Mackay Police Station

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Contact: PoliceLink 131444
www.police.qld.gov.au

Locality Profile

The Mackay Division is situated in the Mackay District in the Northern corner of the Central Region. Situated about 980 kilometres north of Brisbane Mackay combines country hospitality with a balance of all the attractions and commercial facilities expected of one of the largest regional cities in the state.

Mackay is a friendly, unspoiled, tropical city set beside the wide blue Pioneer River. Famous as Queensland’s ‘sugar city’ and an important regional service centre, Mackay is rightfully attracting increasing numbers of visitors seeking a distinct, laid-back contrast to the ‘built environment’ of the well-known resort areas in Queensland.

North from Mackay is the picturesque Hibiscus Coast, Cape Hillsborough National Park and Laguna Whitsundays. To the south, Sarina and the endless beaches of the Serenity Coast extending to Cape Palmerston, and St Lawrence.

Over 200 km of largely deserted coastline provide endless superb beaches, punctuated by estuaries and creeks offering fabulous fishing opportunities. Offshore beckon intriguing islands, including Brampton and Keswick, and the Great Barrier Reef.

An hour’s drive west, through Mirani Shire and the canefields of the verdant Pioneer Valley, lie the Mackay Highlands with notable features including Finch Hatton Gorge, Eungella National Park and the famous Platypus of Broken River.
Mackay City has grown steadily over the past decade at an average of 1.9 per cent to its present population of approximately 77,000 people.

History

The first European to pass by the Mackay area was Captain James Cook as he sailed up the eastern coast of Australia in 1770. He named Cape Palmerston, failed to recognise the mouth of the Pioneer River and, quite sensibly, was more concerned about running aground on the reef than about the potential of the land to the west.

The area remained isolated over 70 years after the settlement of Port Jackson. The first European explorer in the area was Captain John Mackay, after whom the town is named. In May 1860, after travelling overland from northern New South Wales, searching for good grazing land, Mackay led a group of people into the area via Bells Creek and the Pioneer River. On 28 May the group started marking runs after drawing straws for the best lots.

In 1861 Mackay brought cattle and horses overland from Armidale in New South Wales. The following year the tiny settlement of Mackay was established on the banks of the Pioneer River. The area around Mackay remained predominantly cattle until 1865 when John Spiller planted the first sugar.

Sugar mills were built in the area around Mackay in 1867 and the first sugar was exported that year. It was around this time that the South Sea island labourers known as Kanakas were brought to the area to work, as virtual slave labour, on the sugar plantations. At the time there was a notion that the tropics were not suitable for work environment for white people and that only blacks were able to handle the debilitating conditions. Kanakas continued to work on the plantations until 1906.

It was sugar that really gave Mackay its boost. Even today it is hard not to be overwhelmed by the magnitude of sugar production in the area. Once outside the city it seems that every road is flanked by endless fields of sugar cane. It has been estimated that the area around Mackay produces over 25 per cent of all Australia’s sugar.

Certainly by the 1870s the growth of Mackay and the Pioneer Valley could be accounted for by the local sugar production. In 1874, for example, there were sixteen sugar mills in the area.

Mackay became a municipality in 1869 and a city on 16 August 1918. Its increasing importance was related to its development as a major transport centre. The railway arrived in 1922 and in 1939 an artificial deepwater harbour was built with the largest sugar terminal in the Southern Hemisphere jutting out to load ships with the hinterland’s produce.

More recently the discovery and development of the huge coal deposits in the Bowen Basin (particularly at Blair Athol, Dysart and Moranbah) has led to the construction of the Hay Point Coal Terminal which, when it was built, was the world’s largest coal-loading facility. In 1983 it was extended when the Dalrymple Bay coal loader was opened.
Station

Mackay Police Station is located on Sydney Street Mackay. It is a new station (with integrated lift facilities for wheelchair access) and serves as the modern District Headquarters for the Mackay District.

There is also a Shopfront police station located Canelands Shoppingtown and a Police Beat at Slade Point.

WatchHouse

The Mackay Watchhouse is classified as a Category 2 Watchhouse where the OIC is a S/Sergeant. The Watchhouse is operated 24 hours and is a secure environment that is constantly monitored and recorded by time lapsed CCTV. The current staffing level consists of the following:

Industry

Since the inception of the town in the 1870s, cane growing has been a mainstay of the local economy. From the 1930s Mackay has also developed as an important port servicing coal-mining areas in the Bowen Basin. More recently, the City has developed a tourist trade as a staging point for visitors to the nearby islands of the Great Barrier Reef.

Climate

The Mackay Climate is predominately warm and dry. Most of the year the weather is fine with an average of only 50 days rain per year. In the summer, the temperature ranges from the low 20's to the mid 30's. During winter the temperature can drop to a minimum of 5 degrees overnight with a maximum of around 20 degrees.

It is important to note that during the wet season (December to February) it is common to be flooded in. Roads, at times, are cut between Mackay and Townsville, Mackay and Rockhampton, and Mackay and Nebo.

Mackay City Council

The Mackay City Council office is located in the Sir Albert Abbott Administration Building, Gordon Street Mackay. The council runs 2 public libraries. The Mackay City Library is situated near the Sir Albert Abbott Administration Building and the Gordon White Library is situated near Mt Pleasant Shopping Centre in Phillip Street, Mt Pleasant. The Mackay City Council produces a Welcome to Mackay Kit, which provides useful information in relation to the city and services available. There is also a Community Advice and Information Centre which is situated at the old post office beside the police station on Sydney Street Mackay.

