Lockhart River Station Profile

Street Address: Piiramo Street, Lockhart River Qld 4871

Locality Profile

Geographic location of the division:

Lockhart River is a coastal aboriginal community situated on the eastern coast of Cape York Peninsula, approximately level with Weipa. It is 800 km north by road from Cairns & approx. 2550 km by road north of Brisbane. Lockhart River is the northern most town on the east coast of Australia. The community is also located approx. 2 km inland from Quintell Beach.

Approximate size in square kilometres of division:

Divisional boundaries: West to the Peninsula Development Road, South to Wenlock River crossing, North to Margaret Bay.

Climate:

Summer is hot, humid (tropical) & wet. Winter is mild, cool & dry.

Distance from Cairns (time taken to drive or fly):

Flying on police air wing - 2 hrs. Driving - 12 - 13 hrs for 800 kms.

Information about population numbers and their geographic spread throughout the division:

A mix of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders both live in the community. Population is between 650 - 700 'locals' approximately 30 'whites' performing various tasks i.e.: teachers, nurses, police, shop employees, council administration, council workshop, carpenter & plumber.
The Lockhart River 'local' population is made up from 5 different clan groups. The Wuthathi from the north of the Olive River. The Kuuku Ya’u from Lloyd & Weymouth Bays, the Uutaalnganu from the Lockhart River south to Friendly Point, the Umpila from Friendly Point to the Massey River, and the Kaanju from the inland mountain areas behind the coast. (Targeting 2000, 1995) Local language is slowing fading out.

Information about the population spread throughout division: The main population in this division are Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders who nearly all live in the community town area itself.

There is 2 'Outstations'. 1 is at 'Old Site' & is only normally used during the dry season when vehicles can drive to that location on a rough inland road. It is sometimes used as a weekender by some local families during the calm weather over the Christmas to January period.

The 2nd 'Outstation' is at Chillie Beach & this is normally occupied all year round by the HOBSON family group. It remains accessible by road & water most of the time.

A number of smaller communities also exist. These are Wattle Hills Station, Pascoe River 'Farm', Chillie Beach, Packer's Bay & Portland Road communities.

Wattle Hills Station is located just inside the mouth of the Pascoe River north of Lockhart River. It is a share arrangement for persons opting out of main stream society. Very little problems arise from these people. Approx 30 persons live in open plan style houses. This station has it's own airstrip & mail service once a week. Some of the houses have telephone connected and all are linked by their own private UHF radio network under the Rural Fires scheme.

Pascoe River 'farm' is located on the banks of the Pascoe River quite some distance inland. Access to the 'Farm' is from the main Lockhart River to Archer River road 52 kms from the Lockhart River community. A track leads a further 15 kms to the 'Farm'. It is occupied by the FYFE extended family group. Approximately 20 - 30 persons live here (many of them are children) and all adults are unemployed.

Chillie Beach has a number of feral dwellings squatting along the secluded beaches & headlands. Approximately 10 - 20 persons live here, however this varies throughout the year.

Packer's Bay also has a number of open plan & full residential style houses occupied by persons opting out of mainstream society. Approximately 10 persons live here.

Portland Road community is a reasonably standard housing area with some open plan style houses. It is predominately a fishing community. Many prawn trawlers & cray boats use these sheltered waters. Approximately 20 - 30 persons live here.

**Historical Profile**

**Background history of the Division:**

Some historical events involving the area, if any:

1848

The explorer Edmund Kennedy set up a base camp near the mouth of the Pascoe River. Edmund Kennedy left nine men there. By the time they were located by the supply ship only 2 remained alive with seven dying from disease & starvation.
By the 1870’s

Fisherman with luggers looking for pearl shell & trochus were in the coastal areas. Miners in search of tin & gold along with timber cutters were in the hills around Gordon Creek & the country inland around the Wenlock River.

1924 - 1941

The Church of England set up a mission at Ochid Point in Lloyd Bay. This mission was then moved to Bare Hill, south of Cape Direction which is now known as 'Old Site'.

1941

The 'Old Site' mission was abandoned at the start of World War 2 and moved in closer to the American Bomber base at Iron Range.

During World War II a large American bomber base was set up at Lockhart River with 4 airstrips operating. The US bombers would fly to the Coral Sea battles & be met by their fighter escorts based at Bamaga & Horn Island further north. Many thousands of troops both US & Australian passed through as part of their jungle training before being shipped to SE Asia. Portland Road community 40 km north of Lockhart River was the supply port for the war effort with a large jetty. This jetty has since been removed. Many old bunkers and rusting 44 gallon drums can still be found in bush areas.

