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WHALE SEASON SOARS

Hervey Bay has officially welcomed the start of its world famous whale season, with the first pods of humpback arrived in the sheltered waters of the Great Sandy Straits this week. The opening marks the beginning of a 3 month spectacle that draws thousands of visitors to the Fraser coast each year. Tour operators reported early sightings of mothers & newborn calves cruising into the bay, taking advantage of the calm, warm conditions that make Hervey Bay one of the world's only designated whale refuges. The region's geography protected by K'gari & fed by deep channels—creates a safe resting ground where humpbacks pause during their 10,000km migration. Operators say the first arrivals are already displaying the behaviours that made the bay famous: slow-moving pods, curious juveniles, and extended mugging encounters where whales approach boats of their own accord. Fraser Coast tourism operators expect a strong season, with bookings tracking ahead of last year. Many visitors time their trips to coincide with Hervey Bay Whale Festival, which begins late August and includes the Blessing of the Fleet, community parades, live music and cultural celebrations. Marine experts say Hervey Bay's whale season is more than a tourism drawcard—it plays a vital role in humpback conservation. As more pods arrive over the coming weeks, Hervey Bay is preparing for another season of close-up encounters, booming breaches and unforgettable moments on the water. For locals, the return of the whales signals not just a tourism milestone, but the started of the bay's most celebrated natural event.

Courtesy Hervey Bay Sun



LOCAL RENTAL AVAILABILITY SHOWS IMPROVEMENT

Fraser Coast rental availability has climbed to its highest level in years, with new data showing the region is finally beginning to loosen after a long period of extreme pressure on tenants. The latest REIQ Residential Vacancy Rate Report for the June 2026 quarter places the Fraser coast at 2.2% up 0.7% points since March. Hervey Bay rose 2.3%, while Maryborough increased to 1.4% marking one of the most significant quarterly shifts recorded locally since the pandemic. The Fraser Coast is now one of only 6 Queensland regions sitting above a 2% vacancy rate, placing it among the few areas showing meaningful easing. Statewide, Queensland's overall vacancy rate remains at just 1% underscoring how tight the broader rental market continues to be. Industry analysts say several factors are contributing to the local improvement. The completion of major construction projects, including the Hervey Bay Community Hub, has released short-term worker accommodation back into the market. Rising cost-of-living pressures are also prompting tenants to "trade down" to more affordable homes, leaving higher priced rentals vacant for longer. Break-leased activity has increased, and new housing approvals are gradually adding fresh supply. Despite the improvement, the Fraser Coast is still below the 2.6% to 3.5% considered a healthy, balanced market. REIQ warns the easing remains fragile, with migration trends and construction timelines likely to influence conditions over the next year. For renters, the shift means more choice and slightly less competition, particularly in mid-range and premium listings. For landlords it signals longer-leasing times and a need for sharper pricing and presentation. *Courtesy SUN Hervey Bay*

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1927**

What's On
FRASER COAST MAGAZINE

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MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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BURN THE FLOOR
LUMINOUS

DIESEL
SOUNDS OF ROCK
MUSIC FESTIVAL