

Queensland Hosts Iconic Big Things

Fiona Harper



Not all Big Things are cringe-worthy kitsch. The Big Wet makes our list thanks to its influence on Big Waterfalls while dust storm-creating Big Trucks are a part of everyday life in the outback. We're also rather partial to seriously Big Trees in these parts.

Australia has a long tradition of Big Things. You know the sort I mean, those kitschy creations dreamed up by marketers short on budget but big on concrete. Many were conjured up as a quirky way to identify a region's backbone. Such as Wagin's Big Ram in sheep farming country or Bowen's Big Mango. Far from the confines of southern city sophistication, Tropical North Queensland does Big Things in a big way too.

Some like the Big Peanut with its adorable grin and top hat are endearingly cute. Others are more eccentric and come with heartfelt intentions like the arty Big Lizard. Others still are captivating clunkers like Capt James Cook complete with advertising banner for a tavern. Sorry James we sold out on you!

Big crocodile



Big Croc at Normanton

At a staggering 8.64m the Big Croc at Normanton represents the largest croc ever taken. 'Krys' was shot on the banks of the Norman River by Krystina Pawlowska in the 1950's. As one half of a husband & wife croc shooting team, Krystina enjoyed her reputation as a shooter who wore jungle greens and red lipstick, quipping that 'it's good to catch a glint of nail polish as I pull the trigger'. While you're in Normanton keep an eye out for the Big Barramundi too – it's almost as big!

Big peanut



Big Peanut at the Peanut Place on the Kennedy Highway, Tolga

We're not quite sure of the significance of the top hat and bow tie adorning the Big Peanut. Burdened with a dull colour palette dominated by beige, these formal accessories add a touch of sophistication to an otherwise little regarded nut. Find the Big Peanut at the Peanut Place on the Kennedy Highway, Tolga.

Big cassowary



Big Cassowary at the Cassowary Shopping Centre, Wongaling Beach

Australia's second largest flightless bird (after the emu) is on the brink of extinction. Let's hope that this concrete tribute is not all that remains for the next generation of the rainforest's most important propagator. Find the Big Cassowary at the Cassowary Shopping

Centre, Wongaling Beach.

Big Captain Cook



Big Cook on Captain Cook Highway, Cairns

Oh James what have we done to you? You are revered globally as one of the world's greatest navigators, showing extraordinary courage and intelligence to navigate through an uncharted Great Barrier Reef. In turn we honour you with an oversized faded monolith advertising a tavern seemingly directing traffic on the highway that bears your name. Find the Big Cook on Captain Cook Highway, Cairns.

(Not so big) Captain Cook



Statue of Captain James Cook in Cooktown

This is more like it – a suitably respectful monument to the great Cook. Not far from the Endeavour River beach where Cook beached his holed barquentine HMB Endeavour is an appropriate tribute for a revered navigator, sailor and leader who charted much of the Great Barrier Reef.

Big trucks



Cattle truck in Outback Queensland

Big wheel nuts this one's for you. Any guesses how many tyres a triple road train may use? Try 40 or more. Known fondly as the kings of the outback, a triple road train consists of one prime mover and three trailers, transporting anything from livestock, freight, fuel or minerals. They're seriously big vehicles! You'll find these mammoth monsters plying the roads of Outback Queensland – easily spotted from miles away as they kick up dust in their wake.

The big wet



Barron Falls from the lookout in Kuranda

An annual event that begins any time from December onwards, the Big Wet creates seriously Big Waterfalls. One of the best, the Barron Falls in full flood rivals Niagra Falls for pure spectacle. Ok, maybe we're a little biased but there's enough power in the Barron Falls to generate electricity via a hydro power station at the base. Skyrail's look-outs provide unrivalled views of the spectacular Barron Falls and Gorge. If you're on the Kuranda Scenic Rail then don't fret, the train stops so you can jump out and get your postcard worthy snap! Or if you're on foot, follow the signs and take a short stroll to the lookout from Kuranda Village.

Big curtain fig tree



Curtain Fig Tree near Yungaburra on the Atherton Tablelands

The Curtain Fig Tree is another monster unique to TNQ. It's almost a reverse tree in that it grows from the top down rather than from the earth upwards. The Big Curtain Fig is actually a strangler fig species. It attaches itself to a healthy host tree, eventually killing it by sending extensive aerial roots downwards to form a significant curtain. This is nature in all her kick-butt glory. Find the Curtain Fig Tree just outside Yungaburra on the Atherton Tablelands.

More big trees



Mossman Gorge

Ancient buttressed roots of rainforest trees in Mossman Gorge are a favourite with photographers and tree huggers alike. But they also provide habitat for countless forest critters. Though I'm not sure I'd recommend cosying up for too long like this couple, these ancient moss-covered monoliths are awe-inspiring. Find them within Wet Tropics Rainforest.

