

Hopo Commentary Guide

Public Use

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Upstream (Surfers Paradise to Sea World)

Stop 1: Surfers Paradise

- The Gold Coast has over 70km stretch of coastline.
- The Gold Coast is growing in popularity as the location of choice for Hollywood productions. Recent titles filmed in the area include Elvis, Thor Ragnorok, King Kong and Aqua Man.

Stop 2: HOTA, Home of the Arts

- Stroll the HOTA Farmers and Artisan Markets from 6 am – 11:30 am every Sunday. Boasting in-season farm-fresh produce, delicious artisan foods, boutique fashion and handcrafted gifts.
- Plenty of parklands to have a picnic.
- Go for a swim in the man-made Evandale Lake.
- The pastel building is the HOTA Cinema where you can watch a variety of new and arthouse films. Hopo Gold Coast Ferry is a discount partner, so show your ticket and receive 20% off your movie ticket! You can check out the HOTA website for cinema times.

Nerang River Transit Information

- To our left is The Southport School also known as TSS, is one of the Gold Coast's most prestigious private boys' schools that has been operating since 1901. It is a heritage-listed school.
- In 1884, then Governor of Queensland, Sir Anthony Musgrave, decided to establish a summer residence on this site
- The school is known for their sporting alumnus, including golfer Adam Scott, NRL player Mat Rogers, tennis star Bernard Tomic and numerous rugby and medal-winning Olympians.
- Gold Coast has a population of almost 700,000 residents and receives approximately 10 million visitors per year.
- The corner house with blue tinted windows' block of land is worth 9.4 million, this does not include the price of the actual home. Three blocks of land.
- At the Southport side of the Sundale Bridge, you can spot a large nest that is home to the resident Osprey Eagle.
- (AT CHANNEL MARKERS) This is the best panoramic view of the Surfers Paradise skyline. (OPTIONAL: Slow down and give passengers time to take photos of the view).
- The Sundale Bridge replaced the Jubilee Bridge in 1966.

- Prior to the construction of the Jubilee Bridge, visitors were ferried across the Nerang River to surf at the main beach. Following the construction of the Jubilee Bridge in 1925, visitors could walk across the bridge from Southport.

Stop 3: Marina Mirage

- To the right you can see that there is a 160-metre Megayacht berth, the largest floating berth in Australia.
- Marina Mirage is a beautiful spot for award-winning waterfront dining and to taste some of the best seafood on the Gold Coast.
- A great place to shop at boutique and designer shopping.
- Wander to Mariners Cove which offers a number of tours such as Jetski rides or a bite to eat at Fisherman's Wharf Tavern.
- There are many ways to dine at Marina Mirage from, Sushi, and Icecream to Fine Dining that includes places such as:
 - If you are a lover of Seafood head to the Omeros Brothers restaurant
 - Sunset Bar & Grill is right next to the Ferry stop, and very popular with locals
 - Glass Restaurant is very popular for a romantic meal
 - La Luna and La Luna Beach Club - Beach club can be seen in between the berths

- On the right, you can see the renamed Versace Hotel, which has played host to famous musicians such as the Rolling Stones, Beyonce, Jay – Z, Rod Stewart and Elton John.

Stop 4: Broadwater Parklands

- The park went through a major redevelopment and was re-opened on 23 August 2009.
- Walk over to Australia Fair Shopping Centre which is a great place for shopping or catching the latest flick.
- Broadwater Parklands has lots to do including a brand new Play Attraction that opened in August 2022.
- Southport Broadwater Parklands is popular for events and family outings.
- The Broadwater Parklands has played host to music festivals, special events and other major celebrations.
- Access to Gold Coast's China Town Precinct.
- 5km of paths are great to go for a run, walk or cycle.
- 14 free BBQs throughout the parklands

Stop 5: Sea World

- The Gold Coast Seaway (Spit) is a popular snorkeling, surfing and fishing spot.
- Sea World has the new Atlantis Precinct, with Vortex and a wooden roller coaster Leviathan.

- The boats you can see to the left are owned by Sea World Foundation. They are used to perform marine rescues. The rescue team uses a fake humpback whale during their practice drills including how to disentangle a whale and help stranded whales.
- Did you know that Hopo is the only water transport to a major theme park in the world?
- Sea World Cruises is the Gold Coast's premier cruise company, offering tasty Buffet Lunch and Dinner Cruises, Champagne Breakfast Cruises and special event cruises.
- Between May to November, Sea World Cruises takes its luxury Whale Watching vessel to the Humpback Highway to watch the magnificent Humpback Whales.
- Sea World Cruise Terminal is a great place to relax and have a drink on the sundeck or browse the ocean-inspired Gift Store with lots of unique items to take home
- Don't miss Arro Jet Gold Coast's newest attraction, with fast boats that go straight into the high speed action zone in the Broadwater for spins and thrills

Downstream (Sea World to Surfers Paradise)

Stop 5: Sea World

- To the right you can see The Gold Coast Seaway which was built to stabilise the location of the Nerang River Entrance and allow greater tidal flows.

