

Brisbane



Brisbane appears to be setting the tempo for Australian urban spaces. It's the fastest growing capital city in the country and with that comes an energy, and a get-up-and-go attitude, as evidenced by all the building sites in the CBD. Once these initial conceptions are peeled away however, Brisbane is revealed as an affable place, stacked full of colonial architecture, gracious subtropical gardens and a culture revolving around an outdoor life-style, underneath skies that are rarely anything but blue. A river city at heart, Australia's third metropolis huddles around the Brisbane River. Exploring Brisbane by ferry, and passing under the mighty Story Bridge will give you a wonderful appreciation of this city with its prosperous and sophisticated society. Between the parks, koala sanctuaries, tropical flora and river views is world-class cuisine, heritage pubs, style-cat bars spilling onto sidewalks, museums and galleries and perhaps the best opportunity in urban Australia to access indigenous culture. To top it off artistic festivals set the events calendar ablaze.

The water lapping at the city's doorstep is Moreton Bay, which has about 365 islands (one for every day of the year), around which whales, dolphins and dugongs frolic. On Moreton Island the forest tumbles down to white-sand beaches and snorkelling the Tangalooma Wrecks just offshore means immersing yourself in crystal-clear jade and indigo-blue waters. North Stradbroke is more developed and no less attractive with glorious beaches, pristine lakes, thick bush and lots of activities to build up an appetite for the island's gourmet foodie scene.

HIGHLIGHTS

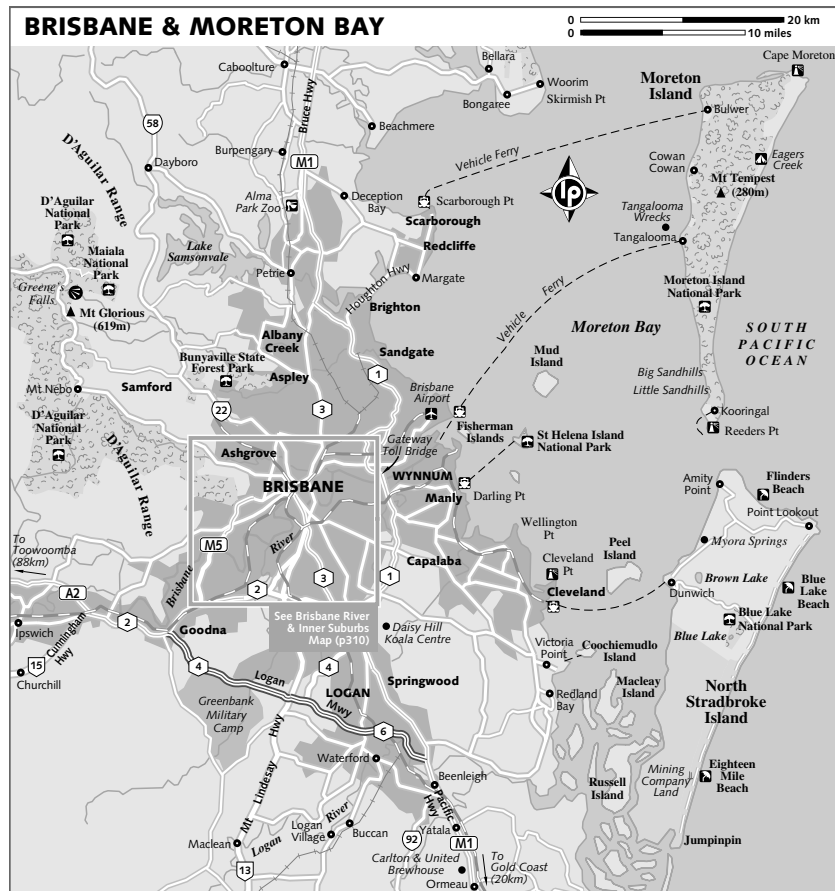
- Heading into the modish suburb of **New Farm** (p323)
- Washing away that urban grit in leafy **Mt Coot-tha** (p318) where you could spend a day exploring bush tracks, gardens, and a city lookout
- Discovering the river city in the Brisbane River with a **scenic river cruise** (p320)
- Checking out the brazen new **Queensland Gallery of Modern Art** (p316)
- Scaling the floodlit, pink, volcanic cliffs at Kangaroo Point, a premier site for **rock climbing** (p319)
- Beating the heat at Streets Beach in the **South Bank Parklands** (p316)
- Exploring the bush wilderness and startling coloured waters of postcard-perfect **Moreton Island** (p332), right on Brisbane's doorstep
- Kayaking the sublime coastline, surf, swim or just relax on a blissful stretch of beach on **North Stradbroke Island** (p330)



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 07

■ POPULATION: 1.86 million

■ www.ourbrisbane.com



ORIENTATION

Brisbane's central business district (CBD) is bound to the south by a U-shaped loop of the Brisbane River, about 25km upstream from the river mouth. Queen St Mall, which runs down to the Treasury Casino and the Victoria Bridge, is the main shopping district. South across Victoria Bridge is South Brisbane, with the Queensland Cultural Centre and the South Bank parklands, and the hip suburb of West End. Northeast of the city, along Ann St, is Fortitude Valley, with its small Chinatown, alternative scene and lots bars and nightclubs. Southeast of here is New Farm, which has excellent culinary and drinking options.

The Roma St Transit Centre, where you'll arrive if you're coming by bus, train or airport shuttle, is about 500m northwest of the Queen St Mall.

Brisbane airport is about 15km northeast of the city; see p328 for information about getting to/from the airport.

Maps

For a comprehensive and handy map pick up a copy of Lonely Planet's *Brisbane and Gold Coast City Map*. You can pick up free Queensland Tourism maps with coverage of the CBD from one of the visitor centres. For more comprehensive detail, pick up a copy of *Brisbane Suburban Map* by UBD

BRISBANE IN...

Two days

Greet the day with an unhurried breakfast in the trendy **West End** (p324) before strolling to the **South Bank Parklands** (p316) to get acquainted with offerings at the **Queensland Cultural Centre** (p311). Already hungry? Then slip into one of the **riverside cafés** (p323) and watch the city's morning routine. As the day warms up, cool those heels, and everything else, at **Streets Beach** (p316). If it's summer, stick around for an alfresco movie in the park. Looking for dinner? Why not jump on a ferry and head to Eagle St Pier where you can tuck into the best steak in town at **Cha Cha Char** (p323).

On day two stroll downtown through the city's mix of old and new architecture. Explore Brisbane's history at **City Hall** (p311) and enjoy the beautiful old **Treasury Building** (p311), before heading south to the **City Botanic Gardens** (p311). The massive Moreton Bay Figs shade the perfect spot for a lazy picnic. Finish the day with a brew at the **Port Office Hotel** (p325) and enjoy a cool breeze off the river over dinner at **Watt** (p324) in New Farm.

Four Days

On day three check out the cafés in **New Farm** (p323) and delve into the trendy shops and **galleries** (p317) in nearby Fortitude Valley. Spend the afternoon at the lookout at **Mt Coot-tha Reserve** (p318). Take in a short bushwalk and visit the beautiful **Brisbane Botanic Gardens** (p318). Then head back to **Fortitude Valley** (p323) for fine dining, and work it all off in one of the clubs or late night bars. On day four you'll need to give the feet a rest, so take a cruise up the Brisbane River to **Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary** (p319). As you cruise back, watch the city glide past, in all its leafy glory. Recount the day's events over a beer at the **Breakfast Creek Hotel** (p324) and then gravitate to Paddington for a feast at **Sultan's Kitchen** (p323) before collapsing into bed.

(\$7.95) or *Brisbane and Region* by Hema Maps (\$6.50).

INFORMATION

Bookshops

Archives Fine Books (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3221 0491; 40 Charlotte St; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Thu, 9am-9pm Fri, 9am-5pm Sat, 10am-5pm Sun) Fantastic range of secondhand books, boasting one million titles.

Borders Bookstore (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3210 1220; 162 Albert St; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Thu, 9am-9pm Fri, 9am-6pm Sat, 10am-5pm Sun)

World Wide Maps & Guides (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3221 4330; Shop 30, Anzac Square Arcade, 267 Edward St; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Thu, 8.30am-7pm Fri, 10am-3pm Sat)

Emergency

Ambulance (☎ 000, 1300 369 003)

Fire (☎ 000, 3247 5539)

Police (☎ 000) City (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3224 4444; 67 Adelaide St); Headquarters (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3364 6464; 200 Roma St); Fortitude Valley (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3131 1200; Brunswick St Mall)

RACQ (☎ 13 19 05, breakdown ☎ 13 11 11) City (Map pp314-15; GPO Bldg, 261 Queen St); St Pauls Tce (Map pp314-15; 300 St Pauls Tce) Roadside service.

Internet Access

Internet cafés are prolific in Brisbane. Rates range from \$3 to \$5 per hour.

Global Gossip City (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3229 4033; 290 Edward St; ☎ 9am-11pm Mon-Sat, 10am-10pm Sat & Sun); Fortitude Valley (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3666 0900; 312 Brunswick St; ☎ 9am-11pm) Charges \$4 per hour with membership; gets cheaper the more you use it.

Internet City (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3003 1221; Level 4, 132 Albert St; per hr \$4; ☎ 24hr)

IFYC (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3211 9095; 128 Adelaide St; 60c per 10min, \$3 per hr; ☎ 8.30am-8.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-8.30pm Sat & Sun)

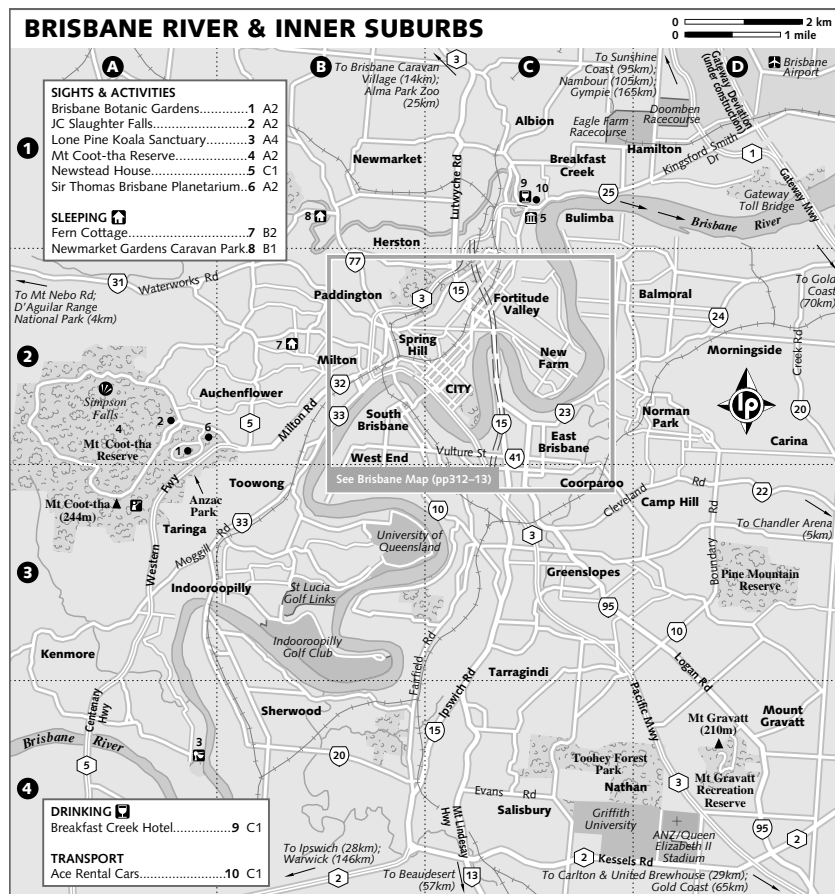
State Library of Queensland (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3840 7666; South Bank; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Thu, 10am-5pm Fri-Sun; wi-fi) Free, but advance bookings required.

