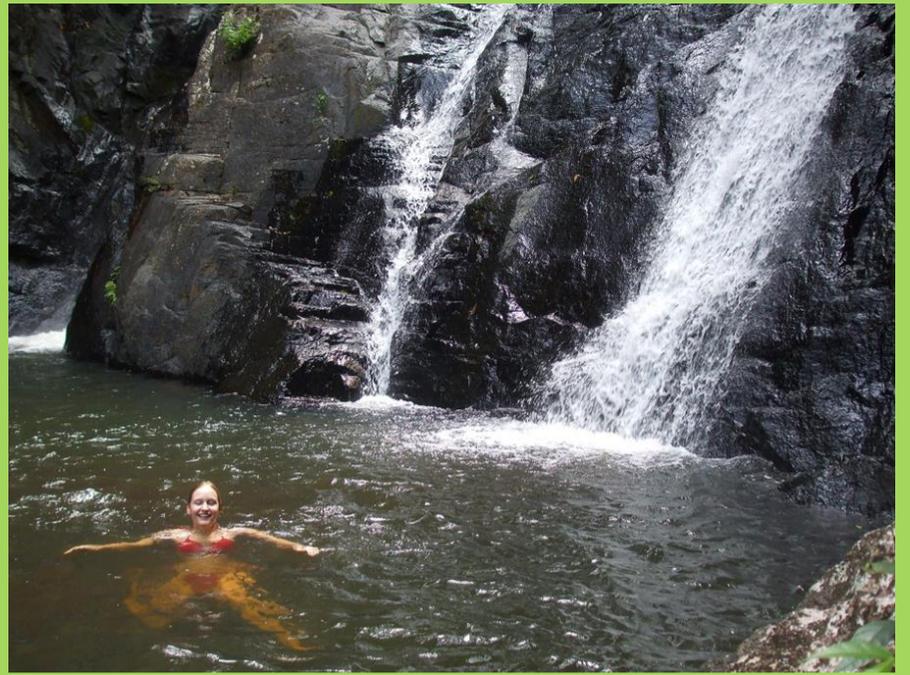


Living and Investing in Australia:

DOES THE ATHERTON TABLELAND HOLD THE

ATTRACTOR FACTOR?



Dinner Falls in the Hypipamee National Park

by Christine Doan

Far North Queensland. It's a long way from anywhere. Australia. The undiscovered end of Australia, that's even further. That's a bad thing. And it is a bloody good thing!

I "discovered" the Atherton Tablelands back in 1970 when it was the unknown paradise at the end of the world. Things have changed. But this relatively undiscovered and benign but teensy corner of the big, bad world out there, is still "underdeveloped". In other words, blissfully beautiful.

So what makes the Tablelands a great place to live and why isn't everyone here already?



Rainforests of the Atherton Tablelands Photo © Alan Carmichael

As to the first question, totally easy answer:

- Perfect climate in the true tropics but almost 1000 metres altitude so never too hot and never too cold.
- We have a Wet Season and a Dry Season but we never run out of water. We never have a winter worthy of the name.
- We sit on some of the most fertile volcanic topsoil in the world.
- We can grow 85% of the food crops of the world right here. Many require little care or attention so even a small backyard (we tend to big backyards....) or a veranda can grow healthy yummys without so much as the touch of a green thumb.
- Communities are still communities here.
- Volunteerism and community input are givens, not extras.
- World Heritage Rainforests surround us. The World Heritage Great Barrier Reef is but an hour or so away.
- We have crater lakes and waterfalls and a man made lake and hills and forests and walking tracks and cycling tracks and horse riding opportunities and camping options and quirky little historical sites and endless possibilities to quickly be in natural surroundings doing calming or exciting or even environmental activities on a daily basis.
- Australia has one of the most stable democracies in the world and the most stable economy of the developed world.
- We have a highly developed social safety net.