Stop 4: Broadwater Parklands

- To the right, you can see the GC Aqua Park; an inflatable obstacle course for all ages.
- Broadwater Parklands has a lot of things to do for the kids, including play equipment, a large Jumping Pillow and the Rock Pools, which is a great places to cool off. It has fun animal-shaped sprinklers and a drop bucket.
- A small beach to cool down at.

Stop 3: Marina Mirage

- Markets are held every Saturday from 7 AM to 12 PM on the ground floor. Local produce and gifts can be purchased.
- The iconic Marina Mirage sails are designed to capture airflow for the unique complex. They also light up at night.
- The Sunset Bar & Grill is a great place to stop and have a coffee.

- A short walk from Marina Mirage is the Fishermans Co-Op which is great for fresh seafood.

Nerang River Transit Information

- Nerang was the first European settlement town on the Gold Coast.
- Before European settlement, the Gold Coast and hinterland was a natural area of timbered mountains and hills, river valleys, floodplain, and salt and freshwater wetlands. Low sand hills and long white beaches marked the place where the land finally met the waters of the Pacific Ocean.
- The canals we travel on used to be swampy marshland.
- There are over 400 kilometres of waterways on the Gold Coast, over 9x the length of that in Venice.
- Paradise Waters is located on the Gold Coast Canals and the average house price is \$7M. Blocks of land sales have recently reached a new record of \$8M for a single block.
- Helipad and cannon house: “Some people decorate their gardens with a fountain or a gnome, but this person has chosen to decorate their house with a WWII cannon”

Chevron Island

- Chevron Island is reclaimed land developed in the 1950s and was formerly known as Goat Island with a Cattle Farm and herd of goats.
- It was uninhabited and used mainly for cattle grazing and small gardening.
- It was one of the first waterfront developments on the Gold Coast and is now a lively precinct of cafes, bars and restaurants.
- Chevron Island is a naturally built island

Cronin Island

- Cronin Island is a man-made island. It can only be accessed by a small bridge that can be seen on the right.
- Cronin Island is named after the City Engineer Jack Cronin, who helped develop much of the infrastructure, waterways, roads and bridges of Surfers Paradise.
- Cronin Island is a private enclave with a large triangular park in the middle, it is one of Gold Coast's most renowned and exclusive estates

Stop 2: HOTA, Home of the Arts

- The tall, brightly-coloured building is the HOTA Art Gallery. Opened in 2021, the \$60 million dollar instalment showcases

local artists and international exhibitions, a cafe and a rooftop restaurant and bar.

- There are great views of Surfers Paradise from the top of the art gallery.
- We will go under this blue-coloured bridge, which is ironically named the Green Bridge. This bridge connects to Chevron Island. It is coloured blue to represent the sea and sky of the Gold Coast and is made of recycled materials.
- The land had once been used for cotton, sugar cane and dairy farms.
- To the right you can see a sculpture made of stone called 'Keeper of the Light'. It was designed by New Zealand artist Chris Booth. The sculpture took 3 months to build. Keeper of the Light was inspired by the life of Jenny Graham, the grandmother of a Kombumerri elder Chris had connected with on the Gold Coast. It acknowledges her 10 years as the Nerang *river pilot* responsible for lighting the navigation beacons for boaters whilst also raising 11 children.

Stop 1: Surfers Paradise

- Before it was named Surfers Paradise, the area was formerly known as Elston.

- Cavill Avenue is named after Jim Cavill who opened the famous Surfers Paradise Hotel in 1925, which also included a zoo.

Surfers things to do

- Challenge the family at mini golf or ten-pin bowling at Timezone, Australia's largest indoor play centre.
- Surf and swim at world-famous Surfers Paradise beach
- Evening markets on the Esplanade on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday
- Sweet cravings can be satisfied by one of many ice cream parlour.
- Ferry Kiosk is a great place to find out more information about the Gold Coast and the various cruise offerings.
- Have a bite to eat or catch up for drinks at Surfers Paradise Pavillion, located next to the Hopo kiosk.
- Things to do in the area include Infinity Experience, Gold Coast Wax Museum and Ripleys Believe it or Not.
- When the sun goes down there is a lively nightlife scene at the many bars and nightclubs.
- Newly opened waterfront dining precinct has opened at the Paradise Centre.
- Budds beach is a small sandy beach with a popular cafe known as Budds Cafe. Budds Beach is a great place to watch the sunset.

