

VA & NZ Experience Australia Famil

Tropical North Queensland

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TNQ Sees Kiwi Market Growth

Cairns may be just a five-hour flight from New Zealand but it truly feels like it's a world away—and the Tropical North Queensland region is enjoying renewed interest from the Kiwi market.

The Air New Zealand/Virgin Australia TNQ famil is underway with a group of Kiwi agents exploring the region, activities and experiences on offer.

Tourism Tropical North Queensland sales & marketing manager Western Elizabeth Webb says the region is currently experiencing huge growth from the Kiwi market.

“People are feeling confident, operators are feeling confident,” she says. “Australia is back on trend, and that means Tropical North Queensland is back on trend.”

Webb adds that this time of year ‘is just beautiful’ and right through to Nov is a great time to visit as it's not too hot, and not too cold. “You can go out swimming and it's nice and comfortable and that's what people like; you can lay out in the sun and not swelter too much.”

TTNQ director leisure sales & marketing (and familiar industry face) Jane Wilson, who only recently moved to Cairns, says she was ‘pleasantly surprised what an amazing destination Cairns is in its own right’. “There is such a huge variety of things to do all very close to one another.”

The destination is great for all markets, including couples and families, and a perfect escape from the New Zealand winter, adds Wilson.



Cairns Turtle Rehabilitation Centre

The Cairns Turtle Rehabilitation Centre (CTRC) is dedicated to the rehabilitation of injured and sick turtles. Located on Fitzroy Island, it offers one small group tour daily (or up to three if there is demand). The CTRC works with injured turtles that have been found around the region, such as hawksbills, flatbacks and greens. The turtles are nursed back to health, no matter how long it takes before being released back into the wild at the same spot they were found. The tour departs daily at 1300 and is limited to 15 people. For further details [CLICK HERE](#)

1 The group learning about the work the centre does. **2** Lisa Millar, Flight Centre The Palms with Eva the turtle. **3** Air NZ's Hayley Price getting a close-up view of one of the turtles.

Adventures Aboard At Fitzroy Island

Located a 45-minute boat ride from the Cairns Reef Fleet Terminal, Fitzroy Island is home to Fitzroy Island Resort and a council campground, and there's the option to stay, or to simply visit for the day. And with its turquoise waters and white coral beaches surrounded by rainforest, it's pretty obvious why Fitzroy Island is such a major drawcard for visitors. While clients could easily sit on the beach all day

there is a host of activities on offer including kayaking, stand up paddle boarding, diving, snorkelling, take a glass bottom boat tour or a bush walk. The famil group travelled to Fitzroy Island from/to Cairns on the Fitzroy Island Fast Cat and had the chance to do a glass bottom boat and snorkelling tour courtesy of the Cairns Dive Centre. For further information see fitzroyisland.com



1 House of Travel Parnell's Silvana Rooney; Air NZ's Hayley Price; HoT Howick's Emma Simpson; HoT Merivale's Danielle Wheatley; and Flight Centre The Palms' Lisa Millar enjoying the ride aboard the Fitzroy Island Fast Cat, en route to Fitzroy Island from Cairns. **2** Lisa Millar, Flight Centre The Palms about to go snorkelling. **3** HoT Howick's Emma Simpson; HoT Parnell's Silvana Rooney; and HoT Merivale's Danielle Wheatley enjoying the views on the way to Fitzroy Island. **4** HoT Howick's Emma Simpson and Flight Centre's Devon Jenkins on arrival at Fitzroy Island. **5** Harvey World Travel Upper Hutt's Scott Goodwin, HoT's Emma Simpson and Tourism Tropical North Queensland's Becca Keegan looking out for fish on a glass bottom boat tour. **6** Air NZ Holidays Queenstown's Kelly Cruickshank and HoT Parnell's Silvana Rooney gearing up to go snorkelling at Fitzroy Island's Shark Fin Bay. **7** Amanda Baird, Student Flights Hamilton ready to spot some tropical fish. **8** Air NZ's Hayley Price enjoying the warm water. **9** Enjoying the warm water is, Andy Willis, Flight Centre Whakatane and Scott Goodwin, Harvey World Travel Upper Hutt at the back; and in front, *Travel Today's* Evie Marinkovich; Air NZ Holidays Queenstown's Kelly Cruickshank; Emma Simpson, HoT Howick; Devon Jenkins, Flight Centre; Hayley Price, Air NZ; Amanda Baird, Student Flights Hamilton; Danielle Wheatley, HoT Merivale; and Silvana Rooney, HoT Parnell.

