

Mackay City Centre and Waterfront Heritage Trail

WELCOME to the Mackay City Centre and Waterfront self-guided Heritage Trail. On this walk we will step back in time to tell the story of Mackay's pioneering spirit, its people, heritage and culture, journeying through a range of sites and events that have shaped the city.

The walk will take about an hour-and-a-half at a leisurely pace, but there will be plenty of opportunity to explore the present, interact with all our city has to offer, and stop along the way for lunch, a snack, coffee or beverage.

If you are travelling to the City Centre via car - navigate to the start point for the trail by typing **29A River St, Mackay** into the navigation app of your choice. There are plenty of on and off-street car parking options available at this location. From the carpark, make your way to the Leichhardt Tree on the banks of Mackay's pristine Pioneer River to begin the trail.



Mackay Court House

GET THE FULL EXPERIENCE:

There is an online version of this trail that includes interactive mapping and provides a full multi-media experience, including fantastic historic images, videos and audio from some of Mackay's local historians.

To jump onto the online trail, visit the Heritage Planning section of the Mackay Regional Council website at mackay.qld.gov.au/heritage

1. LEICHHARDT TREE

The Leichhardt tree is notable as one of the main landing sites for ships during Mackay's pioneering days. It witnessed the passage of thousands of passengers and cargo shipments from ships which were tied to the tree by a piece of rope. Wharves and warehouses were eventually developed along River Street surrounding the tree, becoming the main cargo hub until the construction of the Mackay Harbour.

2. W.H. PAXTON & CO. OFFICES AND WAREHOUSE

WH Paxton & Co. Offices and Warehouse is a rare surviving example of warehouses constructed on timber wharves over water. It is significant to the growth of Mackay as it was home to one of the largest mercantile firms responsible for the shipping trade in the late 19th/early 20th century. Some of the goods traded by the company include plantation rice, flour, tea, tobacco, coal, sugar and the sole Mackay agent for local Pleystowe Rum.

3. CROKER & SONS OFFICE

Built in 1914, this building acted as the administration offices for one of Mackay's most prominent shipping firms Croker & Sons. The company's founder, James How Corker, initially moved to Mackay to take up a position at W.H. Paxton and Co. before starting a mercantile firm of his own. The most notable goods traded by the company include cane sugar and oil, the latter of which they still trade to this day.

4. OLD MACKAY POLICE STATION

The Old Mackay Police Station was originally built as the Mackay Court House in 1886 in the classical revival style of rendered brickwork scribed to resemble stonework. In 1940, following construction of a larger Mackay Court House, it was converted into a police station. Though replaced by the current police headquarters in 1996, it is still used for police purposes and whilst the fireplaces have long gone, the strongroom remains.

5. MACKAY COURT HOUSE

The Mackay Court House, built in 1939, is imposing Georgian Revival architectural style building designed by J.J. Clark. Its construction was undertaken during the depression as an initiative by the then Premier, William Forgan Smith, Member for Mackay, to alleviate unemployment. It was built to service a rapidly growing town in the interwar period of the 1930s when Mackay was the fastest growing town in Queensland.



Mackay Town Hall (former)

6. MACKAY TOWN HALL (FORMER)

The Mackay Town Hall was constructed in 1912 for the Mackay Municipal Council and replaced an earlier timber structure. This town hall served as the centre of local government for more than 60 years until the construction of the Mackay Civic Centre in 1975. Today the building is occupied by the Mackay Family History Society, who house an impressive archive of genealogical records and publications.

7. HOLY TRINITY CHURCH COMPLEX

The Holy Trinity Church Complex is a local landmark, made up of three grand State Heritage-listed buildings, including a parish hall and rectory, in a blend of Romanesque, Spanish Mission and Mediterranean architectural styles. The main church building is the third of its kind built on the block of land, the first two being destroyed by heavy rainfall and the 1918 cyclone respectively.

8. ARONEY'S BUILDING

Built in 1937, this building is an example of Art Deco architecture and tells the story of a prominent Greek family's establishment into Mackay. Originally built for Mr. Anargiros Aroney, he ran the downstairs tenancy as a café called the 'Rose-Marie Café'. The building was passed down to their daughter and the building became a pharmacy. The building is now an entertainment venue called "The Dispensary" as an homage its past.

9. MACKAY MASONIC TEMPLE

Built in 1924, at a time when Mackay was the fastest growing town in Queensland, the temple demonstrates important characteristics of a substantial Masonic Temple, including the front facade with Doric order columns, the lower level function area and upper level lodge room.

10. QUEENSLAND NATIONAL BANK BUILDING

The former Queensland National Bank building dominates the intersection of Victoria Street and Wood Street. Prominent builder William Guthrie arrived from Bundaberg in January 1922 to construct this impressive example of classical revival architecture, as per the design of architect Frederick Herbert Faircloth. The building features a delightful colonnaded facade, rendered arches, grand order columns and pilasters, and an ornate cornice and parapet.

11. AUSTRALIAN HOTEL

An impressive example of Cruise Liner Art Deco style buildings, this building was built during the interwar period. The Australian Hotel was one of the many hotels within Mackay that United States soldiers called home while on rest and recovery leave during World War II. During this time, it played host to more than 41,300 soldiers and was even visited by the then First Lady of the US, Eleanor Roosevelt.

12. CAPTAIN JOHN MACKAY CLOCK

This four-faced electric clock was erected on the July 27, 1957, commemorating Captain John Mackay, founder of our region.

13. VICTORIA STREET INFERNO

In 1916, a one of the most devastating fires in Mackay's history destroyed a whole city block along Victoria Street. The fire was so intense, building windows across the street were cracked and the only way to use the footpath was to run at a rapid rate due to the intense heat. The current building is named after David Hay Dalrymple, the first Mayor of Mackay, and was built in the years after the devastating fire.

