

Kommo Toera Trail

Water walk through the Port of Mackay conservation area

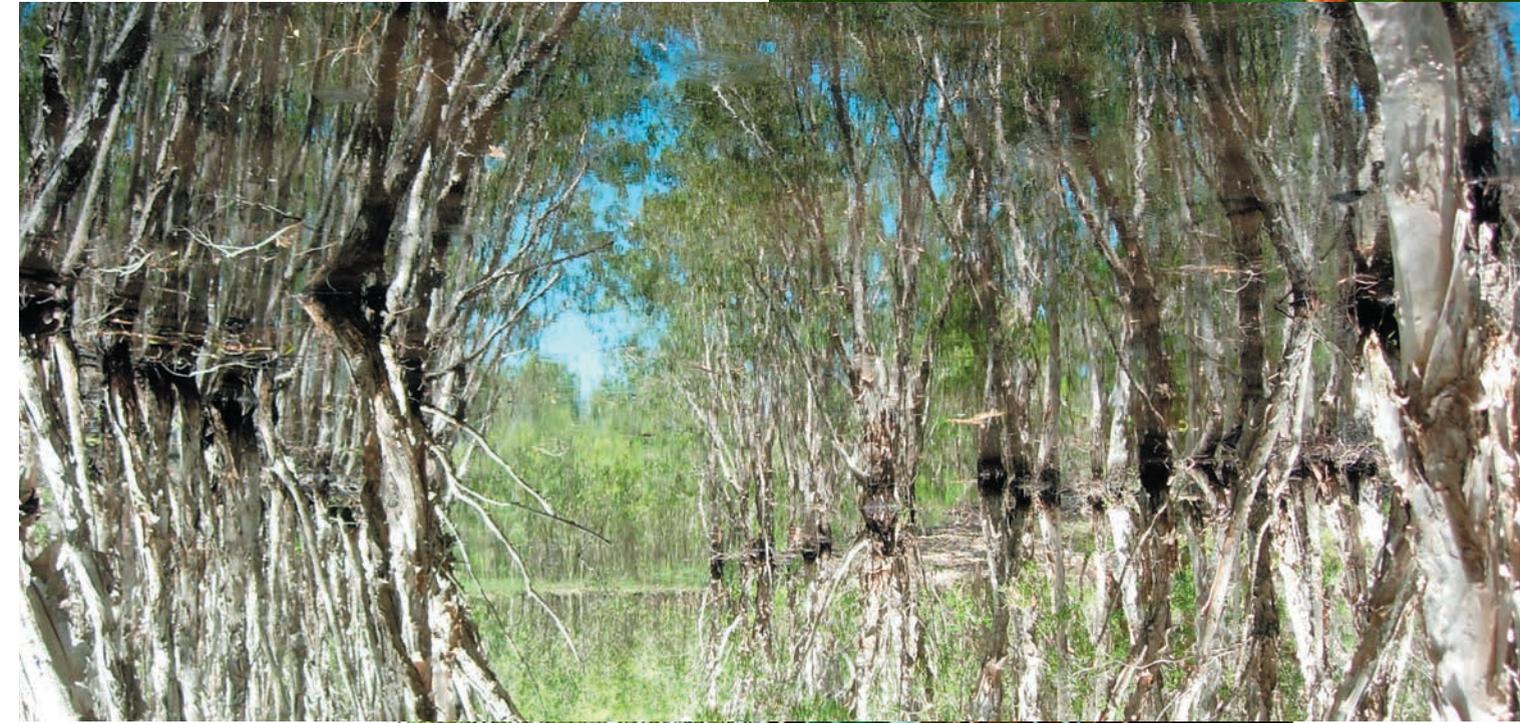


The trail is a one kilometre boardwalk system, traversing almost every habitat found in this coastal environment. These wetlands are a dynamic place to visit whatever the season.

From weeping paperbarks and giant figs to vibrant water lilies, brilliant butterflies, noisy green frogs, spangled drongos and brogas, the trail provides a close view of some of Australia's most beautiful wildlife. In geological terms, the Slade Point lowlands area is a young landscape. In response to natural cycles of climate change over tens of thousands of years, sea level oscillations have governed the area's evolution.

