

Whitsundays Social Indicators 2013

This study examines the social impacts of tourism on the local communities, as perceived by its residents. The research is intended to inform the decision making of state and local authorities, as well as tourism bodies.

89% of residents agree that festivals and events attract tourists and raise awareness of the region

Tourism is an economic staple of the Whitsundays. Of the region's 32,400 residents, one third (33%) perceive they directly benefit from tourism. In general, they are happy with the way the industry is developing (67%) and would like growth to continue, significantly more than in 2010 (52%). However, one quarter of residents believe tourism would benefit from further diversity in areas like the arts, cultural events and better use of the coastal areas.

Like the holidaymakers who visit, locals enjoy the surroundings and relaxed lifestyle. Most have lived in the area for 20 years or less (75%) and more than other Queenslanders, Whitsunday residents cannot think of a better place to live (58% compared with QLD 39%).

For the year ended ⁱⁱJune 2013, 654,000 (473,000 domestic and 181,000 international) overnight visitors holidayed in the region with almost half domestic visitation drawn from Queensland (43%). Almost all residents (98%) come into contact with tourists as they go about their daily lives and a marked high regard for visitors has developed among locals in recent years (74% compared with 48% in 2010). Predictably, there is also solid support for more to be done to attract tourists (79% compared with QLD 45%).

		Queensland %		Whitsundays %	
		2013	2010	2013	2010
Feelings about local area and tourists					
Feelings about local area	I like it, I can't think of anywhere else I would rather live	39	37	58	48
	I enjoy living here but can think of other places I would enjoy equally	50	50	34	42
	I only live here because circumstances demand it and would prefer to live somewhere else	12	13	8	11
Feelings about the number of tourists	Want more tourists	45	43	79	73
	About the same number	50	50	20	24
	Want fewer tourists	6	8	1	4

Shaded box highlights a significantly greater response when comparing the region and Queensland

79% of residents feel that their local area should be trying to attract more tourists

“We have a lot to do with overseas people who visit our area, we learn a lot from them and try to promote our Town and Australia as a whole. We try to make their visit with us enjoyable and educational.”

WHITSUNDAYS RESIDENT 2013

Far more than other Queenslanders, Whitsunday residents feel the positive benefits of tourism on their community as a whole (79% of residents rating the impact of tourism on the community +2 or +3 compared with 46% of all Queenslanders). Unsurprisingly, agreement on the top three tourism positive impacts remains strong.

- Greater cultural diversity (99% in 2013 and 97% in 2010)
- Important economic benefits (95% in 2013 and 92% in 2010), and
- Increased regional profile (89% in 2013 and 83% in 2010).

Furthermore, 89 per cent of residents see festivals and events as great ways to attract tourists and raise awareness of the region.

In fact, across the board they are more likely to rate the positive impacts tourism has on their local community more highly than other Queenslanders. This level of approval is possibly driven by residents’ high interaction with tourists and the large proportion that benefits from tourism.

Little appears to dampen the enthusiasm of residents for tourism and its impacts. Against the top two negative impacts of tourism, locals were less likely to agree than in 2010.

- Increased prices (48% compared with 73% in 2010), and
- Increased property values (47% compared with 66% in 2010).

Fewer agreed with other identified negative impacts compared with the rest of Queensland, including:

- Increased opportunity costs (20% compared with 27% QLD)
- More disruption (10% compared with 32% QLD)
- Lack of access for locals (5% compared with 17% QLD).

Contact with Tourists, Feelings and Development

		Queensland %		Whitsundays %	
		2013	2010	2013	2010
Feelings about tourists	I like tourists	57↑	49	74↑	48
	I tolerate tourists	31↓	35	24↓	41
	I adjust my lifestyle to avoid tourists	10	10	1↓	7
	I stay away from places tourists go	3↓	5	1	4
Contact with tourists	I never come into contact with tourists	22↑	18	2	5
	I see tourists around but don't usually talk to them	51	52	42	35
	I often interact with tourists as part of my job	10↓	13	20↓	32
	I often meet tourists around town and talk to them	15	14	27	24
	I have made friends with tourists during their stay, but have not kept in contact	7	7	15	18
	I have made friends with tourists and kept in contact after they have left	4	5	9↓	17
Preferred development growth	Happy with continued growth	59	59	67↑	52
	Happy but no more growth	25	25	6↓	21
	Want less tourism	3↓	6	2	4
	More growth different direction	13↑	10	25	23

