

## FACT SHEET

### Hamilton Island Green in a Sea of Blue

Hamilton Island is located in the heart of the Whitsundays. It is surrounded by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP), the largest marine protected area in the world and a World Heritage Area.

Protecting Hamilton Island and its surroundings is not a 'go green' trend, it is a necessity. Thousands of tourists – both domestic and international – visit Hamilton Island each year and ecological sustainability is vital for both the protection and wise use of the Island and the impact on its waters and its inhabitants.

Positive environmental initiatives have been adopted and implemented on the Island for many years now and, like many organisations world-wide, Hamilton Island is continually working on ways in which to improve such initiatives and reduce its impact on the environment.

Below is a list of geographical facts about Hamilton Island, environmental initiatives adopted and Eco Friendly activities to take part in while visiting the Island.

#### The Facts:

- Hamilton Island has over a dozen walking trails. Discover the Island by foot and experience the flora and fauna, wildlife, bushland, hidden coves and sea views. Trails are open from 6:30am to 5:30pm.
- Below the high tide mark Hamilton Island itself is surrounded by fringing coral reef and mangrove communities, home to a diverse population of marine animals. Catseye Bay has a fringing coral reef and at low-tide is a great spot to hand-feed an array of colourful fish. The area is often visited by Green Turtles, and between July and October Humpback Whales and their calves are often spotted.
- While Hamilton Island is the largest resort island in the Whitsundays, more than 70 percent remains preserved as natural bushland and is home to an array of beautiful flora and fauna including Gumtrees, Paperbarks, Palms, Pines and ancient Cycads. Three types of eucalyptus grow naturally on Hamilton Island and the koalas at the Koala Gallery live off these leaves.
- The Island is home to a variety of birds, mammals, reptiles and butterflies – many of which have adapted well to living around the resort.
- Hamilton Island Enterprises (HIE) supports and participates in marine park research, including participation in the Eye on the Reef programme collaborating with 40 Marine Tourism operators who report and collect data on the health and status of the Great Barrier Reef.
- Hamilton prides itself in having state of the art sewage treatment facilities that have been upgraded to cope with growing demand. The solid and liquid waste is treated through this tertiary treatment plant producing "A" Class treated effluent. Over 90 per cent of treated effluent produced is reused for irrigating parks and gardens ensuring that the environment and surrounded reefs are protected.

- Hamilton Island has a cutting edge self-managed recycling programme and facilities. Glass is crushed on the island and is then used by the Island's garden's department on garden beds and for drainage projects. Cardboard, plastic, paper, aluminium cans and steel cans are compacted and sold to Amcor in Brisbane while scrap steel, aluminium and copper are sold on the mainland. Clay-based building products are used as landfill at the Hamilton Island quarry. Green-waste and timber are ground to produce mulch.
- To minimise silt run off into the surrounding waters and reef communities other initiatives such as silt and gross pollution traps on storm water drains and water course are being continually installed.
- Innovative building design, guidelines and regulation ensure soil disturbance is minimised, natural slopes are maintained and any silt or runoff which may otherwise enter the water is captured or contained.
- Many buildings, such as the boutique Beach Club, have been designed with ceiling fans and to maximise the cooling effects of Island breezes rather than relying solely on air conditioning, while the style of the building and sheltered porches retain heat in the winter months. Air conditioning systems are serviced regularly in Hamilton Island accommodations; kitchen ducts are professionally cleaned and fridges and freezers are checked daily.
- Many Island developments are visually appealing and preserve the natural scenic qualities of the surrounding reef, islands and World Heritage area. Qualia has been built to harmoniously blend into the natural environment. Extensive use of natural light and cross ventilation have been central to design themes, the gardens have been carefully designed using predominantly indigenous species with garden waste being mulched and recycled to ensure water use is kept to a minimum.
- Hamilton Island provides a range of interpretive activities, including snorkelling tours off Catseye Beach and the fringing reef, which highlight the value of the surrounding reef and World Heritage area.
- Hamilton Island encourages its guests to consider minimising the use of its housekeeping laundry services. Housekeeping uses only phosphate-free cleaning chemicals and, where possible, only non-toxic products.
- Power-tags in rooms shut off electricity supply when guests leave their rooms to assist in saving energy. Where possible, energy efficient lighting is used to reduce power consumption.
- Only service vehicles exist on Hamilton Island. Guests get around via shuttle buses, foot or the highly popular golf buggies. To improve the amenity of the Island, the petrol powered buggies have largely been phased out and replaced by electric powered buggies.
- Guests are educated to not feed the wildlife on Hamilton Island. Specially designed rubbish bins (to keep the wildlife out) are cleaned regularly to maintain the balance of the Island's natural inhabitants.
- Proactive management of water sport activities on the Island prevents damage to the Reef and marine creatures through continuous monitoring of any possible impacts that may occur with these activities.
- Based at the Hamilton Island Marina, Sea Kayaking Whitsundays has Advanced Ecotourism Accreditation. Such accreditation is only awarded to Australia's leading and most innovative ecotourism products that achieve best practice by using resources wisely, contribute to the conservation of the environment and help local communities while at the same time teaching guests about the environment. Sea Kayaking tours cater to all

levels of fitness and give visitors an insight into the ecology, wildlife and history of the beautiful areas around Hamilton Island.

- Guests wanting to explore the underwater world can choose from a variety of diving and snorkelling tours, either on the outer reefs or any of the other colourful reefs within the Whitsunday islands. At Eco Certified Fantasea Reefworld (above Hardy Reef) a marine biologist is on hand to answer your questions.

**-ENDS-**

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