



## The Morning Glory Cloud

The Morning Glory Cloud Formations happen usually in the latter part of the dry season between late September to early November. The atmosphere will put on for you one of its rarest and most spectacular displays - the Morning Glory Cloud. One of the world's most extraordinary meteorological phenomenon.

The cloud attracts gliders and hang glider pilots from all around the world to ride the cloud just as a surfboard rider does the ocean.

The cloud can reach up to 1000 kilometres long, 1-2 kilometres high, and move at speeds of up to 60 kilometres per hour. It is often accompanied by sudden wind squalls.

A strong vertical motion at the front of the cloud transports air up through the cloud and creates the rolling appearance, while the air in the middle and rear of the cloud becomes turbulent and sinks; it is described as a 'solitary' wave

The occurrence of the morning glory cloud is due to the mesoscale circulations associated with sea breezes that develop over the Peninsula and the Gulf of Carpentaria. Sea breezes develop on both sides of the Gulf from the coral sea coast in the east to the Gulf breeze in the west. These meet in the middle of the Peninsula and force air to rise, forming a line of clouds over the spine of the Peninsula. The clouds can have up to 8 rolling clouds going at once.

The best vantage point to see the Morning Glory cloud is from Burketown and of course Normanton in remote Far North Queensland. The cloud generally goes through Karumba/Normanton before dawn and arrives shortly after first light in Burketown.

Morning Glories are usually associated with frontal systems crossing central Australia. Locals have noted that the Morning Glory Cloud is likely to occur when the humidity in the area is high, which provides moisture for the cloud to form, and when strong sea breezes have blown the preceding day.

This unusual phenomenon, of course, was noticed really long ago. Local Garrawa Aboriginal people called these usual clouds- "kangolgi"

The Royal Australian Air Force first reported this phenomenon in 1942.

The Morning Glory over the Gulf of Carpentaria has been studied by multiple teams of scientists since the 1970s

### Did you Know?

- The Morning Glory Cloud stays better formed over water,
- The locals in Burketown say they can predict when the cloud is on its way as the coffee tables at the Burketown pub start to curl upwards.
- A small number of pilots and tourists travel here each year in hopes of "cloud surfing" with the mysterious phenomenon.