Medical Services

Brisbane Sexual Health Clinic (Map pp312-13; Biala City Community Health Centre; ☎ 3837 5611; 270 Roma St)

Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3636 8111; cnr Butterfield St & Bowen Bridge Rd, Herston; ☎ 24hr casualty ward)

Travel Clinic (Map pp314-15; ☎ 1300 369 359, 3211 3611; 1st fl, 245 Albert St; ☎ 7.30am-7pm Mon-Thu, 7.30am-6pm Fri, 8.30am-5pm Sat, 9.30am-5pm Sun)



Travellers' Medical & Vaccination Centre (Map pp314-15; TMVC; ☎ 3815 6900; 75 Astor Tce, Spring Hill; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri, 8.30am-8pm Wed, 8am-1.30pm Sat)

Money

There are plenty of foreign-exchange bureaus at Brisbane airport's domestic and international terminals, as well as ATMs that accept most international credit cards. ATMs are prolific throughout Brisbane.

American Express (Map pp314-15; ☎ 1300 139 060; Shop 3, 156 Adelaide St)

Interforex Brisbane (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3221 3562; Shop 255, Wintergarden Centre, 171 Queen St)

Travelx (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3210 6325; Shop 149F, The Myer Centre, Queen St Mall)

Post

Australia Post (☎ 13 13 18) GPO (Map pp314-15; 261 Queen St; ☎ 7am-6pm Mon-Fri); Wintergarden (Map pp314-15; 2nd fl, Wintergarden Centre, 171 Queen St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) The GPO has poste restante.

Tourist Information

Brisbane Visitor Information Centre (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3006 6290; Queen St Mall; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, 9am-7pm Fri, 9am-4.30pm Sat, 9.30am-4pm Sun) Located between Edward and Albert Sts. Great one-stop info counter for all things Brisbane.

Brisbane Visitors Accommodation Service (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3236 2020; 3rd fl, Roma St Transit Centre, Roma St; ☎ 7.30am-6pm Mon-Sat, 8am-6pm Sun) Privately run outfit specialising in backpacker travel, tours and accommodation in Brisbane and elsewhere in Queensland.

Naturally QLD (Map pp314-15; ☎ 1300 130 372; 160 Ann St; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri) The QPWS runs this excellent information centre. You can get maps, brochures and books on national parks and state forests, as well as camping information and Fraser Island permits.

South Bank Visitors Centre (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3867 2051; www.visitsouthbank.com.au; Stanley St Plaza, South Bank Parklands; ☎ 9am-5pm)

SIGHTS

A walk through the city will reveal Brisbane's colonial history and architecture, and a ferry ride across the river takes you to the attractions and activities of South Bank. The free *Brisbane's Living Heritage* brochure, available from the visitor centre, highlights many of these sights.

City Centre

Brisbane's **City Hall** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3403 6586; btwn Ann & Adelaide Sts; admission free; ☎ lift & viewing tower 10am-3pm) is a historic sandstone building overlooking the sculptures and fountains of King George Square, and offers one of the best views across the city. On the ground floor is the **Museum of Brisbane** (Map pp314-15; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm), which describes the city's historical journey with interactive exhibits, as well as showcasing art and crafts. There are free guided tours of the museum at 11am on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. **King George Square**, the city's premier public space, was getting a huge makeover when we passed through. The project incorporates a subtropical design and should definitely be worth a look when complete.

At the western end of the Queen St Mall is the magnificent Italian Renaissance-style **Treasury Building**. Behind the lavish façade you won't find pin-striped bureaucrats and tax collectors, but rather spruikers and an entirely different kind of money spinner: Conrad's 24-hour casino. In the block southeast of the casino, the equally gorgeous former **Land Administration Building** (Map 314-15) has been converted to a five-star hotel (see p323).

Further south along George St is **Parliament House** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3406 7562; crn Alice & George Sts; admission free), dating from 1868, where you're free to watch Queensland's law-makers in action on sitting days. Free guided tours are available on demand between 9am and 4pm Monday to Friday, and 10am to 2pm weekends, unless parliament is sitting, in which case you can hang out in the public gallery and watch.

Brisbane's **City Botanic Gardens** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3403 0666; Albert St; ☎ 24hr) is right on the river

and are a mass of green lawns, towering Moreton Bay figs, bunya pines, macadamia trees and other tropical flora, descending gently from the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) campus. Its lawns are popular with lunching office workers, joggers and picnickers.

In the grounds of QUT is the **QUT Art Museum** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3864 2797; 2 George St; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue, Thu, Fri, 10am-8pm Wed, noon-4pm Sat & Sun), which has regularly changing exhibits of contemporary Australian art and works by Brisbane art students. Next door is the former **Old Government House**, a beautiful colonnaded building dating from 1860 and now the home of the National Trust.

Built by convicts in 1829, the **Commissariat Stores Building** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3221 4198; 115 William St; adult/child \$4/2; ☎ 10am-4pm Tue-Fri) is one of Brisbane's oldest buildings and houses a museum devoted to Brisbane's convict and colonial history.

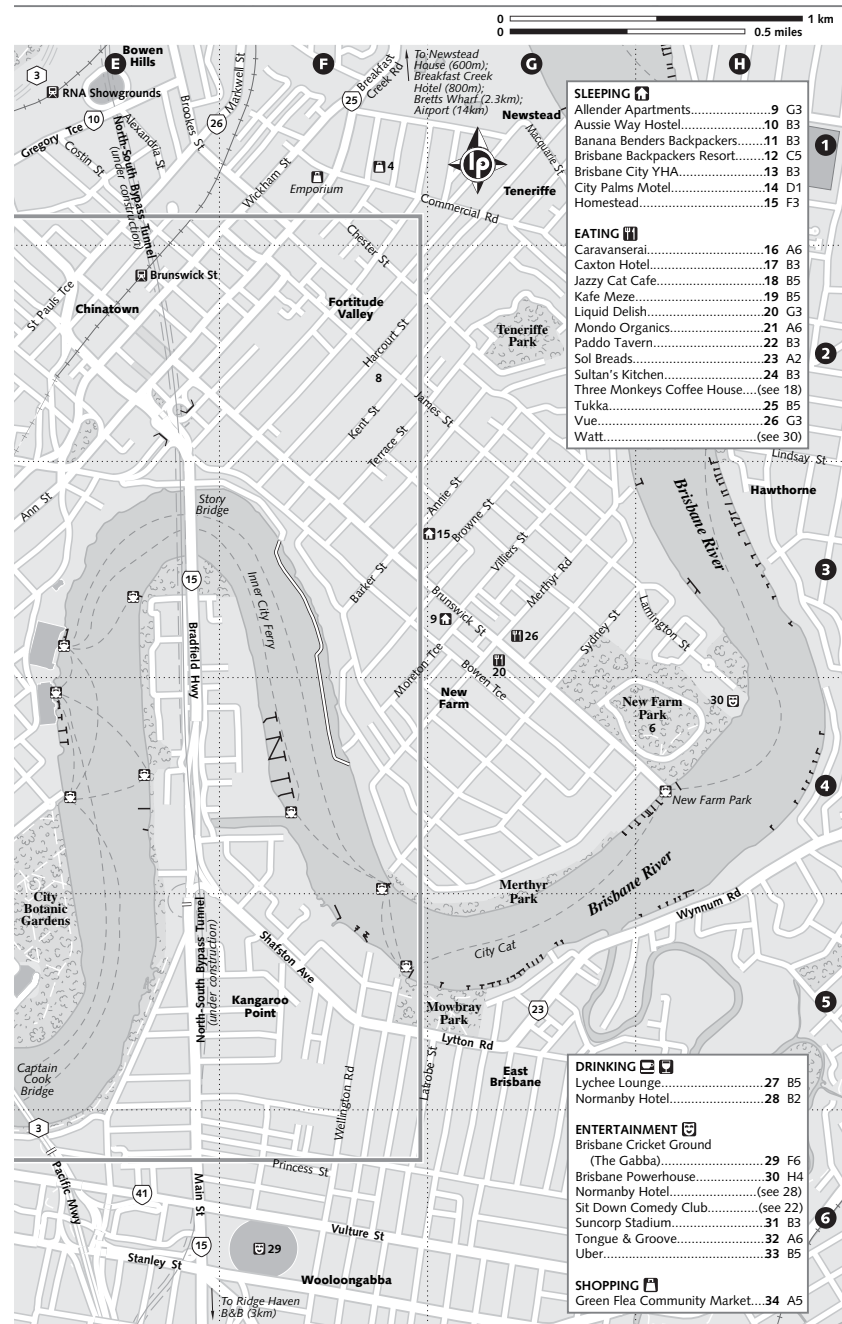
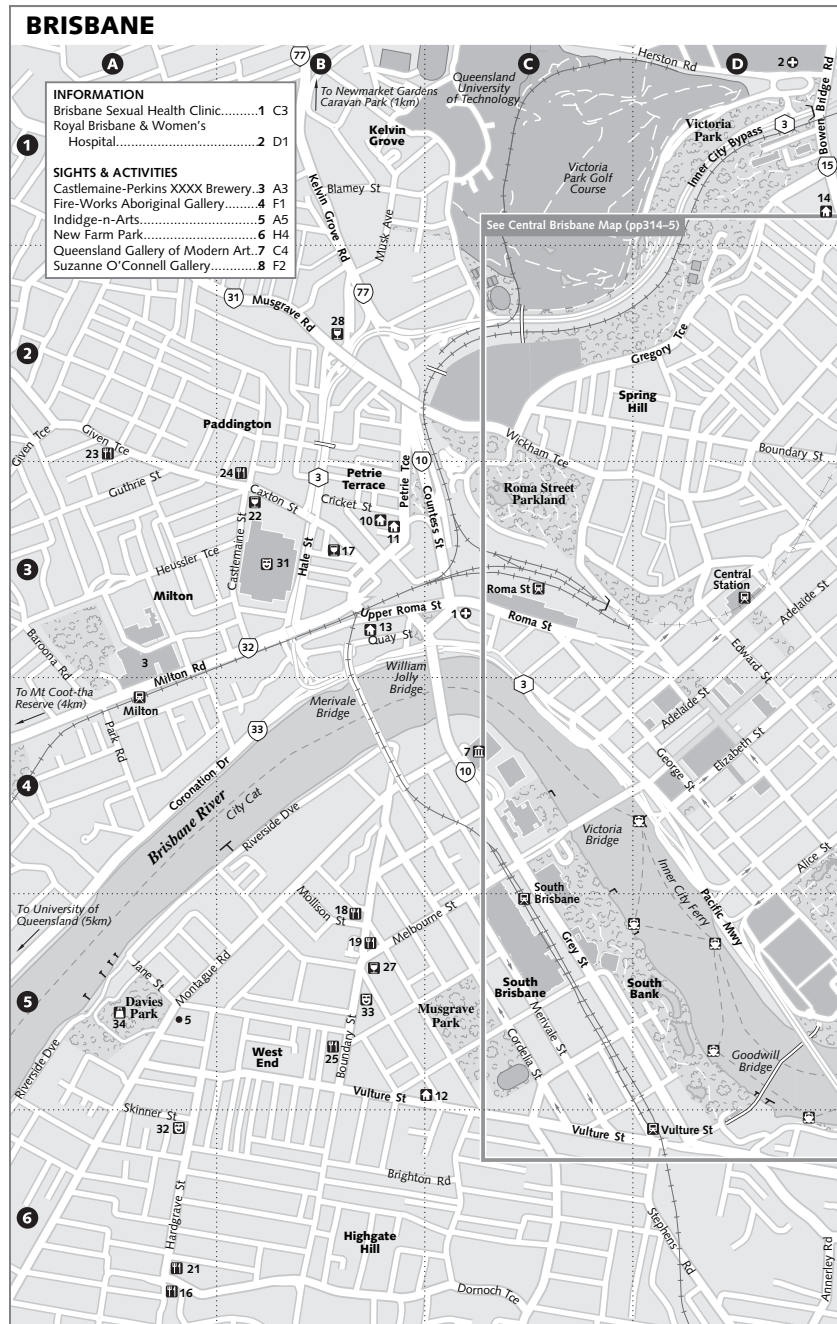
South Bank

QUEENSLAND CULTURAL CENTRE

In South Bank, just over the Victoria Bridge from the CBD, is the extensive Queensland Cultural Centre. The austere exterior of the **Queensland Art Gallery** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3840 7303; www.qag.qld.gov.au; Melbourne St, South Brisbane; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat & Sun, free guided tours at 11am, 1pm & 2pm Mon-Fri, 11am, 12.30pm & 2pm Sat & Sun) doesn't begin to hint at the fine collection of works by European and Australian artists. The 1st floor is devoted to celebrated Australian artists (1840s-1970s), and you can view works by masters including Sir Sydney Nolan, Arthur Boyd, William Dobell, George Lambert, Margaret Preston and Brett Whiteley.