- The top floor of the Q1 offers floor-to-ceiling windows and spectacular views of the city. There is a Skypoint Bistro + Bar where you can dine for breakfast, lunch or dinner.

Wildlife

Dolphins

- There is a population of Indo-Pacific dolphins that live in the Broadwater. It is estimated that 17 dolphins live in the area.
- Some of these resident dolphins have been recorded to be living in the Broadwater for over 30 years. They can live up to 50 years of age.
- Researchers have observed that dolphins can travel up to 15km north in the canals.
- This species of dolphin can weigh up to 155kg and eat a variety of fish and crustaceans.
- Dolphins have very good eyesight both below and above the water, however they also use echolocation to find objects. Echolocation is the ability to locate objects using reflected sound.
- Bottlenose dolphins can display many different types of behaviours including leaping, surfing, bow riding, and tail-slapping.

Sea Birds

- The Gold Coast Broadwater is a recognised RAMSAR site, which is a wetland site designated to be of international importance under the Ramsar Convention, also known as "The Convention on Wetlands", an intergovernmental environmental treaty established by UNESCO.
- The Broadwater is an important area for migrating and resting shorebirds. Commonly seen species can include; Australian pelicans, white-bellied sea eagles, crested terns, silver gulls, cormorants, brahminy kites, ospreys, and migrating australasian gannets.

First Nations

The Yugambeh (yugam-beh) language people are the traditional custodians of the land and sea upon which we meet today. Their homelands stretch from the Logan River in the north, to the Tweed River in the south, and as far west as Beaudesert across the mountain range you can see in the distance.

The Yugambeh Language Speaking peoples have an intricate and profound connection to the land and sea that spans millennia. For generations, they have lived in harmony with the coastal landscapes, drawing sustenance, inspiration, and cultural significance from the bountiful marine resources.

The ocean holds a central place in Yugambeh culture, symbolising not only a source of physical nourishment but also spiritual and ancestral ties. Their intricate understanding of marine ecosystems, passed down through oral traditions and lived experiences, underscores their role as stewards of these coastal environments.

Today, as we face increasing challenges such as climate change and overexploitation of marine resources, the wisdom of the Yugambeh people remains highly relevant. Their sustainable practices, reverence for nature, and holistic approach to resource management offer valuable insights for modern conservation efforts.

By honouring and learning from Yugambeh culture, we can forge a more harmonious relationship with the marine environment, ensuring its preservation for future generations.

Environment

As you can see today, the Gold Coast is brimming with natural beauty. From our beautiful waterways, to the majestic rainforest hinterland. It's ours to enjoy and to care for.

Here at the Hopo ferry, we take pride in caring for the environment.

Each year, we host a Clean up Australia day event. Everyone is welcome to join, and contribute to this wonderful community event. You can find more information on the website.

Another fact that I am proud to share with you today, is that the Hopo ferry uses less fuel than your average car. By taking the Hopo ferry, you have not only reduced congestion on our roads, but reduced your carbon footprint. All whilst enjoying the refreshing scenic tour of our Gold Coast waterways.

Leave no trace

There are many ways in which you can reduce your impact on the environment.

- Don't forget to bring your own drink bottle and keepcup. There are many local cafes close to each of the ferry stops.
- Recycle your cans and bottles onboard our vessels. Not only does this reduce landfill waste, but it also helps raise funds for Sea World Foundation. Sea World Foundation do fantastic work with research, rescue and rehabilitation of sick and injured animals.
- Avoid single-use plastics, including balloons, as they can end up not only in landfills but also in the ocean, where unsuspecting marine animals may ingest them, leading to serious harm and even death.

Climate Action

Many of you have probably heard of the term Climate Action.

Climate Action refers to efforts taken to combat climate change and its impacts.

Some of the ways in which you can reduce your carbon footprint include:

- Turn off lights, electronics and air conditioning when leaving your house or hotel room

- Choose public transport, like the Hopo ferry! Or if possible, walk or ride.
- Reduce, reuse and recycle!
- Reduce your intake of meat
- And conserve water.

There are many ways in which we can reduce emissions and collectively we can make a difference!

Education

Educate yourself, your friends and your family on the importance of marine conservation and the threats facing our oceans.

Encourage others to adopt sustainable practices and make environmentally conscious choices in their daily lives.

Let's work together to preserve our oceans and marine life for a sustainable future.

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