

THE INNISFAIL TOWN WALK

"Art Deco Capital of Australia"



***Innisfail Court House,
Edith Street, Post Office Corner***

More information on local **Cassowary Coast Region** attractions can be obtained from Innisfail Visitor Information Centre (4061 2655)

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KEY: ☀ (eg. ➔3☀) denotes Art Deco building

➔1 Starting from carpark on Fitzgerald Esplanade stroll along riverfront wall.

The River Reflections

Tells the story of the history of Innisfail in beautifully hand crafted tiles. The panels were designed and drawn by Innisfail born S M Di Mauro.

➔2 **The Canecutter Statue (1959)** Erected by the Italian Community as a memorial to the pioneers of the sugar industry. It is carved from Italian Carrara marble.

Look directly across road

Riverside Tavern

On this site (opp. the statue) is the town's first hotel which was built on top of a small hill. To expand the hotel, the owners cleverly decided to excavate the hill and construct another floor under the original building.

Look diagonally across road.

Originally the site of Customs House, the **Commonwealth Bank** was built here in the 1920s. The building now houses the local radio stations, 4KZ and Kool FM - Coastal Broadcasters.

Cross road to

Canecutter Court

Note the themed tiles, depicting the life cycle of the Cassowary, inlaid into the paving. This forms part of the TOWN BEAUTIFICATION commenced 2000.

Half way through Canecutter Court, on your right is

➔3☀ **Memorial School of Arts** (1930) – top floor was originally the town library. Now houses the Historical Society's Museum which is open 10am-12 noon & 1pm-3pm weekdays.





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➡4 Post Office Corner

As you stand on the corner, you see

- a) The Court House completed in 1940
- b) The ANZ Bank, originally Nolans Department Store. It was built in the early 1920s
- c) The former National Bank building, in Rankin St, built in the 1930s is opposite the Post Office

Turn left at corner of Rankin St

➡5☀️ **Woolworths** (after 1918) – Originally the Riverview Hotel. Scores of men would be quenching their thirsts at the hotel prior to departing for home in the countryside by the train, which ran beside the river. This beautiful façade was uncovered when Woolworths renovated the building in 2007.

Turn & walk right up Rankin Street

➡6☀️ **Innisfail Cyber Café**

– (Blue Bird Café 1920s) – Middle Eastern influence. A popular meeting place which was very upmarket with starched white tablecloths and silver cruet sets on the tables.



Staff wore bluebird brooches on their uniforms. Upstairs was a dance hall & wedding reception venue.

➡7☀️ **Cassowary Coast Regional Shire Hall** (1938) (photo next page) – This is Innisfail's fourth Shire Hall, the first three burnt down! Had the best dance floor in North Queensland. There was always a rivalry between this magnificent hall in a country backwater and Sydney Town Hall. Extensive renovations were made after Cyclone Larry damaged the building in 2006. Note the wrought iron balustrade.

➡8☀️ At the corner of Grace & Rankin St look right down the hill to the recently built **Innisfail Ambulance Station**. It was built in an adapted modern Art Deco style.

Cross street to left & turn right at crossing

➡9 **Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church**

Was built to replace the Church blown down by the 1918 cyclone. It was completed in 1928, mostly due to the drive and energy of the legendary Father Clancy. He is buried in the church in front



of the Shrine to Our Lady of Good Counsel. In 1993 the Church was listed on the National Heritage Register.

It was fully refurbished after Cyclone Larry 2006.

Opposite the Church is the former private hospital and surgery of Dr Tim Cotter MBE, who is renowned for his work on Weil's disease which caused such havoc with the health of early cane cutters.

►10 Innisfail's Oldest Building

This private house was built in 1883 by Dr Edwards as his home and surgery, and refurbished in 1988-92 by the late Mr Rod Taylor.



Opposite is **St Alban's Anglican Church** built in 1929. The church is a classic design and has fine stained glass windows over the altar.

Innisfail District Hospital fills the block to your left. There has been a hospital on this site since the tent hospital in 1880s.



Turn back towards CBD

►11 ☀️ Allan Maruff House (after WW11) – Built for electricity board to display modern electrical appliances to housewives. New façade was replicated from original design after Cyclone Larry 2006 damaged the building front. Now houses the town library which has a large range of Art Deco books.

