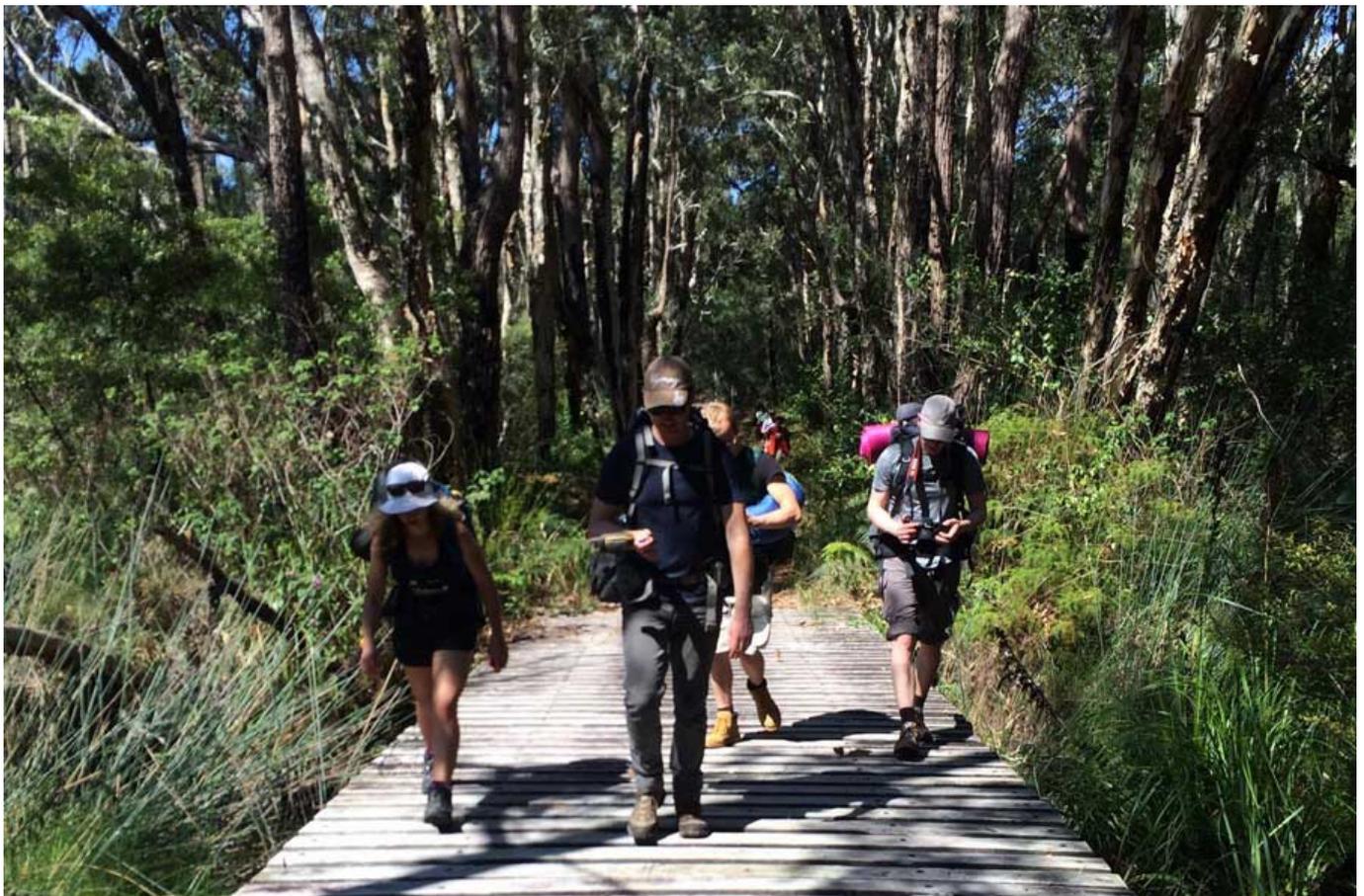




Fraser Island, a World Heritage Site since 1992, is the largest sand island in the world and is the only place in the world where rainforest grows on sand. It is home to the purest dingo in Australia and even has some of the most pristine freshwater lakes. It is a great getaway from the hustle and bustle of the city and a beautiful place to hike.

