

For immediate release

## New walking guide invites locals and visitors to explore the Whitsundays on foot



*Left: Emma and Anthony Colfelt at Whitsunday Cairn, one of the walks featured in the Walking The Whitsundays book. Photograph Credit: Felix Colfelt*

*Right: Emma after breaking her ankle during research for the book. Photograph Credit: Windward Publications*

A new guide to walking the Whitsundays has been launched by the family behind the region's much-loved boating 'Bible' – after more than a decade of research, island walking, family adventures and one broken ankle.

Published by Windward Publications, **Walking The Whitsundays – A Guide to 45 Island and Mainland Walks** is a 304-page full-colour guide to the walking tracks of the Whitsunday islands, Airlie Beach, Conway National Park and Bowen.

Where **100 Magic Miles** belongs in the cockpit, **Walking The Whitsundays** is designed for the backpack.

Covering 45 walks across 12 islands and the mainland, the book ranges from easy strolls such as Airlie Beach's Bicentennial Walk to more challenging island climbs including Whitsunday Cairn and Whitsunday Peak. Each walk includes practical details, maps, photographs, elevation profiles and notes on the history, wildlife, plants, geology and culture encountered along the way.

Tourism Whitsundays CEO, Tim Booth, said the book would give visitors and locals another way to experience the region.

*"The Whitsundays are naturally iconic and known for our islands, beaches and reef, but there is so much to experience on land that is equally as breathtaking," Mr Booth said. "Walking The Whitsundays encourages people to slow down, explore more deeply and experience a different side of the landscapes, stories and natural beauty that make this region so special."*

Anthony Colfelt said the book grew naturally from a lifetime of walking the Whitsundays with his family.



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*"I have fond memories of climbing Mount Oldfield on Lindeman Island and Spion Kop on South Molle Island with my mum and dad in the 1980s and 1990s," he said.*

*"The walks have always been a big part of our sailing trips. We have long wanted to include more about them in 100 Magic Miles, but quickly realised they deserved a book in their own right because they are not just for boaties. These walks are for everybody."*

The guide includes national park island walks, resort island walks and selected mainland walks around Airlie Beach, Conway National Park and Bowen. It also covers the Whitsunday Ngaro Sea Trail and the new Ngaro Track traversing Whitsunday Island.

David Colfelt, author of **100 Magic Miles of the Great Barrier Reef – The Whitsunday Islands**, said the new walking guide was a natural companion to the long-running cruising guide.

*"When Carolyn and I first began exploring the Whitsundays by boat, the walks were always part of the magic," he said. "You would anchor in a beautiful bay, go ashore, climb to a lookout and suddenly understand the islands from a completely different perspective. It is wonderful to see Anthony and Emma carry that love of the Whitsundays into a book of their own."*

For Emma Colfelt, the project became both a research journey and a deeply personal family story.

*"Our most memorable walk was the first time we climbed Whitsunday Peak," she said. "We camped at Dugong Beach and had it all to ourselves for a week. The morning we climbed the Peak, we had just found out we were expecting our first baby, so we really did feel on top of the world. Walking those same trails with both our children now is very special."*

The Colfelts began the project in 2011, spending several months exploring the islands by boat, camping and walking as many trails as possible. Since then, they have continued to revisit and research the tracks while helping David and Carolyn Colfelt update new editions of **100 Magic Miles**.

The project was not without mishap. After hiking to Coral Cove on Hamilton Island, Emma Colfelt slipped on a wet rock whilst photographing the beach and broke her ankle. With help from an off-duty Hamilton Island staffer and paramedics, she was transported by 4WD buggy across the island and onto a Marine Rescue Queensland boat to hospital on the mainland.

After surgery she faced a long recovery. Much of the writing and historical research that followed was completed from bed, with her ankle in a cast and drafts of the book spread around her.

*"Having the book to focus on helped me cope with the pain after surgery and the weeks stuck in bed. There wasn't a moment to feel bored when we had a print deadline to meet," she said.*

Anthony Colfelt said the accident became part of the story of the book.

*"Dad would bring rounds of proofreading to Emma's bedside, and we kept working through the drafts together," he said. "It was a reminder that this book was a real family effort – researched on foot, refined around the kitchen table and, at one point, written from a sick bed," he said.*

The guide also reflects the many layers of Whitsundays history, from the long and continuing connection of the Ngaro, Gia and Juru people to their land and sea Country, through to early European explorers, timber-getters, graziers and the pioneers of island tourism. It includes historical notes, lesser-known local stories, wildlife and plant observations, and previously unpublished photographs of Hamilton Harbour and runway under development.

Photo-journalist and contributor, Sharon Smallwood, said the book captured the Whitsundays from a perspective many visitors never fully experienced.