At the back of the complex, the **Queensland Museum** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3840 7555; www.qmuseum.qld.gov.au; Grey St, South Brisbane; admission free; ☎ 9.30am-5pm) has an eclectic collection of exhibits relating to Queensland's history, including a skeleton of Queensland's own dinosaur *Muttaborrasaurus*, and the *Avian Cirrus*, the tiny plane in which Queensland's Bert Hinkler made the first England to Australia solo flight in 1928. It also has a very good examination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and artefacts. Within the museum is the excellent **Sciencentre** (Map pp314-15; admission adult/child/family \$10/8/29), a hands-on science exhibit with interactive displays and regular film shows.

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BRISBANE

CENTRAL BRISBANE



BRISBANE

(Continued from page 311)

The brand-spanking new **Queensland Gallery of Modern Art** (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3840 7350; Stanley Pl; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat & Sun, free guided tours same times as art gallery) depicts Australian art from the 1970s to modern times in a variety of changing exhibitions and mediums: painting, sculpture and photography alongside video, installation and film. There are some outstanding works of indigenous Australian art. Observe the work that goes

into a piece by Joseph Jurra Tjalpatjarri. A favourite though is Vincent Serico's series on Cooktown gold miners.

SOUTH BANK PARKLANDS

This beautiful smear of green **park** (Map pp314-15; admission free; ☎ dawn-dusk), skirting the western side of the Brisbane River, is home to cultural attractions, fine eateries, small rainforests, hidden lawns and gorgeous flora. The standout attractions here are **Streets Beach** (Map pp314-15), a funky artificial beach resem-

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ACCESSING INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN CULTURE IN BRISBANE

Experiencing indigenous culture is a highlight of any visit to Queensland and Brisbane presents some fine opportunities to access, experience and admire the unbroken spiritual legacy of the first Australians.

Art

Fire-Works Aboriginal Gallery (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3216 1250; www.fireworksgallery.com.au; 11 Stratton St, Newstead; ☎ 11am-5pm Tue-Fri, 11am-3pm Sat) is a wonderful centre for contemporary and often quite political Aboriginal art. There are a number of striking pieces of artwork set in a warehouse gallery, some a staggering size, giving insight into the hours of meticulous detail that goes into this wonderful artform – the wildlife depictions in particular are outstanding. There are also giant boomerangs and wire art.

Suzanne O'Connell Gallery (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3358 5811; www.suzanneoconnell.com; 93 James St; ☎ 11am-4pm Wed-Sat) tucked away in New Farm has stunning works of art from celebrated indigenous artists such as Nancy Nungurrayi. Everything is for sale and prices start around \$800. It's a lovely, compact gallery with good lighting and austere surrounds, which enhances the effect of the indigenous works. There are also regular exhibitions from various artists, and it's a good source for information.

Workshops

Tribal Galleries (Map pp314-15; ☎ 1800 806 225; www.indigenousgallery.com.au; 376 George St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) has a mix of Aboriginal art and tourist souvenirs including a hefty range of didgeridus – if you're lucky someone in-store may demonstrate the didgeridoo for you, or else grab a free lesson at 4pm on Monday, Wednesday or Friday. This place also runs the **Basement** around the corner where you can do a workshop to learn about Australian indigenous culture and craft techniques. Run by traditional Aboriginal artists you can have a go at canvas painting or decorating your own raw boomerang (\$30).

Indidge-n-Arts (Map pp312-13; ☎ 1800 893 896; 270 Montague Rd, West End; ☎ 9am-5pm) also holds workshops including didgeridoo making (\$120), bush seed jewellery (\$25), basket weaving (\$35), as well as hand drumming (\$30) and didgeridoo playing (\$30) lessons. These people like working with children so chances are yours would be very welcome.

bling a tropical lagoon, and, behind the beach, **Stanley Street Plaza**, a renovated section of historic Stanley St, with shops, cafés and a tourist information centre.

On the eastern edge of the parklands is the **Queensland Maritime Museum** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3844 5361; Sidon St, South Brisbane; adult/child \$7/3.50; ☎ 9.30am-4.30pm), which has a wide ranging display of maritime adventures (and misadventures) along the coast.

The South Bank parklands are also within easy walking distance of the city centre, but CityCat and Inner City Ferries stop at South Bank 1, 2 and 3 jetties if you'd like to go by boat. Alternatively, you can get there by bus or train from Roma St or Central station.

Inner North

For over a decade the alternative neighbourhoods of Fortitude Valley and nearby New Farm have been the hub of all things con-

temporary and cool, thanks to a confluence of artists, restaurateurs and various fringe types flooding the area.

Between the months of November and February, the alfresco **Moonlight Cinemas** (☎ 1300 551 908; www.moonlight.com.au; adult/child \$13/9; ☎ 6pm Wed-Sun) screens movies in New Farm Park.

The **Institute of Modern Art** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3252 5750; www.ima.org.au; ☎ 11am-5pm Tue-Sat, until 8pm Thu), a noncommercial gallery with an industrial exhibition space, has regular showings by local names. It's housed inside the **Judith Wright Centre for Contemporary Arts** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3872 9000; www.judithwrightcentre.com.au; 420 Brunswick St, Fortitude Valley).

Other galleries in the area: **Jan Murphy Gallery** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3254 1855; 486 Brunswick St; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sat) **Philip Bacon Galleries** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3358 3555; 2 Arthur St; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sat)

A HELPING HAND

Volunteering is a great way of helping out local communities and you will get to see a slice of the east coast few other visitors experience. Some volunteering can also provide valuable opportunities for training and increase your skill set. A good place to get started is **Volunteering Queensland** (www.volunteeringqueensland.org.au) where you can register to search their database for current placements. Brisbane-based organisations to consider include:

Brisbane ActionWeb for Refugee Collaboration (www.barc.org.au) This umbrella organisation is an excellent information source and can link you up with flexible volunteer placements helping refugees and asylum seekers around Brisbane.

Friends of the Earth Brisbane (www.brisbane.foe.org.au) Provides lots of opportunities to become involved in local environmental issues including campaigns about climate change and their nuclear concerns for Queensland.

Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service (www.epa.qld.gov.au) A government body providing volunteering opportunities all over the state: from counting frogs in tropical rainforest, and nurturing sick and injured wildlife, to restoring degraded land.

Save the Koala (www.savethekoala.com) Runs programs in Queensland and elsewhere in the country including volunteer field-trips and a program where you can foster one of the cuddly bears.

Newstead

North of the centre, on the Brisbane River, is Brisbane's best-known heritage site, the lovely old **Newstead House** (Map p310; ☎ 3216 1846; Breakfast Creek Rd, Newstead; adult/child/family \$4/2/10; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, 2-5pm Sun). The historic homestead dates from 1846 and is beautifully fitted out with Victorian furnishings and antiques, clothing and period displays. Surrounded by manicured gardens it sits on a breezy elevated position overlooking the river, giving superb water vistas. First Friday of each month is free admission.

Mt Coot-tha Reserve

A short drive or bus ride from the city, this huge bush reserve and parkland has an excellent botanic garden, a planetarium, eateries and a superb lookout over the city. On a clear day you can see the Moreton Bay islands. The lookout is accessed via Samuel Griffith Dr and has wheelchair access.

Just north of the road to the lookout, on Samuel Griffith Dr, is the turn-off to **JC Slaughter Falls**, reached by a short walking track, plus a 1.5km **Aboriginal Art Trail**, which takes you past eight art sites with works by local Aboriginal artists.

The pleasant **Brisbane Botanic Gardens** (Map p310; ☎ 3403 8888; admission free; ☎ 8am-5.30pm Sep-Mar, 8am-5pm Apr-Aug; free guided walks 11am & 1pm Mon-Sat) has a plethora of mini ecologies, which include cactus, Japanese and herb gardens, rainforests, and arid zones, making you feel like you're traversing the globe's landscape in all its vegetated splendour.

Also within the gardens, the **Sir Thomas Brisbane Planetarium** (Map p310; ☎ 3403 2578) is Australia's largest planetarium. There's a great observatory here and the shows inside the **Cosmic Skydome** (adult/child/family \$12.10/7.10/32.70) will make you feel like you've stepped on board the *Enterprise*. Note you must see a show to access the planetarium; it is not open to the public otherwise.

To get here via public transport, take bus 471 from Adelaide St, opposite King George Sq (\$2.80, 30 minutes, hourly Monday to Friday, six services Saturday and Sunday). The bus drops you off in the lookout car park and stops outside the Brisbane Botanic Gardens en route.

D'Aguilar Range National Park

Brisbanites suffering from suburban malaise satiate their wilderness cravings at this 50,000-hectare park in the D'Aguilar Range, 10km north of the city centre. At the park entrance the **Brisbane Forest Park information centre** (☎ 1300 723 684; www.epa.qld.gov.au; 60 Mt Nebo Rd; ☎ 9am-4.30pm) has information about **camping** (per person \$4.50) and maps of the park. If you plan to camp, keep in mind that these are remote, walk-in, bush-camp sites.

Beside the visitors centre is **Walkabout Creek** (adult/child/family \$5.30/2.60/13.20; ☎ 9am-4.30pm), a wildlife centre where you can see a resident platypus up close, as well as turtles, green tree frogs, lizards, pythons and gliders.

To get here catch bus 385 (\$3.60, 30 minutes), which departs from the corner of Albert and Adelaide Sts hourly from 8.50am to 3.55pm.

Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary

Just a 35-minute bus ride south of the city centre, **Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary** (Map p310; ☎ 3378 1366; Jesmond Rd, Fig Tree Pocket; adult/child/family \$20/15/52; ☎ 8.30am-5pm) is set in attractive parklands beside the river. It is home to 130 or so koalas, as well as kangaroos, possums and wombats. The koalas are undeniably cute and most visitors readily cough up the \$15 to have their picture taken hugging one.

To get here catch the express bus 430 (\$3.20, 35 minutes, hourly), which leaves from George St. Alternatively, **Mirimar Cruises** (☎ 1300 729 742; incl park entry per adult/child/family \$48/27/135) cruises to the sanctuary along the Brisbane River from North Quay, next to Victoria Bridge. It departs at 10am daily, returning from Lone Pine at 1.30pm.

ACTIVITIES

The **Cliffs** (pp314-15) at Kangaroo Point, opposite the Botanic Gardens on the south bank of the Brisbane River, is a rock-climbing venue that's flood-lit at night. Several operators offer climbing and abseiling instruction here, including **Worth Wild Rock Climbing** (☎ 1800 689 453; www.worthwild.com.au) and **K2 Extreme** (☎ 3257 3310; www.k2extreme.com.au; per person \$30).

Skatebiz (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3220 0157; 101 Albert St; per 2/24hr \$13/20; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, 9am-9pm Fri, 9am-4pm Sat, 10am-4pm Sun) rents out in-line skates and the necessary protective equipment. Some of the best skating areas are the South Bank Parklands, the City Botanic Gardens and the bike paths that follow the Brisbane River.

Brisbane has some 500km of bike trails, all of which are detailed in the *Brisbane Bicycle Experience Guide*, available from visitors centres. The most scenic routes follow the Brisbane River. Bicycles are allowed on Citytrains, except

QUIRKY BRISBANE

It may not be the Melbourne Cup, but Brisbane is mighty proud of the annual **Australia Day Cockroach Races**, held at the Story Bridge Hotel (p325) every 26 January. If racing keeps you on the edge of your seat, then you'll also be in the front row for the annual **Great Brisbane Duck Race**. No, the locals have not figured out a way to train waddling water birds into becoming elite athletes. This is a *rubber duckie* race, an annual event on the Brisbane Riverfestival calendar (see p320). You get to 'adopt a duck' for \$5 and spur it down the river (strictly a vocal affair), willing it to defeat its competitors and become the first to cross the line. The competition is fierce – an estimated 20,000 ducks fight for the winner's crown each year. If you happen to be the lucky caretaker of the victor you'll be rewarded for your efforts with a new car! If your duck performed at a substandard level you go home knowing you helped raise funds for the Princess Alexandra Hospital Foundation.

on weekdays during peak hours. You can also take bikes on CityCats and ferries for free. You can rent a bike from **Riders** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3846 6200; Shop 9, Little Stanley St, South Bank; per hr/day \$12/30; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Sat, 10am-4pm Sun).

