



**BIG4 ADVENTURE
WHITSUNDAY
RESORT**

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BIG4 ADVENTURE WHITSUNDAY RESORT

FIONA HARPER checks into a fun-filled family holiday resort that is big on attractions

THE LOWDOWN

Ideally positioned in the heart of The Whitsundays at Airlie Beach, BIG4 Adventure Whitsunday Resort is a family holiday destination set amongst 10ha of landscaped tropical gardens. A mega water park with water slides and waterplay areas dominates the park, alongside a heated lagoon-style pool.

Family owned and run for almost 30 years, arriving at the park feels a little like straying with much-loved friends. Staff are friendly and cheery, offering an efficient welcome peppered with hints and tips on what's happening within the park, along with what's on around the Whitsundays, and it's not to be missed (including fireworks marking the start of the Great Barrier Reef Festival the day we arrive). An event calendar in our welcome park is full of so many activities it's almost hard to decide what to do first, including feeding

and petting sessions at the animal park, pancakes by the pool, scavenger hunts and outdoor movies, just for starters.

LOCATION

Set on the outskirts of Airlie Beach, within walking distance of parks and shopping precincts, the holiday park is well positioned to take full advantage of everything on offer in The Whitsundays. Coral Sea Marina, where boats depart for the islands, is a five-minute drive away with downtown Airlie Beach another couple of minutes beyond the Marina.

Cannonvale Beach is nearby where Fat Frog Café overlooks the beachfront parklands and does a roaring trade for breakfast and coffees. From here, the Billionennial Boardwalk is a pain-free coastal walkway that links Cannonvale with Airlie Beach via the marina and is a great place to spot dolphins and turtles.

ACCOMMODATION

On-site accommodation includes self-contained hotel-style studio rooms and luxuriously appointed two and three bedroom apartment-style condos and cottages (some with spa!) with outdoor decks and barbecue-equipped alfresco areas.

Caravan and camping sites are well thought out with lush gardens utilised to create private, shady sites in a cosy, social setting. For the ultimate in 'glamourvaning', choose a powered caravan site with its own large ensuite bathroom and secure storage area. A camp kitchen is equipped with hot plates, barbecues, fridges and microwaves, along with a massive TV, and seating for up to 50 people, making it the social hub of the park after sunset.

ACTIVITIES

A full schedule of activities is on offer every day (many of them free), both within the park and the Whitsunday region. A feeding and petting session at the animal park is not to be missed, for a chance to get up close and personal with calves, lambs, goats, chickens, geese and ducks. The Kids Craft Club is led by activities coordinators and is a great place to check the kids into each day, allowing adults to enjoy sun loungers or massages by the resort-style pool or kick back over wine and cheese afterwards. In the evenings, lay out a picnic blanket and take in movies under the stars with a different film showing each night.

But the real attraction is the water park, which is decorated in colourful artworks and motifs in the form of 'Gavin' the resort's frog mascot, with 13 water slides and a pendulous tipping bucket.

Jumping pillows, mini golf and grass areas provide plenty of space for the kids to play safely. The Rolly Room is a sensory room that's available for those travelling with a family member with autism, while amenity blocks are accessible in wheelchairs.

FOOD AND DRINK

The Vintage Café is an onsite food van open for breakfast and lunch beside the water park, serving a limited menu of snacks and drinks. Book ahead for hotdogs, lolly bags and popcorn on weekend movie nights.

EXPLORE

A day trip to the Whitsunday Islands is a 'must do', and an almost overwhelming range of tours can be booked at the front desk. Airlie Beach Markets, held each Saturday beneath the foreshore palm trees, is a great place to pick up local souvenirs and try some of the tropical fruits grown in the area. Walk the trails through lush rainforest in Conway National Park or take a drive to Hillway Beach and Cape Gloucester for calm swimming beaches. **99**

The writer was a guest of **BEQ Adventure Whitsunday Resort**.



The kitchen in a three-bedroom Whitsaway Condo

