

Around Brisbane



The bayside surrounding Brisbane contains some lovely areas that make for great day trips – or longer – from the city and will relieve that sense of urban grit. Redcliffe feels almost as if it was designed for families, with morning jaunts along its esplanade as stressful as it gets. The town is a historical treasure, being the site of the first white settlement in Queensland. If you're interested in boating, grab the train down to Manly, where the main pursuits include sailing into the bay and eating fish and chips by the harbourside.

The patch of water lapping at Brisbane's urban edges and merging into the Southern Pacific Ocean is one of the city's greatest assets. Packed full of marine life including whales, porpoises and dugongs, Moreton Bay also has a bunch of startlingly beautiful islands, which are very accessible from the mainland. North Stradbroke is a gem with thick bush, inland lakes and a glorious stretch of beach that will entice you to linger. The island is quite well developed, providing decent infrastructure for holidaying Brisbanites. If you feel like getting further off the track, the rugged wilderness of Moreton Island beckons. Bush camping on this sand island with its tropical foliage is sublime and there is wonderful snorkelling around an old wreck just offshore.

It's well worth exploring Brisbane's surrounds and nearby islands – you may even find yourself relocating for a while...

HIGHLIGHTS

- Tramping around **North Stradbroke Island** (p129) and discovering powder-sand beaches
- Walking through rainforest on **Moreton Island** (p133), then watching a flaming-red sunset over the **Tangalooma Wrecks** (p134)
- Hand-feeding frolicking dolphins and just lazing about under swaying palm trees at **Tangalooma** (p134)
- Gorging on fresh fish at **Manly** (p128) and then catching a day cruise and spotting magnificent Moreton Bay marine life
- Checking out the fascinating local history museum at **Redcliffe** (p126) and stretching your legs around the peninsula
- Bush camping on **Moreton Island** (p133) and waking up to a symphony of bird calls



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 07

■ www.redcliffe.qld.gov.au

■ www.stradbrokeholidays.com.au

REDCLIFFE

As the state's first white settlement, the Redcliffe Peninsula, located on the bay 35km north of the state capital, talks up its historical credentials. They're pretty organised up here with informative tourist centres and a surprisingly good museum. Redcliffe, a picturesque jut of land doused in an ambling, happy coastal ambience, makes a great break from the urban lashings of Brisbane and that's what it's mainly used for. Particularly good for families, the area has calm beaches ideal for the kids.

The Niny Niny people were the first residents of the peninsula, occupying the land for hundreds of years before white settlement. In 1824 John Oxley and Henry Miller landed the *Amity*, carrying settlers, soldiers and convicts, and the peninsula became the site of the first white settlement in Queensland. When the settlement moved to Brisbane only a year later, the Niny Niny called the place Humpybong (Dead Houses) and the name is still applied to the peninsula.

INFORMATION

The main **Redcliffe Visitor Information Centre** (☎ 1800 659 500, 3284 3500; www.redcliffetourism.com; Pelican Park, Hornibrook Esplanade, Clontarf; ☹ 9am-4pm) is at the base of the peninsula. There's also another smaller, central **branch** (☎ 1800 659 500; cnr Redcliffe Pde & Irene St; ☹ 9am-4pm) in Redcliffe.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

A pedestrian and cycle path hugs the peninsula's shore from Scarborough in the north to Redcliffe Point in the centre. It's the most scenic way to see the area, and there are frequent stairs to the shops and cafés on the esplanade atop the slight slope. On the way you can stretch your legs on the sizable **Redcliffe Jetty**, which has had several makeovers since its beginnings in 1885. A few hundred metres south of the jetty sits **Settlement Cove Lagoon**, a small lagoon that looks like it migrated from Toyland. It's a veritable Utopia for little ones, who get to scramble over colourful boats and castles and cool off in the various pools. Understandably it's a fantastic spot for families and the barbecues and shady spots facilitate an all-day visit.

At the base of the peninsula, on Clontarf Beach, the Redcliffe Visitor Information

Centre feeds the voracious local pelicans every day at 10am.

A few blocks east, the old Hornibrook Hwy used to be the main access point for folk heading onto the peninsula from the south. Having long been replaced by a dirty great concrete slab running parallel to it, the old highway is now a 2.8km jetty and popular fishing spot.

