

Etheridge Shire Community Tours

About the Gulf Region

The Gulf of Carpentaria in northern Queensland is one of Australia's most spectacular and ecologically diverse landscapes.

A jewel in the crown of the Gulf, the Etheridge Shire is nestled at the base of the Cape York Peninsula, covering nearly 40,000 square kilometers of impressive tropical savannas, vast pastoral stations, immense mountain ranges and meandering rivers.

Our seven-day tour showcases some of the most breathtaking scenery that northern Queensland has to offer, from the natural geological wonders of the Undara Volcanic National Park to the spectacular sandstone escarpments of the Cobbold Gorge.

Reduce your ecological footprint and immerse yourself in the local community with this one of a kind community tour.

- Meet the locals and learn about life on the land in the Gulf of Carpentaria;
- attend local events and contribute directly to the local economy;
- visit the region's tourist attractions and discover the history of the area from local guides.

Northern Gulf Resource Management Group, along with Bedrock Village Caravan Park, is offering a unique opportunity to travel across the Gulf Savannah of Northern Queensland and experience life like a local.

Our mission is to allow guests to participate in three levels of sustainability: social (meet the locals, participate in local events and gain a greater understanding of life in the Gulf); environmental (visit sites of significance with local guides and tours, whose lives are dedicated to protecting the environment); and economic (all funds raised from the tour are channelled back into the community for much needed projects).

Run by Joe and Jo Lockyer, local residents for over 20 years and members of the Savannah Guides, this tour will take you through some of the Gulf's most spectacular sights and scenery while giving you the opportunity to take part in the local community.



Bedrock Village Caravan Park



Day 1: Atherton Tablelands

Day 2: Undara Volcanic National Park

Day 3: Fossicking for gems and cattle station tour

Day 4: Savannahlander train ride and Copperfield Gorge tour

Day 5: Cobbold Gorge tour and Forsayth town tour

Day 6: Georgetown tour and golf or birdwatching

Day 7: Return to Cairns via Atherton, Mareeba and Kuranda

Day 1: Atherton Tablelands

Starting from Cairns, we will take you through the stunning Atherton Tablelands, an area renowned for its heritage-listed rainforests, limestone caves, crystal clear lakes and thousand year-old trees. Stopping in Yungaburra, we explore the crater lakes formed thousands of years ago, and take time to visit the famous Curtin Fig Trees - one of the Tablelands most famous and impressive sites.

Continuing west, we stop for lunch at Ravenshoe, which at over 920m above sea level is Queensland's highest town. A former rainforest timber hub reliant on the sawmill industry for its livelihood, Ravenshoe is now a quaint town peppered with art galleries and craft shops. Take some time after lunch to explore the Nganyaji Interpretive Centre and learn about the traditional lifestyle of the local people.

For the final leg of our first day we travel through the 40 Mile Scrub National Park, which boasts a rare and unusual vine thicket which is home to a variety of flora and fauna, many of which are usually only seen in a tropical rainforest environment.

Day one concludes at Mount Surprise, where guests will dine and stay at the Bedrock Village Caravan Park. Your evening's entertainment will be provided by Bedrock's resident herpetologist, whose tales of the area's snakes and crocodiles will have you checking under your bed before turning in!



Day 2: Undara Volcanic National Park

Day 2 will see guests visiting the Undara Volcanic National Park, one of Australia's greatest geological wonders. The park is home to the spectacular and rare lava tube system - the best preserved and longest lava tubes in existence. A fiery eruption some 190,000 years ago resulted in this natural phenomenon, with molten lava flowing along dry river beds to create these impressive tunnels. As the top layer of the lava quickly cooled and crusted, the magma below continued to flow through the tubes, taking it far from the initial eruption. As the eruption stopped, the lava drained out of the tubes, leaving the long, hollow tunnels you see today.

Over the thousands of years since their creation, many of the tunnel roofs have collapsed, creating fertile pockets of land where rainforests now thrive. Our tour will take you through these pockets of wilderness, where the Mareeba Rock Wallabies, Tawny Frogmouths and Boobook Owls make their homes.



We will spend the day exploring the volcanic park, starting with a hike to the rim of Kalkani crater for a bird's eye view of the surrounding area. From the top of the crater you'll have the best views of the collapsed line of the lava tube and the vast scope of the tube system.

