



## Signpost to Emerald



### **EMERALD**

*We are a strong and committed community sustained by a diverse economy and the major centre of the Central Highlands region.*

#### **WHERE CAN YOU FIND US?**

We are the largest town in the Central Highlands region and are located approximately 265 kilometres west of Rockhampton.

Our town lies on the Nogoa River at the junction of the Capricorn and Gregory Highways. We are located in the centre of the region and a short distance from Capella our north, Springsure to the south, Blackwater to the east and the Gemfields to our west.

#### **HOW DID EMERALD BEGIN?**

The indigenous people have lived in the area for thousands of years. Ludwig Leichhardt was the first European to travel across Emerald and surrounding region in 1844 and 1845. By 1861 pastoral sheep runs around the area were consolidated into Emerald Downs Station and along with our town was named after Emerald Downs Hill.

Emerald was established in 1879 as a transport and service hub during the construction of the railway from Rockhampton to Longreach.

Early sheep grazing gave way to cattle grazing and after World War II the establishment of the Queensland British Food Corporation resulted in the first intensive farming operations in the area.

The 1972 construction of Fairbairn Dam and the Emerald Irrigation Scheme allowed for significant development and diversification of agriculture across the region. The construction of the dam

and associated Lake Maraboon also enabled large scale coal mining within the region in 1977.

Along with prospering agricultural and mining industries, Emerald also boasts growth in its service and business sectors with a large number of government agencies, industrial operations and retail shopping to meet the needs of our expanding population.

#### **WHAT MAKES OUR COMMUNITY UNIQUE?**

We are a vibrant, strong and welcoming community with a strong focus on family and community life. Our town is a safe and positive place to raise a family and offers a range of well-equipped and modern facilities for community members of all ages. Our population totalled 15,845 by 2010 with 13,496 people living in Emerald and 2,349 in the surrounding rural area.

We promote community involvement through sporting, cultural and recreational clubs and volunteering. We have excellent facilities including a diverse range of sporting grounds, aquatic centre, indoor sports centres and showgrounds. We also take advantage of Lake Maraboon and nearby National Parks to go fishing, camping, boating and skiing.

We are a diverse community and celebrate this with our annual Multicultural Festival. We also celebrate our unique character with a number of popular annual events including the Easter Sunflower Festival and AG-Grow Field Days.

We have a number of historic sites such as the heritage listed Railway Station, Pioneer Cottage Complex and the step by step mosaic historical tour in Morton Park.

Our community spirit endures through times of adversity and opportunity and is demonstrated in



our willingness to help and support our friends and neighbours.

### WHERE DO OUR PEOPLE LIVE AND WORK?

A large number of our people work in the mining industry, which is the major employer in the Central Highlands region. People work directly for mining companies and associated contracting firms.

We have a diverse agricultural sector with many of our farming, grazing and horticultural business owners, managers and support workers, living on their properties.

A growing number of people work in our thriving retail, business, professional, administrative and hospitality sectors.

Several government services are based in Emerald including health and education. Emerald has a hospital and auxiliary services as well as primary, secondary and tertiary education facilities including primary schools, two secondary schools, TAFE College, Agricultural College and CQ University campus.

We have many public amenities including the botanical gardens, art gallery, hospital, emergency services, courthouse, council office, sporting venues, cinema, town hall, two shopping centres and the world's biggest sunflower painting in Morton Park.

### HOW DO WE GET AROUND?

Rail and road have always been important to the development of our town. Rail is used extensively by the mining industry to transport coal to ports such as Gladstone for international markets.

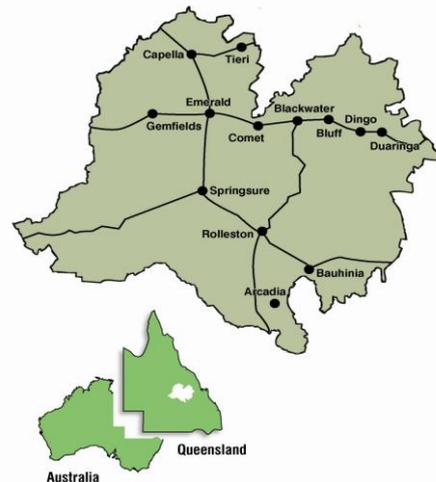
We also have a well serviced airport, which has recently had major upgrades to the terminal. It is just over an hour flight to Brisbane with around 30 commercial flights servicing our community every week.

By road we are a three hour drive to Rockhampton and are a pivotal point for visitors travelling west to Longreach and south through the inland highway. Our welcoming people, great facilities and natural attractions attract visitors to stay and explore our area.

### EMERALD – A JOURNEY INTO THE FUTURE.

As we look to the future, we will continue to embrace growth, value the benefits of our diverse and prosperous economy, while remaining a caring and vibrant community.

### Central Highlands Region



This signpost was created as a brief introduction to our town/locality. Information was accessed from a variety of sources including brochures, web-sites and people.

*Disclaimer: Every effort has been taken to ensure this information sheet is free from error and/or omission at the date of printing. Council is not responsible for loss experienced by persons or organisations acting or refraining from action as a result of this information.*