

Low Isles

Historic Lighthouse

Dual Commonwealth Heritage Listing

Quicksilver has been travelling to Low Isles since 1979 and we have always known it is a special island.

Low Isles and its historic lighthouse are both registered on the Commonwealth Heritage List in recognition of their place in Australia's cultural and Indigenous heritage. Formally registered in 2008, it was the first time one location received a dual listing for both Indigenous history and Australian cultural heritage.

A little bit of island history...

In 1770 Captain James Cook described Low Isles as a "small low island" and was officially called Low Isles in 1819.

Low Isles is a small coral cay and the Aboriginal people know these islands as Wungkun. It is an important Indigenous and cultural site for the KuKu Yalanji and Yiragandi people as the sea country for both groups overlaps at Low Isles.

Weather data has been gathered from the island since 1887 and in 1928 it was the base for the first scientific study of a coral reef anywhere in the world.

Quicksilver commenced the first daily cruises to Low Isles in 1979. In 2000, the Low Isles Heritage Walk was officially opened.

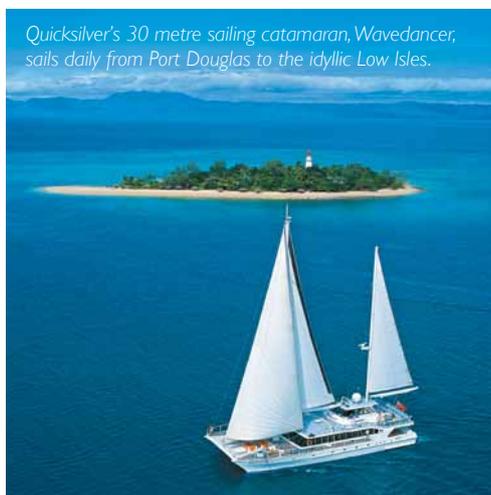
About the lighthouse...

The lighthouse was completed in 1878 and for over 135 years has guided ships through the main shipping channel between Port Douglas and Cairns.

The lighthouse was constructed on a timber frame with a galvanised sheath and interestingly, the Low Isles lighthouse was the first in Queensland to have porthole windows. A timber staircase leads to the lantern room.

Originally oil burners were used to light the way, but over the years with new technology the lighthouse continued to be upgraded and in 1993 solar conversion made it into a self contained beacon.

The original 1878 lens for the light can today be seen on display in the Court House Museum, Port Douglas.



A day in the life of the lighthouse keeper...

Pre electric conversion in 1963... Three keepers manned Low Isles - a head keeper and two assistants. Keepers had one month's holiday a year in which they could leave the island.

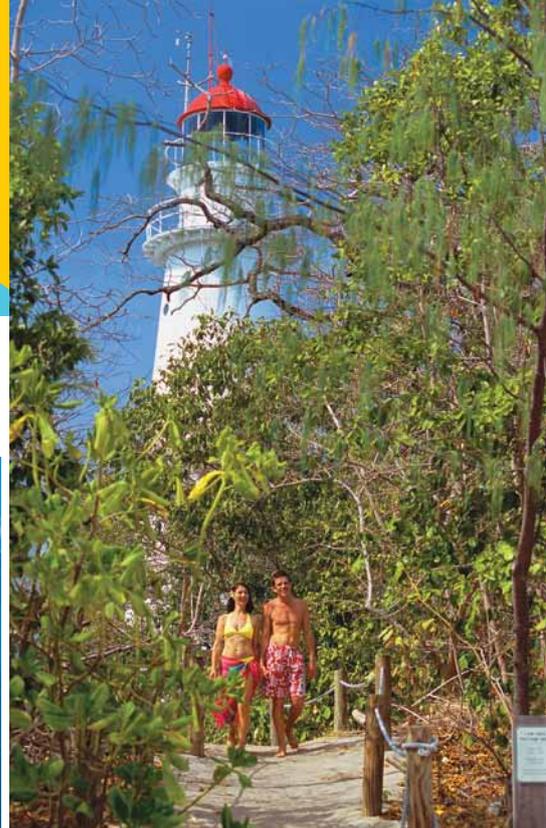
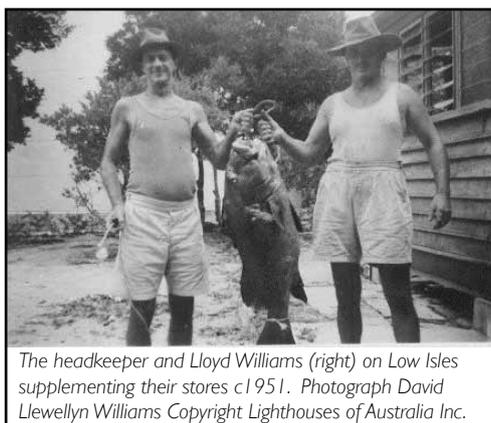
Duties during the day included:

- Cleaning and polishing the lens and the lantern room windows.
- Maintenance of the station such as cleaning, raking leaves, painting and sanitary duties.

The watch was as follows:

- Head keeper watch: 4 - 8pm
- The two assistant keepers watch: 8pm - midnight and midnight - 4am (alternating every week).
- During a shift the clock had to be wound up every hour and the air cylinder pumped up every hour.

Provisions and mail were brought to the island every two weeks by launch from Mossman or Port Douglas.



Lighthouse Specifications...

Location:	Lat. 16° 23' S, Long. 145° 34' E
Operator:	Australian Maritime Safety Authority
Exhibited:	1878
Construction:	Timber Frame with Galvanised Sheeting
Character:	Flashing white 0.02 in 10 sec
Light Source:	120v 1,000w Tungsten Halogen Lamp
Power Source:	Solar Array
Intensity:	21,000cd
Range:	16 nm
Elevation:	28m to weather vane
Height:	26m to weather vane
Demanded:	1993
Custodian:	Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service.



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