As Mackay is currently in a drought period, it is advisable to check with the council in relation to the current water restrictions to avoid fines etc.

Sporting Facilities

All sports are catered for in the Mackay area. All codes of Football are represented as well as Archery, Athletics, Basketball, Bowling, Cricket, Surf Life Saving, Squash, Tennis, Soccer, Baseball, Softball, Hockey, Golf and many others.
The $1.2 million Mackay Surf Life Saving Club at Mackay Harbour opened in November 2000. The purpose-built facility caters for the senior and junior clubs, as well as other water-based sports such as the outrigging, triathlons and jet skiing.

Also, in 1996, a needs assessment study conducted by the PCYC identified key issues affecting young people, particularly those on the north side of Mackay with regard to the lack of facilities for sport and recreation. This survey set the groundwork for much of the PCYC's direction, particularly foreshadowing the need for a larger facility.

In November of 1998, after an approach by the Club, Mackay City Council agreed to contribute half a million dollars towards redeveloping the site with a mind to addressing those identified needs. The State Government, through the Office of Sport and Recreation, sealed the fate of the redevelopment with a matching funding offer. The result is an impressive public building, positioned on a corridor between North Mackay, Andergrove and Beaconsfield; and having direct access to the other developing areas of Northview, Mount Pleasant and the Northern Beaches.

**Banking and Financial**

Australia’s four major banks and various credit unions offer full banking services. Investment, taxation and superannuation services are also available from specialists within the area with the exception of Queensland Police Credit Union. Deposits and Withdrawals with the Queensland Police Credit Union can be made through Australia Post at the Post office via europost. Numerous ATM's are located throughout the city suburbs and shopping centres.

**Shopping**

Mackay has three major shopping centres, the city heart and two large Shopping complexes, Canelands Shoppingtown and Mount Pleasant Shoppingtown, there are also many smaller shopping centres throughout the suburban areas.

**Medical Facilities**

Mackay is served by a wide range of health services and includes three hospitals. Mackay Base Hospital is a public hospital whilst the Mater and Pioneer Valley are both Private Hospitals. Major refurbishment of the Base Hospital over the past two years has brought the facility to a high standard of operating rooms. The Mater Hospital was also relocated in 2003 to a new site overlooking the Pioneer River. The hospital relocation also includes a clustering of health services in the vicinity.

CQ RESQ is a community supported helicopter medical service, which operates out of Mackay and services the whole of the Mackay Whitsunday Region including the Whitsunday Islands.

**Education and training**

The comprehensive range of educational facilities available in Mackay has been boosted with the addition of two exciting new initiatives. The Central Queensland Conservatorium of Music has consolidated its presence in Mackay with the construction of a $4.85 million facility at the Mackay campus of the Central Queensland University (CQU) at Planlands.

The building is the first and only purpose-designed conservatorium to be built in Queensland outside Brisbane and includes a 200-seat theatre, lecture rooms, staff accommodation and outdoor performance venue.
Mackay is well catered for in the education field, with a range of private and public kindergartens, pre-schools and schools. There are 4 state high schools, 30 primary schools and 12 independent schools. Mackay has 14,861 students. Mackay’s numerous high schools take pride in the standard and quality of education offered to students.

The local State schools are well equipped and some boast facilities such as swimming pools, music centres, performing halls, and state-of-the-art sports, technology and science facilities. Many specialisations including languages, LOTE and ESL and study support are available.

The CQU campus is constantly increasing its enrolments and developing new facilities and courses to cater for its students. Courses include education, communication, tourism, marketing, accounting and finance. The James Cook University also has an office in Mackay.

The Central Queensland Institute of TAFE Mackay College campus is located within walking distance of the City Heart and offers degree-orientated courses, block training for apprentices, adult community education courses, and other courses.

**Churches**

All religious denominations are catered for in Mackay.

**Transport**

Mackay Transit Coaches operate extensive weekday services throughout the city and its surrounding suburbs. Mackay Transit Coaches also operates as a Hail 'N' Ride bus service. Mackay Taxis offer a taxi transit service to complement the Mackay Transit Coaches. For further information please ring 4957 3330.

**Tourism**

The City of Mackay offers a quality of lifestyle and environment that are unique to Australia. Cultural attractions, entertainment and public amenities add to the natural beauty of the environment. The Pioneer River, one of the East Coast's few blue water rivers, meanders through the town, bringing a wonderful atmosphere with it. Mackay and Pioneer River Revitalisation Project aims to provide a link between the city and the Riverfront where cafes and boardwalks will attract locals and tourists alike.

Mackay has over 30 beaches within an easy drive of the city centre, as well as rainforests, national parks and many other excellent attractions. A new world class small craft Marina provides access to the nearby islands and reef, or provides shelter for passing yachts. The tourist might like to visit historic Greenmount Homestead before travelling up the Pioneer Valley or to Homebush to visit a working sugar farm, or maybe pay a visit to the new 'Art Space' or the Botanic Gardens.

**General Information**

Police in Mackay are involved in numerous Community Based and Problem Orientated Policing Initiatives, some of which have received state wide recognition. Police are also actively involved in the Adopt a Cop Program and Neighbourhood Watch. The Mackay Blue Light Association hosts some of the biggest blue light discos in Queensland.

Mackay is an exceptional place to work and play, with social, sporting and recreational facilities in abundance. Facilities within the area are more than adequate for most
needs and the people, location, climate and lifestyle makes the area ideal for singles and families to enjoy themselves. Police enjoy a good relationship with the community with work demands being constant but not over bearing.

In an emergency, dial Triple Zero (000).