



Chapter 4. Doomadgee Shire

Mayoral Statement

Doomadgee Shire is a remote indigenous community and is the closest town to the Northern Territory border on the Savannah Way. Council's elected and administrative arms are working closely together to achieve the necessary outcomes needed to improve the quality of life for all residents. Our shire is experiencing unprecedented growth in population and infrastructure. A large housing refurbishment and construction project is underway and is progressing towards completion in four years (2017). In addition to housing, essential water, roads and power infrastructure projects have been completed with more projects underway. Doomadgee residents have been quoted as saying "we now need a street directory to find our way around town, now that there have been so many changes".

Population growth places further strains on service providers, in particular education and health providers when delivering services in a constrained fiscal environment. Traditional state and commonwealth funding levels are not being maintained and the shrinkage in funding is producing adverse effects on the standard of living and aspirations of community residents. Despite the reduction in external funding, Council is aggressively seeking alternative sources of funding and commercial investment. Doomadgee Shire has significant potential for investment in primary and mining industries and would welcome any considered proposal.

In addition to the strong cultural ties to the land, community residents have a strong cattlemen tradition which is evidenced by the annual rodeo and the large quality horse population resident outside the main town environment. Doomadgee also has a long and successful history of sporting culture which is led by the Doomadgee Dragons Rugby league team.

The town welcomes visitors to the Roadhouse, Retail Store and Community Church. These facilities are first and last stops providing fuel and provisions Queensland side of the Queensland / Northern Territory border.

Frederick O'Keefe
Mayor

Introduction

Doomadgee lies alongside the Nicholson River, one of the permanent freshwater rivers that flow from the ranges behind Lawn Hill National Park. Doomadgee is the first (or last) township on the Queensland section of the Savannah Way, and is only 140 km from the Northern Territory border.

The community is comprised mainly of descendants of the Waanyi and Ganalidda peoples. Many artworks and artifacts are produced in Doomadgee although at present there is no retail outlet for these products.

The Aboriginal mission of Doomadgee was originally established on the coast in 1931. It was established by the Christian Brethren after the local police sergeant in Burketown had suggested that the local Aboriginal people, predominantly the Ganalidda people, would be happier if they were removed from the fringes of the township.



The settlement was moved inland to its present location after a cyclone in 1936 made conditions on the coast impossible. The coastal site had never been satisfactory as it lacked a good and reliable water supply. The present site was settled in 1937 with the building of log hostels and a school.

In the early 1980s the government moved to establish self administration at the mission. The Christian Brethren workers, most of whom were working as school teachers, helped to establish the Aboriginal council and for a number of years worked in conjunction with the local elders to ensure that there was a smooth transition of power. In 1988 the last of the mission workers moved out. Administration of the town is now through the Doomadgee Shire Council.

Key Facts

Shire Population: Doomadgee Shire had an official population of 1374 people in 2012 but the actual population is considered to be closer to 1500

Towns: Doomadgee township

Land Area: 1862 km²

Under the Queensland Government's Alcohol Management Plan for Doomadgee, there are limits to alcohol that may be taken into the community and heavy penalties apply to anyone bringing excess alcohol into the community. A 'bona fide traveler' exemption applies for tourists who wish to use the Doomadgee Roadhouse.

House and Land Sales

There is currently very little private ownership of houses in Doomadgee. There is also no private rental market operating. The Doomadgee community is gazetted as a Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT) community under the Community Services Act. All enquiries for access to land in the Doomadgee community should be directed both to the Doomadgee Shire Council and to the Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation on behalf of the traditional owners.

Registered native title claims have been lodged on behalf of the Waanyi, Garawa and Ganalidda peoples over land and waters in and adjacent to the Doomadgee DOGIT. Any person seeking to conduct an activity on native title land is required to comply with the Native Title Act - one of the key ways of doing so is to obtain a registered Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA). Steps for negotiating an ILUA can be found at www.nntt.gov.au. As native title rights are generally held by a group, negotiating an ILUA can be more complicated than making an agreement with an individual. Enquiries regarding proposals that impact native title in the Doomadgee DOGIT should be made through the Native Title Representative Body for the area, the Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation. Telephone: 07 4041 3833.

Zoning regulations and developments: contact Doomadgee Council on 07 4745 8351.

Health Services

The Shire boasts its own hospital and Community Health Centre as well as an Ambulance Station. When required, the Royal Flying Doctor Service provides emergency evacuations to Mount Isa Hospital.

Education

The State School provides schooling for primary school children, together with a secondary school for children up to 10 year. Child care and pre-school services are also available for younger children.

Sport and Recreation Facilities

A designated Sports and Recreation Precinct provides modern services for the community members and visitors. A football playing field is also available and a tennis court and swimming pool can be accessed through the School. Fishing is a major recreational activity for community members.

Retail and Financial Services

A Queensland Government owned General Store provides fresh fruit and vegetables and grocery items as well as EFTPOS facilities. The town bakery is currently undergoing major renovations and will be open for business soon. The Doomadgee Roadhouse, situated on the Savannah Way, provides fuel and food for both residents and travellers. Accommodation is available at the Doomadgee Guest House with meals provided, on request, by a qualified Chef.

Religious Services

Services are carried out on a regular Sunday basis and, of course, during funeral and other special services

Climate

Many people think Northern Australia is uniformly hot and humid, but this is not always the case. Doomadgee Shire residents enjoy warm days, cool winter nights and dry winters. Maximum temperatures are higher than on Queensland's east coast, but not as high as areas such as Mt Isa, which is hotter throughout the summer months.

