

Grand Dame celebrates 100 years - Happy Birthday Tamborine Mountain National Park!

Shafts of light streamed through the canopy of palm fronds above as the long distinctive 'whip-crack' call of a secretive male Eastern Whipbird rang out through the forest. Nearby water dripped from a huge tree fern's new uncurled shoot. Surrounding me was Tamborine National Park - Queensland's oldest National Park and the third oldest National Park in the world. An area marking the northernmost point of the great Mount Warning shield volcano, tucked into the hinterland 25km from Surfers Paradise and 70km south of Brisbane.

Compliments of the volcanic activity over 23 million years ago the landscape was coated in rich volcanic earth and the biggest erosion caldera in the southern hemisphere and one of the largest in the world had been formed. The National Park is actually 13 sections of land that stretch across the 8km long plateau and down adjacent foothills. The Witches Falls section was the first, being declared in 1908. Each section harbours an extraordinary natural environment with an abundance of animals and plants. In fact, it is stated by the Queensland Environment and Protection Agency that '85 percent of all fauna species and 65 percent of all flora species in the Gold Coast City' area can be found here.

Ancient cycads, giant towering piccabeen palm groves, tall flooded gums and waterfalls running over columnar basalt rock faces speckled with glistening ferns, stags and moss are just a few of the attractions. Sheltered within the forest are rare Albert's lyrebirds, Richmond birdwing butterflies, one of the world's largest skinks - the land mullet, glow worms, glowing fungi and an assortment of other insects, birds, mammals and reptiles. It is indeed an important and essential wildlife habitat.

Within the national park sections, six walking tracks lead you to many of the park's features. Most are relatively short, though some have steep grades and none are suitable for wheelchair access. The community nurtured Esme Street Environmental Park is flat and suitable for prams and wheelchairs and the Tamborine Mountain Botanic Gardens has a magnificent display of the local rainforest plant varieties and exotic species. Benefiting from the fertile soils glorious private gardens flourish with the annual 'Springtime on the Mountain Festival' attracting thousands to admire the magnificent displays. A diversity of commercial horticulture crops including avocado, kiwifruit and macadamia nuts also thrive.

The mountain rises up to around 580 metres and is flat-topped. The plateau stretches around eight kilometres and has become home to approximately 7000 people including many artists, musicians and crafts

people who exhibit their wares throughout the village that extends the full length of the plateau. Along with antique shops, boutique wineries, lookouts, the renowned Gallery Walk - a full block jammed with cafes and boutique shops - and a myriad of accommodation houses from luxury to camp grounds offers visitors' wide choices when escaping to the sanctuary of the mountain. It is easy to understand why it has become a weekend get-away for many. Camping is not permitted in any sections of the National Park.

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service has been working hard improving tracks and visitor facilities so everyone can come and enjoy this striking slice of paradise.

- Ends -

Written and copyrighted by Danielle Lancaster Bluedog Pty Ltd
No use of words permitted without consent.
Tel: +61 (7) 55454777 0428 715310
e-mail: danielle@blue-dog.com.au