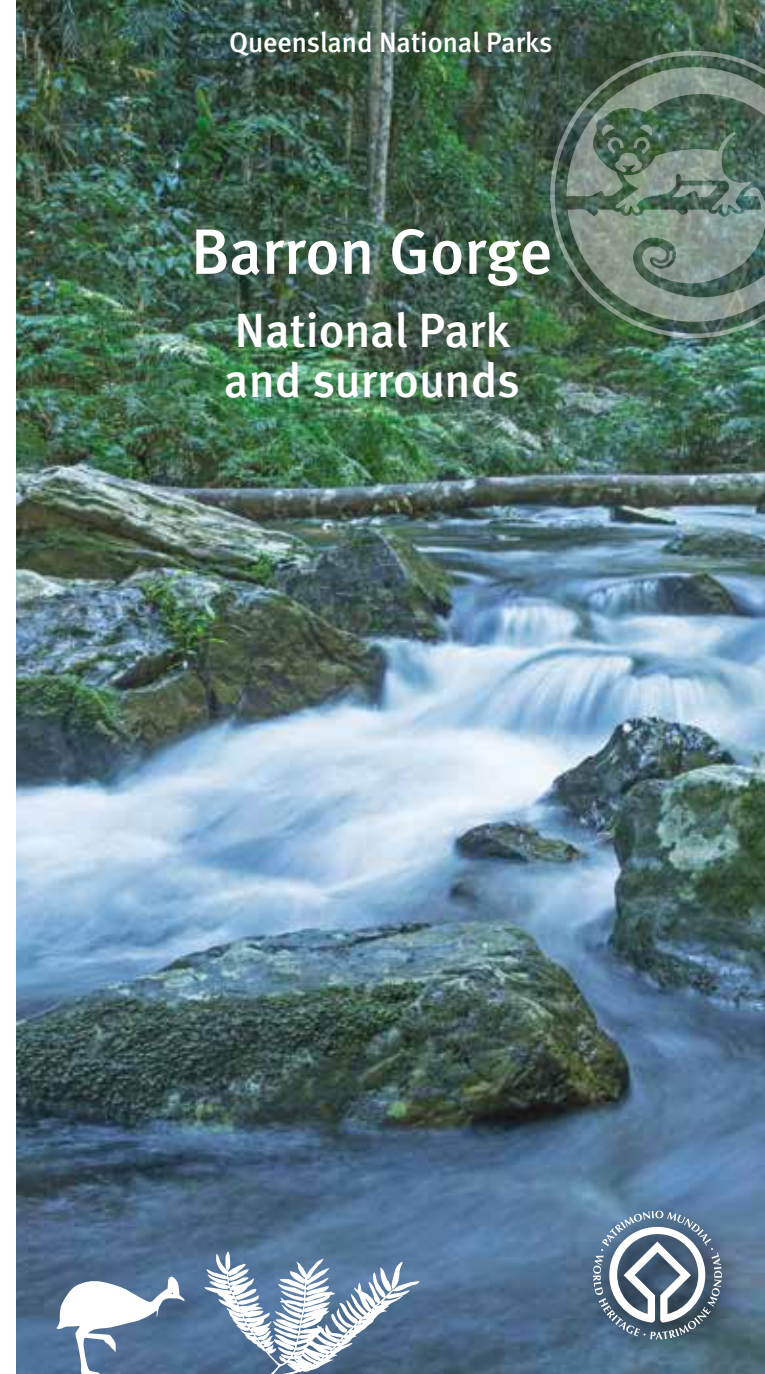
 (Above) Enjoy some mountain-bike riding; (above right) Din Din Barron Falls lookout track; (right) Stoney Creek *Garndal Garndal* track; (above far right) *Pittosporum* sp; (far right) Wrights lookout

Photos: (above) © Tourism and Events Queensland; (above far right) © HolidayTravelTV.com; (all others) HolidayTravelTV.com © Qld Govt





# Barron Gorge National Park and surrounds



of your walk, meet *Budaji*, the giant carpet snake ancestral spirit who created Barron River and gorge, then wind your way to 2 lookouts along the track. Witness nature at her most powerful from the lookout platforms, as wet season water thunders and froths down Barron Falls into the gorge, after downpours between December and April.