- Our worst possible natural disaster event has been the softened edge of a fierce tropical cyclone. Cyclones tend to lose power quickly as they hit the coast and then have to climb the abrupt fault escarpment up to the Tablelands. It can blow hard and rain like nothing you've ever seen outside the tropics, but it rarely causes more than a hiccup compared to the vagaries of natural disasters in most areas.

The Wet Tropics Tablelands never experience:

- ✓ Drought
- ✓ Loss of water supply
- ✓ Crop failure across the board
- ✓ Snow
- ✓ More than localised flooding (largely due to inappropriate development.....)
- ✓ Hurricanes
- ✓ Full force of cyclones
- ✓ More than overnight frost
- ✓ Tidal surge or tsunami
- ✓ Uncontrollable bush (forest) fire in settled areas
- ✓ Insurrection
- ✓ Terrorism
- ✓ Social unrest
- ✓ A crime rate worth worrying about, though we have so little to worry about that we grumble about graffiti and occasional youth break-ins
- ✓ Poverty
- ✓ Okay, so there are a few snakes and spiders but they make better TV footage than the stuff of everyday life.



Popular farmers markets and festivals abound



A pair of platypus

As to the second question, Why isn't everyone here already?, the answer is a bit more convoluted. I have a very long answer to that which cannot be consolidated into dot points. But consider the following:

- Singapore sometimes seems closer than Sydney.
- It is hard to make a fabulous living here though everyone at least gets by.
- It has traditionally been difficult to immigrate to Australia. Immigrants here tend to stick to big cities.
- We are short on urban amenity.
- Not everyone appreciates monsoonal rain. Some "temperate" climate natives never adjust to the lack of seasonality.
- Sparse population surrounded but unreal natural beauty in a down to earth, very real, but not necessarily sophisticated community is not for everyone.
- We have done a woeful job of branding and marketing ourselves. This is partly because we didn't want to share our beautiful secret!
- Our distance from population centres has often rescued us from 20th century ills. The twisty road up the steep fault scarp from Cairns dissuades developers. We have largely been glad not to entertain the wrong kind of development.

Your next question might be , "So what has changed such that I might consider moving there now?"

My answer to that would also be long and involved. Once again, I think I can dredge out a few bullet points for you to consider that do not necessarily do justice to the longer story, but can give you some hints about why you might want to think about Australia and particularly Far North Queensland if you are scratching your head about some of the following questions:

- Where can I take my family to be safe?
- Where can my children grow up in a solid community and enjoy a real, unfettered childhood as well as a decent crack at a good education?
- Where can I go to ensure a future for myself and my family?
- Where can I safely invest?
- Where can I put down roots, travel, work in the global economy, and have a beautiful safe place and space to return to?

Here are a few dot points which do not tell the whole story, but which might give you a hint about why you would consider the Atherton Tablelands worth a look if you have been asking yourself any or all of the questions above:

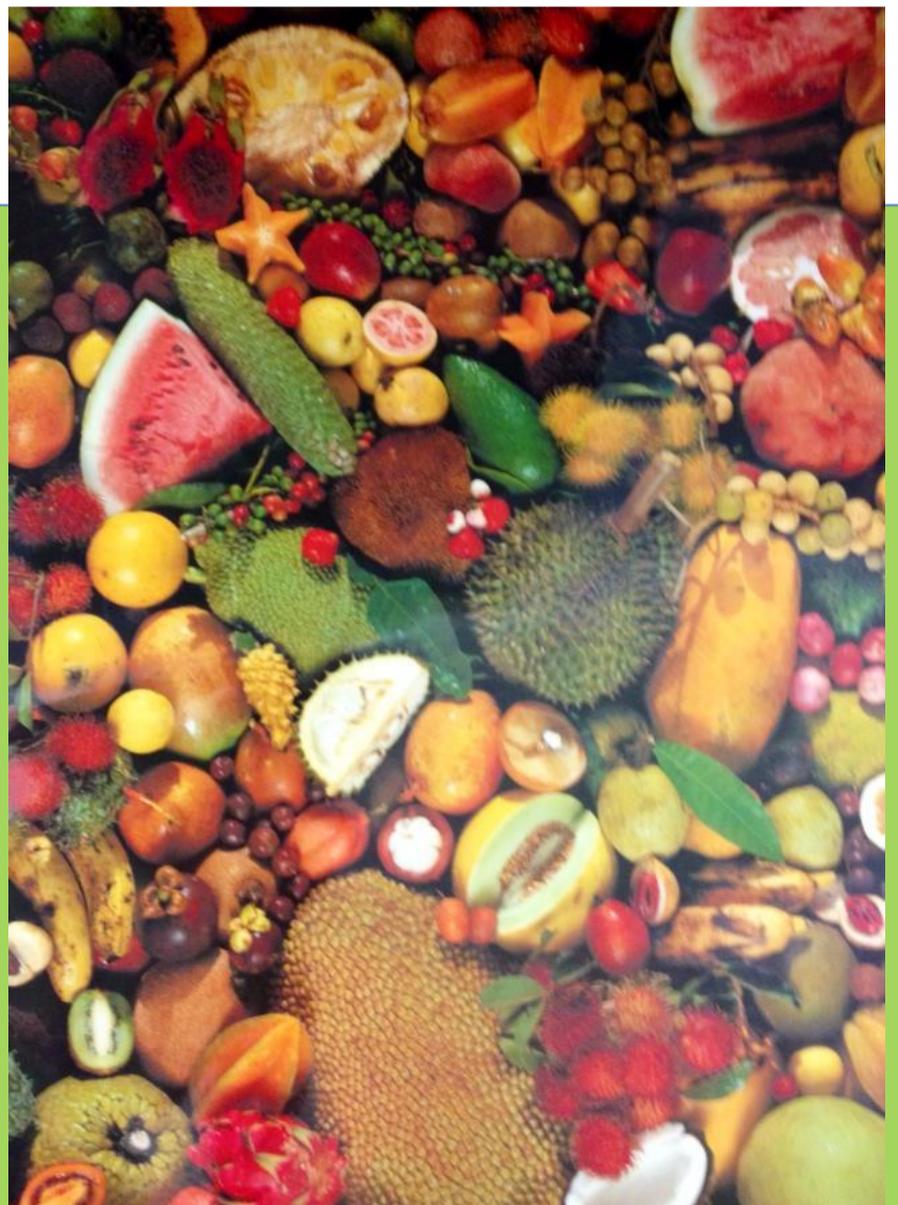
- Business immigration to Australia has never been easier or more desirable. Invest in business here, invest in a safe future for your family.
- The Atherton Tablelands, and regional Australia in general aside from mining areas, has never had strategies or opportunities for smart investors who are looking for a safe place plus a safe investment. Regional Australia is still no place for anyone wanting to make a quick buck.
- Because community participation in a wide range of community driven causes is high, assimilation is relatively easy. No one needs feel left out if you take an interest in the environment, or a local sport, or your local school, even your local Chamber of Commerce or service club.
- With the advent of the internet economy, all the health and well-being benefits of the

Tablelands lifestyle are available to those who can run their high-speed broadband dependent businesses from home.

- With an international airport 1.5 hours or less from most of the Tablelands the option to fly out and do business throughout Australia and at least South East Asia, China and Japan with relative ease is a given. You might be lucky to live in Sydney and be able to access the airport more easily or quickly....

There is so much more to say. This is a subject we at Tropical Tablelands Mag are keen to expand upon in the future. For now, let's just agree in principle that the Atherton Tablelands has a Unique Attractor Factor: it is safe in a deep as well as superficial sense of the word.

The Tablelands offers us not just the comfort and safety but the thrill of adventure and the challenge of the freedom to change your own lifestyle and your own life.



The Tablelands grows it all!