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Kuranda: A Step Back In Time

The village of Kuranda, which started out as an escape for a group of ‘hippies’ wanting a break from commercialism in the late ‘60s, has emerged as a bustling tourism destination attracting around one million visitors per year.

Surrounded by World Heritage rainforest, Kuranda is located a short 35-minute drive from Cairns—but the most popular way to visit is to catch the Skyrail Rainforest Cableway in the morning, and the Kuranda Scenic Railway back, or vice versa.

Tourism Kuranda’s Marc Sleeman says clients really need a full day to experience everything the village has

to offer. They can shop at the Kuranda Markets; take a rainforest cruise on the Barron River, home to eight resident crocodiles; visit a butterfly sanctuary; play mini golf; have a photo taken with a koala; walk in the rainforest; or enjoy the multitude of cafes and restaurants.

With a ‘big resurgence of hippies’ in the late ‘60s, Sleeman says by the ‘70s many had started up a trading economy, and from there grew, and grew, to what it is today. “From really humble beginnings of a group of traders to a million visitors a year is a wonderful success story,” says Sleeman. For further details see kuranda.org



Meeting Kuranda’s Wilder Inhabitants

Kuranda is host to a range of different activities and experiences, but the wildlife viewings are particularly popular. Whilst in Kuranda the famil group toured Birdworld Kuranda which is home to a number of birds and offers many great photo opportunities; as well as the Australian Butterfly Sanctuary which has over 1500 tropical butterflies. Other wildlife attractions in Kuranda include the Australian Venom Zoo where you can see snakes, scorpions and spiders; and the Kuranda Koala Gardens where you can get up close with kangaroos, koalas, crocodiles and more. See birdworldkuranda.com and australianbutterflies.com

Pictured: **1** HoT Merivale’s Danielle Wheatley at the Australian Butterfly Sanctuary. **2** A bird stealing a button off Flight Centre Whakatane’s Andy Willis’ hat. **3** Lisa Millar, Flight Centre The Palms enjoying the Australian Butterfly Sanctuary. **4** HWT Upper Hutt’s Scott Goodwin at Birdworld Kuranda. **5** Flight Centre’s Devon Jenkins holding a butterfly.



Rainforest Viewing From Above

For clients looking to travel to Kuranda in style, recommend the Skyrail Rainforest Cableway. The 7.5km cableway between Cairns and Kuranda is a great way to see the tropical rainforest from above, whilst getting from A-to-B. There are two stops along the way, where clients can break up the trip with a quick walk through the rainforest or, at an extra charge, take a Djabugay Aboriginal Guided Tour to learn more about the local culture and history. Skyrail operates daily and bookings are recommended. For further details see skyrail.com.au

Pictured: **1** Flight Centre Whakatane’s Andy Willis and HoT Howick’s Emma Simpson enjoying the ride. **2** One of the cableway gondolas. **3** HoT Parnell’s Silvana Rooney and Flight Centre The Palms’ Lisa Millar. **4** Air NZ’s Hayley Price and HWT Upper Hutt’s Scott Goodwin posing in the rainforest. **5** The group learning about different plants in the rainforest during their Djabugay Aboriginal Guided Tour. **6** Scott Goodwin, HWT Upper Hutt checking out the views.



