



Chapter 3. Etheridge Shire

Mayoral Statement

Our vision for the Shire is one of a community with robust economic and environmental assets which supports the wellbeing of our citizens. The Shire has many current and looming opportunities, all it takes is people with ideas and vision to take advantage of these opportunities. We need more residents to make the change and embrace the life style away from the heavily populated coastal seaboard. Cattle grazing, mining, tourism and agriculture are the predominant industries which are the driving force behind our economy. As businesses grow and our population steadily increases so will the need for additional services to keep pace with growth.

There are two seasons in the Shire, 'The Wet' and 'The Dry'. We are working to even the impact by storing more water for the dry and building better infrastructure so that moving around the Shire is possible at all times of the year, especially during the wet. Regional and rural roads are improving in standard and quality all the time, travelling between major cities and Shire townships is no longer an arduous journey but a pleasant driving experience. The Shire has all the modern communication and technological services such as ADSL, Next G, free to air and Pay TV that major areas enjoy and take for granted. People residing in our Shire also benefit from incentives offered by the Taxation Office. There are rural, residential, residential/rural, commercial and industrial land available. The Shire has good community and social infrastructure. We are committed to providing quality infrastructure for future generations to enjoy.

The Etheridge Shire is a great place to live, work, play and raise your children. We have a caring and committed community.



Will Attwood
Mayor

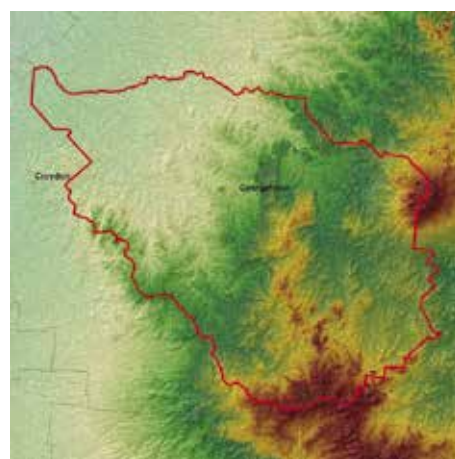
History

The early history of the Etheridge Shire is synonymous with famous explorers such as Leichhardt (1844-45), Gregory (1855-56), McKinlay (1862) and Jardine (1864), all of whom traversed the area seeking minerals, timber and good pastoral land.

History also records that in 1869 a young geologist named Richard Daintree explored the area around 41 Mile Creek and the Gilbert and Copperfield rivers, revealing the presence of payable gold. May 1870 saw the establishment of the community of Etheridge, along the banks of the Etheridge River. In November of the same year, this new settlement became known as Georgetown, named after the first gold commissioner in the region, Howard St. George.

The grazing occupation of the Gulf Savannah originates with Carpentaria Downs, which in the mid 1800's was partially owned by sea captain Robert Towns, founder of both Burketown and Townsville. The main pastoral settlements appeared in the eastern part of the Shire, where large individual areas were taken up. In many cases these settlements remain some of the largest stations in the Shire today.

Relics of the famous gold rush days can still be found throughout the district and the settlements of Mount Surprise, Einasleigh, and Forsayth, together with Georgetown, remain a fossickers dream. The Etheridge goldfield, the "poor mans" goldfield, has never been worked out, and modern-day prospectors still search for specimens such as coloured topaz, agates, sapphires, smoky quartz and other precious stones, as well as using medical detectors to find nuggets of gold.



Etheridge Shire Area Map

Key Facts

Population Statistics

The preliminary estimated resident population of Etheridge Shire Council at 30 June 2012 was 924 people. Projections prepared by the State Government indicate that by 2016 the expected population of Etheridge Shire Council will be between 760 and 980 people. By 2031 this is expected to change to between 730 to 1,190 people. The median age of Etheridge Shire Council's population is projected to increase by 15 years from a median age of 39 years in 2006 up to a median age of 54 years in 2031.

