



Understand Queensland

QUEENSLAND TODAY422

Economic boom and bust, green initiatives and reconciling the past: big changes are underway in modern-day Queensland.

HISTORY425

From the early convict settlements to the postwar boom days, there's never a dull moment in Queensland's rugged history.

ENVIRONMENT.....437

Tim Flannery's portrait of ancient tropical rainforests, ever-changing underwater landscapes and the unusual wildlife that call these places home.

THE ARTS IN QUEENSLAND446

Music, film, painting and Indigenous rock art are all part of Queensland's captivating artscape.

CULINARY QUEENSLAND.....450

Top tips on Queensland's bountiful seafood, its rising wine industry and venerable restaurants sprinkled across the state.



people per sq km



Queensland Today

A Topsy-Turvy Economy

When the global financial crisis erupted in 2008, Queensland was in a fine position to weather the storm. Over the previous two decades, it had enjoyed an economic boom fuelled by tourism and the mining industries, with a flourishing capital city (Brisbane) and an annual growth rate that often soared well above the national average.

The good times, however, didn't last. As economies across the globe came to a standstill (or sometimes shrank), Queensland saw its economy enter a slump with a lacklustre 0.8% growth rate from 2008 to 2009, a depressed housing market, a downturn in manufacturing and construction, and a drop in tourism. The soaring Australian dollar brought more spending power to Aussies heading overseas, but hurt domestic tourism and exports, particularly in farming and manufacturing. To help combat the stagnant economy, Queensland Premier Anna Bligh announced investments in public works, with \$18.2 billion earmarked towards infrastructure projects.

How About That Weather?

The end of 2010 brought record rainfall to Queensland. Farmers initially welcomed the announcement that the 10-year drought was over, then saw their crops waterlogged and destroyed. As the rains continued, things grew progressively worse, and by early 2011 flood waters had inundated Brisbane and dozens of towns, affecting 1 million sq km – the size of France and Germany combined. The floods killed 35 people and ruined over 30,000 homes and businesses; damage costs were estimated at \$5 billion. Then just weeks later the massive Category 5 Cyclone Yasi ripped through North Queensland, causing another \$800 million worth of damages and taking one life. For some climatologists this was just one more piece of evidence that the effects of human-induced climate

» Litre of petrol: \$1.25

» Car/4WD hire: from \$30/175 per day

» Great Barrier Reef day/3-night cruise: \$200/1400

» 2hr surf lesson: \$60

» Seafood feast for 2 people: \$200

Myths

» That Queenslanders are rough-edged larrikins living in the bush. In fact, most live along the coast, with 60% within 150km of Brisbane.

» That most Queenslanders are a sporty, outdoors bunch. Not quite: 55% of the state is obese.

Queensland Stars

Charles Kingsford Smith (1897–1935) Made the first flight from the USA to Australia.

George Miller (b 1945) Film-maker; directed the *Mad Max* films.

Geoffrey Rush (b 1951) Toowoomba-born actor and Academy Award winner.

Steve Irwin (1962–2006) The 'Crocodile Hunter'; a charismatic wildlife lover and conservationist.

Keith Urban (b 1967) Country singer with 10 number-one hits on US country charts.

Cathy Freeman (b 1973) Aboriginal athlete and Olympic champion.