There are several good swimming pools in Brisbane, including **Centenary Aquatic Centre** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3831 7665; 400 Gregory Tce, Spring Hill; adult/child \$4.60/3.60; ☎ 5.30am-7.30pm Mon-Fri, 6am-6pm Sat & Sun), **Spring Hill Baths** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3831 7881; 14 Torrington St, Spring Hill; ☎ 6.30am to 8pm Mon-Thu, 6.30am to 7pm Fri, 8am to 5pm Sat, 9am to 5pm Sun, closed May-mid Aug) and the **Streets Beach** lagoon at the South Bank parklands.

You can tandem skydive with the **Brisbane Skydiving Centre** (☎ 5464 6111; www.brisbaneskydive.com.au; tandem skydive from \$300), or go ballooning with **Fly Me to the Moon** (☎ 3423 0400; www.flyme tothemoon.com.au; Mon-Fri \$300, Sat & Sun \$350).

BRISBANE FOR CHILDREN

One of the best attractions for children is the **Queensland Cultural Centre** (p311), where the Queensland Museum runs a range of fantastic hands-on programmes. The incorporated Sciencentre is made for inquisitive young minds and will keep them busy for hours. The Queensland Art Gallery has a Children's Art Centre that runs regular programmes.

Hands On Art (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3844 4589; www.handsonart.org.au; South Bank; ☎ 10am-5pm Wed-Fri, 10am-5pm Mon-Fri during school holidays) is an art workshop where kids get to unleash their inner Picasso. The **South Bank Parklands** (p316) has the safe and child-friendly Streets Beach and a scattering of jungle gym playgrounds.

The river is a big plus; many children will enjoy a river-boat trip, especially if it's to the **Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary** (left), where they can cuddle up to one of the lovable creatures.

The free monthly booklet *Brisbane's Child* (www.brisbaneschild.com.au) has information about Brisbane for parents.

TOURS

The **City Sights bus tour** (day tickets per adult/child \$25/20) is a hop-on-hop-off shuttle taking in 19 of Brisbane's major landmarks. Tours depart every 45 minutes between 9am and 3.45pm from Post Office Sq on Queen St and allow you to get off and on whenever and wherever you want. The same ticket covers you for unlimited use of CityCat ferry services.

Other tours of the city:

Castlemaine Perkins XXXX Brewery (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3361 7597; www.xxxx.com.au; cnr Black & Paten Sts; adult/child \$18/10; 🕒 hourly 10am-4pm Mon-Fri & 6pm Wed) Adult tickets include four ales at the end of the tour. The brewery is a 20-minute walk west from the transit centre, or take the Citytrain to Milton station. Wear closed shoes.

Ghost Tours (☎ 3344 7265; www.ghost-tours.com.au; tickets \$35-55) Offers something a little different: guided tours of Brisbane's haunted heritage, murder scenes, cemeteries, haunted tunnels and the infamous Boggo Road Gaol. Most tours are on Saturday nights.

River City Cruises (☎ 0428-278 473; www.rivercitycruises.com.au; South Bank Parklands Jetty A; adult/child/family \$25/15/60) Has 1½-hour cruises with commentary, departing South Bank at 10.30am and 12.30pm (plus 2.30pm during summer).

Story Bridge Adventure Climb (☎ 1300 254 627; www.storybridgeadventureclimb.com.au) Offers 2½ hours of exhilarating (or terrifying depending on your vertigo quotient) views over Brisbane and beyond from the upper reaches of the city's premier bridge.

A CITY CELEBRATES ITS RIVER

Running over 10 days from late August to early September, **Riverfestival** (www.riverfestival.com.au), the city's biggest arts event of the year, celebrates Brisbane's relationship with its river. The common thread between the performances, artistic displays, mini food festivals and cultural celebrations is that they are as intrinsic to Brisbane as its meandering river; continuously shaping and developing with the city's evolving character.

The festival is opened each year with a bang – literally. Staged over the Brisbane River, with vantage points from South Bank, the city and the West End, **Riverfire** is a massive fireworks show with dazzling visual choreography and a synchronised soundtrack. Also a staple is the **Riversymposium**, an international conference on the development of new approaches and methods to preserve the world's waterways. Other events combine Indigenous culture with contemporary performance to pay homage to the river and celebrate cultural collaboration.

Music plays a major role throughout the festival. The **Riverconcert**, held in the City Botanic Gardens, features live acts performing everything from jazz to hip hop to electronic soundscapes. The city's live-music venues also fill their playlist nightly.

Most of the events are free and family-friendly and there's a smorgasbord of activities for the kids. For more information click on to the Riverfestival website.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Information on festivals and events in Brisbane can be found at the visitors centres or at www.ourbrisbane.com/whatson. Major happenings:

Chinese New Year Always a popular event in the Valley in January/February.

Tropfest (www.tropfest.com) This nationwide short film festival is telecast live from South Bank during late February.

Brisbane Pride Festival (www.pridebrisbane.org.au) Brisbane's fabulously flamboyant gay and lesbian celebration, held in June.

Queensland Music Festival (www.queenslandmusicfestival.com.au) Outstanding celebration of the world of music, held over 17 days in July in odd-numbered years.

Brisbane International Film Festival (www.biff.com.au) Ten days of quality films in August.

Ekka Royal National Agricultural Show (www.ekka.com.au) The country comes to town in early August.

Brisbane Riverfestival (www.riverfestival.com.au) Brisbane's major festival of the arts (see below), with buskers, performances, music and concerts. Held in September.

SLEEPING

Brisbane has an excellent selection of accommodation options that will suit any budget. Most are outside the CBD, but more often than not they're within walking distance or have good public transport connections.

Budget

Most of Brisbane's hostels are concentrated in the inner suburbs of Petrie Terrace, Fortitude Valley, New Farm and the West End.

CITY

Tinbilly (Map pp314-15; ☎ 1800 446 646, 3238 5888; www.tinbilly.com; 462 George St; 13-17/4-bed dm \$26/28/29, tw & d \$100; 🍷 📺 📺) This sleek hostel flaunts its youth with a modern interior, excellent facilities and clinical cleanliness. Downstairs a happy, helpful buzz swims around the job centre, travel agency and the very popular bar, which is one big party place.

Annie's Inn (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3831 8684; www.babs.com.au/annies; 405 Upper Edward St; s/d \$60/70, d with bathroom \$80) In a central location and walking distance to the CBD, this modest B&B feels a little like a large doll-house. The owners are helpful and friendly.

FORTITUDE VALLEY & NEW FARM

Homestead (Map pp312-13; ☎ 1800 658 344, 3358 3538; 57 Annie St, New Farm; dm \$22-26, d \$69; 📺) In a top New Farm location, Homestead has four-, six- and eight-bed dorms, and mixed and female-only dorms in a great old house. No 6 is the best double with heaps of space. This backpackers would suit those looking for a quieter stay, away from the more institutional options.

BunkBackpackers (Map pp314-15; ☎ 1800 682 865; www.bunkbrisbane.com.au; cnr Ann & Gipps St, Fortitude Valley; dm \$26-29, s \$70, d & tw \$90; 🍷 📺 📺) More like a snazzy hotel than a backpackers, this excellent hostel has generous dorms with bathrooms, gleaming kitchens and funky décor. It's extremely secure and the faaaabulous bar and swimming pool belong on a CD cover.

PETRIE TERRACE

Aussie Way Hostel (Map pp312-13; ☎ /fax 3369 0711; 34 Cricket St, Petrie Tce; dm/s/d \$25/45/60; 🍷 📺) A small and personal hostel housed in a picturesque Queensland that feels more like a guest-house than a hostel. The upstairs balcony is good for breezy afternoons. Dorms are a tad more spacious than most.

Banana Benders Backpackers (Map pp312-13; ☎ 1800 241 157, 3367 1157; www.bananabenders.com; 118 Petrie Tce, Petrie Tce; dm \$25, tw & d \$60; 📺) This small and down-to-earth hostel is a great spot if you're planning to hang your hat for awhile. A great decking is the real pull of this place with top city views. The friendly owners can also help you find work.

Brisbane City YHA (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3236 1004; brisbanecity@yhaqld.org; 392 Upper Roma St, Petrie Tce; dm \$29, tw & d \$67-85; 🍷 📺 📺) You can't miss the Legoland exterior of this hostel, but inside it's spacious and comfortable. There are clean three- to 10-bed

dorms and key-card security. It's very popular, attracting all ages and groups. Refurbishments were taking place as we went to press.

WEST END

Ourpick Brisbane Backpackers Resort (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3844 9956; www.brisbanebackpackers.com.au; 110 Vulture St, West End; dm \$24-28, d \$73; 🍷 📺 📺) The word 'resort' is not in the title of this backpackers by accident – it's a class act. Perks include TVs, en suites and private balconies in the dorms, and a tiled outdoor area around the bar, which is spacious and has a nice tropical feel.

CAMPING

As all the camping grounds are far from the centre of town, hostels are generally a better bet for budget travellers.

Newmarket Gardens Caravan Park (Map p310; ☎ 3356 1458; www.newmarketgardens.com.au; 199 Ashgrove Ave, Ashgrove; powered/unpowered sites \$30/27, caravans \$47, cabins \$80-100; 🍷 📺 📺) This clean site is just 4km north of the city centre and is well connected to town by bus routes and Citytrain (Newmarket station). The best tent-sites are around Nos 193 and 194, where there are shady spots in the bottom corner of the park.

Brisbane Caravan Village (off Map p310; ☎ 1800 060 797, 3263 4040; www.caravanvillage.com.au; 763 Zillmere Rd, Aspley; sites \$25-50, cabins \$95-110; 🍷 📺 📺) Tidy and excellent facilities.

Midrange

Brisbane has a good range of midrange city hotels. Many cater to the business trade and offer discount rates on the weekend.

CITY & NEW FARM

Allender Apartments (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3358 5832; www.allenderapartments.com.au; 3 Moreton St, New Farm; r \$100-155; 🍷 ; wi-fi) The yellow-brick façade may not grab you, but Allender's studios and one-bedroom apartments are tasteful and immaculate. The cool and shaded interiors are a fusion of funky décor and homely amenities and there's plenty of room to spread out. Allender also own more contemporary apartments that carry a touch of class, on nearby Villiers St.

Explorers Inn (Map pp314-15; ☎ 1800 623 288, 3211 3488; www.explorers.com.au; 63 Turbot St; r from \$110, superior or family \$150; 🍷 📺 📺) A modern hotel with very friendly management and a supreme city centre location; prices do vary and its much more expensive if booked at the last minute.

Standard rooms are pretty boxy – the best room in the house is No 316.

Royal on the Park (Map pp314-15; ☎ 1800 773 337, 3221 3411; www.royalonthepark.com.au; cnr Alice & Albert Sts; r \$130-300; 🏠 📺 📺) You'll feel like royalty indeed once you've spied the wonderful views of the City Botanic Gardens from the stylish room here. This four-star hotel is very popular with business travellers, so the cheaper rates are for Friday to Sunday nights. The rooms have broadband internet access.

Abbey Apartments (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3236 0600; www.abbeyhotel.com.au; 160 Roma St; 1-bed apt nightly/weekly per night \$200/140; 🏠 📺 📺) Consisting of older, self-catering, apartments that have been tastefully and extensively refurbished to give them a very contemporary feel, these are great value CBD apartments. It's opposite the transit centre so very handy for coming and going.

Inchcolm Hotel (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3226 8888; www.inchcolmhotel.com.au; 73 Wickham Tce; r \$160-250; 🏠 📺 📺) Dripping with character, the heritage structure gives this personable hotel much of its charm. Rooms have been renovated extensively and those in the newer wing tend to have more space and more light courtesy of huge windows, while rooms in the older wing have more character. The best deluxe is room is No 112 and the best executive rooms are Nos 101 and 102.

KANGAROO POINT

Paramount Motel (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3393 1444; www.paramountmotel.com.au; 649 Main St, Kangaroo Point; s/d/f \$80/95/115; 🏠 📺 📺) Ignore the 'No Vacancy' sign out the front and check availability with reception at this excellent motel. It has cheery and impeccably clean rooms. Facilities include TVs and fully equipped kitchens making rooms terrific value.