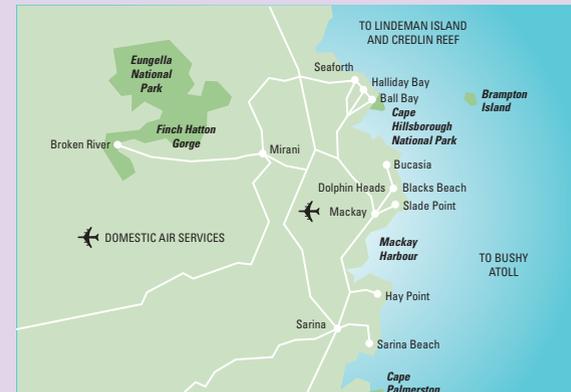
Around 50 thousand years ago the Slade Point swamp land lay beneath the Coral Sea, and Mt Bassett and Slade Point were islands surrounded by shallow sea water. At this time the main estuarine channel, now known as the Pioneer River, flowed into the sea in the Slade Point area, well north of its present outlet. Longshore drift of beach sands over millennia resulted in the build up of the present coastal dune system. The surrounding wetland supports an abundance of plants and animals, and the natural cycles of water inundation and drying play a vital role in maintaining their biodiversity. Some plants and animals only appear during the wet, some appear as the surface water recedes and others have adapted to survive both the wet and dry season.

Paperbarks are the dominant trees along the trail. While weeping paperbark is the most common, two other species are found in the area – blue-leaved paperbark and a broad-leaved species. The characteristic white to pale brown paperbark, often blackened by fire, is one of the few trees that can survive in knee-deep water. When it is dry, the tangled hummock of roots rises from the ground and the tannin-stained socks at the base of the trunk indicate the depths of water in previous seasons.



How to get there

The Kommo Toera Trail is a 15 minute drive north of central Mackay. To get there, head towards the Port of Mackay along Harbour Road and turn left onto Slade Point Road. Once you are in the Melaleuca forest, the entrance to the trail is left on Keeleys Road.



Before you walk...

The walk takes approximately 30 minutes. No refreshment or toilet facilities are available on site. The nearest facilities are located at Mackay Marina. Please take care of our wildlife and take your rubbish with you.



North



Boardwalk
Pathway

Keeleys Road

START

The Kommo Toera Trail is a spectacular walking trail, located in melaleuca rainforest in the Port of Mackay conservation area.

Your tour guide

- 1 Keeleys Road carpark and entrance shelter are located on a remnant sand ridge. Well-drained conditions support a diverse woodland community characterised by Moreton Bay ash (*Corymbia tessellaris*) and colonised by rainforest species that form a tall understorey.
- 2 Shade generated by the high canopy of the weeping paperbark forest, together with a high water table and accumulated leaf mulch, creates ideal conditions for an extensive colony - rare to the region - of swamp water fern. This fern reacts dramatically to seasonal conditions, growing in almost impenetrable head-high thickets of fronds during the wet season then dying back to a mass of wiry sticks in the dry. In some areas, the thick underground stems of swamp water fern were traditionally roasted by indigenous people for food.
- 3 In January 1991 a tornado-like storm cell funnelled in from the sea, travelled behind Slade Point Road and tore through the adjacent urban area. It left a trail of damage before continuing towards Mt Bassett. The metal roof sheeting, wrapped high in the paperbark branches above serves as a reminder of the force of nature.
- 4 Several waterways that channel storm and flood waters towards the south and south-west cross in this area. While some sections are deeper than others and contain water for longer periods, none are permanent.
 **The best time to see the wealth and diversity of plant and animal life in the wetlands is during the wet season's peak.**
- 5 This sand ridge is marginally higher than the adjacent waterways or swales. It supports a range of species who thrive in the well-drained soils that overlay the high water table beneath.
- 6 In summer, clusters of pink euodia flowers appear along the branches. In a nectar feeding frenzy, honeyeaters snap the flowers from the stem, creating a carpet of pink on the forest floor. Pink euodia is a food plant for the larvae of the brilliant electric blue ulysses butterfly (*Papilio ulysses*). On occasions, hundreds of blue triangle butterflies can be seen hovering over the ground and resting in the paperbark trees.

- 7 On each side of the path stand large rusty figs. These strangler figs have virtually destroyed their host tree. You'll also notice a diverse mix of seedling and juvenile trees under the canopy of the larger fig tree on the north side of the track. Birds play an important role in seed dispersal and are often attracted to the succulent fruits of the figs.
- 8 This section of boardwalk is an ideal place to observe the growing weeping paperbark forest.
- 9 Moreton Bay ash trees are often referred to as 'half-barks', thanks to the shedding of its chequered bark every year to reveal a smooth silvery grey-green 'gum' bark.
- 10 A cluster of swamp lilies distinguished by their strap leaves and white spider-like flowers have established themselves in this location.
- 11 Several juvenile weeping cabbage palms (*Livistona decipiens*) and a screw palm (*Pandanus* sp.) add textural variety to this community through their foliage.

