

Running safely on trails in FNQ

The Weather

Visitors to Cairns will soon realise that it is very hot and humid any time of the year. It's unlikely that you will be cold, so don't overdress for the start. If anything, you'll get sunburnt! You can check the weather conditions prior to the event at the Bureau of Meteorology (<http://www.bom.gov.au/qld/forecasts/north-tropical-coast-and-tablelands.shtml>)

Course markers

Every effort is made to mark the course appropriately for each event. Study the maps provided PRIOR to the event. Follow route markers on the day. If you think you are lost, turn back and return to the last known location. Make sure you get your name ticked off at the checkpoints along the course.

Other Road Users

Although some of the dirt roads and trails on the courses are closed to vehicles, others are open and in use. You can expect four-wheel drive vehicles, horses, trail bike riders and mountain bikes. Stay alert and move off the road when you hear vehicles approach.

Headsets

The use of headsets during the race are strictly prohibited. Stay aware of your surroundings at all times.

Condition of the roads

The dirt roads/tracks you will be on are in good condition and you can complete in most event using regular running shoes. There may be shallow creek crossings along the course and you will get your feet wet. The exception is the Barron Gorge area, which is single tracks in the rainforest.

Animals in the tropics

Snakes

Snakes will lie on the road in the warm sun. They may move out of your way, but be careful not to step on them. Actively look for and avoid snakes. Runners entering remote areas MUST carry two compression (snake) bandage. Protective clothing such as covered shoes and gaiters are recommended.

Cassowaries/Wild pigs – there is clear evidence of wild pigs in all the areas where we run. Cassowaries are often seen on Black Mountain Road and the Barron Gorge area. If you spot or hear any, make noise to scare them off or hide behind a tree until they wonder off. Normally they will run away if they hear you coming.

Golden Orb Spiders – they often spin their huge webs across walking tracks. The females reach 45mm body length, but they are basically harmless.

Ticks and leeches – they can attach to your skin and then feed on your blood. Use an insect repellent on skin, shoes and socks. When you get home, search carefully for ticks. Good places to look are behind the ears, the back of the head, neck, groin, armpits and back of the knees. Remove a leech by flicking it off with your finger or showering it with salt. Remove a tick with tweezers by grasping the head and rotating. Do not pull the tick by the body as this may make it release more toxin. Apply an antiseptic cream to the bite. Seek medical advice if you experience muscle weakness, paralysis or feel generally unwell after a tick bite.

Plants in the tropics

Avoid touching the sap from leaves and stems from rainforest plants.



Stinging trees – these grow on the edges of tracks and clearings. It has fine, poisonous hairs on its heart-shaped leaves and these hairs penetrate the skin - even when just lightly brushed. The sting can be **excruciatingly painful** and can cause illness and even hospitalisation. Avoid rubbing the skin. You might try carefully but firmly applying sticky plaster over the wound. When you rip the tape off, you might be able to remove some of the stinging hairs and lessen the severity of the wound. If you stop for a toilet break make sure you're NOT using these leaves

as your toilet paper!

Wait-A-While (also called **Lawyer Vine**) - a climbing palm that has a main stem covered with sharp bristles; as well as long, whip-like strands that often hang down over tracks - these are covered with small hooks and will stop you in your tracks if you run into it. It loves to hang onto clothing or your naked skin! If you are caught, **stop** and gently pull the whip off you. Wear a hat to keep the wait-a-while 'whips' from ripping your face! Use sticky plaster to pull the thorns out when you get home.



Sounds like fun, hey!

Have a safe and enjoyable event. We'll see you at the race!