Il Mondo (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3392 0111; www.ilmondo.com.au; 25 Rotherham St, Kangaroo Point; r \$115-150, apt \$150-350; 🏠 📺 📺) This postmodern boutique hotel has contemporary three- and four-star rooms that are reminiscent of an Ikea showroom. There's plenty of block colours, minimalist design and space, and the bathrooms are quite blissful. Towering over the Story Bridge the location is excellent.

PADDINGTON

Fern Cottage (Map p310; ☎ 3511 6685; www.ferncottage.net; 89 Fernberg Rd, Paddington; s/d \$115/140; 🏠 📺 📺) Fern Cottage is a beautifully renovated Queenslander with a splash of Mediterranean ambi-

ence. Rooms have a cottage appeal and the burgundy room is the pick of the bunch: it's upstairs, spacious and has a great balcony.

SPRING HILL

Ourpick Spring Hill Terraces (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3854 1048; www.springhillterraces.com; 260 Water St, Spring Hill; budget/std r \$75/100, studio/terrace unit \$120/145; 🏠 📺 📺) Good old fashioned service and a range of accommodation is provided at this place, just tucked away off Brunswick St. It offers motel-style rooms and units all set in a collage of greenery and a tropical atrium garden very close to the Valley.

City Palms Motel (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3252 1338; www.citypalmsmotel.com; 55 Brunswick St, Spring Hill; standard/deluxe r \$90/100; 🏠 📺) Fringed by palm trees on busy Brunswick St, this little motel is excellent value with cool, dark rooms that include a kitchenette. Deluxe rooms are bigger and have queen-size beds.

Dahl Court Apartments (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3830 3400; www.dahlcourt.com.au; 45 Phillips St, Spring Hill; r per night/week \$125/805; 🏠 📺) Tucked into a quiet, leafy pocket of Spring Hill, this boutique complex offers outstanding value. The sizable apartments are fully self-contained with stylish bathrooms (including baths), kitchens and heritage aesthetics throughout (two with balconies – popular with smokers). The commodious townhouses are a step up in style and go for \$140/910 per night/week.

One Thornbury House (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3839 5334; www.onethornbury.com; 1 Thornbury St, Spring Hill; d \$140-170; 🏠 📺) Effortlessly dashing and with a hint of debonair, this two-storey Queenslander guesthouse is a classy affair. There are four rooms, three of which are en suite. All are beautifully furnished in warm contemporary décor, which contrasts vividly against rendered brick. Pick of the rooms is No 1 (with king-size bed), which is more like a boutique hotel room.

Top End

Brisbane has several fabulous top-end places, and they often give discounts to walk-in guests, particularly on weekends.

Quay West Suites Brisbane (Map pp314-15; ☎ 1800 672 726, 3853 6000; reservations@qwsb.mirvac.com.au; 132 Alice St; 1-2-bedroom ste \$200/450; 🏠 📺 📺) This sophisticated hotel has opulent, self-contained units with modern kitchens, fully equipped laundries, numerous TVs, stereos and spectacular views. The refined interiors are worth the price tag and the staff are utterly gracious.

Note that renovations were ongoing at the time of research.

Conrad Treasury (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3306 8888; www.conradtreasury.com.au; 130 William St; r from \$215; 🏠 📺 📺) Brisbane's classiest hotel is in the beautifully preserved former Land Administration Building. Every room is unique and awash with heritage features, polished wood, elegant furnishings and marble. If you go for a standard room, nab one on the 4th floor – they're slightly smaller but have brilliant balconies overlooking the city and river.

Stamford Plaza Brisbane (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3221 1999; www.stamford.com.au; cnr Edward & Margaret Sts; r from \$220; 🏠 📺 📺; wi-fi) At the southern end of the city, the Stamford has a historic façade in front of a modern tower. The indulgent rooms have antique touches, large beds and plenty of atmosphere. There are often good package deals up for grabs.

EATING

Brisbane has a sophisticated and varied dining scene, with the best places to be found in New Farm, West End, Petrie Terrace and the CBD. Many eateries take advantage of Brisbane's climate with open-air courtyards or tables out on the pavement.

City Centre & South Bank

Java Coast Cafe (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3211 3040; 340 George St; mains \$6-10; ☎ 7.30am-4pm Mon-Fri) Fancy recapturing your zen while lunching under a canopy of trees in the middle of the CBD? Tables in the leafy rear courtyard here feel a mile away from the busy streets outside at this special city nook. Goodies include giant muffins, bagels, panini and quiche. There are also 20 different varieties of teas and they know how to brew a decent coffee.

Embassy Hotel (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3221 7616; 188 Edward St; light meals \$12; ☎ lunch, dinner) With suave red tones, cubed seating and polished wood, this groovy hotel dishes out some excellent pub nosh (mains \$13 to \$17) and is popular with city folk and travellers alike.

Café San Marco (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3846 4334; South Bank Parklands; mains \$16-28; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) Swimming in a blithe, balmy atmosphere, this waterfront bistro is the perfect spot for a relaxed feed. It's just the ticket for picky palates and the patter of little feet. Good for families.

E'cco (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3831 8344; 100 Boundary St; starters \$22, mains \$38; ☎ lunch Tue-Fri, dinner Tue-Sat) One of the finest restaurants in the state,

award-winning E'cco is a must for any culinary aficionado. Masterpieces on the menu include Margaret River lamb rump, zucchini, eggplant, crisp sage and chickpeas.

Cha Cha Char (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3211 9944; Shop 5, Eagle St Pier; mains \$30-40; ☎ lunch Mon-Fri, dinner daily) Wallowing in awards, many consider this Brisbane's best restaurant. And although you can tuck into fish, veal or duck dishes, this is primarily a steak restaurant – and a supremely good one at that. It's very classy without being pretentious as demonstrated by the diverse clientele.

II (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3210 0600; cnr Edward & Alice Sts; mains \$40-45; ☎ lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat) This elegant restaurant is agreeable without making too much of a statement – that mission is saved for the food. Dishes include fillet of black Angus beef, bubble & squeak, king brown mushrooms and red wine jus.

Petrie Terrace & Paddington

Sol Breads (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3876 4800; 20 Latrobe Tce; breakfast \$8.50; ☎ 7am-4pm Mon-Sat, 7am-3pm Sun) Vegetarians will love this joint, which is all about fresh, healthy eating. It even makes its own sourdough bread onsite. Breakfast can be bircher muesli, fruit salad or baked eggs with avocado, garden salad and sourdough. The small balcony out the back is perfect for settling restless bubs.

Sultan's Kitchen (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3368 2194; 163 Given Tce, Paddington; dishes \$12-17; ☎ lunch Fri, dinner) If Indian food is your weakness, then this award winner will make you wobble. The service is impeccable and flavours from all corners of the subcontinent are represented on the menu. The nine types of naan are a meal unto themselves.

The bistros at both the **Caxton Hotel** (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3369 5544; 38 Caxton St, Petrie Tce; mains \$15-25; ☎ lunch & dinner; 🏠 📺), which has a popular steakhouse, and the **Paddo Tavern** (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3369 0044; 186 Given Tce, Paddington; mains \$10-18; ☎ lunch & dinner; 🏠 📺), serve good pub food.

Fortitude Valley & New Farm

Liquid Delish (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3254 4900; 4/893 Brunswick St; turkish sandwich \$7.50; ☎ 6am-3.45pm Mon-Thu, 6am-3pm Fri & Sat, 7am-1pm Sun) Hunt out this star performer in New Farm. It specialises in delicious juices (\$6; a meal unto themselves), especially the frappes, and turkish bread sandwiches (fillings are creative and fresh) and salads, all with a Mediterranean feel.

Wok on Inn (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3254 2546; 728 Brunswick St; mains \$10-12; ☺ lunch & dinner) With a lovely shaded front courtyard this industrious and popular noodle bar is the New Farm spot for some fast noodles. Choose your noodle, your cooking style (incl Mongolian) and your meat/veg combo.

Spoon Deli & Café (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3257 1750; 22 James St; breakfast \$10-15, mains \$14-21; ☺ 5.30am-7pm Mon-Fri, till 6pm Sat & Sun) Inside James St market, this upmarket deli serves deliciously rich pasta, salads and soup and colossal paninis and focaccias. Diners munch their goodies amidst the deli produce at oversized square tables or low benches skirting the windows, which flood the place with sunlight.

our pick **Garuva Hidden Tranquillity Restaurant & Bar** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3216 0124; 324 Wickham St; mains \$19; ☺ dinner) This is no restaurant, it's a dining experience! Garuva's rainforested foyer leads to tables with cushioned seating concealed by walls of fluttering white silk. The menu shows diverse influences including Asian and southern European. There's a very Arabian Nights feel to dining, along with dim lighting, smooth soundtracks and lulled voices, which create a deaudecorous air.

Purple Olive (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3254 0097; 79 James St; mains \$20-30; ☺ lunch Fri-Sun, dinner Tue-Sun) With a Mediterranean feel and a diverse continental menu this place fuses the best of southern European cooking with local produce. Dishes such as char-grilled baby octopus in sweet Hungarian smoked paprika or Moreton Bay bug fettuccine work a treat.

Watt (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3358 5464; Brisbane Powerhouse; mains \$34; ☺ lunch & dinner Tue-Sun) On the lower level of the of the Powerhouse Arts precinct, this is riverside dining at its best. The minimalist setup along the river creates a unique dining ambience. The Mod Oz food with Asian and Middle Eastern influences is delightfully presented and the fusion of flavours is a masterclass in cooking.

Also recommended:

Himalayan Cafe (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3358 4015; 640 Brunswick St; dishes \$10-16; ☺ dinner Tue-Sat) The authentic Tibetan and Nepali fare gets rave reviews. Kids welcome.

Vue (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3358 6511; 1/83 Merthyr Rd; mains \$12-16; ☺ 7am-10pm Tue-Sat, 7am-6pm Sun & Mon) Trendy bar-restaurant with gourmet pizza and pasta dishes.

West End

Three Monkeys Coffee House (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3844 6045; 58 Mollison St; dishes \$7-16; ☺ breakfast, lunch &

dinner) A far departure from the profusion of minimalist cafés, this laid-back alternative is steeped in pseudo-Moroccan décor and ambience. *The* place to hunker down in the West End on a rainy afternoon.

Jazzy Cat Cafe (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3846 2544; 56 Mollison St; mains \$12-23; ☺ 10am-late Wed-Fri, 8am-late Sat, 8am-3pm Sun) Set in a beautifully restored Queenslander, this restaurant/café is a wee warren of dining nooks, bohemian vibes and friendly staff. The menu is imaginative (all-day veggie breakfasts are popular) with lots of picky entrees.

Mondo Organics (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3844 1132; 166 Hardgrave Rd; mains \$28-35; ☺ lunch Tue-Fri, dinner Tue-Sat) Blow your tastebuds, not your arteries, at this exquisite organic restaurant. In urban timber surrounds diners savour dishes such as lamb backstrap with pumpkin and olive cannelloni, pea puree and roasted garlic.

Tukka (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3846 6333; 145 Boundary St; mains \$30-35; ☺ dinner daily, lunch Sun) The menu at this restaurant reads like a who's who of Australian game: Tasmanian confit possum, paperbark-roasted Cairns crocodile and seared emu fillets. It's amazing what Aussie tucker you can eat in this country and you'll find plentiful samples of it in creative combinations at Tukka. There are also veggie dishes for the timid diners who prefer more standard fare.

Also recommended:

Caravanserai (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3217 2617; 1-3 Dornoch Tce; mains \$20-25; ☺ lunch Thu-Sun, dinner Tue-Sun) Delicious and slightly extravagant Turkish cuisine.

Kafe Meze (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3844 1720; cnr Boundary & Browning Sts; starters \$9, mains \$27; ☺ lunch, dinner) Fresh flavours and tastes of the Mediterranean. Where Greek people in Brisbane go to dine out.

Self-Catering

James St Market (Map pp314-15; James St, Fortitude Valley) The produce is pricey but the quality is excellent and there's a good fishmonger here.

There's a great produce market inside **McWhirters Marketplace** (Map pp314-15; cnr Brunswick & Wickham Sts) in Fortitude Valley. The Asian supermarkets in Chinatown mall also have an excellent range of fresh vegies, Asian groceries and exotic fruit.

There's a Coles Express on Queen St, just west of the mall, and a **Woolworths** (Map pp314-15) on Edward St in the city.