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*"The Whitsundays are breathtaking from the water, but walking gives you a more intimate view of the islands and mainland," she said. "You notice the textures, the changing light, the plants, the wildlife and the little details that make each track feel different. I was delighted to contribute images to a book that celebrates that quieter, more personal side of the region."*

Emma Colfelt said walking gave people a different way to experience the Whitsundays.

*"The views from the summits and lookouts are spectacular, but the real joy is in noticing what's around you along the way – the grasstrees, orchids, butterflies, birds, rock formations, and the stories of people both past and present. We hope the book inspires people to explore, helps them know what to expect, and enriches their experience of this special place," she said.*

**Walking The Whitsundays – A Guide to 45 Island and Mainland Walks** is available now for **\$49.95** from The Beach Book Boutique in Airlie Beach, News Whitsunday in Cannonvale, Trader Pete's on Hamilton Island, selected other local outlets and online at **100magicmiles.com**.

## About the book

**Walking The Whitsundays – A Guide to 45 Island and Mainland Walks** is a 304-page full-colour guide to the best walks across the Whitsunday islands, Airlie Beach, Conway National Park and Bowen. It includes detailed walking notes, maps, photographs, elevation profiles, safety information, access guidance and insights into the region's natural and cultural history.



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## About the authors

Emma and Anthony Colfelt are the authors of **Walking The Whitsundays**. Anthony is the son of David and Carolyn Colfelt, authors of **100 Magic Miles of the Great Barrier Reef – The Whitsunday Islands**, and is a designer. Emma is a researcher, writer, nature lover and history enthusiast. Together, Anthony and Emma have spent many years walking, researching and exploring the Whitsundays with their family.

## Photographs

[https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/bdnsiz1twgqx6qmee9fka/AGcp1S6yiYJAJsBw\\_58qHSg?rlkey=1xgbq31jx0hldliec83txb1f&st=rbo3a1pc&dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/bdnsiz1twgqx6qmee9fka/AGcp1S6yiYJAJsBw_58qHSg?rlkey=1xgbq31jx0hldliec83txb1f&st=rbo3a1pc&dl=0)

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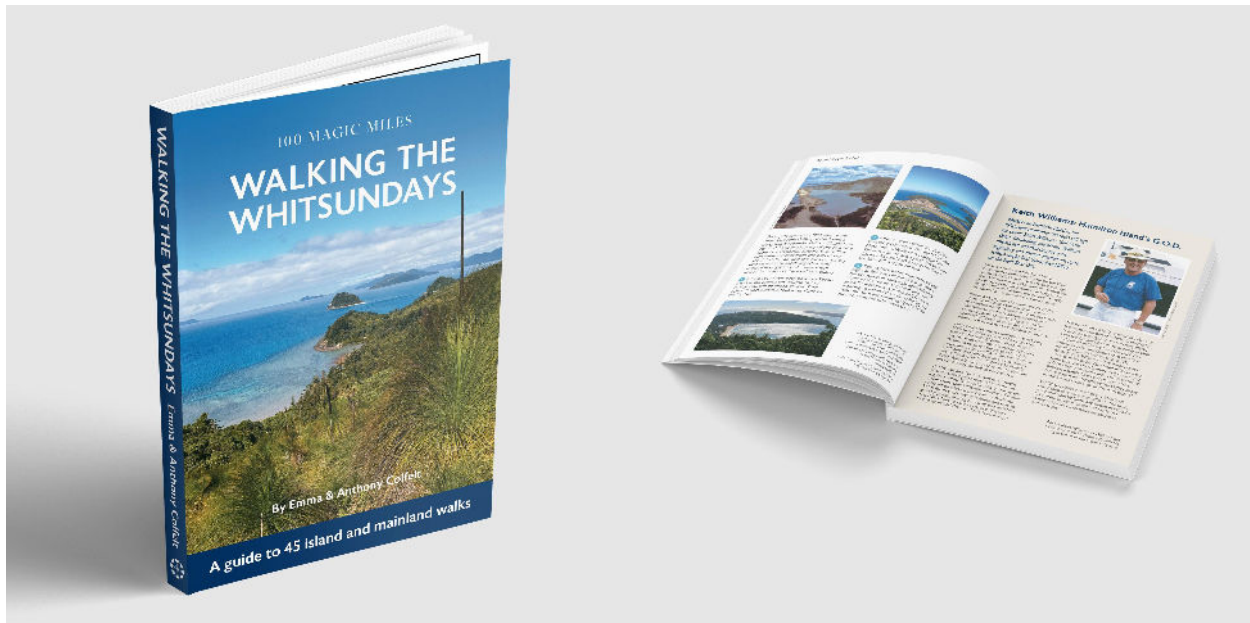
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