After this short (2.5km) walk, enjoy a cup of tea and some home-made treats before our visit to the volcanic wind tunnel complex. This system of intertwining lava tubes features spectacular caves just waiting for exploration. Led by the award-winning Savanna Guides, you'll get a hands-on look at this impressive geological sight while learning about the local flora and fauna which thrive in this basalt region.

After a smorgasboard buffet lunch at the Undara Lodge's scenic restaurant, we will explore the caves further, visiting Barker's tube and the Arch complex.

We conclude day two with dinner and a sing-along back at the Bedrock Village Caravan Park.

Day 3: Gem fossicking and cattle station tour

O'Brien's Creek gemfields are a short drive from Mt. Surprise, where we will spend the morning fossicking for topaz, aquamarine, smoky quartz, citrine and cassiterite. Established in the mid-1800s for the mining of tin, the abundant gemstones found in the area were originally discarded by miners as a nuisance to their machinery. It wasn't until the mid-1900s that these gemstones were thought to be worth collecting.

Today a significant portion of the area is open to public fossicking, though budding miners are required to obtain a permit. Our morning's tour will introduce you to the art of gem fossicking, where you'll get a chance to search for gems under the guidance of your local fossicking experts Pete and Pam.

Permits, tools and a lesson in fossicking are all included in the morning's tour, and best of all, any gems you discover are yours to keep!



Following lunch back at Bedrock Village, we will take you for a first-hand look at the ins and outs of running a working cattle station. Rocky Springs Cattle Station is situated on over 19,000 hectares of prime cattle grazing land. Owners Doug and Mary Buchanan have been breeding cattle in the Gulf for over 20 years, and their station currently runs nearly four thousand head of mainly Brahmin cross cattle.



Our afternoon tour will take you around the station, learning about life on the land in the Gulf country. Take in a working dog demonstration while Doug and Mary display their innovative land management practices, which are leading the way in better production and environmental conservation.

Take the opportunity to chat to Doug and Mary about life in the Gulf while relaxing at the scenic Elizabeth Creek Gorge for your afternoon tea.

The evening brings an opportunity to meet the locals of Mount Surprise with a dinner and trivia night hosted by the local state school. All ten of the school's students will be on-hand to test your trivia knowledge, while you mingle with the locals and learn about life in a small community. Experience first-hand the generous and friendly nature of small town country Australia.



Day 4: The Savannahlander train ride and Copperfield Gorge



The Savannahlander Train is a classic 1960s “Silver Bullet” which travels between Cairns and Forsyth, taking in some of Queensland’s most spectacular scenery along the way. This unique rail journey takes in world heritage-listed rainforests, vast savannahs and stunning outback vistas, all at a sedate 50km per hour. Stopping at various points of interest along the way, this unique rail experience offers a rare insight into one of the most diverse and fascinating regions of Australia.

We will join the train at Mt Surprise, and spend three relaxing hours taking in the beauty of the outback while journeying to nearby Einasleigh. A former copper mining town, Einasleigh is now famous for the stunning Copperfield Gorge which forms part of the eastern edge of the Newcastle Range. After a delicious lunch dining with some of the town’s 35 local residents, we head off to explore the gorge.

With 30 foot cliffs dropping spectacularly to a sandy-bottomed river, the Copperfield Gorge is a great place for a swim, or just explore the surrounds and take in the peace and quiet of the area. Our final leg of the journey takes us via road to Forsyth, where we will spend the evening in another of the area’s famous gorges - the Cobbold Gorge.



Day 5: Cobbold Gorge tour and Forsyth town tour

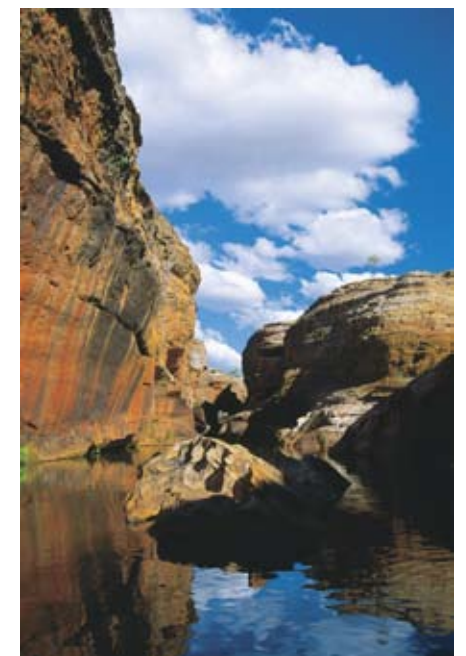
Day five sees us touring the rugged sandstone formations of Cobbold Gorge. Over 135 million years in the making, the 30 metre cliffs of the gorge drop to a narrow creek, which meanders along for six glorious kilometers of unmatched beauty. This unique gorge is famous for its narrow shape, closing in at some places to only two metres wide, and with only the last 500 metres accessible by flat bottom boat.