DRINKING

our pick **Breakfast Creek Hotel** (Map 310; ☎ 3262 5988; 2 Kingsford Smith Dr; steaks \$16-34; ☺ lunch & dinner) In a

great rambling building dating from 1889, this historic pub is a Brisbane institution. Built in French Renaissance style the best part remains the spacious, art-deco front bar – it's nothing fancy but it reeks of authenticity.

Lychee Lounge (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3846 0544; 2/94 Boundary St, West End) Sink into the lush furniture and stare up at the macabre dolls head chandeliers at this exotic oriental lounge-bar. Mellow beats, mood lighting and an open frontage to Boundary St create an ideal triffecta. Specialises in cocktails.

Story Bridge Hotel (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3391 2266; 196 Main St, Kangaroo Point; ☺) This beautiful old pub beneath the bridge at Kangaroo Point is the perfect place for a pint after a long day sight-seeing. You can mingle with the fashionable in the back bar with its floor to ceiling glass, or hunker down in the casual beer garden.

Normanby Hotel (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3831 3353; 1 Musgrave Rd, Red Hill) Opposite the train station of the same name, this rambling hotel is pure Queensland. Without doubt its best feature is the colossal, modern beer garden, which can get a real party atmosphere on weekends. The huge bar upstairs is a mishmash of brick, art deco, sawdust floor and modernist bar design.

Port Office Hotel (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3221 0072; 40 Edward St, City; ☺) The industrial edge of this renovated city pub is spruced up with swathes of dark wood and jungle prints. In the afternoon a table by the open windows is the perfect place to watch city life tick by.

Two New Farm hotspots on opposing street corners are the **Alibi Room** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3358 6133; 720 Brunswick St; ☺ closed Mon), a quirky bar bucking the fine wining and dining trend, calling itself 'a cultural splinter in the tail end of Brisbane'; and **Gertie's Bar & Lounge** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3358 5088; 699 Brunswick St; ☺ closed Mon), a more sophisticated affair with comfy seating, cool lighting, cocktails and, on the weekends, acoustic guitar.

ENTERTAINMENT

Brisbane pulls most of the international bands heading to Oz and the city's clubs have become nationally renowned. There's also plenty of theatre and cultural events. Pick up copies of the free entertainment papers *Time Off* (www.timeoff.com.au), *Rave* (www.ravemag.com.au) and *Scene* (www.scene magazine.com.au) from any café in the Valley. A good website to check out is www.my247.com.au/brisbane.

The *Courier-Mail* also has daily arts and entertainment listings, and a com-

prehensive 'What's On In Town' section each Thursday.

Ticketek (☎ 13 28 49; http://premier.ticketek.com.au) is an agency that handles phone bookings for many major events, sports and performances.

Nightclubs

Brisbane is proud of its nightclub scene – most clubs are open Thursday to Sunday nights, are adamant about ID and charge between \$7 and \$25 cover. The alternative scene is centred on the Valley, and attracts a mixed straight and gay crowd.

Family (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3852 5000; 8 McLachlan St, Fortitude Valley) One of Brisbane's best nightclubs, the music scene here is phenomenal. Family exhilarates dance junkies every weekend on four levels with two dance floors, four bars, four funky themed booths and a top-notch sound system.

Monastery (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3257 7081; 621 Ann St, Fortitude Valley) After a sensible refurbishment giving more space to the dance floor and easier access to the bar, Monastery really does look like a monastery inside (apart from the heaving, sweaty hordes churning up the dance floor) with its iconic, plush design and gothic lighting.

Uber (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3846 6680; 100 Boundary St, West End) Brisbane's latest club, Uber is cool indeed with a stylish décor and patrons to match. It's all a bit decadent feeling like an old-style boutique hotel. The music varies but weekends are dedicated to pure main-room house.

Beat MegaClub (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3852 2661; 677 Ann St, Fortitude Valley) Five dance floors, six bars, and hardcore techno equals the perfect place for dance junkies who like their beats hard. It's popular with the gay and lesbian crowd with regular drag performances, but Beat is welcoming to all.

Two places next door to each other on Warner St, popular with the younger set, and in the heart of the Valley are: **Mass** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3852 3373; 25 Warner St), which is set in an old cathedral and pulls some impressive DJs spinning house and electro; and **Planet** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3852 2575; 27 Warner St), which has been newly renovated and has a great light and sound set up.

Live Music

In recent years successful acts, including Katie Noonan, Kate Miller-Heidke and Pete Murray have illustrated Brisbane's musical cred. You

GAY & LESBIAN BRISBANE

Most action, centred in Fortitude Valley, is covered by the fortnightly **Q News** (www.qnews.com.au). *Queensland Pride*, another gay publication, takes in the whole of the state. **Queer Radio** (www.queerradio.org), a radio show on Wednesday from 8.30pm to 10pm on FM102.1, is another source of information on the city.

Major events on the year's calendar include the **Queer Film Festival**, held in late March, which showcases gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender films, and **Brisbane Pride Festival** in June (see p320). Pride attracts up to 25,000 people every year, and peaks during the parade held midfestival.

Brisbane's most popular gay and lesbian venue is the **Wickham Hotel** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3852 1301; cnr Wickham & Alden Sts), a classic old Victorian pub with dance music, drag shows and dancers. The Wickham celebrates the Sydney Mardi Gras and the Pride Festival in style. The **Sportsman's Hotel** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3831 2892; 130 Leichhardt St) is another fantastically popular gay venue, with a different theme or show for each night of the week.

The **Gay & Lesbian Welfare Association of Brisbane** (GLWA; ☎ 1800 184 527; www.glwa.org.au) can offer information on groups and venues and also counselling.

can get in early to see history in the making at any number of venues. Cover charges start at around \$5.

Zoo (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3854 1381; 711 Ann St, Fortitude Valley; ☎) The long queues here start early for a good reason and whether you're into hard rock or electronic soundscapes, Zoo has a gig for you. It's one of your best chances to hear some raw, local talent.

Tongue & Groove (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3846 0334; 63 Hardgrave Rd, West End; ☎ closed Mon) This funky little venue in the West End hosts everything from jazz, blues, reggae and funk to dance beats from Wednesday to Sunday. All nightlife takes place in the subterranean bar. See tng.net.au to check out their upcoming gigs.

Brisbane Jazz Club (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3391 2006; 1 Annie St, Kangaroo Point) A Brizzie institution for addicts of the swinging and soulful, this club lures jazz purists aplenty from Thursday to Sunday nights. There's usually a cover charge of \$15, and anyone who's anyone in the jazz scene plays here when they're in town.

Other live venues:

Arena (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3252 5690; 210 Brunswick St, Fortitude Valley) An industrial-sized venue that attracts local and international rock acts. Big supporter of hip hop.

Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3308 3000; Glenelg St, South Bank; ☎) When the big acts are in town they perform at this multi-functional entertainment complex.

Normanby Hotel (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3831 3353; 1 Musgrave Rd, Red Hill) Great venue for live music – Sunday goes off. Bands on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday night.

Cinema

There are open-air movies screened over summer in the South Bank Parklands (p316) and New Farm Park.

The **Dendy Cinema** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3211 3244; 346 George St) shows good art-house films.

In the Valley, **Palace Centro** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3852 4488; 39 James St, Fortitude Valley) also screens good art-house films and has a Greek film festival at the end of November.

South Bank Cinema (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3846 5188; cnr Grey & Ernest Sts, South Bank) is the cheapest cinema for mainstream flicks; tickets cost about a third less than at other places.

Cinemas on Queen St Mall:

Greater Union (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3027 9999; Level A, Myer Centre) Mainstream blockbusters.

Hoyts Regent Theatre (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3027 9999; 107 Queen St Mall) A lovely old cinema worth visiting for the building alone.

Theatre

Brisbane is well stocked with theatre venues, most of them located in the South Bank Parklands. The **Queensland Cultural Centre** (☎ 13 62 46) handles bookings for all the South Bank theatres and publishes *Centre Stage*, the events diary for the complex.

Queensland Performing Arts Centre (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3840 7444; www.qpac.com.au; Queensland Cultural Centre, Stanley St, South Bank; ☎) This centre consists of three venues and features concerts, plays, dance and performances of all genres.

Queensland Conservatorium (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3875 6375; 16 Russell St, South Bank) South of the

Performing Arts Centre, the Conservatorium showcases the talent of attending students.

Brisbane Powerhouse (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3358 8622, box office 3358 8600; www.brisbanepowerhouse.org; 119 Lamington St, New Farm; ☎) A magnificent conversion from an old powerhouse into a leading place for contemporary culture at a picturesque spot on the Brisbane River. This one-stop venue presents an evolving schedule of theatre, dance, music and workshops.

Metro Arts Centre (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3221 1527; www.metroarts.com.au; 109 Edward St, City; ☎) This progressive venue hosts community theatre, dance and art shows.

QUT Gardens Theatre (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3138 4455; www.gardentheatre.qut.com; QUT, 2 George St) This university theatre hosts touring national and international productions as well as student performances.

Sit Down Comedy Club (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3369 4466; Paddo Tavern, Given Tce, Paddington; ☎) The most prominent comedy venue in town, at the Paddo Tavern.

Sport

Like other Australians, Brisbanites are sports-mad. You can see interstate cricket matches and international test cricket at the **Gabba** (Brisbane Cricket Ground; Map pp312-13; ☎ 3008 6166; www.thegabba.org.au) in Woollongabba, south of Kangaroo Point. If you're new to the game try and get along to a 20/20 match, which is cricket in its most explosive form. The cricket season runs from October to March.

During the other half of the year, rugby league is the big spectator sport. The Brisbane Broncos plays home games at **Suncorp Stadium** (Map pp312-13; ☎ 3331 5000; Castlemaine St, Milton).

Once dominated by Victorian teams, the Australian Football League (AFL) has been challenged by the Brisbane Lions, which has tasted success in recent years. You can watch the team kick the ball and some southern butt at a home game at the Gabba between March and September.

Australia's National Basketball League (NBL) is based on American pro basketball, and the fast-paced NBL games draw large crowds. Brisbane's team, the Brisbane Bullets, is based at the **Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre** (Map pp314-15; ☎ 3308 3000; www.bcec.com.au; cnr Merivale & Glenelg Sts, South Brisbane).

Queensland also has a side in the National Netball League – the Queensland Firebirds. Their home stadium is the **Chandler Arena** (off

Map p310; Old Cleveland & Tiley Rd, Chandler). You can book tickets through Ticketek, or online at <http://firebirds.netballq.org.au>.

SHOPPING

See p317 for places to purchase indigenous crafts.

Clothing

For something fashionable, there are plenty of Australian and international boutiques in the upmarket **Elizabeth Arcade** (Map pp314-15), between Elizabeth and Charlotte Sts, and **Brisbane Arcade** (Map pp314-15), between the Queen St Mall and Adelaide St. For club fashions, head to Fortitude Valley around Brunswick, Wickham and Ann Sts.

Markets

Every Sunday, the carnival-style Riverside Centre and Eagle St Pier markets have over 150 stalls, including glassware, weaving, leather work and children's activities.

South Bank Lifestyle markets (Map pp314-15; Stanley St Plaza, South Bank; ☎ 5-10pm Fri, 10am-5pm Sat, 9am-5pm Sun) These popular markets have a great range of clothing, craft, art, handmade goods and interesting souvenirs.

Green Flea Community Market (Map pp312-13; Davies Park, cnr Montague Rd & Jane St; ☎ 6am-2pm Sat) This cosmopolitan flea market has loads of fresh produce, herbs, flowers, organic foodstuff, clothing and bric-a-brac. It's an apt representation of the diverse West End.

King George Square Contemporary Craft & Art Market (Map pp314-15; King George Sq; ☎ 8am-4pm Sun) These markets transform a pocket of the city centre into a bustling arts and crafts fair on the weekends. A nice spot to bring the kids.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

Brisbane's main airport is about 16km north-east of the city centre at Eagle Farm and has separate international and domestic terminals about 2km apart, linked by the Airtrain (\$4 per person).

Qantas (Map pp314-15; ☎ 13 13 13; www.qantas.com.au; 247 Adelaide St), has an extensive network, connecting Brisbane with Sydney (1½ hours), Melbourne (2½ hours), Adelaide (2½ hours), Canberra (two hours), Hobart (four hours), Perth (five hours) and Darwin (four hours).

Virgin Blue (☎ 13 67 89; www.virginblue.com.au) also flies between Brisbane and Australian capital

cities. **Jetstar** (☎ 13 15 38; www.jetstar.com.au) connects Brisbane with the same cities (except Perth) as well as Cairns.