Wind through secluded rainforest, encountering tranquil rock pools and cascading creeks on both the **Surprise Creek track** and **Stoney Creek Garndal Garndal track**. From Kuranda, don't miss a visit to **Wrights lookout**, with its spectacular panoramic vistas over Barron Gorge, Cairns and the coast.



## **Walking the Djimburru**

Nestled between tableland and coast lie *Djimburru*—a network of traditional Djabugay walking paths where the Djabuganydji Bama—the Traditional Owners of this area—walked for trade, seasonal food gathering and to visit ceremonial sites. Today, these traditional trails have been linked to form a network of walks throughout the park.

The **Douglas track** follows one of the first trails linking the Hodgkinson goldfields on the Atherton Tableland with the port of Cairns. Take in stunning views of the coast, Lake Placid and the Barron River, before climbing the distinctive Red Bluff landmark. A short side-track to *Bunda Bulurru* (Glacier Rock) reveals a significant traditional meeting place for the local Djabuganydji Bama.

Prepare for a full-day walk on the **Smith track**, trekking through rainforest, wet eucalypt forest and grasslands. Pass old remnants of stone-pitched walls and railway construction camps. As you walk, look for beautiful staghorn ferns high up in the trees, a stand of cadagi trees, giant kauri pines and a cycad gully. Catch your breath on ridge tops offering scenic views through the trees.

A number of link tracks—**Djina-Wu**, **Yalbogie**, **Gandal wandun** and **McDonalds**—connect the *Djimburru* to create long-distance routes. See overleaf for more details about route options. Detailed track information is available at [qld.gov.au/NationalParks](http://qld.gov.au/NationalParks)







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## Ranger's favourites



“ My favourite walking track is the McDonalds track which winds its way through a number of different vegetation types before offering magnificent views over Barron Gorge and the coastal plains below. *Ranger Evan*

“ This little corner of the world is like a living museum. It's truly special to be able to see plants that have survived through the millennia—it's like looking at a dinosaur! All of this is protected and that's why we love our jobs.

*Ranger David*

“ Barron Gorge National Park stands out to me, with its exceptional natural beauty, home of many rare and endangered species and a strong cultural history. I really enjoy the change of seasons, particularly the wet season with all the new growth and the rain makes the forest come alive.

*Ranger Evan*

“ Everywhere I get to work is just beautiful, being able to see the canopy of tall rainforest trees sharing the light with a diversity of climbing vines—I love seeing visitors' reactions to that. *Ranger Stephanie*



## Explore the park safely

- Take extreme care at *Bunda Bulurru* (Glacier Rock) and supervise children at all times.
- Take care at creek crossings. Don't attempt crossing when the flow is rapid or during wet conditions.
- Always carry plenty of drinking water and wear sunscreen, a hat, sturdy footwear and insect repellent.
- Try to walk in the cooler part of the day and plan to complete your walk well before dark.
- Stay on the tracks. You may get lost if you leave the roads or walking tracks. Take a map if possible and follow markers and signs carefully.
- Take care on uneven surfaces, especially in wet conditions. Tracks can become slippery when wet.
- Be careful when walking on slippery rocks or at the edge of steep cliffs.
- Consider your ability and track conditions carefully before setting out.
- Be aware that stinging trees are found along many walking tracks. They grow to 4m high and have large, heart-shaped leaves with serrated edges. Do not touch this plant as it may result in a very painful sting.
- Cassowaries are potentially dangerous. If encountered, avoid unnecessary risks and keep your distance.
- Mobile phone coverage is generally not available on longer day walks.
- Notify somebody of the walk you are intending to take and walk with a partner or in a group.