Our tour will take you along the creek by boat, where you’ll spot freshwater crocodiles and a wide variety of Australia’s native birds and animals. Experience the eerie silence that descends on the group as the majestic sandstone cliffs rise up to meet the sky - this is a ride not to be missed.

Your guide will offer an overview of the geological history of the area, and during the course of the morning you’ll visit the grave of early pioneer John Corbett. Cool off with a swim (watch out for crocodiles!) and then lunch on the banks of the creek.

Take the afternoon to explore the town of Forsyth, a former gold mining hub where in the late 1800s gold nuggets were literally found ‘on the ground’. Forsyth’s many heritage listed buildings offer a window into the past, and you’ll have time to wander around and explore at your leisure before taking in afternoon tea with Forsyth’s locals.

We conclude our day’s journey travelling 40km by road to Georgetown where we will spend the night. The evening’s dinner and entertainment will be provided by the Georgetown State School, with a talent quest presented by the local community.



Day 6: Georgetown tour and golf or birdwatching

No trip to Georgetown would be complete without a visit to the multi-award winning TerrEstrial Centre, home to the world-class Ted Elliott Mineral Collection. The collection features over 4,500 mineral specimens collected from both the local region and around the world. Learn all you need to know about the geology of the Gulf region while touring the nine themed rooms.



Following on from your geological education, you'll get the opportunity to learn about the various land management, environmental and indigenous projects that Northern Gulf Resource Management Group are undertaking in the region. You'll also learn about the many issues involved with sourcing and providing medical services to the outback, with a presentation by Frontier Services.

Your town tour will also include a presentation by the Etheridge Shire Mayor, with plenty of opportunity to ask questions about all that you have seen over the previous week.

After lunch, enjoy the afternoon with a round of golf at the Georgetown Golf Course or a spot of bird watching, followed by a community dinner at the Golf Club.

Day 7: Return to Cairns via Atherton, Mareeba and Kuranda

Tour Details

Cost:

\$2,000 per person (inc gst). Double or twin share accommodation provided.

Includes:

All tours, meals, accommodation and transport fares are included for the duration of the trip. (Excludes breakfast on Day 1 and dinner and accommodation on Day 7). Alcohol and other expenses are the responsibility of the guest. Pick up and drop off to Cairns included in the price.

Dates:

19th - 25th July 2010 or 23rd - 28th August 2010.

Contact:

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Web: www.bedrockvillage.com.au



Expression of Interest - Please fax or email this form to the details above

I am interested in participating in the 2010 Etheridge Shire Community Fundraising Trip

19th - 25th July 2010 OR 23rd - 28th August 2010

Title: _____ First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Postal Address: _____

Phone: _____ Mobile: _____

Email: _____

Special requirements: _____

Terms and Conditions

1. TRIP PARTICIPATION/EXCLUSION/RELEASE

Bedrock Village Caravan Park may, if in the opinion of any representative of Bedrock Village Caravan Park or carrier, either refuse to allow persons on the tour or expel persons from the tour if their mental or physical condition is such as to render them; incapable of caring for themselves; likely to become objectionable to other passengers; or a hazard to themselves or other passengers. Bedrock Village Caravan Park or any representative and carrier will not be liable for any expenses arising from such persons being precluded from completing the tour for any such reason. Each booking is conditional on Bedrock Village Caravan Park securing the minimum number of bookings required to operate on a trip and to ensure an enjoyable group atmosphere. Where sufficient numbers cannot be achieved, Bedrock Village Caravan Park reserves the right to cancel or suspend a scheduled departure.

2. SPECIAL DIET

Passengers requiring special diets such as vegetarian or gluten-free must inform Bedrock Village Caravan Park at time of reservation and reconfirm their request with the Bedrock Village Caravan Park driver/host upon arrival. Bedrock Village Caravan Park cannot guarantee special requests will be met in all instances.

3. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Bedrock Village Caravan Park welcomes passengers with disabilities or special needs provided they are accompanied by a companion capable of providing all necessary assistance. Any special requirements must be advised at time of booking. Bedrock Village Caravan Park reserves the right to refuse to carry any person whom it deems cannot fully care for themselves on tour without assistance. Wheelchairs and walkers cannot be carried on motorcoaches due to space limitations. We regret that we cannot provide individual assistance to a passenger for walking, dining, getting on and off motorcoaches or other transportation vehicles, or other personal needs. Passengers who need such assistance must be accompanied by a qualified companion.

4. HEALTH & FITNESS

Trips include walks ranging from short to long distance of up to 2.5 kilometers. These walks are often over uneven ground and may include steps. For safety and enjoyment passengers should be in good physical condition to participate in all trips. Some walks vary in degree of difficulty from moderate to difficult. Passengers need to be aware of the high temperatures which may be experienced in the outback.

Medical Equipment: Please note that in some remote outback locations electric power may not be available 24 hours per day. Passengers are advised to bring adequate medication (and spare prescriptions for essential medication) for remote travel and emergencies.

5. PRICING & CONDITIONS

All prices are quoted in Australian currency on a Twin Share basis and include trips preparation, operation costs and GST where applicable. Prices include all on-tour coach travel, all rail tickets and arrival and departure point of each tour, meals, accommodation, sightseeing and admissions as per the itinerary. Prices do not include airfares, meals not specified in the itinerary, drinks, laundry, optional activities and items of personal nature. Trips are subject to availability, operational and seasonal factors. A minimum number of people are required for some activities to operate and you are encouraged to pre-book these prior to arrival to avoid disappointment. These terms and conditions may be subject to further changes by Bedrock Village Caravan Park from time to time.

6. CHANGES TO THE ITINERARY

Bedrock Village Caravan Park is often not the provider of attractions, excursions and/or optional trips. Accordingly, Bedrock Village Caravan Park may, where it is required to do so, suspend or cancel any tour inclusion where that tour inclusion is not available or, in the opinion of Bedrock Village Caravan Park, inadvisable, unsafe or unsuitable.

Bedrock Village Caravan Park reserves the right to

alter or change the accommodation, carriers at any time for any reason; and cancel or alter the itinerary and/or trip at any time without notice as Bedrock Village Caravan Park considers necessary for any reason whatsoever including road, weather or traffic conditions, non performance of suppliers, industrial action, operational conditions and requirements. Where a trip is cancelled prior to the departure date, Bedrock Village Caravan Park will use reasonable endeavours to offer the nearest possible alternative trip (subject to a refund or payment to cover trip price difference) or, if this is not acceptable, refund the trip price or such portion of it as Bedrock Village Caravan Park considers appropriate.

7. DEPOSITS & FINAL PAYMENT

A non-refundable/non-transferable deposit of \$200 per person is payable within 7 days for booking confirmation. Bookings will be automatically cancelled if a deposit is not received by Bedrock Village Caravan Park within 7 days of booking. Final payment for trip costs must be paid no later than 60 days prior to travel. For bookings made less than 60 days prior to departure, full payment is required within 48 hours for confirmation. It is the passenger's responsibility to pay the trip price by the due date. Please ensure payments are made within the specified time limits to ensure that bookings are not automatically cancelled.

8. CANCELLATION FEES

DAYS OF NOTICE	FEE PER PERSON
60 days and over	100% of trip fare refundable
60-46 days	75% of trip fare refundable
45-15 days	50% of trip fare refundable
14-0 days	Loss of deposit

9. RESPONSIBILITY

Passengers participation in tours operated by the carrier companies and Bedrock Village Caravan Park may incur certain risks and dangers which

are beyond the operators' control including, but not limited to, the hazard of traveling in remote areas, travel by boat, train, automobile or other means of transportation, the forces of nature and accident or illness in remote regions without means of rapid evacuation or medical facilities. The carrier companies and Bedrock Village Caravan Park will not have any liability regarding provision of medical care or the adequacy of any care that may be rendered. It is understood that Bedrock Village Caravan Park will try their utmost to ensure that adequate measures are taken. Passengers must make their own enquiries regarding safety warnings in relation to the destination they are traveling to.

10. SMOKING

Government regulations restrict smoking on tour coaches and public areas.

11. SUGGESTED CLOTHING

Enclosed footwear is to be worn on all trips, along with hat and sunscreen. Clothing to be casual and comfortable and the nights can be quite cool; it is also recommended packing a warm jacket or cardigan.

CONTACT

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