

## Profile

### Cairns Historical Society Museum M&GSQ Standards Program 2007



Local Aboriginal people with unique rainforest swords and shields (c.1900)



School of Arts Building - home of the Cairns Historical Society Museum



Construction of railway bridge across Stony Creek on the Cairns-Kuranda railway line (c.1890)

Cairns Historical Society Museum  
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Hours: 10:00am - 4:00pm  
Mon to Sat

Contact: Les Sim, Museum Manager  
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#### 'Did You Know' - intriguing facts about the Museum & its collection

- ◆ The Cairns Historical Society Library has an extensive collection of over 20 000 documents and 16 000 photographs, available to researchers. Many of these have been digitised and are available on a searchable database.
- ◆ The Museum displays a unique collection of Aboriginal rainforest artefacts, including swords and shields found only in the North Queensland area.
- ◆ The Museum has a specially designed enclosed trailer containing a selection of artefacts which they tour around schools for presentations on Cairns history.

#### Our Profile

The Cairns Museum, part of Cairns Historical Society, is housed in the School of Arts building, which celebrates its one hundred year anniversary (1907-2007) this year. It is one of the oldest heritage listed buildings in Cairns. The School of Arts was established as a library and a place of education for the public of Cairns. The Historical Society was established within this framework to collect and preserve Cairns' written, photographic and oral history. The museum continues this charter by displaying the history of the region. The museum houses a unique collection of rainforest Aboriginal artefacts including swords and shields found only in the North Queensland area. Along with these artefacts are photographs of Aboriginal people with their weapons, basketry and dwellings taken by a well known photographer of the time, Alf Atkinson. This provides a unique insight into the life of Aboriginal people within the tropical rainforest of North Queensland. Displays also include photographs of the construction of the Cairns to Kuranda railway. The line carried supplies to the mining fields in the west and returned with minerals and later large quantities of timber to be exported from the port of Cairns. Photographs depict the lifestyle of the people working on the construction as do the record of their stories held within the extensive collection of the Cairns Historical Society library.

#### What the Standards Program has meant for our Museum

- ◆ We plan to update our strategic plan and finalise our Museum Action Plan to include improved collection documentation and conservation measures. The Museum also plans to enhance the visitor experience by providing improved captions and downloadable audio tours of displays.
- ◆ With the Reviewers we identified the importance of researching information for object files on key museum objects.