



Green is way to go for travellers who crave something different

# Enjoy without leaving your footprints

**Having an eco-conscience is easy in Queensland's tropical Townsville region, discovers Jessica Reid**

NOT only does the Townsville area boast Australia's first carbon-neutral tourism business, but it is also home to many other operators that are raising the bar for green

getaways.

Situated just 8km from Townsville, Magnetic Island (or Maggie as it is affectionately known), is a must visit destination on any eco-friendly holiday to the region.

The island is predominantly national park so it's no wonder there are operators dedicated to preserving its natural habitat, which includes 24km of walk-

ing tracks, 23 bays and beaches and around 40km of coastline.

Twenty-minute transfers to the island are via the advanced eco-accredited Sunferries vessel. [www.sunferries.com.au](http://www.sunferries.com.au).

For advanced eco-tourism accommodation on Maggie, head to the

multi-award-winning Bungalow Bay Koala Village, one of the few places in Australia where you can still cuddle a koala.

The resort is nestled among a national park and is a short walk from the beach. Visitors are invited to take part in one of the resort's guided walks to learn about the surrounding bushland and environment, or enjoy a champagne bush tucker breakfast to meet all sorts of animals including crocodiles, koalas, birds and lizards. Details at [www.bungalowbay.com.au](http://www.bungalowbay.com.au).

To discover the waters around Maggie without damaging the surrounding, fragile Great Barrier Reef, there are two options.

Magnetic Island Sea Kayaks is Townsville's first tourism operator to achieve advanced ecotourism status. Navigate your way around the islands stunning bays lined with huge granite boulders on a guided morning or sunset tour while learning about the regions wildlife, ecology and history. See [www.seakayak.com.au](http://www.seakayak.com.au).

The region is also a great access point to the *SS Yongala* wreck, renowned as one of the best dive sites in the world. Adrenalin Dive is an eco-accredited company that picks guests up from Townsville and Magnetic Island for day trips to the coral-encrusted wreck, which attracts a pro-



**GETAWAY ...** eco-tourism delights can be found at Arthur Bay at Magnetic Island (above) and Wallaman Falls, which is the continent's largest single drop waterfall.



lific variety of colourful marine life and is an unforgettable swim for novice and experienced divers alike. Find out more at [www.adrenalindive.com.au](http://www.adrenalindive.com.au).

How about staying at Hidden Valley Cabins, Australia's first 100 per cent solar powered and carbon neutral tourism operator? The award-winning resort, situated 90 minutes drive from the city, offers accommodation in quaint Solar Eco Cabins and its new Interpretive Centre explains how solar energy is used to power the resort, saving 78 tonnes of CO2 emissions per year. Visit [www.hiddenvalleycabins.com.au](http://www.hiddenvalleycabins.com.au).

The family-run business also operates Hidden Valley Tours, a three day

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trip incorporating hiking, fishing, swimming and sightseeing in the Paluma and Hidden Valley regions.

A highlight of the trip is a visit to the spectacular Wallaman Falls Australias largest single drop waterfall. All accommodation, meals and tours are included, see [www.hiddenvalleytours.com.au](http://www.hiddenvalleytours.com.au).

Heading north again, Hinchinbrook Island is the perfect destination for an eco adventure. The world's largest National Park island, Hinchinbrook is home of the internationally-acclaimed Thorsborne Trail, a 32km trek through mountainous tropical terrain.

Stay on the mainland at the beautifully-appointed and recently-renovated Port Hinchinbrook Resort, or stay on the island at Hinchinbrook Resort in unique tree house style accommodation.

The surrounding waterways can be explored by canoe, kayak, snorkelling or diving, and be sure to take your fishing rod for some of Australia's best fishing. More at [www.porthinchinbrook.com.au](http://www.porthinchinbrook.com.au).

**Getting there:**

Qantas, Jetstar and Virgin Blue fly direct to Townsville from Brisbane. Other travel options include the QR Tilt Train, or a Greyhound-Australia coach.