The small but interesting **Redcliffe Historical Museum** (☎ 3883 1898; 75 Anzac Ave; admission free; ☹ 10am-4pm Tue-Sun) details the peninsula's history through information boards, artefacts and a great series of personal accounts from locals. The excellent *Spectravision* wraps Redcliffe's story up in a clever and engrossing 15-minute multimedia presentation. The audiovisual pays respect to the Niny Niny people and their role in saving three shipwrecked whitefellas. The museum also has interesting artistic and photographic displays from local artists.

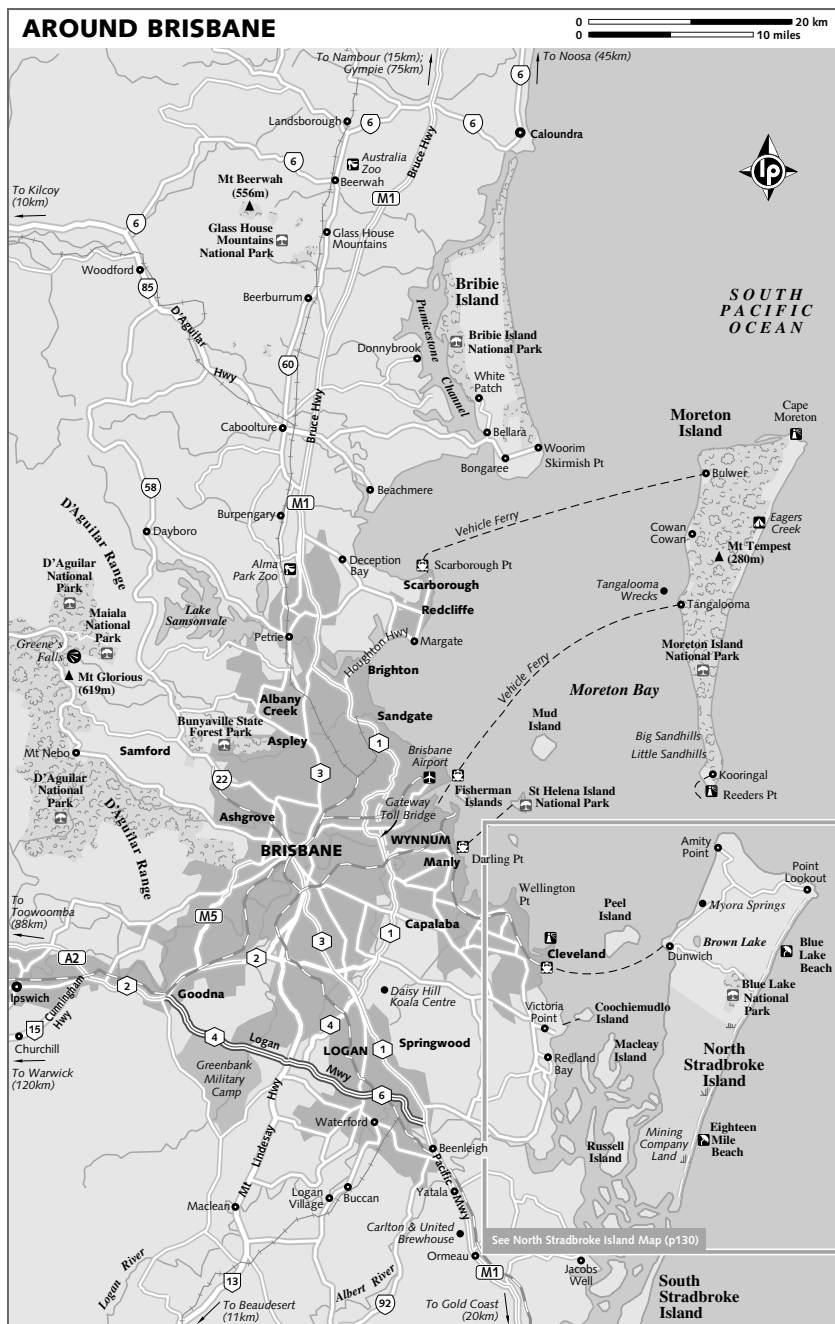
If you're feeling adventurous, what better place to learn how to kite-surf? This is one adrenalin-pumping sport and **Bris Kites** (☎ 3283 1818; www.bris kites.com.au; 2/10 Hornibrook Esplanade) runs a kite-surf school at the peninsula; a two-hour introductory lesson is \$140.

