

Whitsunday Ngaro Sea Trail

Follow in the footsteps of the Ngaro people, the traditional owners of the Whitsunday area, and undertake a journey through a region of unsurpassed natural beauty and rich cultural history. Blending seaways with a range of walks, the Whitsunday Ngaro Sea Trail will be truly unique.



What are Great Walks?

The Great Walks of Queensland is a State Government initiative to develop a series of extended walks. These will provide visitors with new and exciting ways to explore Queensland's natural areas as well as provide future economic and commercial opportunities for the regions.

After successfully building and opening six great walks from 2004-2007, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) is planning an additional four Great Walks that will highlight more of Queensland's most valuable natural assets — our parks and forests. Planning and construction will commence early 2008 for the following walks:

- Carnarvon
- Conondale Range
- Cooloola
- Whitsunday Ngaro Sea Trail.

The Whitsunday Ngaro Sea Trail

The Whitsunday islands and their surrounding waters have long been a centre for recreation and nature-based activities. Annually, more than 1.4 million people visit this region, making it one of the most popular tourist destinations in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. The Whitsunday Ngaro Sea Trail will add another facet to an already outstanding region, providing visitors with the opportunity to experience a remarkable journey over both land and sea.

What to see

The Whitsunday Ngaro Sea Trail will highlight many iconic features that have made the area famous. Walk across pure white sands, sail over turquoise waters, see ancient rock art, rugged headlands, dry rainforest, rolling grasslands and experience the breathtaking views.

The trail

Take in all of the Whitsunday Ngaro Sea Trail — travel from sea to summit with varying grades of difficulty and length across South Molle, Hook and Whitsunday islands, as well journeying its sea paths for a different and refreshing perspective.

Access to the Whitsunday Ngaro Sea Trail is through private, charter or commercial boat. The area is also kayak friendly and within easy reach using hire vessels or bare boats. Commercial boats depart from Shute Harbour and Airlie Beach. Bare boats can be sourced at Hamilton Island, Shute Harbour or Airlie Beach. There are also numerous public boat ramps in the area.

Nara Inlet, Hook Island

500m one way

Short and initially moderately steep, the track climbs the banks of Nara Inlet, to a rock shelter filled with Ngaro art motifs and extensive cultural deposits. The site is currently being upgraded to provide a new boardwalk, viewing area and displays. Access will also be improved as part of the Great Walk project.

Hook Island Resort, Hook Island

A short circuit walk from the resort is being investigated.

Whitsunday Cairn, Whitsunday Island

Scrub Hen Beach to Whitsunday Cairn – 3km one way

Steep and challenging, this track will be created for the Whitsunday Ngaro Sea Trail. Breathtaking views over Hook Island and beyond to Border Island are the reward for the more serious hiker.

Tongue Point, Whitsunday Island

Tongue Bay to Hill Inlet lookout – 1km one way

Lookout junction to Lookout Beach – 400m one way

This moderate, winding track travels through woodland and dry rainforest communities to lookouts and beach. Visitors can walk uphill to take in the vistas over Hill Inlet – a highly significant area for the Ngaro

people; the islands emerging from the surrounding turquoise waters and the sweeping sands of Whitehaven Beach. An alternative is to walk over the ridge and along the cycad-lined boardwalk to the extensive white sands of Lookout Beach. Improved circuit access tracks to the lookouts and a possible circuit track to Lookout Beach will form this section of the Great Walk.

Whitehaven Beach – Chance Bay, Whitsunday Island

Solway outlook – 400m one way
Chance Bay – 2.5km one way

From Whitehaven Beach, a short climb will take visitors to Solway outlook with magnificent views over Pentecost and Haslewood islands. For those with more time, the track will continue to Chance Bay, a secluded bay on the southern side of Whitsunday Island and a great anchorage option for boats during northerly winds. The Great Walk project will create the walks to Solway outlook and Chance Bay, and will investigate the feasibility of circuit tracks.

Whitsunday Peak, Whitsunday Island

Whitsunday Peak track – 3km one way
Dugong-Sawmill track – 1.5km one way

The Whitsunday Peak track will be one of the most challenging of the Whitsunday Ngaro Sea Trail. Reaching an elevation of 437m, this track offers spectacular views over the Whitsunday islands and surrounding mainland. Accessed from the Sawmill Beach picnic area at Cid Harbour, the Great Walk

project will define the Whitsunday Peak track and upgrade the Dugong-Sawmill track.

Spion Kop and Mt Jeffreys, South Molle Island

Sandy Bay to Spion Kop – 5.5km, extension to Mt Jeffreys – 1.5km

Winding its way through open forest, grasslands, dry rainforest and stands of hoop pine, the track starts at the boaters' camp at Sandy Bay and traverses the length of South Molle Island. Culturally significant sites can be visited en route to Spion Kop, and once again spectacular views are a highlight from the higher elevations of the track. The Great Walk project will upgrade these tracks, and its access tracks from Paddle Bay camp and South Molle Island resort, providing an extensive and accessible island track network of around 12km.

Walkers' and boaters' camps

Walkers and boaters may access a number of camps if overnight island stays are required. Camps close to the proposed trail heads are Sandy Bay and Paddle Bay on South Molle Island, Dugong Beach, Whitehaven Beach and Peter Bay on Whitsunday Island and Curlew Beach on Hook Island. Camps have various facilities and are managed by QPWS.

Consultation

QPWS have consulted community and stakeholders about the Great Walk. Community will be kept informed and involved throughout the project.

When?

Construction will commence April 2008 and finish June 2009. The project will be staged so that sections of the walk will be started and completed outside the wet season.

For more information

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Visit us online at www.epa.qld.gov.au/greatwalks

Photography: Lisa Dwyer, QPWS

Disclaimer:

The materials presented in this fact sheet are distributed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service for information only. The project is at concept stage and the location of the final track and infrastructure depends on environmental and cultural heritage impact assessment.

