

Camping

Cape York offers many great camping locations. There are campgrounds in national parks and Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land (CYPAL) parks, Council-controlled areas, Aboriginal Land Trusts and there are some privately-owned campsites.

Demand for campsites can be high, as there are limited other accommodation options on long journeys through remote areas.

TRAVEL IN SMALL GROUPS

If you're travelling in a group, keep it to less than eight people. Smaller groups have much less effect on the environment.

GET PERMISSION

Remember – all land belongs to someone, even deep in the bush. Get prior permission to enter and camp. Check with local shire councils, visitor centres or roadhouses to find out who to contact for permission.

Camping with permission also ensures that you're avoiding areas where land management activities are taking place such as fire management activities or shooting and baiting of feral animals.

If areas are fenced off, don't enter. Use designated campsites where they are available.

You must pre-book camping in all national parks and most Aboriginal communities well in advance of your visit.

Find national parks and campsites information at <https://www.npsr.qld.gov.au/parks> and go to <https://qpws.usedirect.com/qpws> to book.

CHOOSE LOW-IMPACT CAMPSITES

Hard or sandy surfaces are better than boggy or grassed areas. Use an existing campsite rather than making a new one, and keep at least 20 metres away from the track.

BE CROC WISE

Saltwater crocodiles live in coastal and river habitats on the Cape, but can also be found in freshwater areas and billabongs.

Crocodiles can be hard to see, even in shallow water. You may not even see a croc – but you can be sure it can see you! In Cape York and northern Australia, you should always stay away from the water's edge.

Department of Environment and Science suggest camping at least 50 metres back from the water's edge. Many locals recommend staying even further away – at least 100 metres back.

Never leave food scraps or rubbish around your campsite. Remove scraps and rubbish left by previous campers. Don't discard fish frames or other food scraps in waterways. This will attract crocodiles.

For more information about staying safe in croc country, go to https://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/wildlife/livingwith/crocodiles/crocodiles__be_croc_wise.html

LEAVE PLANTS AND TREES AS YOU FIND THEM

Plants and animals are vital to Cape York ecology. They have important cultural significance and help make the Cape such a unique and special place.

Don't cut down or damage standing trees or vegetation. Some managed campsites will have firewood collection areas and established fireplaces.

DON'T CAMP CLOSE TO WILDLIFE BREEDING AREAS

Cape York is home to an incredible variety of creatures. Be aware of the wildlife around you, and keep your interaction with native species to a minimum. Don't disturb breeding areas.

LEAVE YOUR PETS AT HOME

Dogs, cats and all domestic animals are prohibited in all national parks and resources reserves. Everywhere else, they must be on a lead and under control at all times.

There are many good reasons not to bring your pet to the Cape. Feral cats have a devastating impact on native animals, and wild dogs are a serious threat to stock animals.

USE MODERN CAMPING EQUIPMENT

You'll be more comfortable, and have less impact on the environment if you use modern equipment.

Waterproof tents (with floors and tent poles) and foam sleeping mats help minimise damage to camping areas. Don't dig trenches around tents. It's damaging, and unnecessary if you put your tent on a raised or well-drained site.

LEAVE CAMPSITES BETTER THAN YOU FOUND THEM

Remove all rubbish from around your campsite, including litter left by someone else. Dismantle unnecessary or unsafe fireplaces.

CAMPING IN ALL NATIONAL PARKS AND RESOURCES RESERVES MUST BE BOOKED IN ADVANCE

There is no phone or internet coverage at these camping areas. Book online at <https://qpws.usedirect.com/qpws> or phone 13 QGOV (137468).

You can also book national park or resources reserve camp sites at over-the-counter booking agents in Cooktown and at Moreton Telegraph Station. And self-serve booking kiosks are located throughout the Cape - usually at ranger bases.

For detailed information on parks and camping areas go to www.des.qld.gov.au

To camp on Aboriginal land you must contact the Land Trust or local Council for permission. For Aboriginal Council contact details visit <http://www.dilgp.qld.gov.au/local-government-directory>

For Land Trust contact details seek advice from local Aboriginal Councils and see also <https://publications.qld.gov.au/storage/f/2014-05-30T04%3A53%3A59.483Z/land-trusts-map.pdf>