## Caring for our parks

- Everything in national parks, living or dead, is protected. Please leave everything as you found it.
- Take all your rubbish with you when you leave. There are no bins provided in the park.
- Always stay on marked tracks as shortcutting leads to erosion and instability.
- Avoid the spread of weeds—check your clothing and shoes regularly for seeds.
- Leave your pets at home. Domestic animals are not permitted in national parks. Horses are accepted on the Bump track with written authorisation—visit [qld.gov.au/KurandaMowbray](http://qld.gov.au/KurandaMowbray) for further information.



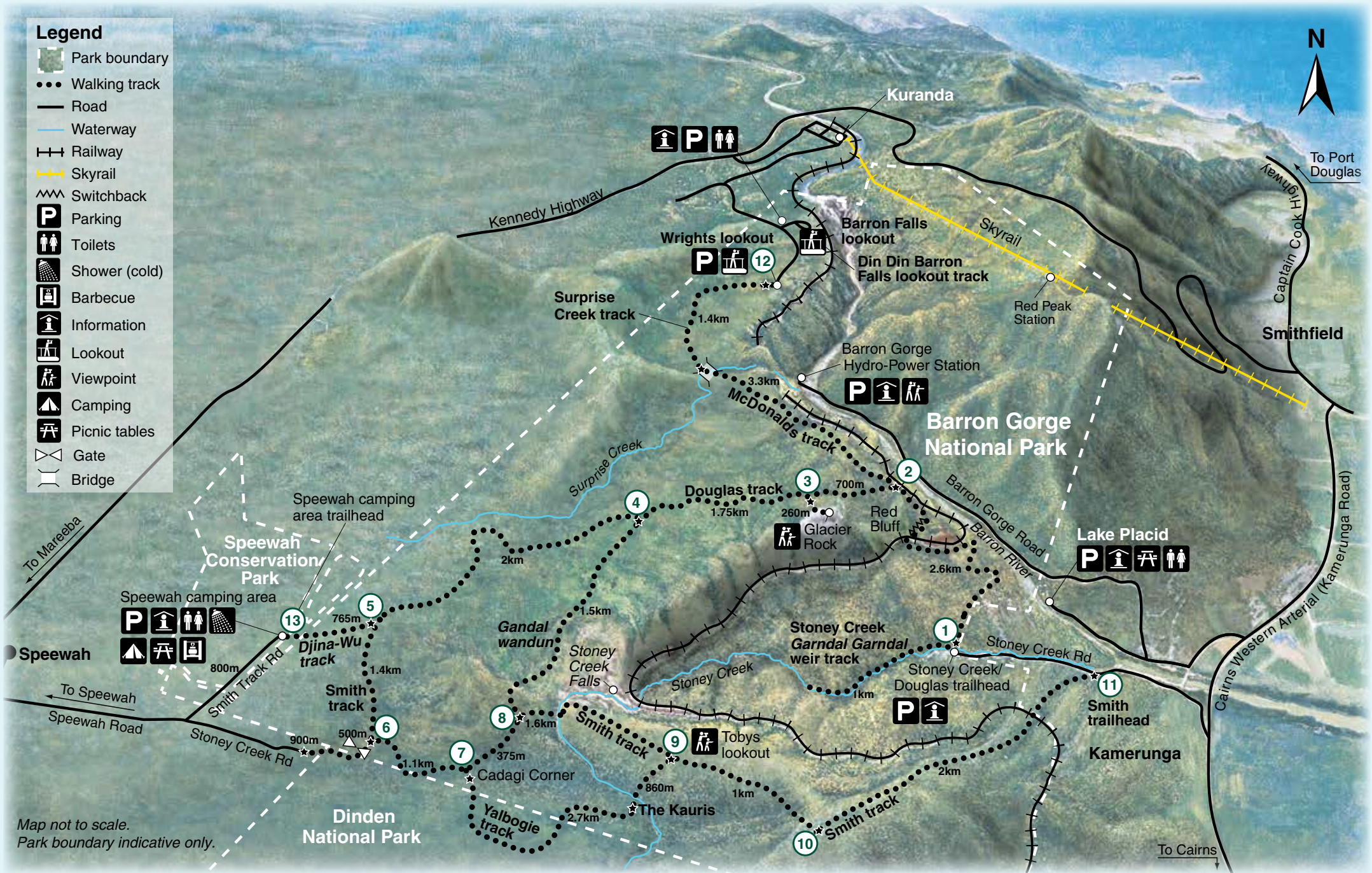
(Top left) Noisy pitta; (top right) Boyd's forest dragon; (left) Northern barred frog; (right) Rainbow stag beetle

