



RAINFOREST RETREAT

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Family friendly O'Reilly's provides a 'theme park' experience in the forest

The forest provides a 'theme park' of experiences for families as a great alternative to the Summer beach holiday, allowing parents to relax and unwind in the cool mountain temperatures, while the kids have fun.

For the kids, there's the chance to fly through the forest on a flying fox, set their own hand-made catamarans sail on a mountain creek, find frogs, furry creatures and other weird and wonderful wildlife – all part of the fun of the 'Scrub-Club', which operates at O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat every Queensland school holidays.

Open to kids aged five and over, 'Scrub-Club' is like a 'theme park' of the forest – with a ride on the famous Flying Fox, the highlight of the adventure.

A host of activities are on offer everyday to more than rival the fun of the beach.

O'Reilly's Activities Manager Tim O'Reilly recommends the Flying Fox as a favourite activity for kids (not to mention adults).

"Kids are strapped into a harness, linked to a pulley, for a 180 metre flight through the air over Morans Creek," Mr O'Reilly said.

"It is totally safe, and totally fun."

The Flying Fox has been operating for over four years and around 4,000 people soar through the sky each year, to screams of excitement. Kids need to be of a certain size to make the ride – most kids over 7 or 8 are fine to fly.

While the focus of the 'Scrub Club' is on fun, it is equally on learning – but these outdoor lessons, exploring bush tracks, mountain streams and hidey hollows for all sorts of rainforest creatures are far removed from the classroom.

"We teach the kids quite a lot about the environment and conservation, but because we incorporate games and activities they hardly realise they are learning," Mr O'Reilly said.

Alternating programs include 'Feathered Friends', 'Things that Bite and Sting', 'Frogs and Friends' and 'Good Old Days', which explores the pioneering past on the mountain.

Other options incorporate four-wheel drive bus trips to popular lookouts and even a visit to the mountain Alpaca Farm.

Inside the 'clubhouse' kids take part in a range of arts and crafts activities, so in wet weather there is always something fun to do.

Even when the weather is fine, the indoor activities make a welcome break from the walking, and a chance to get crafty and construct catamarans, to see how they float the next day.

The walks range from just 500m to around 7.5km, with a leisurely pace, and plenty of stops to spot wildlife, paddle in creeks or enjoy a picnic lunch, ensuring even younger children can take part.

"With the longer walks, we have kids occupied all day, giving parents the chance to do their own longer walks," Mr O'Reilly said.

"Other programs are structured around morning and afternoon activities, so kids can join their parents for lunch and families can opt to spend part of the day together."

"We also have evening activities – 'Scrub Club Grub' dinners, especially for kids, children's movie screenings and spot-lighting and glow worm adventures."

"Parents have the opportunity to relax and indulge in their own activities while the kids are entertained, opt for a range of family fun activities, or a combination of both 'quiet time' and 'family time'."

"And relaxing on your own private balcony taking in a stunning sunset over the McPherson ranges even surpasses swinging in a hammock by the beach."

It is important that children are dressed appropriately for each activity. A hat, sunscreen, walking shoes and raincoat are essential for enjoyable bush walks. Old clothes are recommended for arts and crafts as getting messy and dirty is all part of the fun.

O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat also boasts a spa and plunge pool, which are always popular with families.

For further information on special accommodation packages or the cost of Scrub Club activities, contact O'Reilly's Reservations on 1800 688 722.

Ends.

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