



With safe, protected beaches, Agnes Water is ideal for families and others looking to escape the rat race for the weekend

Agnes Water ...

A HIDDEN GEM

There is no wonder why families, couples and surfers, cannot get enough of Agnes Water with its beautiful beaches and laid-back lifestyle, writes MEGAN CUNNEEN

The waves glide over the sandy shore, the water nibbles at your toes and as you breathe in the sweet salty air one word forms in your mind – magic.

You realise with wonder that there are no beach battles for spaces on the sand, no shoulder-to-shoulder crowds of swimmers and no noisy jet skis to break the tranquillity.

Agnes, as it is affectionately known to the regulars, is a hidden paradise just over an hour north of Bundaberg.

Lonely Planet Guide has listed the beach side town as one of the top 10 destinations in Queensland and it is easy to see why.

Longreach couple Deon and Doug Wiseman often visit the area for a well-deserved holiday.

"It is very quiet compared to the Sunshine Coast or Gold Coast," Doug said. "At Mooloolaba there are 10 people in one spot."

The couple admit they make the most of the beach while at Agnes and spend every day of their trip on the sand or in the water.

"We make the most of it, there are no beaches in Longreach," Doug said.

As well as the beaches, the couple recommend a number of tours and cruises that are available including the Larc experience, trips to Lady Musgrave Island, scuba diving and estuary and deep sea fishing charters.

"At 1770 you can fish and canoe and do other water sports," Doug said. "Without the hype of the Gold Coast or Sunshine Coast, we can just relax."

The town of 1770 is just 6km from Agnes Water and is also well worth a look.

But for the surfers, Agnes is the place to be. Agnes Water is the most northern surf beach on the east coast of Australia and home to one of the premier long

board surfing competitions. Surf lifesaver Jonathan Merefield would never pass up the opportunity to hit the Agnes surf to catch some waves.

"I come to Agnes, basically for the surf and it has a pretty laid-back as well – the beach is pretty clean and it is not too packed and crowded," he said. "And anyone would tell you that Agnes is the best surfing spot."

Jonathan has been surfing here for many years and has noticed the increasing amount of people discovering this once-hidden gem.

"It was a small surfing town and then the real estate boomed," he said.

So what do you do when you are all swum out and are looking for a little land activity?

Well, everything you want to see at Agnes is simply a few flip flop footsteps away. The area is surrounded by national parks and rainforests and there is WD hire for those wishing to explore Deepwater National Park.

And if you would like to brush up on the area's history, the Miriam Vale Mine Museum at Agnes Water is where you can spend the time learning about the history of the area. There is an informa-

tive display on the many shipwrecks along the coastline and a collection of photographs from the early days of the shire.

Once you have had your history lesson, there is a heritage walking trail located behind the museum, so you can experience the breath-taking views from Agnes Water headland.

The fresh salty air is sure to make the stomach rumble and Agnes Water serves up a handful of cafes and restaurants to head to, including the lively Latino Cafe, the Agnes Water Tavern and also the mellowed out Mango Tree Beachside Bar and Restaurant.

This Mango Tree restaurant next to the motel, used to be the town's only grocery store but has undergone drastic renovations to convert it into an atmospheric restaurant.

Dining at its best is only a hop, skip and jump away from the beach.

So, whether you chose to stay overnight or for a week at any of the town's quality backpacker hostels, resorts or camping grounds, Agnes Water is a must see for all.

And be quick – this slice of paradise is being re-discovered every day. ■