(Fauna) © Greg Watson Photography; (background) © HolidayTravelTV.com



### Legend

- Park boundary
- Walking track
- Road
- Waterway
- Railway
- Skyrail
- Switchback
- Parking
- Toilets
- Shower (cold)
- Barbecue
- Information
- Lookout
- Viewpoint
- Camping
- Picnic tables
- Gate
- Bridge

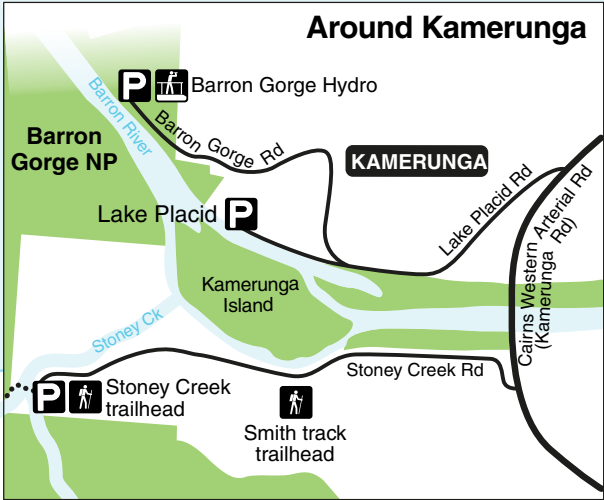
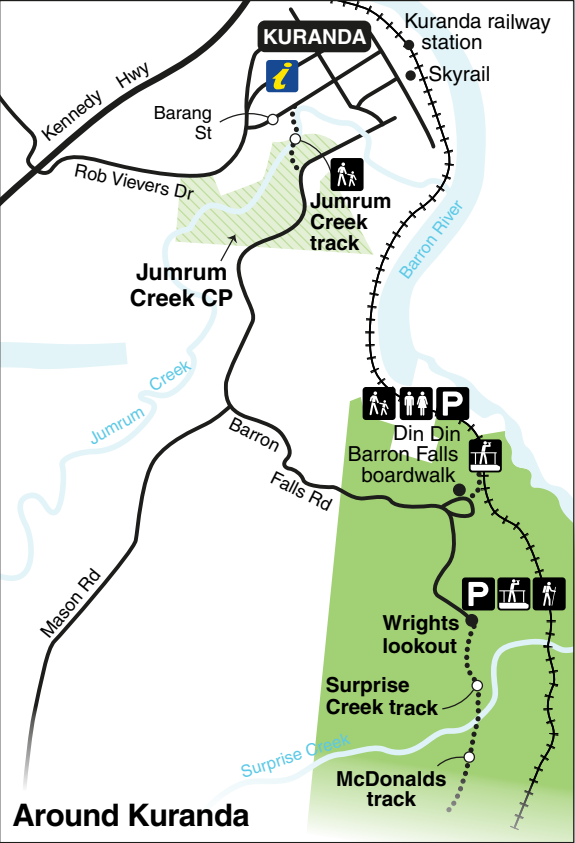
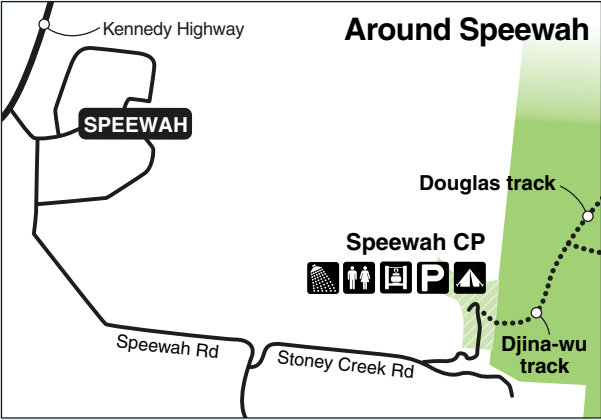
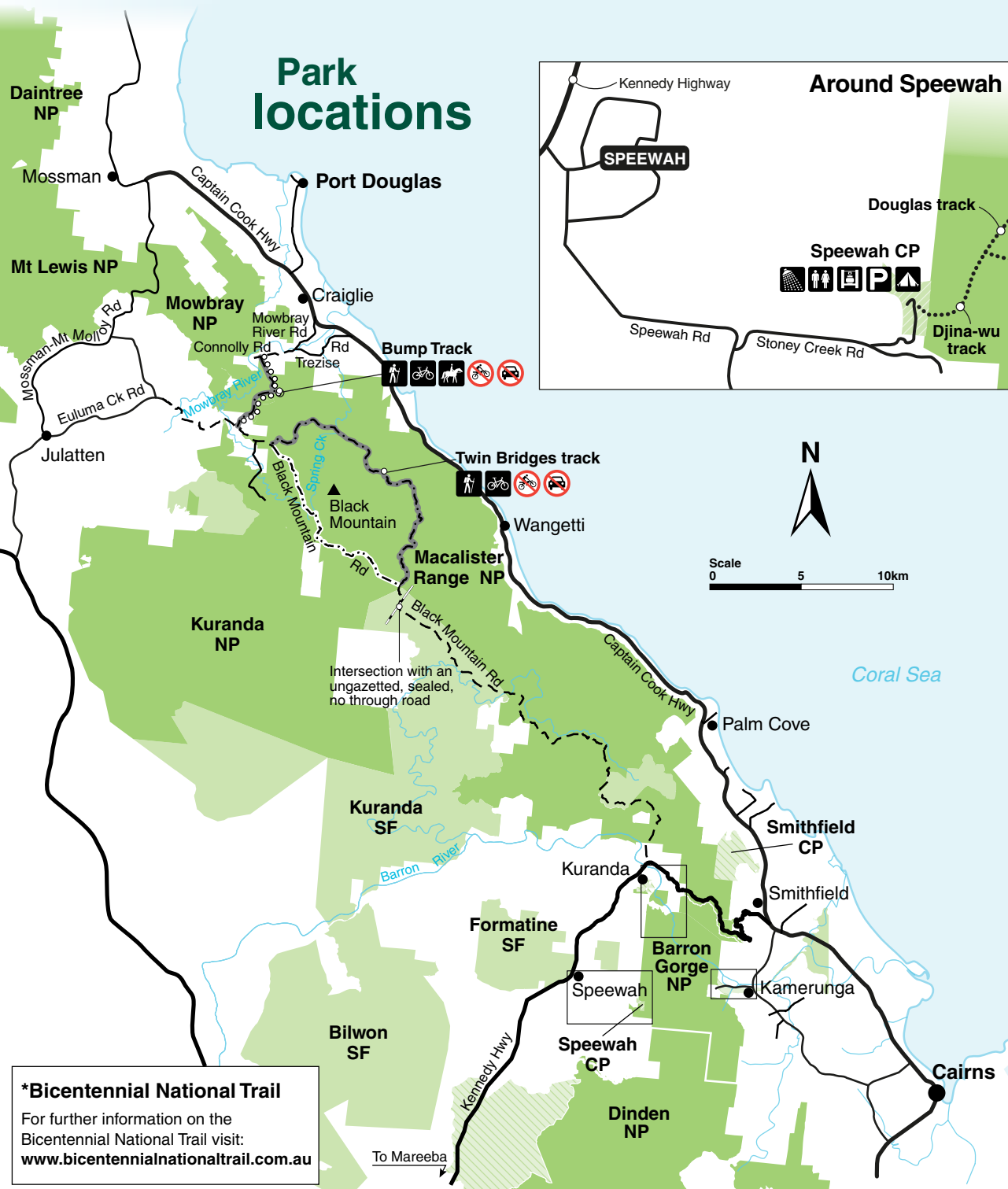


Map not to scale.  
Park boundary indicative only.