## Where is Fraser Island?

Fraser Island is located approximately four hours north of Brisbane. The closest township to the barge which takes you over to Fraser Island is Hervey Bay. The barge departs River Heads and free parking is also available if you want to leave your car on the mainland - advisable if you're going over to hike.



*The gang from QUT Hikers enjoying some beautiful hiking weather.*

## Travelling from Brisbane

There are a few ways you can travel from Brisbane to Hervey Bay and Fraser Island. Driving is the most common way, but there are also the options of flying or catching a bus.

### By Car

If travelling from Brisbane, I suggest you leave the night before and camp at [Petrie Rest Area](#) which is one of the most beautiful rest areas I have come across. It is located about 2km



away from the highway and is right next to Mary River. This rest area (which is free) is located on Van Doorn Road, Tiaro, and is approximately one hour's drive from River Heads.

## By Plane

Don't want to drive? Qantas operate around four flights a day between Brisbane and Hervey Bay. From the Hervey Bay Airport, you can then get a taxi, hire a limo with [Hervey Bay Limousines](#) for a reasonable price (yep, it's a serious and affordable option), or make other arrangements to get to River Heads to catch the barge.

## By Coach

It's a long coach ride, almost 7 hours, from Brisbane to Hervey Bay, but if you don't want to drive or you're on a budget, it may be your best option. There is one Greyhound coach service per day. Once you have reached Hervey Bay you'll need to make arrangements to get to River Heads to catch the barge (see under By Plane).

## Catching the Barge

It's recommended you catch the first barge of the day across to Wanggoolba Creek. This will allow you to start the hike early. See Fraser Venture Barge's website for up-to-date prices and timetable. It takes approximately 30 minutes to get to the island.



