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Timeless magic

Trading screens for surf breaks and sandy feet, Meg Law discovers a pocket of old-school coastal magic at Queensland's Agnes Water & 1770.



“For a splash of quirk, we hopped aboard the iconic 1770 LARC! Tour, a hot-pink amphibious truck that rumbles across sand and sea.”

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There's something about an Aussie road trip that flicks the nostalgia switch the moment the wheels hit the highway. It takes me right back to childhood in the backseat with my siblings: the scent of 15+ sunscreen, hot balmy air whipping my hair across my cheeks, and our sweaty limbs colliding on a sticky vinyl bench seat like some rite-of-passage obstacle course.

Fast forward to now, and here I am with my own kids cruising up the coast in our trusty old Land Rover Defender, Snowy River caravan in tow, with Daisy and Jasper in the back creating the very memories I once lived.

No rush. No schedules. No screen glowing in their faces. Just sunshine, slow travel and the freedom to pull

over whenever the mood may strike. After a snack-fuelled haul up the Bruce Highway from Brisbane, surfboards rattling in the back, we rolled into Agnes Water, a chilled coastal town with that unmistakable old-school summer hum.

Palm trees swaying, barefoot holidaymakers in their bikinis, boardies and thongs. Surfers riding past on bikes with boards strapped on and fluoro zinc smeared across their noses.

It felt like we'd driven straight into a postcard from the 1980s.

Beach days, sunshine and van-life bliss

We set up camp at the NRMA Agnes Water Holiday Park, where the scent

of sausages on the barbie mixed with sea air and the sound of waves set the soundtrack. Kids rode bikes through sandy lanes and happy hour buzzed with parents swapping road trip stories.

Located in Queensland's Gladstone Region, about five hours north of Brisbane, Agnes Water is home to the northernmost surf breaks in the state, and it quickly became the kids' playground. Each day started with a sunrise dip, followed by lazy coffees back at the van and sometimes a cheeky fish taco or smoothie from the onsite café after an afternoon surf. Hours slipped by in that timeless 'summer holiday' haze only small beach towns can conjure.

01 Town of 1770 © Tourism and Events Queensland/AWOL Family 02 1770 LARC! Tours © Tourism and Events Queensland / Jesse Lindemann 03 Daisy and Mum enjoying van life 04 Jasper showing off his paddling prowess 05 Views at NRMA Agnes Water Holiday Park. Images 03, 04 & 05 © Meg Law.

Wild little summer adventures

Afternoons were for exploring. Chinaman's Beach was a highlight with a long golden stretch perfect for Mum's beach walks, reef edges for Dad's fishing and giant boulders for the kids to climb.

A family favourite? Kayaking with 1770 Liquid Adventures. We hired bright red-and-yellow doubles and paddled through glassy creeks and mangroves, spotting hermit crabs and darting fish. We pulled up on a sandbar for a dip before heading back to 1770 for fish and chips on the old wooden jetty.

And for a splash of quirk, we hopped aboard the iconic 1770 LARC! Tour, a hot-pink amphibious truck that rumbles across sand and sea. Daisy and Jasper were in hysterics as wild emus chased us along the dunes, the experience ending in an epic water splash finale that no one saw coming.

The summer feeling that follows you home

As we packed up the van, Dad strapping down the boards and the bikes back on the racks, that feeling returned. The one that tugged at us when we first arrived.

We'd come chasing warmth, waves and a taste of old-school coastal simplicity. What we found in Agnes Water and the town of 1770 was a golden blend of wild adventure, easy beach days and an authentic summer vibe that's increasingly rare.

This is the kind of coastline where time slows, kids thrive and memories follow you long after the palm trees fade in the rearview mirror. ●

Agnes Water & 1770 Report Card

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