SLEEPING & EATING

Waltzing Matilda Hotel (☎ 3283 7177; 109 Margate Parade, Margate Beach; r \$80-95) We won't lie – this place has seen better days, but at the price it's good value. 1970s in almost every respect, the rooms worth chasing here are the upstairs sea-facing ones – especially numbers 11 to 14. These come with small balconies and water views making the décor behind you fade into insignificance. Rooms at the rear are cheaper, and so they should be: worn and tattered, they'd do at a pinch if you plan to spend most of your time out and about anyway.

Baringa B&B (☎ 3284 9230; salis@technet2000.com.au; 1 Baringa St; d \$95-105; ☹) At Baringa you get space. Your options are a huge double room (with extra single bed) separate from the main residence; or upstairs, above the owner's residence, you get your own unit complete with full kitchen, lounge room and balcony. In the unit you have a choice of three bedrooms, so it's a good option for groups. The owners aren't the friendliest folk on the planet but they'll leave you to do your own thing.

Pale Pacific Holiday Units (☎ 3284 7743; borger@hotkey.com.au; 159 Margate Pde, Margate; units per week from \$500; ☹) A handful of old-fashioned units that



are very well kitted-out, including TVs and DVD players, make a good option for families or couples. The two-bedroom units have sea-facing balconies, and because the whole place is on a corner it catches the afternoon sea breeze. Great value for money in unfussy, family-run, self-catering accommodation.

Morgans (☎ 3203 5744; Bird of Passage Pde, Scarborough; mains \$30-40; ☺ lunch & dinner) An emporium of the freshest seafood, here you'll find Morgans Seafood Restaurant, a sushi bar, fish market and seafood takeaway. If you want the full splurge the award-winning restaurant is ideal, otherwise line up at the takeaway.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

Translink buses 690, 310 and 315 service the Redcliffe area, including Scarborough, from Brisbane (\$4.50, one hour).

Vehicle ferries to Moreton Island leave from Scarborough at the northern tip of the headland.

MANLY

Just a few kilometres south of the Brisbane River mouth, Manly's large marina makes a good base for trips into Moreton Bay, including yacht rides. The town is delightful, with an excellent selection of eating and drinking establishments; seafood rules most of the kitchens.

The esplanade (north and south of the marina) makes for good walking or cycling in either direction with water and island views, and, around by East Coast Marina, cliffs and ridiculously stunning houses falling off cliff-tops.

INFORMATION

The **tourist information office** (☎ 3348 3524; 43 Cambridge Pde; ☺ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat & Sun) is very helpful.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Various sailing companies offer day trips out on Moreton Bay. **Solo** (☎ 3348 6100; www.solosail.com.au; adult/child \$115/90) operates day tours in its racing yacht *Solo*, which has won the Sydney-Hobart yacht race. The tours include three hours of sailing and three hours of snorkelling, swimming or just lazy about on Moreton Island, plus lunch.

Getaway Cruising (☎ 3396 9400; www.manly.ecocruises.com; adult/child \$100/45) takes folk out on

the MV *Getaway*, with boom nets, for full-day cruises. It also operates a very popular Sunday barbecue breakfast tour (adult/child \$40/20), which lasts two hours.

The **Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron** (☎ 3396 8666; 578 Royal Esplanade), south of the centre, has yacht races every Wednesday afternoon, and many of the captains are happy to take visitors on board for the ride. Sign on in the Yachties Bar before 12.30pm. You may also be able to pick up a yacht ride along the coast from here: the club has a notice board where people advertise for crew. Another port of call is the **Wynnum-Manly Yacht Club** (☎ 3393 5708).

SLEEPING & EATING

Our pick **Moreton Bay Backpackers Lodge** (☎ 1800 800 157, 3396 3824; www.moretonbaylodge.com.au; 45 Cambridge Pde; dm/d \$22/85) Upstairs on Manly's main strip, this is a brilliant, laid-back hostel in a great old property right on the main drag, with fantastic common areas including a large lounge. It's friendly and chilled and there are lots of activities on offer everyday. Dorms have six to eight beds, and have a double bed as well as bunks; most are en suite. Also here is the excellent **High Tide** (mains \$15-21; ☺ lunch Fri-Sun, dinner Tue-Sun), a bar-restaurant that does cheap meals for backpackers most nights.