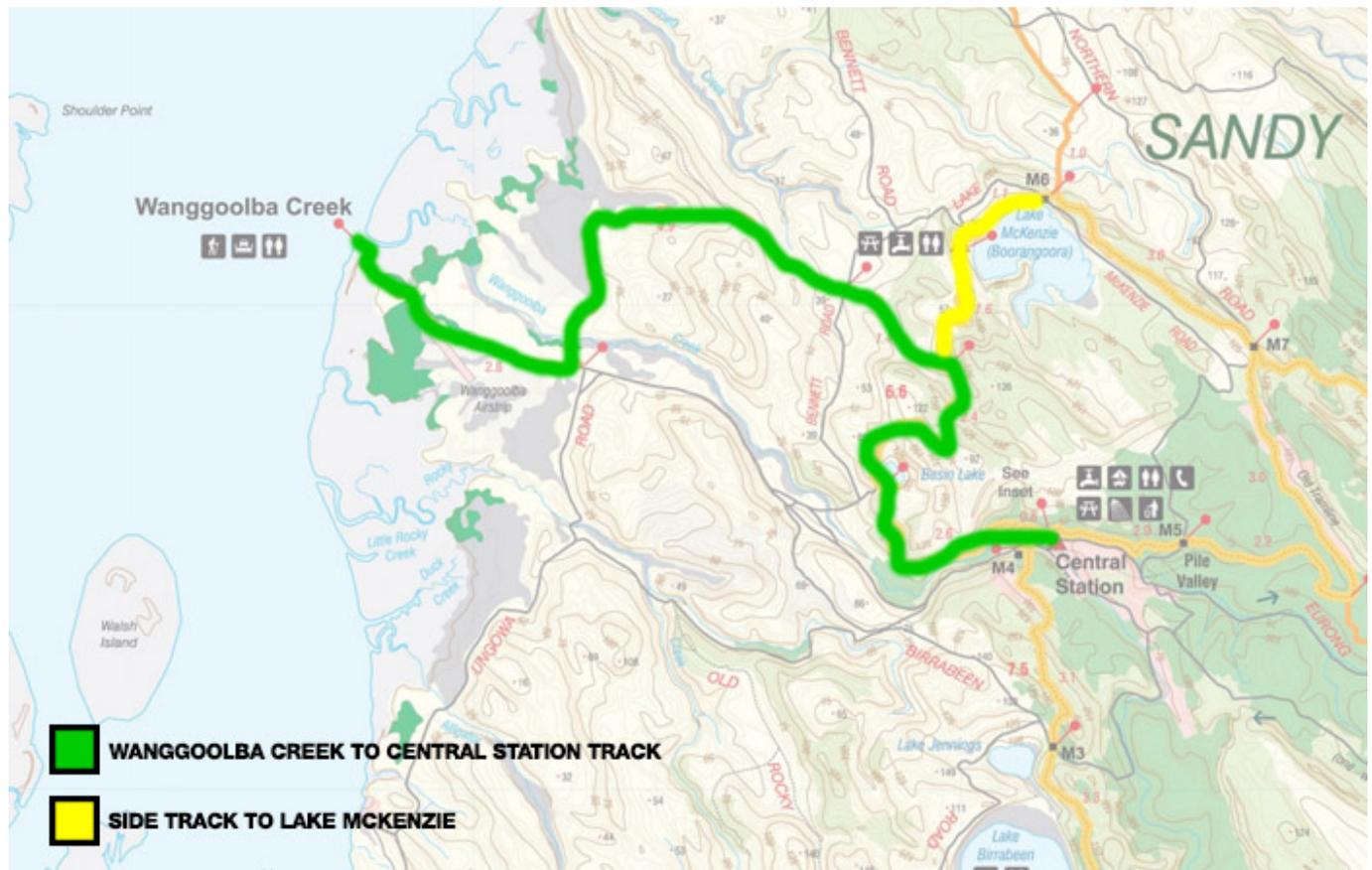


*The Fraser Venture Barge. There is also a ferry that travels to Fraser Island: the Kingfisher Bay Ferry, which'll deposit you at the Kingfisher Bay Resort.*

## Wanggoolba Creek to Central Station via Lake McKenzie

**Distance:** ~16km one way, allow two days if walked as a return trip

One of my favourite hikes on Fraser Island is from Wanggoolba Creek to Central Station via Lake McKenzie. From Wanggoolba Creek to Central Station, it is approximately 13km, and an extra 6km return if you decide to go to Lake McKenzie.



*The green line on the map indicates the route taken from Wanggoolba Creek to Central Station. The yellow line shows the short side track to Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora). Image credit: [Queensland Government](#).*

To begin, you will walk along the gravel road which is relatively flat and offers you views of the mangroves on either side of the road. After about 3kms you will turn left onto the hiker's track. Over the next 4km, there's a few inclines and hills. Keep an eye out for dingoes - we saw dingo footprints on the track on this part of the hike.



## Lake McKenzie

Then, after a total of 7km of hiking, you will get to a junction where you can either go left to Lake McKenzie (which was one of the highlights of the hike for me) or turn right toward Central Station. We hid our packs at the junction and walked to Lake McKenzie for a swim in the freshwater lake and had lunch at the designated lunch area (which is fenced).



*Look at that sand. Isn't it beautiful? It looks more like an idyllic tropical beach than a freshwater lake in the middle of an island, doesn't it? This is Lake McKenzie.*

From Lake McKenzie, we walked all the way to Central Station stopping back at the junction to pick up our packs, and also stopped at Basin Lake. Basin Lake is only 200m from the track and is a good spot to rest. The track itself is well-maintained (clean and clearly marked) and you will walk through different types of vegetation.

## Central Station Hikers Camp

Arriving at Central Station, you will see signs leading to the hikers camp. All camping spots are surrounded by a fence to stop dingoes from getting in. The campsite itself is clean and has fresh, drinkable water. There are toilets and coin operated (\$1 coins) showers for hot water. It has picnic tables to prepare your dinner and overall has a really relaxing vibe.

In the morning, you will be woken up by the sound of kookaburras and other birds which is always a nice touch on a hike. Camping permits cost \$6.15 a night per person at the time of