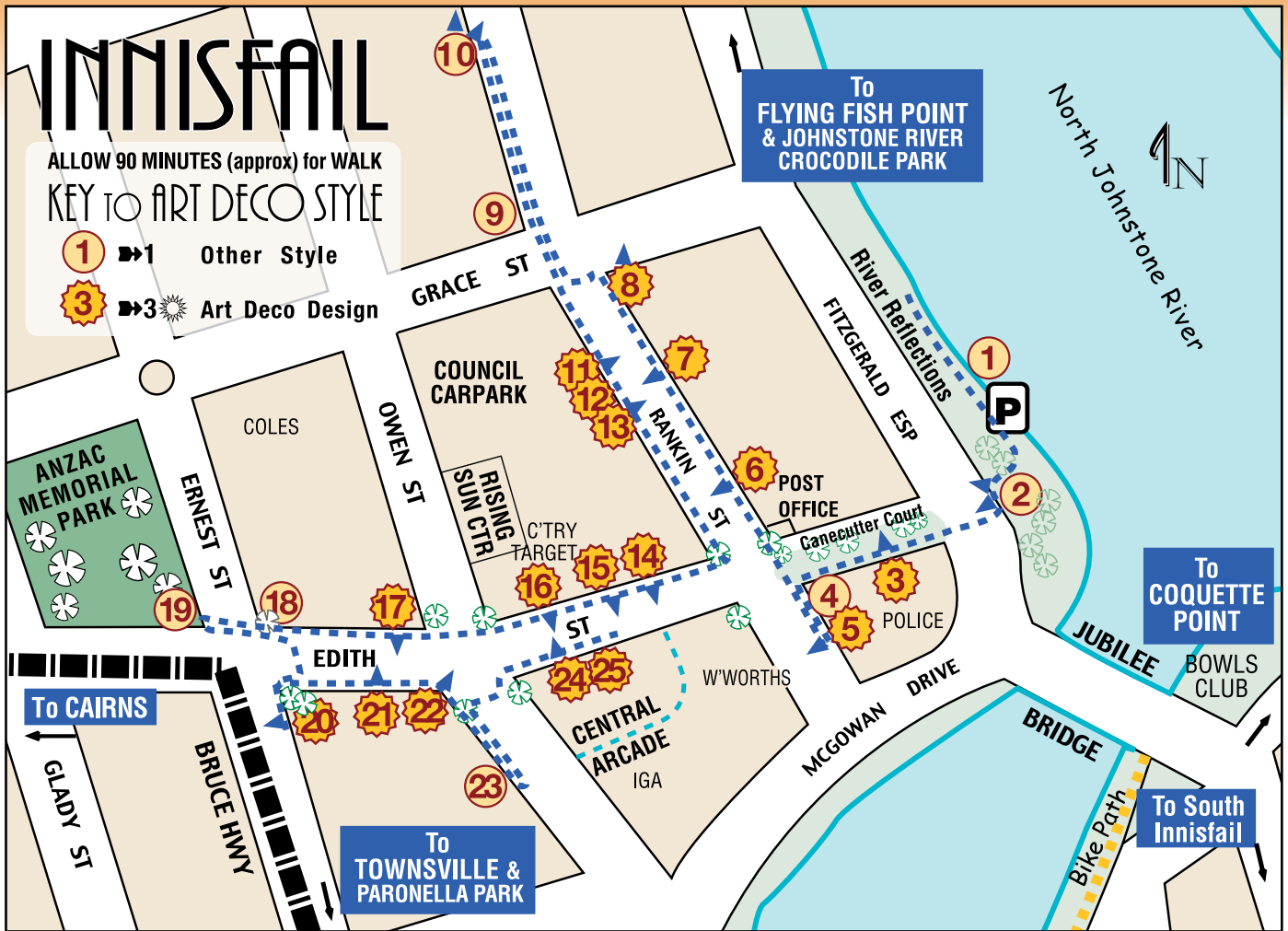
►12 ☀️ Turn right into the foyer of Cassowary Coast Regional Shire Hall. Notice the decorative ceiling, leadlight panels above the doors and the terrazzo tiled floor. A book detailing the building of the Shire Hall is available for purchase from the library.



The Shire Hall

►13 ☀️ **Arcidiacono House** (1930s) – example of Spanish Mission Art Deco. Used to be living quarters upstairs and a drapery downstairs. Note use of reflective lettering used for building name.

Looking down the street note the Art Deco water tower on the horizon.



WHAT IS ART DECO?

The Art Deco era was a period of architectural design & cultural influence between WW1 & WW2. It was an era of speed, power, light & the dawning of new social freedoms especially for women.

ART DECO REPRESENTED THE FUTURE, MODERNISM AND THE COMING MACHINE AGE.

Buildings with plans that were drawn up during the 1930s might not have been built till the 1950s due to interruption from WW2.

