



**1 & 2** True North, four public sculptures by Donna Marcus along Mackay's Bluewater Trail & Caneland Central Shopping Centre

## MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the Bluewater Trail in Mackay, visit Mackay Regional Council's website [www.mackay.qld.gov.au](http://www.mackay.qld.gov.au)

## ARTSPACE MACKAY

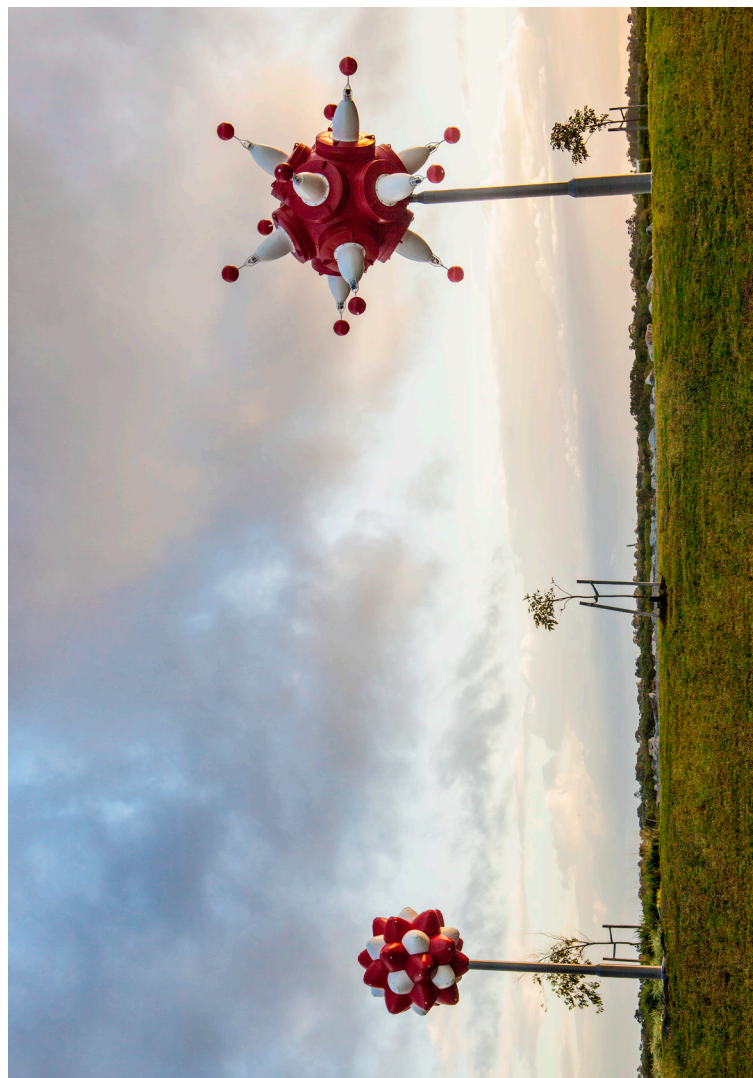
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FREE ENTRY: 10am - 5pm Tuesday - Saturday



INFORMATION MAP

## Bluewater Trail Public Art

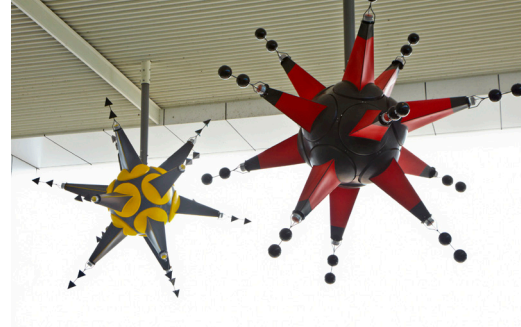


## Bluewater Trail Public Art

Mackay Regional Council, Artspace Mackay and Lend Lease proudly present an exciting public art development *True North*, a collection of four sculptures by Donna Marcus at Caneland Central and along Mackay's Bluewater Trail overlooking the Pioneer River.

When Donna Marcus was approached to develop concepts for public art outside a new shopping centre in Mackay, she was aware of Mackay's significant investment and interest in culture, particularly the program delivered by Mackay Regional Council's Artspace Mackay, and the public artwork developed by Fiona Foley for the Bluewater Trail along the Pioneer River.

In this context, Marcus has created *True North*, a visually commanding collection of sculptures that is also sympathetic to the "beautiful, simple void" of the interior architecture of the shopping centre. The design of the building, by Lend Lease architect Darren Kindrachuk, was influenced by the rural and industrial structures that have been so important to Mackay and this resonates strongly with Marcus's sculptures. Constructed to her specifications from marine buoys, they are utilitarian in materials yet anchored to both the community's vibrant economy and its ties to the sea. The layers of ideas float as far and wide as universal consumption and the ethics of modernism.



The siting of these colourful beacons also creates a visual link between the populated shopping centre and the Pioneer River, that takes Mackay to an international market. They speak both to the history of the city and, aesthetically, to the contemporary concerns in Foley's large-scale public art works along the Bluewater Trail.

Using the nautical term *True North*, the four sculptures exhibit strong colour combinations with industrial and recreational references. *True North* is strident in its yellow and black (the colours of work) and hangs at the front of the building, a beacon that draws the eye. *Isolated Danger* is an intense black and red. These two buoys are hung high off the ground under the canopy of the shopping centre. The other two, located on the other side of the Matsuura Avenue, along the river, are playfully red and white.

Red, when it occurs in nature, is often a danger signal. It has been adopted for its visibility on the seas, but within this sculptural group also speaks to the connection of Mackay to its sister city, Matsuura, in Japan. Matsuura's floral emblem is the red and white camellia, with these colours also echoed in

the country's national flag, carousels, and nautical structures. Importantly in this context however, the red and white buoys flag their given nautical meaning, "safe water", and refer to the buoys marking safe passage north, through Queensland's Great Barrier Reef, to Matsuura.

They are colourful nautical sentinels, lit in the evenings by marine LED lighting and, at double human height, dwarfing the viewer at close range. At night they attract from many kilometres away.

In *True North*, the unexpected nature of ocean buoys floating in a celebratory fashion on dry land is whimsical, poetic, and odd enough to stimulate the imagination.

Utility becomes artistry, function becomes concept, and the familiar becomes exotic. In these works we view the materials of the age, positioning Mackay within the global economy, whilst paying tribute to the local.

**Adapted from an essay by Louise Martin-Chew,**  
21 May 2012. To read the full essay, visit  
[www.artspacemackay.com.au](http://www.artspacemackay.com.au)

Images: **Donna MARCUS** *True North* 2012. Virgin Polyethylene, Stainless Steel, Marine LED Lights. Commissioned by Lend Lease and Mackay Regional Council. Images courtesy of the artist and Dianne Tanzer Gallery. Photography by Grant Perigo.