Etheridge Shire Council covers part of Queensland's outback Gulf Savannah region and is bordered by Tablelands and Charters Towers Regional Councils, Flinders, Richmond, Croydon and Carpentaria Shire Councils.

Population Trends

YEAR AT 30 JUNE	EST. RESIDENT POPULATION
2005	883
2006	869
2007	902
2008	915
2009	927
2010	923
2011	929
2012	924



More Key Facts

Main Industries Mining
Agriculture (beef, small crops)
Tourism
Eco Tourism

Main Townships Georgetown
Mt Surpsie
Forsayth
Einasleyh
Kidston
Oak Park
Lynd Junction

Area 39,323 (sq km)

Average Annual Rainfall 734 mm

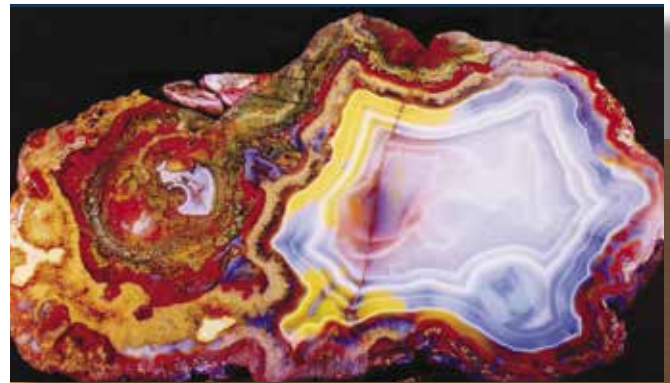
Average Annual Daily Maximum Temp 31.4 C

Average Annual Daily Minimum Temp 17.8 C

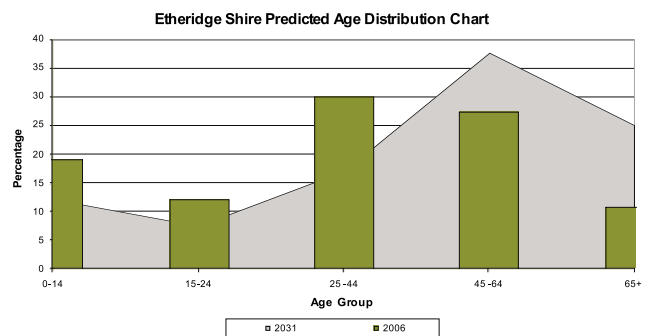
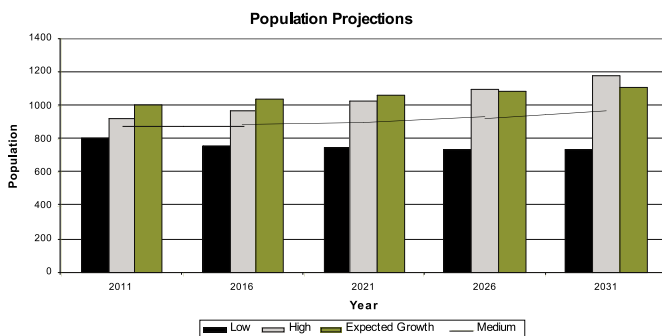
National Reserves Tallaroo, Howlong



Agate Creek



Etheridge Agate



Building Approvals

Financial Year	Type of Applications	Value of Work
2006-2007	Dwellings - 4 approvals Sheds - 1 approval Accommodation units - 1 approval 1 development approval - reconfigure lots 1 development approval - major tourism	\$1,261,500
2007-2008	Dwellings - 3 approvals 1 development approval – major tourism	\$533,946
2008-2009	Dwellings - 10 approvals Medical Clinic - 1 approval	\$650,000
2009-2010 (Feb 2010)	Dwellings - 10 approvals Commercial - 2 approvals 3 development approvals – reconfigure a lot & M.C.U.	\$1,810,000 \$1,000,000
2012 (July -September)	Dwellings - 1 Sheds - 1 Dwelling extensions/alterations - 4 Commercial - 23 Major Tourism -	\$1,474,209.13

Recent House and Land Sales

Council has 20 residential allotments in Georgetown.

