

Fishing The Islands Off Sarina

In Central Queensland

As fuel prices hit new and unsustainable levels, our two favourite fishin' pensioners (not to say our 'two silly old farts' as they were so unkindly christened up north) Neil Dunstan and his mate John Turnbull, reckon we all need to re-think our fishing trips, holidays and adventures. Case in point, they say, is central Queensland's Northumberland Islands. Not as far as Boroloola NT, as pretty as Hinchinbrook, miles "fishier" than the Whitsundays - and hell of a lot closer than them all. In this Two Part Series, they put up a convincing argument. Neil Dunstan report & pics.

Over the past couple of years I have related many stories about boat trips and fishing in the general area where I live at Sarina Beach and I got to thinking that maybe some of the readers may like to come to our area and try it for themselves. So my mate John and I decided to do a trip to some of the many interesting places around here and also visit some of the many spots we have fished or camped in the past.

I guess we are the same as most readers in that we have a number of favourite spots and we continue to go there as we know when to go and what will be around at certain times of the year. However there are many other places where we have fished successfully in the past and haven't been to for some years. This article is about most of the places of interest for fishermen and campers and includes as much info. as I dare reveal for fear of painful visitations from my friends.

Sarina Beach is a beach side hamlet which was originally only a collection of fishermen's shacks which the residents of Sarina, about eight km inland from the beach, used to travel to on weekends etc via a two wheel track through the bush. After the second



Author Neil Dunstan stands in his 530C BarCrusher with a nice estuary cod that gave him a nice workout, thank you!

world war, a local named Owen Jenkins bought a plot of land right on the beach and constructed a dwelling and shop using a war surplus Nissen hut. This building was for many years the only substantial (and legal) building in the area but around the fifties and sixties there was a better road put in and people started to build proper houses.

Owen is still around and is in his nineties and the shop has grown to a complex of shops, apartments and a motel which are all run by Owen's children. There are about six hundred people living here now and most are either retired or commute to work at the local sugar mill, the giant coal ports of Haypoint and Dalrymple Bay or travel backwards and forwards to work at the forty odd coal mines located around 150 km inland.

There are two motels, one with an a la carte bar and eating area, and very nice and cheap meals are available at the surf club on most nights whilst the store sells excellent take away meals.

The reason for the existence of this hamlet is the beautiful, many kilometres long beach, and the large inlet which is the outlet to the sea for Plane Creek, the whole system being navigable and fishable for about twelve kilometres