After the war the community moved back to 'Old Site'.

1967 - 1987

The Queensland Government took control of the mission & tried to move the population to Umagico near Bamaga. Some people moved to Umagico however many resisted the move & the current site of Lockhart River Community was established.

1987

The Lockhart River Community was given 'Deed of Grant in Trust' (D.O.G.I.T.) title of the lands. Locally elected councillors now provide administration for the Lockhart River D.O.G.I.T.

2005

Iron Range Memorial Wall established. First ANZAC Day conducted. Wall is established within the confines of the Iron Range Airport.

Adjacent divisions and travel time by road to those divisional stations:

Driving from Lockhart River community to – Bamaga in the north is approx. 10 hrs. Coen in the south is approx. 3.5 to 4 hrs. Weipa in the west is approx. 5 hrs. (Road conditions will vary times greatly).

Distance in kilometres and travel time by road (or air) from the District Office:

Flying on police air wing - 2 hrs. Driving - 12 - 13 hrs for 800 kms.
Banking

Names of banks with branches or agencies represented in the division:

Commonwealth Bank operates a room at Council chambers. This is NOT a bank and only operates on passbooks with the 'bank staff' simply ringing the Commonwealth bank in Cairns each time a withdrawal is requested. It would be recommended to have other banking arrangements in place. EFTPOS card is recommended.

Are EFTPOS facilities available?

The retail store only has EFTPOS facility. $100 cash out is maximum. Higher amounts must be arranged with the store manager a day or two before needing the money. Normally you get $50 to $100 cash out each day you go to the store and build up the cash you expect to require.

Any agencies for QPS Credit Union:

Nil

Churches

List of Churches represented in the division:

Anglican church with local lay preacher only.

Communications

Telephone services:

Normal telephone services available. This includes internet access. It must be understood that ALL internet access is at STD rates.

Radio stations:

ABC Radio, 4K1G.

Television stations:

ABC, Seven Central from Sydney, Imparja from Alice Springs. Regularly fails during heavy rains. Austar Cable is a must.

Education

List of education facilities:

Child Care An under 5's day care centre operates at the Woman's Shelter.

Pre School Operates in conjunction with the primary school.

Primary School One state school to grade 7. The quality of education for children is not wonderful.

High School Nil
Ancillary Information

Electricity supply:
Electricity supply by ERGON, generators etc.: Supply is via a generator operated by ERGON. All electrical costs for each residence is borne by the occupant i.e.: Sgt or Sen Constable. Electricity costs are best paid by a pre-arranged direct debit with ERGON.

Reliability of supply:
Power outages, brownouts and cycle alternations are extremely common usually a number each week. If using a personal computer (including notebooks) then a UPS is a 'must have'.

Type and quality of water supply:
Rainwater tanks are part of the fittings at each of the 2 police residences. Town water is of poor quality often coming out from a slight discoloration to a dark brown colour & smelling of sewage. Drinking water for station is from rain tanks from police homes.

Type of sewerage:
Pumped sewage lines have been installed at nearly all houses in Lockhart River.

Industry / Employment

Local industry and employment opportunities:
Local industries: Nil

Employment opportunities: None to very poor.

Leisure Activities

Licensed premises: The Lockhart River Canteen operates Mon – Thurs 4pm to 8pm Friday nights 4pm – 9pm. The canteen is subjected to a number of restrictions with mid strength beer only (canned beer only) with no takeaways. The canteen is managed by the Lockhart River Shire Council. No trade on weekends.

Restaurants: Nil

Sporting facilities / clubs: The community at times will instigate soft ball and football matches. No planned sporting carnivals as such.

Tourist activities: 4WD tourists visit Chilli Beach 40 km north of Lockhart River. Various bird watchers also attend the Iron Range National Park. Many 4WD companies offer Iron Range National Park, Chilli Beach and Lockhart River with packaged deals to visit and camp.

Things to do: The beach is 1.5 km from the police station and is a great place for a long walk and croc spotting. Fishing (saltwater) in the Claudie River approx. 6 km
from station. Pig hunting (with dogs) is anywhere from 3 km & out. Police dingy is available for fishing (water patrols) on the reef & snorkelling cray diving.

Items nice to have (but not essential) at Lockhart River for your own sanity: Diesel Toyota 4WD vehicle with snorkel, air-conditioning, winch, UHF CB radio (with SCAN function). A small aluminium dingy & trailer with a 9 or 15 HP outboard, basic fishing & snorkelling equipment, a home computer for games or e-mail etc.