Council is investigating further land developments for residential and commercial areas for future opportunity in other parts of the Shire.

Council Regulations and Contact Person

Etheridge Shire Council has a current Planning Scheme which covers development throughout the Shire. Council does provide a building approval service or approvals can be arranged with private certifiers.

If you would like further information on building and town planning matters, please contact the Director of Corporate and Community Services at Etheridge Shire on (07) 4062 1233 or 0448 621 231.

Health Services

The Shire boasts excellent health services provided through Queensland Health, Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) and Frontier Services. In an emergency, the RFDS is called to evacuate patients by plane or helicopter.

There are regular doctor clinics throughout the Shire. Georgetown has a 24 / 7 hospital service with a modern facility which can take in-patients if required. Forsayth has a hospital which is open five days per week and Mt Surprise has a nursing service provided by Frontier Services.

Dentists hold clinics regularly each year.

While there is no pharmacy service in the Shire, medications can be easily delivered by various pharmacies by bus, truck or mail.



I moved to Etheridge Shire almost by accident, some 10 years ago and right from the start I was made most welcome by the locals.

I have a philosophy in life, that if you have job satisfaction, lifestyle and wellbeing, and it doesn't matter which order, you will have security. That is what I have living and working in this wonderful place.

Michael Digby

I chose to come to Georgetown, from Townsville, when my partner's family bought a property between Georgetown and Croydon. Since then we have chosen to raise a family in the area as we believe it is a wonderful place to bring up children.

The freedom to do things you can't do in the cities is endless, whether it be talking to your neighbour over the fence or down the street, riding motorbikes and horses within five minutes of your own house, going swimming and fishing in local creeks or just relaxing for the weekend and not doing much.

The Etheridge community gives you a feeling of security and willingness to help - especially in trying times, which I don't think you would experience in many other places.

Dale Harrison



Education Services

There are primary schools in our Shire at Georgetown, Forsayth and Mt Surprise. The Shire offers a boarding hostel for primary school children with caring house parents. The boarders attend the Georgetown State School.

While there are no high schools in the Shire, there is significant government assistance to help families attending boarding schools in Charters Towers, Cairns, Townsville and other centres. Many families say that the assistance gives them the chance to send their children to a better school than they might have otherwise afforded. Our local high school students excel at sports and many of our children have gone on to rewarding professional careers. You might have seen locals Klancy Keogh and Mitchell Steele on the TV singing contest, Australian Idol, for example.

The School of Distance Education provides for all levels of students. While most schooling is done at a distance there are plenty of activities offered and chances to meet other families.

There is a long hours child care centre in Georgetown and play groups organised throughout the Shire at various times.

Sport and Recreation Facilities

Our Shire is definitely sports mad!

Scarcely a weekend goes by without some sort of event such as the Annual Rodeo, Camp draft, Horse Sports, Horse Racing at Oak Park and Einasleigh, Bushmans Ball, School Fetes and Forsayth Turnout just to name a few. In Georgetown there is a golf club, rodeo association, camp draft and a number of other sporting and social activities.

For the kids there is a range of sports and activities that they can participate in such as athletics, hockey, and soccer, cricket, boxing and swimming depending on their interests.

Council is very proactive in providing sporting fields and venues for the community to utilize and is always planning to provide additional sports and recreational facilities.

The swimming pool in Georgetown has been refurbished and upgraded and is open all year round. This aquatic centre is free to the public and is consistently utilised by the communities and by the swimming club.

There are various walks and camping experiences around the shire taking in the unique and spectacular outback scenario, with picture perfect sunsets and sunrises and clear night time skies.

For the fishing enthusiasts, there is plenty of black bream and other fresh water fish in the various rivers and waterholes. Karumba is only 4 hours drive west and Cairns is about 5 hours east.