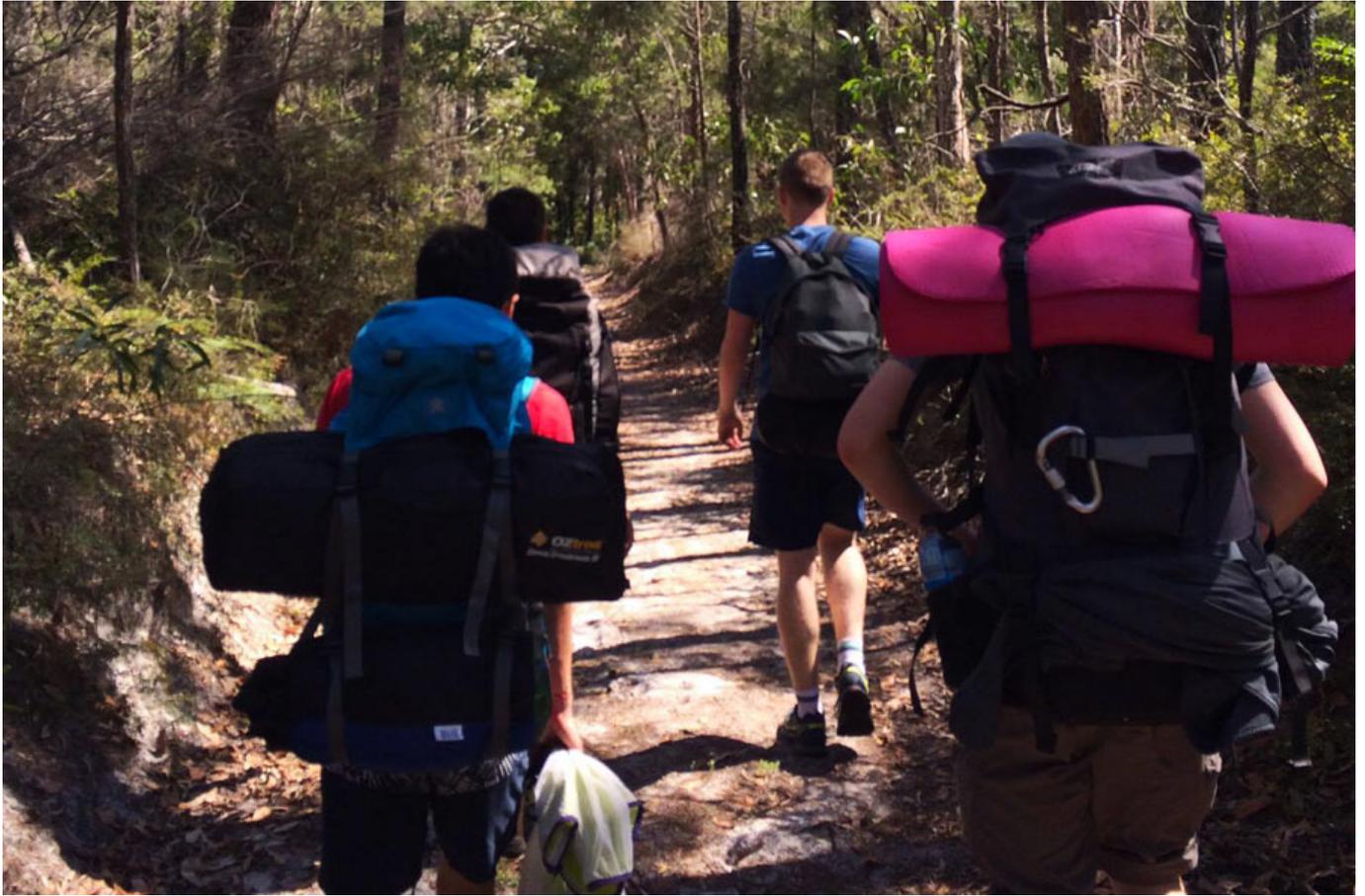
writing (October 2016) and can be purchased online.



*Our basic but neat campsite at Central Station. For \$6.15 per night, it's good value.*

On our recent hike, we returned to Wanggoolba Creek the way we came the next day. However, if you have more time to spare, you can continue on to Lake Boomanjin, with its dark, tannin-stained water, south-east of Central Station. Alternatively head north along the Great Walk towards Happy Valley.

The Great Walk, if done in its entirety, is 90km long and takes 6-8 days to complete. It's on my bucket list, so I hope to write about it at length in the future.



*A simple, overnight hiking set-up is ample for a couple of days on Fraser Island.*

## What to bring?

For a two day hike, you will need to bring a typical overnight kit of gear. A lightweight hiking tent and sleeping gear, cooking equipment and food, and water of course. Be sure to pack your swimming togs and sunscreen as well as bug repellent, your camping permits, and a few \$1 coins if you want to glamp it and have a shower at Central Station.

Overnight hikes are great as they mean relatively light backpacks and plenty of room for delicious food and drinks.

***If you want to check out more hiking destinations in Queensland, then check out our top 5 for Brisbane [here](#). What's your favourite day hike on Fraser Island? Let us know in the comments.***