Living in this community is extremely challenging and the workload constantly varies. Wet season at Iron Range is an experience you will never forget.

Local Government

Community Infrastructure:

Council office is a two story building positioned along Maathv Street in the middle of the community.

The council employs locals to work as Community Police, Health & Security workers at the hospital, garbage collectors, workshop staff. The council workers are paid each fortnight.

Justice Committees: Formed but not extremely forthcoming or active

Describe any other community resources available:

Workshop: Vehicle repairs, services & puncture repairs only (no panel repairs available). A welding section is also available for very basic welding repairs & fabrications.

Post Office: Is not an official post office. It is merely a room used to sort received mail & collect mail to be flown out. No normal Post Office facilities are available.

Domestic Violence Woman's Shelter: A well set up woman's shelter exists at Lockhart River community directly opposite the police station. The shelter has a co ordinator who is on call, as well as other workers who are called on when required. Phone 40607382.

Airport: The local airport is run by the council under its own incorporated body called the Lockhart River Airport Corporation. There are on site managers. Telephone 40607121. The airstrip is now lite during the night, when required. The airport operate UHF CB radio on channel 12, have a full channelled air band radio HF radio with RFDS frequencies.
Medical and Veterinary Facilities

Local hospitals, medical clinics, doctors, QAS, Dental, Optical: A local hospital is available for Primary Health Care only which is staffed by 4 x registered nurses with 'Remote Nursing' qualifications. The community does not have a doctor. The Royal Flying Doctor Service visits each week on Wednesday & overnights, flying out Thursday afternoon. About each 2 months a dentist & other medical specialists attend as needed. No fully fitted ambulance is available.

Other Government Agencies

Federal and State government agencies:

State Government Agencies include:

- Nil

Federal Agencies include:

- Nil

Court facilities:

One room Magistrates court as part of police station. 1st District Court sitting at L/River was on 12/09/2000.

Other Emergency Services:

Nil QAS, Nil QFS.

Work undertaken by QPS for other Agencies or Services:

Police Clerk of the Court duties Driver's License issuing MRD registrations. You can also expect to undertake police vehicle & dingy maintenance duties.

Shopping

One shop operates in the community.

The Retail store is operated by the Dept of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Policy & Development. The store has a Manager. This store has EFTPOS facility & cash out to a max. of $100. It stocks sufficient foods for day to day living but at higher than larger city prices. Fresh fruit, vegetables, milk & bread can be fairly ordinary in quality. Diesel & unleaded fuels are available at the bowser. Opening times week days are from 0910 to 1230. Closes for lunch. Then 1335 to 1600. On Saturday the store opens at 0905 to 1030. The store does not open on Sunday. Be prepared for expensive pricing on all items.

An alternative to shopping at Lockhart River is purchasing your groceries, meats & alcohol supplies from various outlets in Cairns. Normal payment method is by credit card at the same time you fax your orders to the suppliers. Delivery to Lockhart River community is by barge operated by Seaswift Pty Ltd at 41-43 Tingira Street, Portsmith, Cairns, 4870. Seaswift normally require credit card direct debit access for transport costs.
Transportation

Available Public Transportation:

Nil

Availability of air travel facilities:

Dailypassenger service to Cairns. $616 return on Skytrans Airlines (the only scheduled passenger service to Lockhart River)

Access to sea travel facilities:

Nil passengers carried on the barge service. General cargo only arrives once a week on Monday.

Access to rail travel facilities:

Nil

Road conditions:

Bitumen streets around community itself. Many severe potholes in the bitumen roads will cause damage to vehicles if not driven slow enough. All other access roads are dirt. The roads are rough and hard mechanically on vehicles. L/River has a lot of creeks crossing on the roads and some are quite deep. This causes a lot of mechanical failures in vehicles because of water in the various oils & seal damage.

The 'WET' season starts at about the 2nd week of November each year with local storm activity. Later in the 'Wet' season the monsoonal rains keep the rivers flooded. Usually the first vehicles to travel out to the Archer River Roadhouse start about the 1st week of June.

In the 'WET' you can expect to drive through some long deep mud sections and numerous deep creeks where a snorkel is definitely required. In the 'DRY' you can expect to destroy your vehicle on hard corrugations & ruts.

Search and Rescue activities:

Search & Rescue: Police commence initial search investigation & advise SARMAC

In an emergency, dial Triple Zero (000).

www.police.qld.gov.au