There are many other tourist attractions within the Shire, including the Ted Elliott Mineral Collection which is housed in Council's Terrestrial Building in Georgetown, Undara Experience, Cobbold Gorge, and the Cumberland Chimney (just to name a few).



I actually moved out to Georgetown to be with the love of my life, a man I met a little while ago. I had a few reservations when I first moved because living in a city like Cairns and being used to all the girlie shops and things I was a bit worried moving out here.... thinking Oh my goodness what am I doing... but since being out here it's been wonderful. I absolutely love it and we do do the trip to Cairns occasionally so I don't really miss out on much on the girlie stuff and there's always ebay, which is fantastic.

But having settled in now and being out here for about 15 months and taking over the running of the business essentially, I realise there are a heap of business opportunities out here for anyone that's prepared to give things a go and with a little bit of gumption... but its a really wonderful place to live, the people are really friendly. I often go for walks and the sunsets and sunrises are just absolutely beautiful. There's a gorgeous park and swimming pool and certainly I don't feel that I'm hard done by or I don't feel I'm missing out on anything at all by living out here in Georgetown. Absolutely beautiful place.

Lydia Wilde

Retail and Financial Services

Although the Shire is classified as remote, and has a small population, it boasts a number of services. There are caravan parks, hotels, motel, rural supply merchant, post office, police station, QGAP office, Department of Primary Industries and roadhouses. A supermarket, locksmith, and computer repairs are also available in Georgetown.

Bus and cartage services operate from Georgetown. Most businesses in the far north are well geared to country orders and transport comes at least three times a week.

Religious Services

Georgetown is the base of the Gulf Savannah Catholic Parish which covers an area larger than Victoria. There are church services for the Uniting Church and Catholics on a routine basis. There is also a Masonic Lodge in Georgetown.



I moved to the Lynd 9 years ago when we bought the roadhouse here at the Lynd Junction. I find it very good living out here with all the local people and the community.

I find living here at the roadhouse is very good because you are meeting a lot of different people every day from all over the world, a lot of local people as well as travellers, the grey nomads travelling around from all over Australia as well as from foreign countries as well and the workers that we get here as well. Very often we get backpackers.

It's very interesting to learn where they're from and their cultures and just a few of the little Australian habits that they pick up along the way that are quite amusing that we actually don't take a lot of notice of. I find the Etheridge Shire is very vast shire and very interesting.

Karley Royes

Climate

Many people think Northern Australia is uniformly hot and humid, but this is certainly not the case in Etheridge Shire. Warm days, cool nights, low humidity and dry winters are features of the climate enjoyed by residents of the Shire's towns. Maximum temperatures are higher than on Queensland's east coast, but not as high as areas such as Mt Isa, which is hotter than Georgetown throughout the summer months.

These warm days are balanced by cool nights. Georgetown, for example, has lower minimum temperatures than Cairns year-round. In winter, the mean minimums are a full five degrees below Cairns, with a July mean minimum of twelve degrees in Georgetown. Because of their altitude, the Shire's smaller towns, such as Mt Surprise, have even cooler nights, with a refreshing mean minimum of just 9.6 in Mt Surprise in July.