The new kid on the block, **Tiger Airways** (☎ 9335 3033; www.tigerairways.com.au) is a genuine Singapore-based budget carrier that will hopefully shake-up the airline market in Australia and bring about better budget fares. It currently flies from Melbourne to the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast but may well have started a Brisbane service by the time you read this.

Qantas, Virgin Blue and Jetstar all fly to towns and cities within Queensland, especially the more popular coastal destinations and the Whitsunday Islands. **Macair** (☎ 1300 622 247; www.macair.com.au) flies to many destinations in the Queensland outback, including Mt Isa (four hours).

Bus

Brisbane's **Roma St Transit Centre** (Map pp314–15), about 500m west of the city centre, is the main terminus and booking office for long-distance buses and trains. The centre has shops, food places, a post office and an accommodation booking service. Bus companies have booking desks on the 3rd level. **Greyhound** (☎ 13 14 99; www.greyhound.com.au) is the main company on the Sydney to Brisbane run; you can either go via the New England Hwy (17 hours) or the quicker Pacific Hwy (16 hours) for \$125. **Premier** (☎ 13 34 10; www.premiers.com.au) does the same route and often has slightly cheaper deals.

North to Cairns, Premier Motor Service runs one direct service daily and Greyhound runs four. The approximate fares and journey times to places along the coast are as follows:

Destination	Duration	One-way fare
Noosa Heads	2½hr	\$30
Hervey Bay	5½hr	\$65
Rockhampton	11½hr	\$115
Mackay	16½hr	\$165
Townsville	23hr	\$215
Cairns	29hr	\$255

Car

There are five major routes into and out of the Brisbane metropolitan area, numbered from M1 to M5. The major north-south route, the M1, connects the Pacific Hwy to the south with the Bruce Hwy to the north, but things get a bit confusing as you enter the city.

Coming from the Gold Coast, the Pacific Hwy splits into two at Eight Mile Plains. From here, the South East Freeway (M3) runs right into the centre, skirting along the riverfront on the western side of the CBD, before emerging on the far side as the Gympie Arterial Rd.

All of the major companies – **Hertz** (☎ 13 30 39), **Avis** (☎ 13 63 33), **Budget** (☎ 13 27 27), **Europcar** (☎ 13 13 90) and **Thrifty** (☎ 1300 367 227) – have offices at the Brisbane airport terminals and throughout the city.

There are also several smaller companies in Brisbane that advertise slightly cheaper deals, including **Ace Rental Cars** (Map p310; ☎ 1800 620 408, 3862 2158; www.acerentals.com.au; 35 Sandgate Rd, Albion).

Train

Brisbane's main station for long-distance trains is the Roma St Transit Centre. For reservations and information visit the **Queensland Rail Travel Centre** (☎ 131 617; www.qr.com.au) Central Station (Map pp314–15; ☎ 3235 1323; Ground fl, Central Station, 305 Edward St; ☎ 8am–5pm Mon–Fri); Roma St (Map pp314–15; ☎ 3235 1331; Roma St Transit Centre, Roma St; ☎ 6am–5pm Mon–Fri). You can also make reservations online or over the phone.

CountryLink (☎ 13 22 32; www.countrylink.nsw.gov.au) has a daily XPT service between Brisbane and Sydney (economy/1st class \$92/130, 14 hours). The northbound service runs overnight, and the southbound service runs during the day.

Coastal services within Queensland: **Spirit of the Outback** (economy seat/economy sleeper/1st-class sleeper \$185/245/375, 24 hours) Brisbane–Longreach via Rockhampton (\$105/165/255, 10½ hours) twice weekly.

Sunlander (\$215/270/415, 30 hours) Departs Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday for Cairns via Townsville.

Tilt Train (business \$310, 25hr) Brisbane–Cairns train leaves Brisbane at 6.25pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday, returning from Cairns at 9.15am Sunday, Wednesday and Friday.

Concessions are available to children under 16 years, students with a valid International Student Identity Card (ISIC), and senior citizens. For details contact **Queensland Rail** (☎ 13 22 32; www.traveltrain.com.au).

GETTING AROUND To/From the Airport

The easiest way to get to/from the airport is the **Airtrain** (☎ 3215 5000; www.airtrain.com.au; per adult/child \$13/6.50; ☎ 6am–7.30pm), which runs every 15 to 30 minutes between the air-

port and the Roma St Transit Centre and Central Station. There are also half-hourly services to the airport from Gold Coast Citytrain stops.

Coachtrans (☎ 3358 9700; www.coachtrans.com.au) runs the half-hourly Skytrans shuttle bus between the Roma St Transit Centre and the airport between 5.45am and 10pm. It costs \$12 per adult and \$8 per child for the trip from the airport to the city. A taxi into the centre from the airport will cost around \$35.

Bicycle

See p319 for information on cycling.

Car

Be warned that Brisbane's peak hour(s) traffic is notorious. There is free two-hour parking on many streets in the CBD and in the inner suburbs, but the major thoroughfares become clearways (ie parking is prohibited) during the morning and afternoon rush hours.

Queensland's motoring association is the RACQ (p309). You can obtain insurance and maps at the city branch.

Public Transport

Information on bus, train and ferry routes and connections can be obtained from the **Trans-Info Service** (☎ 13 12 30; www.transinfo.qld.gov.au). Information is also available at the Brisbane Visitor Information Centre (p310), the **bus station information centre** (Map pp314–15; Queen St Mall; ☎ 8.30am–5.30pm Mon–Thu, to 8pm Fri, 9am–4pm Sat, 10am–4pm Sun), and the Queensland Rail Travel Centres.

Fares on buses, trains and ferries operate on a zone system. The city centre and most of the inner-city suburbs fall within Zone 1, which translates to a single fare of \$2.30/1.20 per adult/child.

If you're going to be using public transport more than once on any single day, it's worth getting a daily ticket. These allow you unlimited transport on all buses, trains and ferries and are priced according to the number of zones you'll be travelling in:

Zone 1 (adult/child \$4.60/2.30)

Zone 2 (adult/child \$5.40/2.70)

Zone 3 (adult/child \$6.40/3.20)

You can also buy cheaper off-peak daily tickets that allow you to do the same thing between 9am and 3.30pm and after 7pm from Monday to Friday and all weekend.

BOAT

Brisbane's CityCat catamarans run every 20 to 30 minutes, between 5.45am and 11pm, from the University of Queensland in the west to Bretts Wharf in the east, and back. Stops along the way include North Quay (for the Queen St Mall), South Bank, Riverside (for the CBD) and New Farm Park. CityCats are wheelchair accessible at all stops except for West End, QUT Gardens Point, Riverside, Bulimba and Brett's Wharf.

Also useful are the Inner City Ferries, which zigzag back and forth across the river between North Quay, near the Victoria Bridge, and Mowbray Park. Services start at about 6am from Monday to Sunday, and run until about 11pm. There are also several cross-river ferries; most useful is the Eagle St Pier to Thornton St (Kangaroo Point) service.

BUS

The Loop is a free bus that circles the city, stopping at QUT, Queen St Mall, City Hall, Central Station and Riverside; it runs every 10 minutes on weekdays from 7am to 6pm.

The main stop for local buses is in the basement of the Myer Centre, where there's a small information centre. You can also pick up most of the useful buses from the colour-coded stops along Adelaide St, between George and Edward Sts.

Useful buses from the city centre include buses 195, 196, 197 and 199 to Fortitude Valley and New Farm, which leave from Adelaide St between King George Sq and Edward St. You can pick up bus 375 to Paddington from opposite the transit centre or on Adelaide St.

Taxi

There are usually plenty of taxis around the city centre, and there are taxi ranks at the transit centre and at the top end of Edward St, by the junction with Adelaide St. The major taxi company here is **Black & White** (☎ 13 10 08). Rivals include **Yellow Cab Co** (☎ 13 19 24) and **Brisbane Cabs** (☎ 13 22 11).

Train

The Citytrain network has seven lines that run as far as Nambour, Cooroy and Gympie in the north (for the Sunshine Coast) and Nerang and Robina in the south (for the Gold Coast). Other useful routes include

Rosewood (for Ipswich) and Cleveland (for the North Stradbroke Island ferry). The lines to Pinkenba, Shorncliffe and Ferny Grove are mainly for suburban commuters.

The Airtrain service (p328) integrates with the Citytrain network in the CBD and along the Gold Coast line. All trains go through Roma St and Central stations in the city, and Brunswick St station in Fortitude Valley.

Trains run from around 4.30am, with the last train to each line leaving Central Station between 11.30pm and midnight. On Sunday the last trains run at around 10pm.

AROUND BRISBANE

MORETON BAY ISLANDS

The patch of water lapping at Brisbane's urban edges is packed full of marine life including whales, dolphins and dugongs. Moreton Bay also has a bunch of startlingly beautiful islands that are very accessible from the mainland. North Stradbroke Island with its nonchalant holiday air and Moreton Island, a stunning patch of wilderness on Brisbane's doorstep, are two of the best.

North Stradbroke Island

Brisbanites are lucky to have such a brilliant holiday island on their doorstep. A mere 30-minute ferry ride from Cleveland, this sand island has a string of glorious powdery white-sand beaches. Inland are two glittering lakes carved out of the surrounding bushland, and

back along the coast quality accommodation and dining options await.

ORIENTATION & INFORMATION

Straddie has three small settlements, Dunwich, Amity Point and Point Lookout, all grouped around the northern end of the island. In the hilly central area is the beautiful Blue Lake National Park, and, while the wild southern half of the island is inaccessible due to mining, Eighteen Mile Beach, which runs clear down the eastern edge of the island, is accessible to 4WDs.

Stradbroke Island visitor information centre (☎ 3409 9555; www.stradbroketourism.com; Junner St; ☎ 8.30am-4.30pm) is 200m from the ferry terminal in Dunwich.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

If you're interested in Straddie's art scene, check out the local **Coral Sea Gallery** (Map p330; www.straddieonline.com.au/StraddieOnline/CoralSeaGallery.aspx; Pandanus Palms Resort) where the island's artistic community is well represented.

Straddie's best beaches for both **surfing** and **swimming** are around Point Lookout, where there's a series of points and bays around the headland and long stretches of white sand.

If you're not so keen on the surf, there are a couple of inland lakes worth exploring. If you don't have your own vehicle, you can take a tour or hire a bike, but be warned that there are some punishing hills to be negotiated. Both Brown Lake and Blue Lake are accessed via the sealed Mining Company Rd

from Dunwich. The turn-off to **Brown Lake** is reached first after about 3km; the lake is a short distance down a dirt track. The water is indeed brown, and shallow to boot, but it's a decent spot for a picnic and popular with young families.

Blue Lake, accessed from a car park a further 5km along the road, is a different proposition altogether. The centrepiece of Blue Lake National Park, it's reached via a beautiful and winding 2.1km walking track. The lake itself is small, crystal clear and very deep – the bottom drops away quickly and a little alarmingly right by the shore – but it's a serene and very beautiful spot. If you're lucky you'll have it all to yourself, and if you're even luckier you'll spot a rare and shy golden wallaby. There's no camping or drinking water in the park, so come prepared.

The eastern beach, known as **Eighteen Mile Beach**, is open to 4WD vehicles and campers and finishes up at the popular fishing spot of **Jumpinpin** on the island's southern tip. **Straddie Super Sports** (☎ 3409 9252; Bingle Rd; ☎ 7.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 7.30am-4pm Sat & Sun) hires out fishing gear from \$20 per day (plus deposit of \$30). **Manta Lodge & Scuba Centre** (☎ 3409 8888; www.mantalodge.com.au; 1 East Coast Rd), based at the YHA (right), offers snorkelling for \$50 inclusive of a two-hour boat trip and all the gear.

Straddie Adventures (☎ 3409 8414; Point Lookout) offers sea-kayaking trips (including snorkelling stops \$35) around Straddie, and sandboarding (\$25), which is like snowboarding, except on sand.

TOURS

A number of tour companies offer tours of the island. Generally the 4WD tours take in a strip of the eastern beach and several freshwater lakes.

North Stradbroke Island 4WD Tours & Camping Holidays (☎ 3409 8051; straddie@ecn.net.au) Generally, half-day tours cost \$30/15 per adult/child.

