

LANDMARK POSTCODE
4822



Fred Tritton Lake, Richmond.
Copyright: Danielle Lancaster. Photograph supplied by Bluedog Photography Pty Ltd.

Story: Sheryl Allen

LOCATION: Richmond
5 hours west of Townsville

POPULATION: 750

INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, tourism

CLIMATE: Temperate
Summer: 23.0°C – 36.8°C
Winter: 8.5°C – 25.9°C
Rainfall: 477mm

One hundred million years ago the land where the central Queensland town of Richmond now stands was submerged beneath an ancient inland sea.

Today Richmond is 216 metres above sea level and 500km from the ocean. Yet marine fossils (fascinating remnants of the prehistoric aqua environment) have put Richmond on the map as the "Fossil Capital of Australia".

Locally unearthed fossils, including the 4.25m Richmond Pliosaur discovered in 1989, are showcased at award-winning Kronosaurus Korner – an interactive interpretive centre with 400 separate exhibits, a theatre, café and souvenir shop.

Fossil fanatics from afar come to fossick along the Dinosaur Trail, experience the annual Fossil Festival and find out more about prehistoric creatures.

Fossils aside, Richmond has long been a popular stop-over point, explains Landmark's Mick Chittick "Richmond is well-situated

half-way between Mount Isa and Townsville. It's like an oasis in this rugged country, with its bougainvillea-lined main street, townside recreational lake and lush green parks. Visitors often extend their stay once they arrive and see what we have to offer."

Eight-metre deep Lake Fred Tritton is located on the edge of Richmond and offers sandy beaches, shaded playgrounds, a water park and a range of water sports. Stocked with several fish species, it's an angler's delight, and along with the Bush Tucker Garden is another award-winner for Richmond.

Several motels and a "backpackers" provide a selection of accommodation, along with the ever-bustling caravan park by the lake.

Richmond's early heritage is shared by explorers and pastoralists seeking new land. These days, agriculture remains the lifeblood, with a lucrative beef cattle industry seeing 85,000 head cleared through the town each year. Non-traditional production such as goats, camels and sandalwood are also part of the mix.

The proactive Richmond Shire Council is lobbying for a dam at O'Connell Creek to support sound economic development, including its vision for an irrigation-based "food bowl". Exploration of gold and mineral deposits in the Gregory Range to the north is also promising for the future.

There is a wealth of opportunity in Richmond, says Mick. "Many of the townfolk work on the surrounding farms or in the shops or service

industries within Richmond. We have a doctor and a small hospital, two supermarkets, two petrol stations, a state school, shire offices, aged care facilities and sporting infrastructure."

Richmond is well-known for its grassy plains, and property is traditionally tightly held. "Some properties stay in the same family for three or more generations," says Mick. "In line with the national trend, the rural property market here has taken a price correction and softened back over the past couple of years, so fewer than usual properties are coming on the market, but if the price is right, they do sell."

Thanks to its laid-back country lifestyle, strong community spirit and sound strategic leadership, Richmond has developed a solid agricultural and tourism identity that delivers real confidence for the future, while fostering a big interest in its prehistoric past.

CONTACT:

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PROPERTY GUIDE:

Residential: range from \$140,000 – \$300,000
Rural: average \$120 per acre