Gold Class Scenic Railway Experience

After a jam-packed day of sightseeing, eating and shopping at Kuranda, the famil group boarded the Kuranda Scenic Railway for their Gold Class experience. The train travels at a leisurely pace, and takes around two hours from Kuranda to Cairns, or vice versa, offering plenty of time to soak up the views of the rainforest from the comfort of the carriage. With wine, cheese, crackers and other refreshments served on board, there isn’t anything else to do but sit back and enjoy the ride. For full details see ksr.com.au

Pictured: **1** Kelly Cruickshank, Air NZ Holidays Queenstown; Paula Coppel, Best Travel; Andy Willis, Flight Centre Whakatane; and Becca Keegan, Tourism Tropical North Queensland enjoying the Gold Class train experience. **2** HoT Merivale’s Danielle Wheatley enjoying the views. **3** Silvana Rooney, HoT Parnell on the train. **4** The view from the train window.

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Flames Of The Forest Dining

For a dining experience with a twist, clients can enjoy **Flames of the Forest**, located a 10-minute drive from Port Douglas or 50 minutes from Cairns.

Set in a natural environment, clients can choose from two experiences; either the Aboriginal Cultural Experience—which the famil group sampled—or the Rainforest Dining Experience, all while enjoying a delicious and indulgent menu, featuring a selection of Australian wines.

The Aboriginal Cultural Experience is extremely personal, and allows clients to listen to stories and tales from two local Aboriginal brothers while enjoying their seven-dish banquet meal and the surroundings. As soon

as clients step foot onto the property, they will feel truly relaxed and at home, and this feeling doesn't leave until they do. It's an intimate way to get to know a little bit more about the Aboriginal culture, while enjoying a night out with friends or family.

Meanwhile, the Rainforest Dining Experience is perfect for special occasions, such as proposals, anniversaries, birthdays and the likes. The night features a solo acoustic guitarist, set six course menu, and clients may book tables for two or a small group.

Prices start from AUD177 for children and AUD216 for adults, including return coach transfers. For full details see flamesoftheforest.com.au



1 Flight Centre's Devon Jenkins enjoying the location. **2** HoT Parnell's Silvana Rooney and Best Travel's Paula Coppell posing in one of the features. **3** Air NZ Holidays Queenstown's Kelly Cruickshank at Flames of the Forest. **4** The two brothers sharing their story. **5** The location.



Up Close With The Animals At Cairns Tropical Zoo

The Cairns Tropical Zoo is located on six hectares of tropical gardens at Palm Cove. It's home to a variety of reptiles, including komodo dragons, snakes and crocodiles; mammals like koalas, wombats, lemurs and dingos; and a huge range of birds. The famil group tried the very popular Zootastic experience, where clients can interact with five favourites such as cuddling a koala; feeding a cassowary or a crocodile; holding an alligator, snake or lizard; or feeding birds or lemurs. The experience is recommended for those who wish to have a more personal experience and like to get up close with animals. It's available daily at 0930, runs for one hour and is priced from AUD125, including zoo entry. It must be pre-booked by at least 1700 the day before visiting. See cainstropicalzoo.com.au

1 Danielle Wheatley, HoT Merivale, feeding a cassowary. **2** Hayley Price, Air NZ cuddling a Koala. **3** Amanda Baird, Student Flights Hamilton pictured with a wombat. **4** Silvana Rooney, HoT Parnell with a koala. **5** TTNQ's Becca Keegan checking out two baby koalas. **6** Flight Centre's Devon Jenkins patting a wombat. **7** Watching the crocodile being fed.