Point Lookout Fishing Charters (☎ 3409 8353, 0407-376 091) Organises six-hour fishing trips that cost \$160 per person.

Straddie Kingfisher Tours (☎ 3409 9502; www.straddiekingfishertours.com.au; adult/child \$70/40) Operates ecotours that last for six hours.

SLEEPING

Most accommodation is at Point Lookout, which is strung along 3km of coastline on the northern shore of the island.

Budget

Manta Lodge YHA (☎ 3409 8888; www.mantalodge.com.au; 1 East Coast Rd; dm \$28, tw & d \$70; ☎ ☎) This large beachside hostel is clean and well kept, and has excellent facilities, including a dive school right on the doorstep. There are four-, six- and eight-bed dorms. Guests can rent surfboards, bodyboards and bikes for \$20/\$35 per half-/full day.

Headland Chalet (☎ 3409 8252; 213 Midjimberry Rd, Point Lookout; d & tw cabins \$66, bungalow \$110; ☎ ☎) An excellent budget option is this cluster of cabins on the hillside overlooking Main Beach, near the roundabout. The cabins are attractive inside and have good views, and there's a pool, a TV room and a small kitchen.

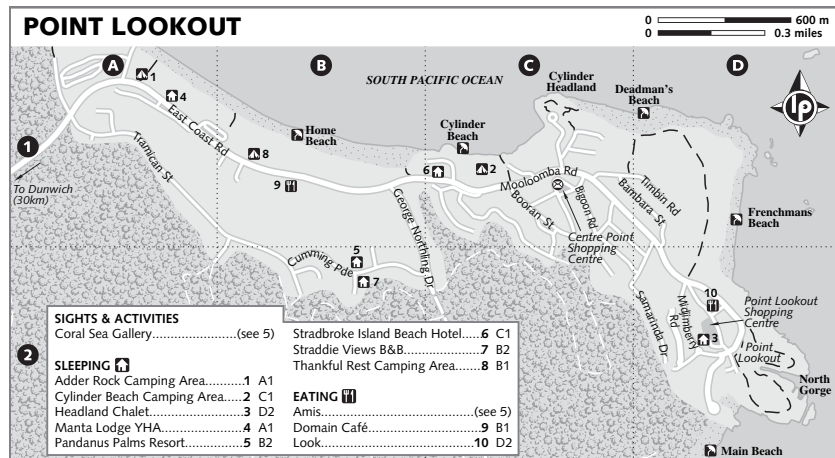
There are five camping grounds on the island operated by **Straddie Holiday Parks** (☎ 1300 551 253; unpowered sites \$13-31, powered sites \$28-38, cabins from \$75), but the most attractive are the places grouped around Point Lookout. The Adder Rock Camping Area and Thankful Rest Camping Area both overlook lovely Home Beach, while the Cylinder Beach Camping Area sits right on Cylinder Beach, one of the most popular beaches on the island. Sites should be booked well in advance.

Midrange & Top End

Straddie Views B&B (☎ 3409 8875; www.northstradbrokeisland.com/straddiebb; 26 Cumming Pde; r \$130-140) This friendly B&B, run by a couple of Straddie locals, has excellent-size rooms – probably double the size of most B&B rooms. Inside you get cane furniture, a breakfast menu and little touches such as wine glasses on the bed filled with choccies awaiting your arrival.

Stradbroke Island Beach Hotel (☎ 3409 8188; www.stradbrokeislandbeachhotel.com.au; East Coast Rd; r from \$145; ☎ ☎) Straddie's only hotel has been totally revamped. And we mean totally. Razed to the ground, the old hotel was blown aside for this masterclass of contemporary architecture. Rooms have muted, inoffensive tones, large flat-screen TVs and a cool, modern ambience.

Pandanus Palms Resort (☎ 3409 8106; www.pandanus.stradbrokeresorts.com.au; 21 Cumming Pde; apt \$180-320; ☎ ☎) Perched high above the beach, with a thick tumble of vegetation beneath, the large two-bed townhouses here are a good size and it is well worth paying the extra and getting one down the front of the complex. No 28 is probably the best – it has been modernised inside and has a large coconut tree in your



private courtyard from where you can enjoy the views while cooking on the BBQ.

EATING

There are a couple of general stores selling groceries in Point Lookout, but it's worth bringing basic supplies.

Look (☎ 3415 3390; shop 1, 29 Mooloomba Rd; lunch mains \$8-16; ☺ breakfast, lunch & dinner) This seems to be the hub of Point Lookout during the day, with funky tunes in the background and great outdoor seating where you catch the breeze and sublime views over the water. Dinner mains cost \$15 to \$26.

Domain Café (☎ 3415 0090; East Coast Rd; mains lunch/dinner \$16/26; ☺ breakfast, lunch & dinner) Domain is a classy little eatery adutting the resort of the same name. Dinner mains consist of meat oriented dishes, seafood (such as char grilled reef fish) and pasta.

Amis (☎ 3409 8600; 21 Cummings Pde; entrees \$17, mains \$31; ☺ dinner Wed-Sun) If you're looking for a special feast, this is the spot to head. This restaurant raises the bar on Straddie, serving delicate concoctions such as Bush to Bay – Queensland kangaroo loin fillet and Moreton Bay bugs with apple and pear risotto, bilberry rose petal sauce and bush herb oil. Many dishes have a north African influence.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

The gateway to North Stradbroke Island is the seaside suburb of Cleveland. Regular **Citytrain** (☎ 13 12 30; www.transinfo.qld.gov.au) services run from Central Station or Roma St to Cleveland station (\$4.50, one hour) and buses to the ferry terminals meet the trains at Cleveland station (\$1, 10 minutes).

Several ferry companies head across to Straddie. **Stradbroke Ferries** (☎ 3286 2666; www.stradbrokeferries.com.au) runs a water taxi to Dunwich almost every hour from about 6am to 6pm (\$17 return, 30 minutes). It also has a slightly less frequent vehicle ferry (per vehicle including passengers \$122 return, 45 minutes) from 5.30am to 5.30pm.

The **Stradbroke Flyer** (☎ 3286 1964; www.flyer.com.au) also runs an almost-hourly catamaran service from Cleveland to One Mile Jetty (\$17 return, 45 minutes), 1.5km north of central Dunwich.

GETTING AROUND

Local buses (☎ 3409 7151) meet the ferries at Dunwich and One Mile Jetty and run across

to Point Lookout (\$9.50 return). The last bus to Dunwich leaves Point Lookout at about 6.45pm, later on Friday. There's also the **Stradbroke Cab Service** (☎ 0408-193 685), which charges \$35 from Dunwich to Point Lookout.

Moreton Island

You don't need to head north to find a patch of island paradise in Queensland. Thick foliage tumbles down to white-sand beaches along the coast of Moreton Island. Largely undeveloped, most of the island is national park with walking trails, and the bird life is prolific. The water itself is a patchy jade and indigo colour, and once you're in it, crystal clear, as you'll discover if you go diving or snorkelling around the Tangalooma Wrecks, a shipwreck just off the west coast.

ORIENTATION & INFORMATION

Apart from the Tangalooma resort, the only other settlements are **Bulwer** near the north-western tip, **Cowan Cowan** between Bulwer and Tangalooma, and **Koorringal** near the southern tip. The shops at Koorringal and Bulwer are expensive, so bring what you can from the mainland.

You can get Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service (QPWS) maps from the vehicle-ferry offices or the Information desk at the **Marine Research & Education Centre** (below) at Tangalooma, which is a very helpful resource. Vehicle permits for the island cost \$36 and are available through the ferry operators or from the Naturally Qld office in Brisbane (p311). Ferry bookings are *mandatory* if you want to take a vehicle across; see opposite for operators.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Tangalooma, halfway down the western side of the island, is a popular tourist resort sited at an old whaling station. The main attraction is the **dolphin feeding**, which takes place each evening around sunset. Usually about eight or nine dolphins swim in from the ocean and take fish from the hands of volunteer feeders. Although you have to be a guest of the resort to participate, onlookers are welcome.

Also here is the **Marine Research & Education Centre** (Tangalooma Resort; ☺ 10am-noon & 1-5pm), which has a display on the amazingly diverse marine and bird life of Moreton Bay. Don't miss the 'Oddities of the Deep' board.

You can pick up a map of the island showing walking trails at the Centre. There's a

desert walk (two hours) and a bush walk (1½ hours), both leaving from the resort, as well as a longer walk to Water Point (four hours) on the east coast. It's also worth making the strenuous trek to the summit of Mt Tempest, 3km inland from Eagers Creek.

About 3km south and inland from Tangalooma is an area of bare sand known as the **Desert**, while the **Big Sandhills** and the **Little Sandhills** are towards the narrow southern end of the island. The biggest lakes and some swamps are in the northeast.

At the island's northern tip is a **lighthouse** built in 1857.

You can hire snorkelling gear from **Get Wet Sports** (☎ 3410 6927; Tangalooma Wild Dolphin Resort; per hr/day \$6/12) and immerse yourself amid the colourful coral and marine life of the Tangalooma Wrecks.

TOURS

Gibren Expeditions (☎ 1300 559 355; 1-2-day tours from \$140/220) Offers tours of the island with heaps of activities thrown in. The guides are locals and really know the island. The two-day tour means you camp overnight.

Moreton Bay Escapes (☎ 1300 559 355; www.moretonbayescapes.com.au; 1-day tours adult/child from \$140/120, 2-day camping tours incl meals from \$220) Its itineraries are similar to those of Gibren Expeditions.

Sunrover Expeditions (☎ 1800 353 717, 3880 0719; www.sunrover.com.au; adult/child \$120/90) A friendly and reliable 4WD tour operator with good day tours, which include lunch. It also operates two-day camping tours (adult/child \$195/150).

SLEEPING

There are a few holiday flats and houses for rent at Koorringal, Cowan Cowan and Bulwer. To see what's on offer including current pricing arrangements go to www.moreton-island.com/accommodation.html.

Tangalooma Wild Dolphin Resort (☎ 1300 652 250, 3268 6333; www.tangalooma.com; 1-night packages from \$200; ☺ ☎ ☎) This luxurious modern resort is the only formal setup on the island. There's a plethora of options available starting with pretty standard hotel-style rooms. A step up are the units and suites – refurbished B and D blocks offer your best options here,

where you'll get beachside access and rooms kitted out in cool, contemporary décor with good facilities.

There are nine (including four on the beach) national park **camping grounds** (sites per person/family \$4.50/18), all with water, toilets and cold showers. For information and camping permits, contact the Naturally Qld office in Brisbane (p311) or call ☎ 13 13 04. Camping permits must be arranged before you get to the island.

The shops at Koorringal and Bulwer are expensive, so bring what you can from the mainland.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

A number of ferries operate from the mainland. The **Tangalooma Flyer** (☎ 3268 6333; www.tangalooma.com/tangalooma/transport; per adult/child return day trip \$40/25, or from \$80/40), a fast catamaran operated by the resort, sails to the resort on Moreton Island daily from a dock at Holt St, off Kingsford Smith Dr (in Eagle Farm). A bus (\$10) to the flyer departs the Roma St Transit Centre at 9am. You can use the bus for a day trip (it returns at 9am and 4pm daily as well as at 2pm on Saturday and Sunday) or for camping drop-offs. Bookings are necessary. The trip takes 1¼ hours.

The **Moreton Venture** (☎ 3895 1000; www.moretonventure.com.au; adult/child/vehicle & 2 passengers return \$45/30/190; ☺ 8.30am daily, 6.30pm Fri & 2.30pm Sun) is a vehicle ferry that runs from Howard-Smith Dr, Lyton, at the Port of Brisbane, to Tangalooma. It leaves the island at 3.30pm daily, as well as at 8pm on Friday, and 1pm and 4.30pm on Sunday.

The **Combie Trader** (☎ 3203 6399; www.moreton-island.com/how.html; adult/child/vehicle & 4 passengers return \$40/25/165; ☺ 8am & 1pm Mon, 8am Wed & Thu, 8am, 1pm & 7pm Fri, 8am & 1pm Sat, 10.30am & 3.30pm Sun) sails between Scarborough and Bulwer and takes about 2½ hours to make the crossing. The Saturday morning crossings are slightly cheaper for pedestrians.

Moreton Island 4WD Taxi & Tour Services offer a 4WD taxi service and tours of the island – for information click onto www.moretonisland.com.au/product.php?id=67753.

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