A series of cyclones, including the most destructive one in 1918 destroyed most of the Innisfail timber buildings. Seeing how well the few concrete buildings survived, the town was rebuilt using concrete. This was at the time that Art Deco was the fashionable architectural influence. Visit www.artdeco-innisfail.com.au.

Art Deco features include reinforced concrete construction, low relief surface decoration, curved corners, geometric shapes and lines, lead light panels, porthole windows, wrought iron balustrades, stepped skyscraper facades.

Art Deco is characterized by decorative themes like

- sunbursts and fountains representing the dawning of a new age, skyscraper shapes which were symbolic of the 20th Century.
- geometric shapes representing machines and technology, and symbols of speed, power and flight which represented the exciting new developments in transport and communications of the times.

Art Deco architecture used aspects of machine design as inspiration, for example, aeroplane wings, porthole cabin windows, cogs & wheels of the motorcar engine and the bow shape of the new transatlantic ocean liners.

At corner turn right into Edith St

➡14 Formerly the **Grand Central Hotel**, recently refurbished to accommodate Central Arcade, was built in 1926.

➡15☀ **Regent Arcade** (Regent Theatre) – Was the town's main entertainment place for stage plays and live theatre. Was originally an igloo shaped building to maximise the wide internal space needed. In 1977 new owners transformed it into an arcade. On the façade they kept the word Regent and changed 'Theatre' to 'Arcade'. The first talking movie shown in Innisfail was the Jazz Singer in 1928.



➡16☀ Towards the end of the block is a group of **Art Deco façades** proudly restored by their owners. Displaying stepped skyscraper façades, decorated anchor points for rods to hold up the weight of awnings & other features highlighted by the colour scheme.
Straight ahead across Owen Street



➡17☀ **Innisfail Family Health** (after WW11) - Note the wrought iron balustrade on verandah.

Bendigo Bank (1980s) – modern building built to complement the Art Deco design of the surrounding buildings. Notice the sunburst pattern symbolizing the dawning of the Art Deco era.

➡18 **See Poy Corner**

The whole area covered by Coles and its carpark was formerly See Poy & Sons - Innisfail's largest department store which sold everything from toys and shoes to groceries and furniture to cars. There is a plaque on the wall of Coles commemorating Tom See Poy (Taam See Piu). *Cross to Park at crossing*

➡19 **Memorial Park**

This park was the site of the first school in Innisfail (called Geraldton until 1910), but the school was shifted because this area was then very swampy. The area was later filled and became one of the town's sportsgrounds.

Note the following:

- 1) Band stand - built 1923
- 2) Plaque noting site of the school
- 3) Palm trees planted to commemorate Don Bradman's visit.
- 4) Gate commemorating the Coronation of George V.



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Returning cross Edith Street to the right

➔20  **Sam's Warehouse** (after WW11)

- Look left down Ernest St to red brick building which was Hastings Deering agricultural machinery business. The porthole windows were taken from transatlantic

liner design which was a symbol of speed and power of the Art Deco era. *Returning back up Edith St towards CBD*



➔21  **Dom's Deli & Fine Food** (1936) – Right hand part of this building was a salami factory catering for the new cuisine of the immigrant canecutters who came to Australia 1920s.

➔22  **Soul Pattinson Chemist**

(White Horse Hotel) – *Diagonally across intersection.* The first building of wooden construction, was converted to a hotel

by the Wakelam Family who named it after a statue of the little *White Horse* they brought back from England. The hotel was sold to the McIlwraith Family but was

totally demolished in the 1918 cyclone. The *White Horse* was salvaged and incorporated into the rebuilt hotel. It still remains in the delicensed hotel building.




At corner turn right down Owen Street


➔23 **The Chinese Temple**

This temple is locally known as The Joss House because of the Joss sticks burnt during worship. It is a Universal Temple honouring

Buddhism, Taoism and Ancestor worship - and is still used as an occasional place of worship by some recent refugees. The first "Joss House" was built on the site of the present Commonwealth Bank. *Return, at corner turn right and cross*

➔24  **Country Target** (2004) – Recently built in sympathetic modern Art Deco design after fire destroyed the original building. Another example of development in sympathy with the predominate art deco theme.

➔25  **Rothnie's Pharmacy** (1920s) – Look above you to the ceiling panels under the awning. This has been a chemist shop since 1930s.

➔25  **Cheryl-Lee Florist & Bridal** – To right notice panels of painted leadlight windows. Note the original brown tiles with a central panel of dots on the walls of the shop front.



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