Cairns Zoom An Experience For All Ages

Encased by a 20-metre high glass dome on the rooftop of the Pullman Reef Hotel Casino, Cairns Zoom features a range of wildlife and adventure activities. Clients can enjoy guided tours and animal presentations; walk around the outside of the dome and take in views of Cairns from up high; take on a high ropes course; zip-line over a crocodile and more. See cainnszoom.com.au

1 Best Travel's Paula Coppell and HoT Howick's Emma Simpson ready to go. **2** Lisa Millar, Flight Centre The Palms; Scott Goodwin, HWT Upper Hut; and Silvana Rooney, HoT Parnell, walking around the outside of Cairns Zoom. **3** Amanda Baird, Student Flights Hamilton making the most of the high ropes course. **4** HoT Merivale's Danielle Wheatley taking a shortcut to the bottom. **5** Best Travel's Paula Coppell taking in the views of Cairns.

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Great Barrier Reef Highlights

It's arguably Australia's most iconic destination, and this is why clients simply cannot miss visiting the Great Barrier Reef while in Tropical North Queensland.

Stretching around 2300km along the coast of Queensland, the entire GBR is a World Heritage area; renowned for its clear blue and turquoise waters and abundant marine life. All fish, coral and shells are protected by law, and it's illegal to take anything from the reef. The reef is made up of around 3000 individual reefs, and the famil group spent the day exploring the outer Agincourt Reef with Quicksilver, where special reefs, known as ribbons, run

parallel to the Continental Shelf.

After a 1.5 hour boat ride from Port Douglas, the group arrived at Quicksilver's pontoon, which is anchored in the Agincourt Reef, and collectively spent the day making the most of the activities on offer, including swimming, snorkelling, diving and ocean walking. It's what many in the group called a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity, with highlights including the chance to swim with turtles, and witnessing the abundant coral and other marine life.

Quicksilver cruises daily from both Port Douglas and Cairns. For further details see quicksilver-cruises.com



Daintree River Croc Spotting

Tropical North Queensland is well known for its crocodiles so it would be a shame to visit the region and not see one in the flesh. A recommended way to spot a croc in the wild is to take a cruise down the Daintree River. The famil group did just this with the Daintree River Cruise Centre and were lucky enough to spot two. Along the way the guide will also point out useful facts about certain trees and other animals, such as birds. For further details see daintreerivercruisecentre.com.au

1 A view of the Daintree River, which is home to many resident crocodiles. **2** TTNQs Becca Keegan; Air NZs Hayley Price; Air NZ Holidays Queenstown's Kelly Cruickshank; and HWT Upper Hutt's Scott Goodwin getting ready for their Daintree River Cruise. **3** HoT Parnell's Silvana Rooney enjoying the ride. **4** A crocodile the famil group spotted on their cruise. **5** A sand bank on the Daintree River.



1 The Quicksilver pontoon. **2** Scott Goodwin, HWT Upper Hutt and TTNQs Becca Keegan relaxing onboard Quicksilver's pontoon. **3** HoT Merivale's Danielle Wheatley; HoT Parnell's Silvana Rooney; and Flight Centre's Devon Jenkins getting ready to go snorkelling. **4** Best Travel's Paula Coppell and *Travel Today's* Evie Marinkovich ready to go swimming in their lycra suits. **5** The famil group on their way to Quicksilver's pontoon.



The famil group checking out the views of the Great Barrier Reef from Daintree.

Bushwalking, Ziplining In Daintree

There are many options for clients to explore the ancient tropical rainforest of the Daintree National Park, but the Daintree Discovery Centre is a great place to start. The centre offers a number of different self-guided tours, featuring hand-held audio guides and a guide book. Clients can learn about different fruits, trees and animals; enjoy the views from the 23m high canopy tower; walk along the 125m long skywalk; make the most of an interpretive display centre; try to spot a wild cassowary and more. For more, [CLICK HERE](#) For those looking for a more adventurous way to view the rainforest, there's Jungle Surfing Canopy Tours where clients can zipline through the forest. Not only does this make for an exciting way to spend a morning or afternoon, but the guides are very knowledgeable and will tell visitors about different trees and animals as they go. It's suitable for all ages and tours last two hours. For more, [CLICK HERE](#)

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