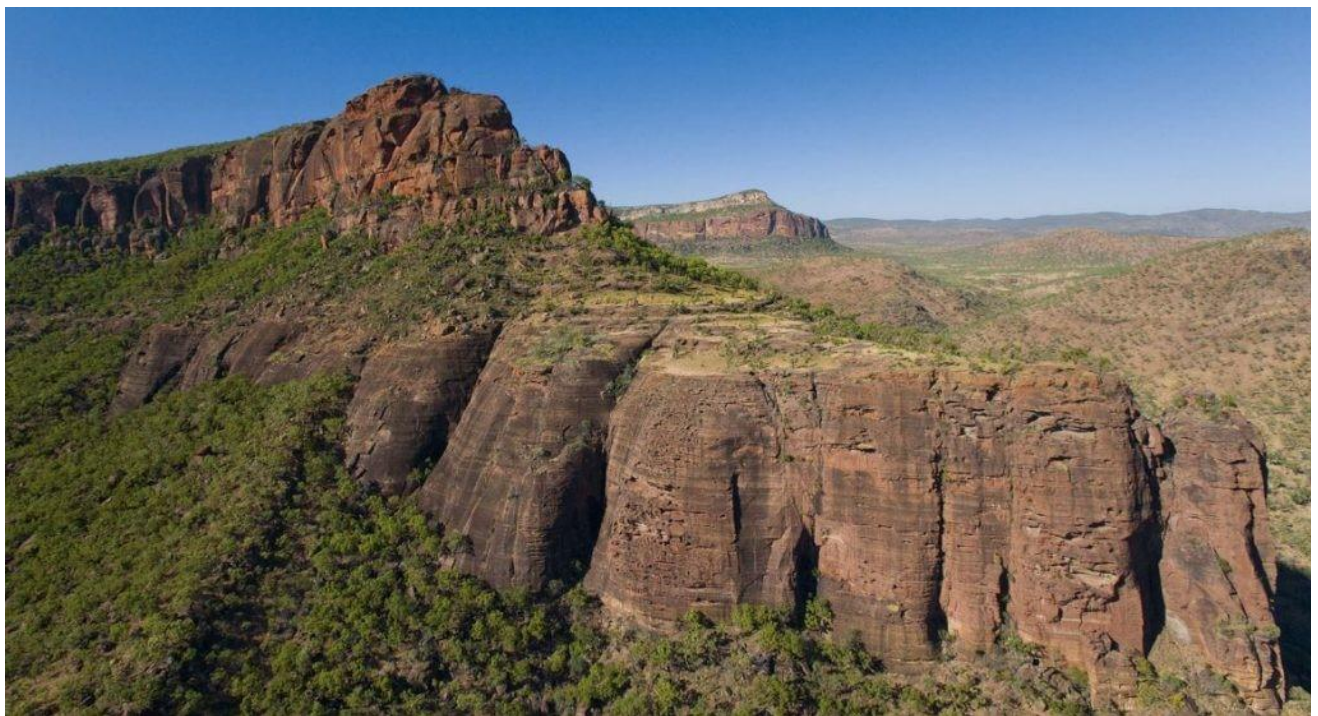
Big lizard



Big lizard sculpture at Jabiru Safari Lodge Mareeba

The Big Lizard is a striking stainless steel artwork by Japanese sculptor and conservationist Mitsuaki Tanabe. The piece was created to draw attention to the decline of wild rice eco systems in Australia's wetlands through environmental destruction. It's a remarkable piece that seems oddly conspicuous, given its wild surroundings. View the Big Lizard at Mareeba Wetlands on the Atherton Tablelands.

Big mountains



Mt Mulligan on the Gulf Savannah

With the Great Dividing Range running north south like the spine of the nation, it's no surprise to find monumental mountains in TNQ. Bartle Frer and Bellenden Ker dominate the podium but we like Mount Mulligan as the little known placegetter who rarely receives red carpet attention. We think you'll agree she's paparazzi-worthy with stories to tell. Laying in her shadow lies the scattered remains of the ghost town of Mount Mulligan, the site of Queensland's worst mining disaster that killed 75 coal miners.

Big barramundi



Big Fish on the Millaa Millaa-Malanda Rd

Is it a barramundi? Or some other species? We're not certain, but whatever it is we like it! Like a fish out of water this fella finds himself well inland and almost 1,000 metres above sea level, representing a big challenge for fresh water anglers. Anglers chase barra while others enjoy the tranquillity of rolling hills of the Atherton Tablelands. Find the Big Fish on the Millaa Millaa-Malanda Rd.

Big termite mounds



Termite mounds in Cape York

It's difficult to fathom that a creature barely visible to the human eye could create monoliths that dominate the landscape. The enemy of carpenters and woodworking craftsmen, termites create homes larger than the large 4WD's that are standard transport in their habitat. Look for termite mounds in all shapes and sizes by heading inland into Savannah country.

Big Adventures

From chasing waterfalls to mountain biking, there's a plethora of big adventures waiting for you in the tropics.