14. PALACE HOTEL

The first hotel on this site dates back to 1884 and was a two-storey timber building known as the Bobby Burns, but has been known as the Palace Hotel since 1905. On the night of June 18, 1956, bar patrons of the Palace Hotel questioned how much they had to drink when a seven-foot-high, two tonne, baby elephant named Joedee appeared inside the bar.

15. T & G BUILDING/MALTESE CORNER

This distinctive building, built in 1937, is a local heritage icon, known for its architectural design pedigree. The T&G Building



Left: T & G Building
Above: Queensland National Bank Building

was designed by Edwin Roy Orchard, one of Australia's most notable Art Deco Architects, who also designed several other buildings in Mackay. The corner outside this building is referred to by locals as the Maltese Corner.

16. THE DAILY MERCURY BUILDING

Established in 1866, the Daily Mercury was Mackay's first newspaper of the six newspapers that served the settlement in its first century. The Daily Mercury Building was constructed as a purpose-built newspaper office in 1922 by local builder William Guthrie to a design by architect Frederic Herbert Faircloth. This building is now home to a tattoo shop, which was beautifully restored in 2019 with many like-for-like replacements, along with a lot of creativity and attention to detail.



17. MCGUIRES HOTEL

This Spanish Mission style building was dubbed the "Ritz of the North" when it was constructed in 1938. A zoo operated at the rear of the hotel and was called Belmore Zoological Gardens – the menagerie included crocodiles, kangaroos, koalas, monkeys, snakes, lizards a large variety of birds and even an American alligator. The zoo's peak in popularity came during World War II when Mackay was a major Rest and Recreation centre for American Soldiers.

18. PIONEER SHIRE COUNCIL BUILDING (FORMER)

The former Pioneer Shire Council Building was designed by Harold Vivian Marsh Brown in 1935 and occupied by the Pioneer Shire Council until 1994, when the Shire Council amalgamated with the Mackay City Council. Interestingly, the council building was never in the shire that it served. The Pioneer Shire began on the northern side of the Pioneer River and so the building and all council business was actually conducted in the Mackay City Council area.

19. THE POST AND TELEGRAPH OFFICE (FORMER)

This two-storey former post and telegraph office has dominated River street since 1883 and is the city centre's second oldest surviving building. It was remodelled on a large scale in 1938 from a classical masonry style to an Art Deco style.

20. ST. PATRICKS CATHOLIC CHURCH

This beautiful church is a perfect example of 1960s Spanish Mission style architecture and is the fourth Catholic Church to be built on this site. Reverend Father Pierre-Marie Bucas (pronounced bew-kar) ministered Mackay's first Catholic parish from 1869 to 1880 and was responsible for setting up formal education for the growing town's children. One of the schools he established was set up on the site of the present St Patrick's College behind you.

21. YUWI ARTWORK

The YUWI artwork acknowledges and represents the traditional owners of the land, the Yuibera people, who once densely populated the Mackay area. The two-metre-high text names local Aboriginal people and their lands. The letters were created to look narrow from the front and have depth of field visible from the side. There is a poetry in this as it is akin to the reputation of Aboriginal people and their ability to melt into the bush, to be seen and unseen.

22. MACKAY CUSTOMS HOUSE (FORMER)

Customs duties were carried out on the site of this building since 1863, when the Mackay river was declared a Port of Entry, until 2003. This beautiful building is a rare mixture of Edwardian and Federation architectural styles, built in 1902. It bears the Queensland State Coat of Arms, although the Commonwealth assumed responsibility for Customs on the Declaration of Federation on January 1, 1901.



Above: W.H. Paxton & Co. Office and Warehouse | Right: Mackay Customs House (former)



This is the final location along the Mackay City Centre and Waterfront Trail. If you are parked near the beginning of the trail, cross Sydney Street and walk through the Bluewater Quay to return to your vehicle.

Thank-you for taking time to appreciate and immerse yourself in the cultural and historic heritage of our City Centre! If you would like to see a full list of all registered local heritage sites within the Mackay region or any other information on heritage within Mackay, visit Mackay Regional Council's Heritage Planning page.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The City Centre and Waterfront Heritage Trail was delivered by Mackay Regional Council to promote the rich historic and cultural heritage of our region. Images and information have been provided courtesy of the Mackay Regional Council Library Service Heritage Collection. A special thanks to the volunteers of the Character and Heritage Advisory Committee for their contribution and assistance in developing this trail.

If you would like more information the Library's Heritage Collection, located at Dudley Denny City Library, houses an extensive range of historical and current resources relating to the development of the Mackay region.

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Discover Mackay's City Centre and Waterfront Heritage

Take the self-guided heritage discovery trail: adventure into the past, in the footsteps of our locals



- 1 Leichhardt Tree
- 2 W.H. Paxton & Co. Offices and Warehouse
- 3 Croker & Sons Office
- 4 Old Mackay Police Station
- 5 Mackay Court House
- 6 Mackay Town Hall (former)
- 7 Holy Trinity Church Complex
- 8 Mackay Masonic Temple
- 9 Aroney's Building
- 10 The Australian Hotel
- 11 Queensland National Bank (former)
- 12 Captain John Mackay Clock
- 13 1916 Victoria Street Inferno
- 14 Palace Hotel
- 15 T & G Building/Maltese Corner
- 16 The Daily Mercury Building
- 17 McGuire's Hotel
- 18 Pioneer Shire Council Building (former)
- 19 The Post and Telegraph Office (former)
- 20 St Patrick's Catholic Church
- 21 Yuwi Artwork
- 22 Mackay Customs House (former)

Visit our website to explore Mackay's rich historical and cultural past with a series of interactive and immersive discovery trails.

mackay.qld.gov.au/heritage