To Cairns



# Park locations



**Legend**

- National Park (NP)
- Conservation Park (CP)
- Other estate
- Bicentennial National Trail\*
- Waterways
- Multi-use track
- Highway
- Sealed road
- Unsealed road
- Unsealed road (4WD) recommended
- Railway
- Visitor Information Centre
- Parking
- Toilets
- Shower (cold)
- Camping
- Barbecue
- Lookout
- Horse riding (permission required)
- Mountain biking
- Hiking
- Walking
- No trail bikes
- No vehicles

**\*Bicentennial National Trail**  
 For further information on the Bicentennial National Trail visit:  
[www.bicentennialnationaltrail.com.au](http://www.bicentennialnationaltrail.com.au)



# Walking tracks at a glance

Immerse yourself in the area's history exploring a range of bushwalks. For more adventurous walkers, a network of walking tracks provides long-distance walks between the four main trailheads—Smith, Stoney Creek/Douglas, Wrights lookout and Speewah camping area. You need to be fit, experienced and well-prepared to undertake the longer day walks. You'll also need transport to and from each end.

## Short walks

From Stoney Creek/Douglas trailhead ①			
Track name	Grade	Distance	Walk time
Stoney Creek <i>Garndal Garndal</i> track	Easy	2km return	40min

Close to Kuranda			
Track name	Grade	Distance	Walk time
Barron Falls lookout track*	Easy (wheelchair accessible with assistance)	1.2km return	40min
Wright's lookout**	Easy	50m return	15min
Surprise Creek track (leaving from Wright's lookout)	Moderate	2.8km return	1.5hr

\*drive 3.5km from Kuranda to access the Barron Falls lookout track car park

\*\*drive 4.9km from Kuranda to access Wright's lookout car park

## Long walks

From Speewah camping area ⑬				
Track name	Track junctions	Grade	Distance	Walk time
Douglas track (Tablelands to Cairns direction). Track can also be walked Cairns to Tablelands direction.	13, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1	Moderate	7.8km	4–6hr
Smith track (Tablelands to Cairns direction). Walking this track in the Cairns to Tablelands direction is not recommended unless you are very fit.	13, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11	Difficult	8.25km	6–7hr

## Suggested long-distance routes (incorporating link tracks)

From Speewah camping area ⑬					
To	Track route	Track junctions	Grade	Distance	Walk time
Smith trailhead ⑪	<i>Djina-Wu</i> , Smith, Yalbogie, Smith	13, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11	Difficult	9.8km	8–10hr
Wright's lookout ⑫	<i>Djina-Wu</i> , Douglas, McDonalds, Surprise Creek (can be walked in reverse)	13, 5, 4, 3, 2, 12	Moderate	9.8km	8–10hr
Speewah camping area ⑬	<i>Djina-Wu</i> , Douglas, <i>Gandal wandun</i> , Smith, <i>Djina-Wu</i>	13, 5, 4, 8, 7, 6, 5, 13	Moderate	7.9km	4–6hr

From Stoney Creek/Douglas trailhead ①					
To	Track route	Track junctions	Grade	Distance	Walk time
Smith trailhead ⑪	Douglas, <i>Gandal wandun</i> , Smith	1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11	Difficult	11km	6–8hr
Smith trailhead ⑪	Douglas, <i>Gandal wandun</i> , Smith, Yalbogie, Smith	1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 7, 9, 10, 11	Difficult	13.5km	9–10hr

From Wright's lookout ⑫					
To	Track route	Track junctions	Grade	Distance	Walk time
Stoney Creek trailhead ①	Surprise Creek, McDonalds, Douglas (can be walked from ① to ⑫)	12, 2, 1	Moderate	7.3km	4–6hr

## Drives and other trails

Track name	Grade	Symbol	Distance	Duration
Black Mountain Road		Not recommended for caravans or trailers	43km one way	2–3hr driving time
Twin Bridges track	Moderate		18km one way	6–8hr walking time
Bump track	Moderate		12km return	8hr walking time

\*written authorisation is required to horseride