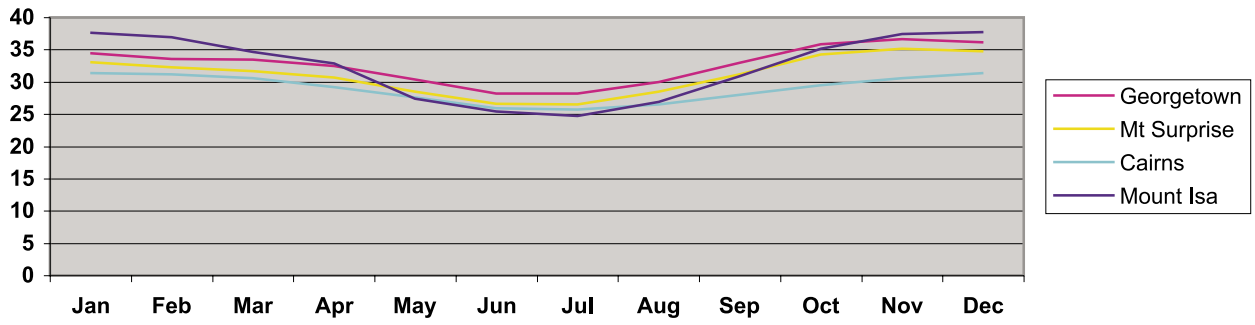
But it is the low humidity which is a feature of Etheridge's climate. Humidity is far below that of cities such as Cairns and Brisbane, all year round. While Brisbane and Cairns sweat it out in higher humidity in October / November, Georgetown enjoys humidity levels 30% lower.

As with most of Northern Australia, rains begin to fall in November/ December, mainly through afternoon and evening storms, before the monsoon brings the bulk of the regions rain from January through to April. However average rainfall is much less than on the east coast in Cairns and rain periods tend to be shorter in duration.

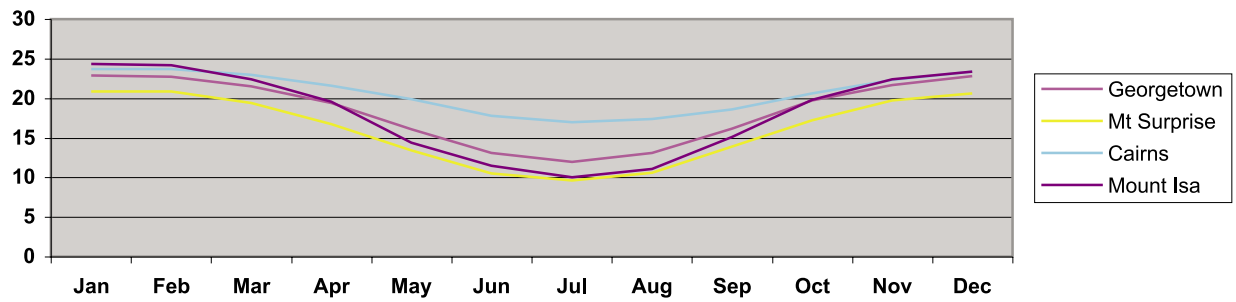


Castle Rock

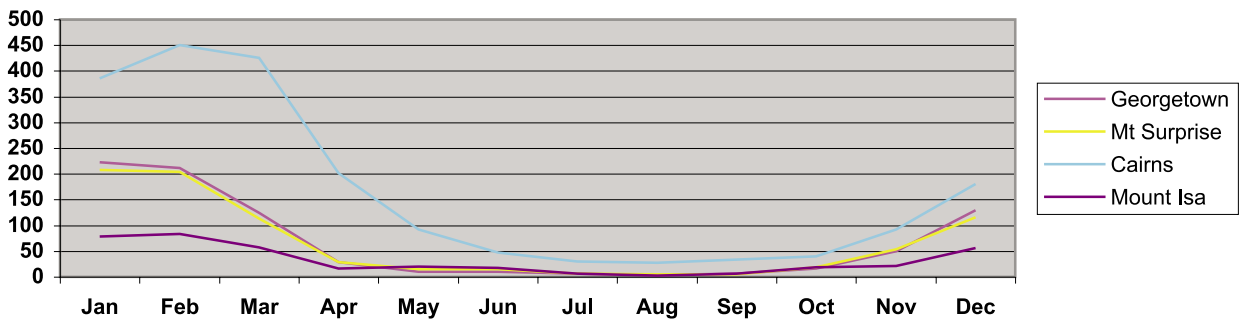
Etheridge Shire Mean Maximum Temperature



Etheridge Mean Minimum Temperature



Etheridge Shire Mean Rainfall



Etheridge Shire Mean 3pm Relative Humidity