The Shire enjoys cool winter nights, with mean minimum temperatures in July significantly cooler than in Cairns. Humidity is also a lot lower than in Cairns, especially in winter. 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. Average rainfall, however, is much less than on the east coast in Cairns and rain periods tend to be shorter in duration.

Contact

Chief Executive Officer
Telephone 07 4745 8351

"I think [Doomadgee] is probably Queensland's best kept secret. It's only 100 kms from the Northern Territory border, about an hour to Adel's Grove, Lawn Hill Gorge, Hells Gate and Burketown and four hours to Normanton and Karumba. We go down to the [Gregory] canoe race every year we go ... as a team and do our work but we play as well away from the community. Those activities we do together are fantastic.

It is essential to come into Doomadgee with a positive, open mind. It's certainly not like newspapers portray. It's a wonderful place, with wonderful people here. The community itself is great, it's going ahead in leaps and bounds. The school is fantastic, we now have so many new resources. A new Resource Centre and technology center have been built, and all classrooms are now refurbished with all new furniture. We also have new playgrounds.

It's a place to come and enjoy, not a place to come and be miserable that's for sure.

If you come with a positive attitude you will remember your stay in the Gulf for a lifetime. Come with a positive attitude and you will enjoy every moment of your being here, especially with the rewards of seeing the children progress under your guidance. And what you can do in your spare time? WELL THAT IS UP TO YOU!!!!!!".

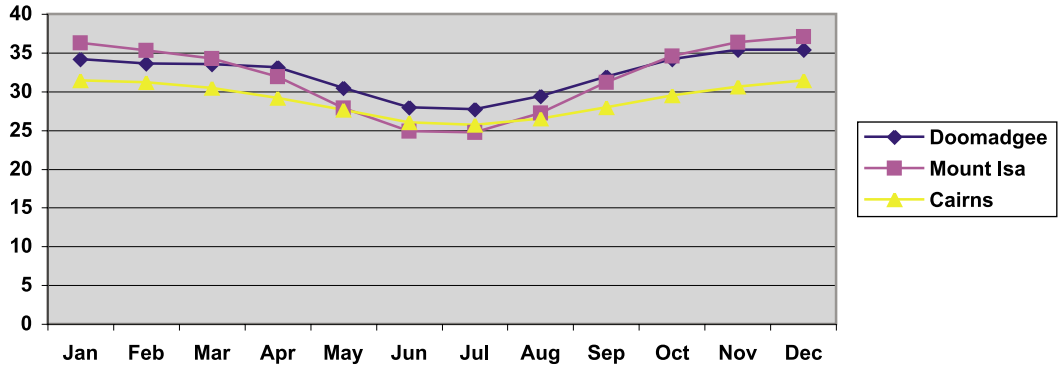
Richard Barrie,

Principal, Doomadgee State School

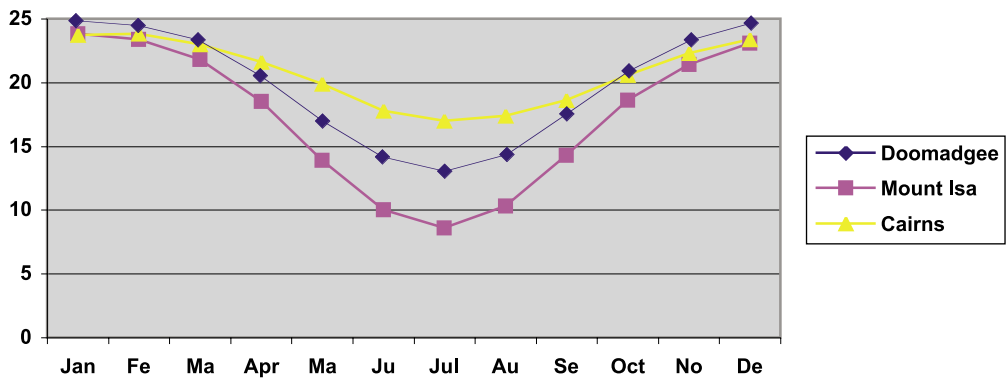


Doomadgee State School Mural

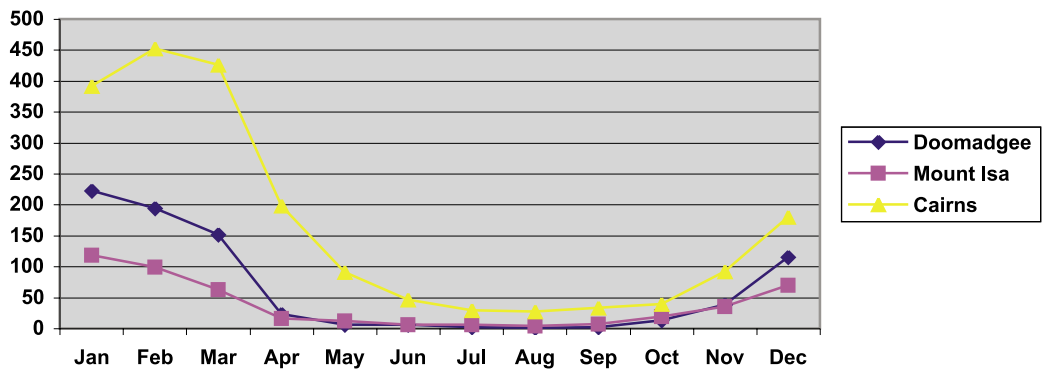
Doomadgee Shire Mean Maximum Temperature



Doomadgee Shire Mean Minimum Temperature



Doomadgee Shire Mean Rainfall



Doomadgee Shire Mean 3pm Relative Humidity

