



Travel for good



Sustainable Luxury at Silky Oaks Lodge

Tropical North Queensland is a remarkable region where Australia's celebrated Daintree Rainforest meets the World Heritage-listed Great Barrier Reef. At an estimated 180 million years old, the Daintree is regarded as the world's oldest living rainforest with a fascinating ecosystem revealing ancient plants as well as hundreds of species of birds and wildlife. It's also home to the First Nations Kuku Yalanji people, the Traditional Owners of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area whose history dates some 50,000 years.

The broader Baillie Lodges' commitment to sustainable luxury travel is best expressed by the lodges' interactions with the natural environment, the local community and its culture. The protection and preservation of each lodge's natural and cultural surroundings is a firm priority. The Baillie Lodges' approach to sustainability is essential to lodge operations both to ensure the well-being of the destinations it operates in and to enhance the guest experience.

Natural Environment

Dynamic environmental management plans for each property embrace advanced and emerging technology and work alongside local organisations including government agencies, national parks and conservation sanctuaries, ensuring all activities are in line with each region's broader conservation goals.

Local Community

Active engagement with local communities includes establishing supportive supplier relationships with food and drink producers, with Indigenous artists and designers and supporting local charities, education initiatives, community events and work experience programs.

Culture & Heritage

Baillie Lodges provides guests with a chance to connect with the destination's culture and heritage. This approach encompasses all aspects of the lodge experience, from the design to food and drinks and signature guest tours.

People

Baillie Lodges' own team of people is its greatest asset, and the company carries a 'family' style culture with a commitment to the long-term development, retention and wellbeing of every member of its team.



Commitment to the Natural Environment

An energetic and invested approach to best managing the natural environment is essential to the Baillie Lodges guest experience, to the ongoing appeal of the destination and to operating a sustainable business in experiential tourism. A comprehensive Environmental Management Plan is in place at Silky Oaks Lodge and steers all strategies relating to the conservation of the World Heritage-listed landscape.

- Essential to the vision are initiatives designed to preserve the region's pristine waters and broader environment, to maximise recycling and eliminate single use plastics and to conserve energy via smart measures and technologies including LED lights and water-conserving bathroom fittings.
- Clever architectural design minimises energy consumption, where high ceilings and open-air spaces make the most of the evening's cool breeze, meaning guests enjoy an easy indoor-outdoor interaction with the rainforest, and the main lodge, restaurant and guest suites are cooled by relaxed, slow-turning fans.
- Silky Oaks Lodge takes a holistic approach to managing its impact on the natural environment. The use of organic and free-range produce in the kitchen complements mutually beneficial supplier partnerships with carefully chosen local food and drink producers who embrace sustainable practices.
- An extensive Kitchen Garden has been created onsite where the kitchen team cultivates local and especially Indigenous edible ingredients for use in the lodge's daily changing menus. A walk through the garden at dusk is a wonderful way to learn about the diverse range of tropical produce and witness its short journey from garden to plate, sundowner in hand.
- Managing partnerships with selected local tour operators means our consideration of the environment extends to guided adventures in the neighbouring Daintree Rainforest, the wilderness around Mossman Gorge and Mossman River, the Atherton Tablelands, Cape Tribulation and the Great Barrier Reef.
- A dedicated policy of working exclusively with local builders and tradespeople, and to recruiting lodge staff from the region as a first preference is another way to ensure the local community is engaged and its economy sustainable.

'As a chef new to the region, it's wonderful to discover the bounty of local ingredients harvested in Tropical North Queensland's rich food bowl. We've introduced some of the native ingredients used by the local First Nations Kuku Yalanji people to create a real taste of the tropical north on the menus at Silky Oaks Lodge.'

Mark Godbeer, Executive Chef

Commitment to Culture & Heritage

The team at Silky Oaks Lodge has nurtured an enriching connection with the First Nations Kuku Yalanji people who have lived in the Daintree continuously for thousands of years.

- The Kuku Yalanji people's ancient culture is centred around a deep respect for nature and an intimate knowledge of its cycles. A guided tour through Mossman Gorge is a must-do to discover first-hand the invaluable knowledge passed down through generations.



- Highly recommended cultural experiences on offer at Silky Oaks Lodge include a guided tour of Kuku Yalanji Country with Walkabout Cultural Adventures, the popular Ngadiku Dreamtime Walk through Mossman Gorge and an Aboriginal art workshop at the nearby Janbal Gallery.
- The colourful, textured works of local Aboriginal artists also add a real sense of place to a stay at Silky Oaks Lodge, including an installation of 45 ceramic tiles by artists from Yalanji Arts Centre and handmade pots and vessels by Cairns-based artist Shireen Talibudeen.
- Guests connect with the Indigenous heritage of the region through the innovative well-suited to the tropical climate menus, which incorporate Indigenous ingredients, techniques and flavours from the spicy-citrus leaves of the kaffir lime to the tender sweet meat of a local mud crab.
- In the Healing Waters Spa, guests connect with the spirit of the Daintree via body products from local Indigenous brand Kija Creations. The bush medicine range is inspired by traditional healing practices and is made with ingredients collected on Kuku Yalanji Country. In this way, the legacy of Australia's First Nations peoples' sustainable practices and knowledge continues.

'It's very special to have the chance to learn more about the local Kuku Yalanji people who have lived in the Daintree continuously and have a deep connection with Country.'

Sonya Boaden, Lodge Manager

Commitment to People

Baillie Lodges recognises its people are its greatest asset and is committed to the long-term development and wellbeing of its staff. Baillie Lodges encourages all team members to personally engage in the business and empowers them to take ownership of delivering exceptional service.

Baillie Lodges encourages staff development and growth and team members often transfer between lodges to advance their personal and professional development while discovering a new destination.

The Silky Oaks Lodge team is small and close-knit, attracting hospitality professionals from far and wide to create a remote family. Some of the ways that Baillie Lodges embraces, develops and care for its people include:

- Baillie Lodges believes in investing in the broader Australian tourism industry by training new recruits, recruiting hotel school trainees and offering opportunities for staff development including chef apprenticeships and individual scholarships.
- The Baillie Lodges team is an integral part of the lodge guest experience and all staff members are encouraged to establish a warm rapport with guests. The team doesn't wear name badges, as they introduce themselves personally to each guest.
- Baillie Lodges ensures the team is regularly recognised for its dedication, with shared feedback including guest comments and monthly awards for outstanding team members, showcasing team success stories in marketing materials and bonuses on the anniversary of employment.



‘At Baillie Lodges we feel strongly about supporting local and regional economies by working with local designers, tradespeople and food and beverage producers to give back to the local communities in which we operate.’

James Baillie, Founder & Creative Director

Creating Connections

Getting involved in sustainable initiatives at Baillie Lodges is a wonderful way for guests to positively contribute to each lodge’s local environment and community. Guests visiting Silky Oaks Lodge – and other Baillie Lodges properties – actively support locally owned businesses and other services and thereby have a positive impact. Guests can get more involved by:

- Acquiring as much information as possible before leaving home about the natural environments on the itinerary: the National Parks, conservation sanctuaries, culture, local standards and values.
- Considering supporting programs and organisations that are working to protect the welfare, culture and environment and protect it for future generations.
- Remembering to leave only footprints...

