

Skyrail

Project type: Commercial

Location: Caravonica to Kuranda, QLD, Australia

Year completed: 1995

- One of Australia's most successful nature based tourist attractions, and the world's most environmentally sensitive cableway project
- Extensive planning approvals, feasibility studies & world's best practice construction techniques in World Heritage rainforest

OVERVIEW

The family owned Skyrail was conceived in 1987. It was proposed that a 7.5 km long cableway, the longest in the world at the time, be constructed in the rainforest from Caravonica to Kuranda. The developers were committed to delivering an environmentally sustainable tourist attraction that allows a unique interaction with the rainforest in an environmentally friendly way.

The process was arduous with seven years of extensive planning.

Community response to the construction of Skyrail through the Barron Gorge National Park and the newly listed Wet Tropics World Heritage Area quickly became polarised as being either for or against the project. The controversy and political attention was reported widely at the time.

After numerous studies and approval processes ensuring the rainforest habitat would not be threatened by the project, construction commenced in June 1994. The Skyrail project and construction required 'world first' construction techniques which have helped place it as the most environmentally sensitive cableway project in the world.

The cableway was originally installed with 47 gondolas giving it a carrying capacity of 300 people per hour. A \$2.5 million upgrade completed in May 1997 increased the total number of gondolas to 114 and increased the carrying capacity to 700 people per hour.

The successful European Greening of Business Tourism Award in the 'Most Environmentally Conscious Visitor Attraction'.

became the first tourism attraction in the world to achieve the Platinum EarthCheck certification, placing it amongst the world's leading eco friendly and environmentally sustainable.



In Australia in 2008 and 2009 Skyrail received the Qantas Award for Excellence in Sustainable Tourism. In 2010 Skyrail was accepted into the Queensland Qantas Award for Excellence in Sustainable Tourism, Hall of Fame.

PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT 3 TcTT3 3Tj 4

SITE

Skyrail passes through the Barron Gorge National Park and the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, the latter being listed due to its outstanding universal/global value. The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area has worldwide recognition for its spectacular scenery, rugged topography with fast flowing rivers etched with deep gorges and cascading waterfalls and panoramas of undisturbed rainforest as far as the eye can see. Stretching from Cooktown to Townsville in tropical north Queensland this area is a living museum of ancient plant and animal species found nowhere else in the world. Wet Tropics World Heritage Area forests are home to many rare and endangered animal species some that have changed very little since

DESIGN

There are 32 towers in total. The highest tower is 40.5metres(133feet) high.

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MATERIALS

The main structures are primarily built of steel, reinforced concrete and composite steel and concrete floors. Helicopters transported 900 tonnes of steel, cement and building materials into the Red Peak Station site alone.

The Red Peak station was originally to

WATER and WASTE

Skyrail is committed to using minimal water in its operation and to protecting the World Heritage values of the rainforest by eliminating the possibility of harmful liquid waste entering the rainforest. Initiatives to reduce freshwater use and wastewater generation include:

- x Monitoring water quality from stormwater and testing for hydrocarbon and diesel as a part of this process
- x Installing water saving devices in all buildings