

A MOMENT ON MAGNETIC ISLAND

Daniella Conser

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5mdELdV41w>

Sitting on the rugged cliffs of Magnetic Island, I hear the island's whispers carried by the wind. The fallen rocks and granite speak stories of time and ancient beginnings, the soils and stones sentences in the island's history. Eucalypt trees sway, their leaves murmuring the songs of the Wulgurukaba people. I picture their footsteps tracing these paths, their Dreaming stories etched into the landscape. Gabul, the great python, ripples the earth beneath me as I gaze toward the surrounding islands. High in the branches, a blue-winged kookaburra embodies the evolutionary wonders of this island. Nearby, rock wallabies confidently trace the landscape, their presence a testament to survival in isolation. These animals, endemic to the island, reflect the delicate balance of life crafted over millennia. As I wander these paths, I am filled with wonder. The island's history weighs heavy, yet the present feels light, a fleeting moment within an eternal story. Magnetic Island's beauty lies not just in its scenery but in the intricate tales embedded in its landscape. Here, I see the hand of evolution, the care of the Wulgurukaba, and nature's relentless forces woven into a mosaic of life. Beneath the surrounding waters, the reef bursts with color and life. Corals spread like intricate lace, fish weaving through their patterns choreographed by time. This underwater world mirrors the land. The island speaks of endurance, a dialogue between land and sea, past and present. Its story unfolding, inviting us to listen, learn, and protect. Listening, I find a connection to nature and a deeper understanding of my place within it. We've altered and changed so much of our earth in the plight of perceived progress. Yet here, a sanctuary remains, withstanding time and the harshness of humanity's touch. This island offers a glimpse into the past and, if protected, a hopeful vision for the future. In this moment of stillness, I honor the land's history, savor its presence, and guard its future. The island is a delicate link in the chain of life. May it remind us of nature's intrinsic value and implore us to protect it.

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Judge's Comments: In the Commended category, we have 'A Moment on Magnetic Island' by Daniella Conser, a first-person account of the sights, sounds, and sensations of the Island, accompanied by a video narrative. What distinguishes Daniella's work is its reflection on the Indigenous cultures of Magnetic Island. Crossing between personal essay and video diary, the work issues a compelling call for the conservation of Magnetic Island's unique habitats, histories, and heritages