Manly Hotel (☎ 3249 5999; www.manlyhotel.com; 54 Cambridge Pde, Manly; mains \$20-30; ☺ breakfast, lunch & dinner) This is a much classier joint than it appears from outside, and the floor-to-ceiling windows flood the place with light. There are also excellent front and rear beer gardens, and live music on weekends. It's a great place to try reasonably priced Moreton Bay Bugs – the local speciality. Also has large range of well-maintained rooms (single \$65 to \$110, double \$80 to \$125).

Fish Cafe (☎ 3893 0195; cnr Cambridge Pde & Esplanade; mains \$25-35; ☺ breakfast Sat & Sun, lunch, dinner) For the best fish and chips (\$10) in town, get a takeaway (local whiting is recommended) at this fancy place, trot across the road and pull up a seat overlooking the marina. If you prefer to eat inside, tuck into succulent seafood so fresh it may still be squirming on your plate. Try the Moreton Bay Bugs with papaya and vermicelli rice noodles.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

The best way to get to Manly is by train, which departs from Brisbane's Roma St or Central Stations (\$3.60, 40 minutes, approximately half-hourly).

NORTH STRADBROKE ISLAND

'Straddie' is one of Moreton Bay's gems. A lovely sand island that is frequently turned into a playground by Brisbanites escaping the urban grind for the weekend, it's large enough to absorb this influx of visitors and has some genuinely pristine wilderness areas. If you want to get some sun on your back the beaches here are excellent and there are some great walking tracks to sublime inland lakes. The wild south-eastern coast is the spot where 4WD drivers churn up the sands. Given its popularity with mainlanders there are also some fabulous accommodation and dining options.

North and South Stradbroke Islands used to be joined, but a savage storm severed the sand spit between the two in 1896. Sand mining used to be a major industry here, but these days only the southwest of the island is mined. For information on South Stradbroke, see p138.

ORIENTATION & INFORMATION

There are three small settlements on the island: Dunwich, Amity Point and Point Lookout, which are all grouped around the northern end of the island. Point Lookout, on the main surf beach, is the nicest place to stay. Apart from the beach, the southern part of the island is closed to visitors because of mining.

The **Stradbroke Island Visitor Information Centre** (☎ 3409 9555; Junner St; www.stradbroketourism.com; ☺ 8.30am-4.30pm) is 200m from the ferry terminal in Dunwich and has extremely helpful staff, especially for finding accommodation when it's busy.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Straddie's most obvious lure is a string of beautiful **beaches**. At Point Lookout there's a series of points and bays along the headland, and endless stretches of white sand. Cylinder Beach and Amity Point generally provide calm swimming opportunities, while Main Beach churns some good swells and breaks for **surfing**. There are also unpatrolled and exposed breaks all along Eighteen Mile Beach. Manta Lodge YHA (p131) hires out surfboards.

Straddie Adventures (☎ 3409 8414; www.straddieadventures.com.au; 112 East Coast Rd, Point Lookout) offers sea-kayaking trips including snor-

kelling stops (\$35) around Straddie, and sand-boarding (\$25).

Manta Lodge & Scuba Centre (☎ 3409 8888; www.mantalodge.com.au; 1 East Coast Rd), based at the YHA (p131), offers snorkelling for \$50 inclusive of a two-hour boat trip and all the gear. Open-water dive courses cost \$450, while a trip with two dives for certified divers goes for \$160. The centre will also hire out gear (\$50) if you already know what you're doing. Some of the diving sites are spectacular, with sightings of grey nurse and leopard sharks, turtles, tropical fish and other marine life common.

The island is also famous for its **fishing**, and the annual Straddie Classic, held in August, is one of Australia's richest and best-known fishing competitions. Manta Lodge hires fishing rods for \$10.