Bird watch

- 12 Look out for big black and white magpie geese or sacred and straw-necked ibises. In the nearby trees you may be lucky enough to see a shiny black spangled drongo or the tiny red-backed fairy wren.
- 13 At the end of the walk lies an excellent vantage point to enjoy the lagoon, grassland and clay pans beyond while observing the wildlife. Look for various species of ducks, tall graceful egrets, big grey brolgas or marsh harriers flying above looking for prey.

Kommo Toera Trail

Water walk through the Port of Mackay conservation area



nqbp.com.au



The Kommo Toera Trail is a spectacular walking trail, located in melaleuca rainforest in the Port of Mackay conservation area.

Your tour guide

- 1 Keeleys Road carpark and entrance shelter are located on a remnant sand ridge. Well-drained conditions support a diverse woodland community characterised by Moreton Bay ash (*Corymbia tessellaris*) and colonised by rainforest species that form a tall understorey.
- 2 Shade generated by the high canopy of the weeping paperbark forest, together with a high water table and accumulated leaf mulch, creates ideal conditions for an extensive colony - rare to the region - of swamp water fern. This fern reacts dramatically to seasonal conditions, growing in almost impenetrable head-high thickets of fronds during the wet season then dying back to a mass of wiry sticks in the dry. In some areas, the thick underground stems of swamp water fern were traditionally roasted by indigenous people for food.
- 3 In January 1991 a tornado-like storm cell funnelled in from the sea, travelled behind Slade Point Road and tore through the adjacent urban area. It left a trail of damage before continuing towards Mt Bassett. The metal roof sheeting, wrapped high in the paperbark branches above serves as a reminder of the force of nature.

Kommo Toera Trail

Water walk through the Port of Mackay conservation area



nqbp.com.au



4 Several waterways that channel storm and flood waters towards the south and south-west cross in this area. While some sections are deeper than others and contain water for longer periods, none are permanent.

★ The best time to see the wealth and diversity of plant and animal life in the wetlands is during the wet season's peak.

5 This sand ridge is marginally higher than the adjacent waterways or swales. It supports a range of species that thrive in the well-drained soils that overlay the high water table beneath.

6 In summer, clusters of pink euodia flowers appear along the branches. In a nectar feeding frenzy, honeyeaters snap the flowers from the stem, creating a carpet of pink on the forest floor. Pink euodia is a food plant for the larvae of the brilliant electric blue ulyssees butterfly (*Papilio ulyssees*). On occasions, hundreds of blue triangle butterflies can be seen hovering over the ground and resting in the paperbark trees.

7 On each side of the path stand large rusty figs. These strangler figs have virtually destroyed their host tree. You'll also notice a diverse mix of seedling and juvenile trees under the canopy of the larger fig tree on the north side of the track. Birds play an important role in seed dispersal and are often attracted to the succulent fruits of the figs.

8 This section of boardwalk is an ideal place to observe the growing weeping paperbark forest.

9 Moreton Bay ash trees are often referred to as 'half-barks', thanks to the shedding of their chequered bark every year to reveal a smooth silvery grey-green 'gum' bark.

10 A cluster of swamp lilies distinguished by their strap leaves and white spider-like flowers have established themselves in this location.

11 Several juvenile weeping cabbage palms (*Livistona decipiens*) and a screw palm (*Pandanus* sp.) add textual variety to this community through their foliage.

Bird watch

12 Look out for big black and white magpie geese or sacred and straw-necked ibises. In the nearby trees you may be lucky enough to see a shiny black spangled drongo or the tiny red-backed fairy wren.

13 At the end of the walk lies an excellent vantage point to enjoy the lagoon, grassland and clay pans beyond while observing the wildlife. Look for various species of ducks, tall graceful egrets, big grey broilgas or march harriers flying above looking for prey.

Before you walk...

The walk takes approximately 30 minutes. No refreshment or toilet facilities are available on site. The nearest facilities are located at Mackay Marina. Please take care of our wildlife and take your rubbish with you.



Boardwalk
Pathway