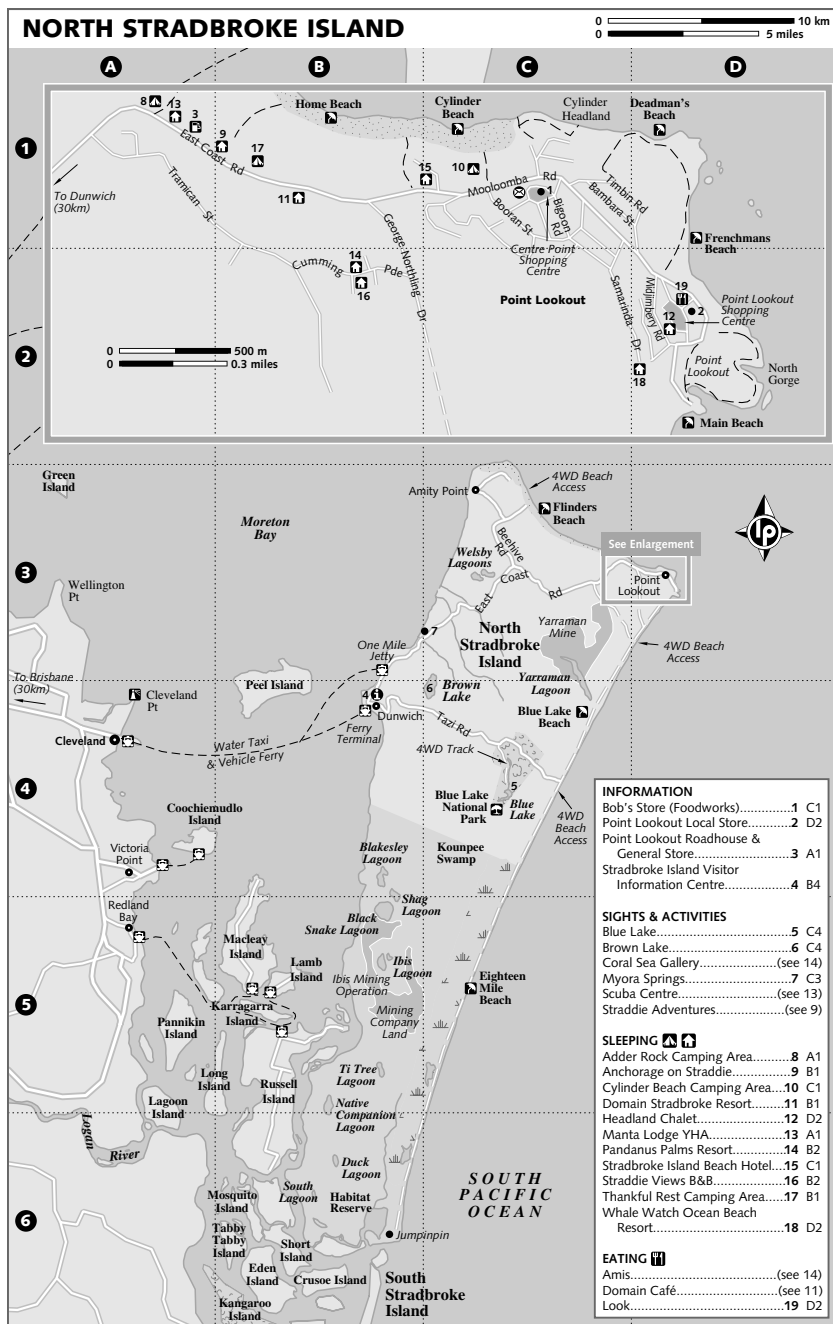
Straddie Super Sports (☎ 3409 9252; Bingle Rd, Dunwich; ☺ 7.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat & Sun) hires out fishing gear from \$20 per day (plus deposit of \$30). See p131 for fishing tours.

With a 4WD you can drive all the way down the eastern beach to Jumpinpin, the channel that separates North and South Stradbroke, a legendary fishing spot. Access is via George Nothling Dr or Tazi Rd. 4WD permits cost \$30 and are available from the Dunwich visitor information centre. You can also call **Redlands Tourism** (☎ 3821 0057) to purchase one.

There is a good walk around the **North Gorge** (30 minutes) on the headland at Point Lookout, and porpoises, dolphins, manta rays and sometimes whales can be spotted from up here. In fact Point Lookout is one of the best land-based **whale-watching** sites in Queensland.

Dunwich, on the western coast, is where the ferries dock and is home to the **North Stradbroke Historical Museum** (☎ 3409 9699; Welsby Rd; adult/child \$3.30/1.10; ☺ 10am-2pm Wed, Fri & Sat), near the post office. The museum is definitely worth an hour or two's browsing. An oddball collection of island artefacts includes the skull of a sperm whale, washed up along Main Beach in 2004. There's a section on the indigenous history of Stradbroke, including a map showing Aboriginal walking trails around the island.

The eastern beach, known as **Eighteen Mile Beach**, is open to 4WD vehicles and campers, and there are lots of walking tracks and old 4WD roads on the northern half of the island. Just off the road from Dunwich to the beach, **Blue Lake** is the glittering centrepiece



of the Blue Lake National Park. It's reached by a 2.7km walking trail through the forest, starting from a car park, well signed off the side of the road. There's a wooden viewing platform affording great views and the lake is surrounded by a forest of paperbarks, eucalypts and banksias. Keep an eye out for swamp wallabies. The freshwater lake is a beautiful spot for a swim, if you don't mind the spooky unseen depths.

There's also good swimming at **Brown Lake**, about 3km along Tazi Rd from Dunwich. Favoured by families and only a short 2WD from the road, the water here is very brackish, hence the name. There are picnic benches, barbecues, a kids playground and a sandy beach that's good for paddling.

For both lakes, take the road opposite to the ferry terminal. If you're coming from Point Lookout turn right to the ferry and left to get to the lakes.

If you want to hike the 20km across the island from Dunwich to Point Lookout, a number of dirt-track loops break the monotony of the bitumen road. A pleasant diversion is a visit to the **Myora Springs**, which are surrounded by lush vegetation and walking tracks, near the coast about 4km north of Dunwich.

If you're interested in Straddie's art scene, check out the local **Coral Sea Gallery** (www.straddieonline.com.au/StraddieOnline/CoralSeaGallery.aspx; Pandanus Palms Resort), where the island's artistic community is well represented. If you can't get to the gallery, click onto the website to view the works online.

TOURS

A number of tour companies offer good 4WD tours of the island. Generally these take in a strip of the eastern beach and visit several freshwater lakes. All tour operators will collect you from either the ferry at Dunwich or your accommodation.

North Stradbroke Island 4WD Tours & Camping Holidays (☎ 3409 8051; straddie@ecn.net.au) Operates tours by negotiation, based on numbers and the time of year. Generally, half-day tours cost \$30/15 per adult/child. This outfit also operates half-day fishing tours for the same price.

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.stradiekingsfishertours.com.au; adult/child \$70/40)

Operates ecotours that last for six hours; also has whale-watching tours in season

SLEEPING

Almost all of the island's accommodation is in Point Lookout, strung along 3km of coastline. Note that during low season you can get just one night's accommodation at many places, but it's far more expensive than booking multiple nights.

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 and the owners are very happy to close off small dorms to couples or friends who don't want to share, and just charge a bit extra. Guests can rent surfboards, body boards and bikes for \$20/35 per half-/full day.

Headland Chalet (☎ 3409 8252; 213 Midjimberr 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. The bungalow is a self-contained house sleeping four.

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 those grouped around Point Lookout. The Adder Rock Camping Area and the Thankful Rest Camping Area both overlook lovely Home Beach, while the Cylinder Beach Camping Area sits right on one of the island's most popular beaches. Sites should be booked well in advance.

Midrange & Top End

Gurpick Straddie Views B&B (☎ 3409 8875; www.northstradbrokeisland.com/straddiebb; 26 Cumming Pde; r \$130-140) Two suites are available in this friendly B&B run by a couple of Straddie locals. Rooms are an excellent size – probably double that of most B&B rooms. Inside you get cane furniture, a breakfast menu and little touches like wine glasses on the bed filled with choccies awaiting your arrival. Breakfast in the morning is served on the upstairs deck with fantastic water views.

OODGEROO NOONUCCAL

North Stradbroke Island's most famous daughter was the poet and Aboriginal activist Oodgeroo Noonuccal. Born Kath Walker in 1920, she belonged to the Noonuccal tribe, which has inhabited the Moreton Bay area for thousands of years.

Oodgeroo attended school on North Stradbroke Island until the age of 13, when she left to become a domestic servant. At the time it was apparent to her that even with an education, Aboriginal people had little hope of working in better jobs.

In 1942 her path shifted again when she volunteered for service in the Australian Women's Army Service. However, it was her role as the Queensland State Secretary of the Council for the Advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (CAATSI) during the 1960s that began an era when her two passions would flourish.

During her 10-year tenure, Oodgeroo travelled throughout Australia and across the globe, campaigning for equality for indigenous Australians. It was her mission to expose their plight and promote their cultural survival. Her efforts played no small role in the 1967 legislation that gave indigenous Australians the right to vote for the first time.

This decade also gave birth to Oodgeroo's other great passion and talent: poetry. In 1964 she became the first Aboriginal woman to be published (under the name of Kath Walker), with her collection of verse *We Are Going*. The publication sold out in three days, and during the 1970s and '80s her subsequent work received international acclaim and was acknowledged through several prestigious awards, including the Fellowship of Australia Writers' Award, and several honorary doctorates.

Perhaps the most recognised of her awards was the Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to the community, which she received as Kath Walker in 1970. When Oodgeroo accepted her nomination for the award, it was because she felt the honour would increase awareness of Aboriginal culture. Seventeen years later, she felt this vision had not transpired and famously returned her MBE to protest the 1988 Australian bicentenary celebrations.

Oodgeroo spent the later years of her life back on North Stradbroke Island, teaching more than 30,000 children of all races about Aboriginal culture. Her death in 1993 was mourned widely in the community. Throughout her life she used her poetry to voice her desire for greater understanding between white and black Australians. Among her most celebrated publications, which also include short stories, plays, speeches and children's books, are *The Dawn is at Hand* and *My People*.

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 in contemporary architecture. Rooms have muted, inoffensive tones, large flat-screen TVs and a cool, modern ambience. An extra \$40 will buy you sea views. The open bar downstairs with an outside pool table and 'sail' roof is a delight, and makes you feel like you're almost on the beach itself. The hotel also runs a courtesy bus which is a big bonus – no need to drive, if you go out to dinner.

Domain Stradbroke Resort (☎ 3415 0000; www.domainresorts.com; 43 East Coast Rd; villa from \$160; 🏠 🚿) Large ultramodern villas are set in a leafy compound and backed by forest here. If you like your designer furniture and 'ooohh look at that, daaahling' décor then this could be the place for you. Designs are a little zany,

with two-bedroom villas having a completely separate little building for the master bedroom. If you want space from the kids, or travelling companions though, this is ideal. Also included is good privacy from your neighbours, great outdoor decking and an outside shower.

Pandanus Palms Resort (☎ 3409 8106; www.pandanus.stradbrokeislandresorts.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 to get one at the front of the complex. The ocean views are simply magnificent and on a clear day you can see all the way to the Glasshouse Mountains. Room 28 is probably the best – it has been modernised inside and has a large coconut tree in its private courtyard, from where you can enjoy the views while cooking on the barbecue.

Also recommended:

Whale Watch Ocean Beach Resort (☎ 1800 450 004, 3409 8555; www.whalewatchresort.com.au; Samarinda Dr; apt per 2/5 nights from \$340/800; 🏠 🚿 🚿) Sublime and secluded apartments with stylish furniture and large decks.

Anchorage on Straddie (☎ 3409 8266; www.anchorage.stradbrokeislandresorts.com.au; East Coast Rd; studio apt from \$150; 🏠 🚿) Large self-contained apartments with great balconies overlooking a canopy of forest at the rear of the complex. Ideal for families.

EATING

There are plenty of dining choices; the ones listed here are all in Point Lookout.

Look (☎ 3415 3390; Shop 1, 29 Mooloomba Rd; lunch mains \$8-16, dinner mains \$15-26; 🍳 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 can catch the breeze and sublime views over the water. For lunch try the citrus-segment salad: grilled haloumi cheese, asparagus, citrus segments and salad greens with crushed cashews. The relaxed-by-day attitude is retained in the evening when more serious fare is churned out.

Domain Cafe (☎ 3415 0090; East Coast Rd; mains lunch/dinner \$16/26; 🍳 breakfast, lunch, dinner) Domain is a classy little eatery abutting the resort of the same name. Dinner mains consist of meat-oriented dishes, seafood (such as char-grilled reef fish) and pasta. There are not many dishes to choose from – the kitchen doesn't try and overextend itself, relying on quality rather than choice. The outdoor seating is lovely on warm evenings.

our pick 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 to. 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. Inside you'll find a thatched roof, large windows, and efficient, smooth and friendly service.

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 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 return \$122, 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 for the trip from Dunwich to Point Lookout.

MORETON ISLAND

If you're not going much further north in Queensland than Brisbane but want a slice of tropical paradise, slip over to this blissful island. Dazzling white beaches are backed by Australian bush tumbling down to the sands, while the water itself is coloured patchy jade and indigo and, once you're in it, crystal clear. Apart from a few rocky headlands, it's all sand, with Mt Tempest, the highest coastal sand hill in the world, towering to 280m. The island hosts prolific bird life, and at its northern tip is a lighthouse, built in 1857. Off the western coast are the rusty hulking Tangalooma Wrecks, which provide good snorkelling and diving.

The best part about the island is its lack of development, with 90% of it a national park. The island sees far fewer visitors than Stradbroke, with mostly families, Asian tourists and grey nomads dropping anchor.

ORIENTATION & INFORMATION

Moreton Island has no paved roads, but 4WD vehicles can travel along the beaches and a few cross-island tracks – seek local advice about tides and creek crossings before

venturing out. 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 (p73). Note that 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 **wild-dolphin feeding** that takes place each evening around sundown. Usually about eight or nine dolphins swim in from the ocean and take fish from the hands of volunteer feeders. You have to be a guest of the resort to participate, but 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. There's a desert trail (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.

The only other settlements, all on the western coast, are **Bulwer**, near the north-western tip, **Cowan Cowan**, between Bulwer and Tangalooma, and **Koorinal**, near the southern tip.

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. If you prefer to view things from on top of the water, it also has kayaks for \$9 per hour. If you're into more adventurous playthings, check out **Club Toys** (Tangalooma Wild Dolphin Resort; ☎ 8am-5pm), which hires out catamarans (\$15 per hour), surf skis and motorboats (\$20 per hour).

TOURS

Most day and two-day tours depart from Brisbane or the Gold Coast.

SUNSET DELIGHT

For flaming sunset views over the water, head up to the top of Kangaroo Lodge, which is within the Tangalooma Resort complex. Tangalooma on Moreton Island is one of the few places around Brisbane that faces west over the bay, giving wonderful water sunsets, with the Tangalooma Wrecks looking quite surreal in the foreground.

Get Wet Sports (☎ 3410 6927; Tangalooma Wild Dolphin Resort) Offers 1½-hour snorkelling trips around the Tangalooma Wrecks (adult/child \$30/22) and introductory diving trips for qualified divers (\$95). You can also do an open-water PADI dive course here for \$440.

Gibren Expeditions (☎ 1300 559 355; 1-2-day tours from \$140/220) Offers tours of the island with heaps of activities thrown in, including snorkelling, sand-boarding, bushwalking and scuba diving. 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) 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. Also operates two-day camping tours (adult/child \$195/150) and three-day national-park safaris (camping \$300/200). Both of these options include meals.

SLEEPING & EATING

There are a few holiday flats and houses for rent at Koorinal, 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; ☎ ☎ ☎) Fringed with grass leading onto the beach, and thatched umbrellas and swaying palm trees providing shade, 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 in Kookaburra Lodge. If you go for one of these, get a room near the top for the sensational views from your balcony. 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. Both include kitchens in an open-plan living style. The main difference is that suites sleep more people, with a separate double bedroom, so are better for families.

The resort also offers a number of eating options, including **The Coffeshop** (Tangalooma Resort; snacks \$6; ☎ lunch) for sandwiches, wraps and pies; the **Beach Cafe** (Tangalooma Resort; mains \$15-20; ☎ lunch) for something more substantial, or **Tursiops Restaurant** (Tangalooma Resort; lunch/dinner \$20/30; ☎ breakfast, lunch, dinner) if you've worked up a healthy appetite – this buffet-style place has beef, chicken and seafood dishes.

There are nine national park **camping grounds** (sites per person/family \$4.50/18), all with water, toilets and cold showers; of these, four are on the beach). For information and camping permits, contact the Naturally QLD office in Brisbane (p73) or call ☎ 13 13 04. Camping permits must be arranged before you get to the island.

The shops at Koorinal 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) is a fast catamaran operated by the Tangalooma Resort. It makes the 1¼-hour trip to the resort on Moreton Island daily from a dock at Eagle Farm, at Holt St off Kingsford Smith Dr. 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 **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 offers a 4WD taxi service and tours of the island – for information click onto www.moretonisland.com.au/product.php?id=67753

ST HELENA ISLAND

Now a national park, little St Helena Island, only 6km from the mouth of the Brisbane River, was a high-security prison until 1932. You can now see the remains of several **prison buildings**, plus parts of Brisbane's first **tramway**, built in 1884. The old trams were pulled by horses, but these days a tractor pulls the coaches as part of the island tour.

AB Sea Cruises (☎ 3893 1240; www.sthelenaisland.com.au; ☎ 9.15am Mon-Fri, 10am Sat & Sun) runs day trips to St Helena from Manly Harbour, including a tramway ride and a 'dramatised tour' of the prison (adult/child \$70/40), complete with floggings if you so desire. Its ghost tour (\$90/50) departs on Friday and Saturday evening.

You can reach Manly from central Brisbane in about 35 minutes by train on the Cleveland line.

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