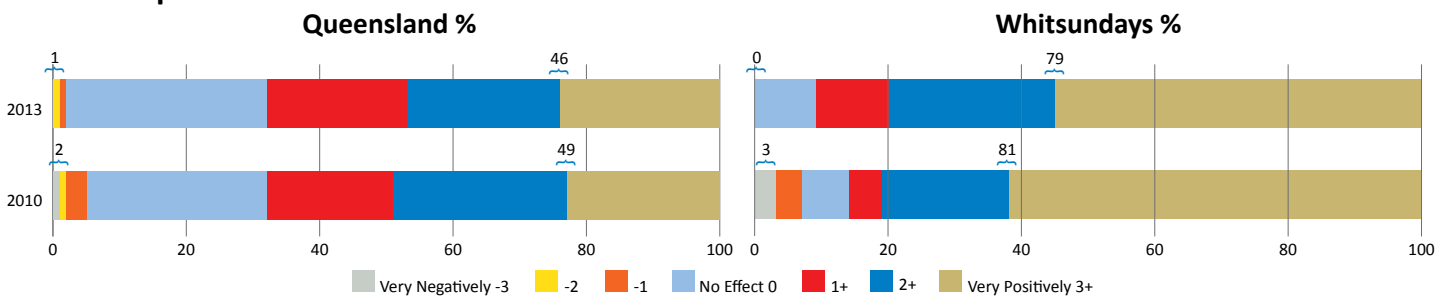
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↑ Highlights a statistically significant increase in the region from 2010

↓ Highlights a statistically significant decrease in the region from 2010

Respondents were asked to rate the overall impact tourism has on their community as a whole, using a seven point scale ranging from very negatively (-3) to very positively (+3). In 2013, 79% of Whitsundays residents rated the impact of tourism on their community as positive, scoring a +2 or +3, similar to the ratings from the 2010 survey.

Overall Impacts of Tourism



Respondents were then asked to nominate if they agree or disagree with the following impacts of tourism. Below is the proportion of respondents that agree with each impact.

Positive Impacts of Tourism

	Queensland % Agree		Whitsundays % Agree	
	2013	2010	2013	2010
More interesting things to do	62↑	54	62	62
Important economic benefits	91↑	87	95	92
Improved facility maintenance	69↑	60	69	59
Increased local pride	72↑	65	75↑	61
Increased regional profile	86↑	76	89	83
New infrastructure	68↑	60	68	70
Greater cultural diversity	92↑	89	99	97
* Benefits of tourism shared evenly	38	-	40	-
** Festivals and events attract tourists and raise awareness	87	-	89	-

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↓ Highlights a statistically significant decrease in the region from 2010

* Question wording changed from 2010

** New statement included in 2013

- Data not available

Those that agree with the positive statement were then asked to rate the affect it has on their community as a whole using a seven point scale ranging from very negatively (-3) to very positively (+3). Below are the scores of those respondents who gave a rating of +2 or +3.

	Queensland % Positive affect on the community as a whole. Those that rated the affect +2 or +3.		Whitsundays % Positive affect on the community as a whole. Those that rated the affect +2 or +3.	
	2013	2010	2013	2010
More interesting things to do	53↓	65	76	79
Important economic benefits	45↓	58	68	79
Improved facility maintenance	43↓	53	66	70
Increased local pride	39↓	50	61	69
Increased regional profile	40↓	52	62	65
New infrastructure	49↓	65	73	76
Greater cultural diversity	29↓	32	46	51
* Benefits of tourism shared evenly	41	-	65	-
** Festivals and events attract tourists and raise awareness	49	-	67	-

% positive affect is based on the proportion of respondents who cited the top two ratings on a seven point scale ranging from very negative (-3) to very positive (+3).

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* Question wording changed from 2010

** New statement included in 2013

- Data not available

Base: Those that agree with each statement

Negative Impacts of Tourism

Respondents were asked to nominate if they agree or disagree with the following impacts of tourism. Below is the proportion of respondents that agree with each impact.

	Queensland % Agree		Whitsundays % Agree	
	2013	2010	2013	2010
Increased opportunity costs	27	25	20	21
More disruption	32	31	10↓	28
Rise in delinquent behaviour	35	36	41↓	57
Negative impact on the environment	29	29	25	29
Increased prices	56↑	53	48↓	73
Lack of access for locals	17	16	5	9
Negative impact on local character	29	29	42	44
Increased property values	41↓	45	47↓	66

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↓ Highlights a statistically significant decrease in the region from 2010

Those that agree with the negative statement were then asked to rate the affect it has on their community as a whole using a seven point scale ranging from very negatively (-3) to very positively (+3). Below are the scores of those respondents who gave a rating or -2 or -3.

	Queensland % Negative affect on the community as a whole. Those that rated the affect -3 or -2.		Whitsundays % Negative affect on the community as a whole. Those that rated the affect -3 or -2.	
	2013	2010	2013	2010
Increased opportunity costs	15↓	24	39	-
More disruption	14↓	24	-	-
Rise in delinquent behaviour	22↓	31	16	-
Negative impact on the environment	18↓	31	29	-
Increased prices	13↓	18	22↓	41
Lack of access for locals	18↓	28	-	-
Negative impact on local character	8	11	16	-
Increased property values	16↓	25	13↓	41

% negative affect is based on the proportion of respondents who cited the top two ratings on a seven point scale ranging from very negative (-3) to very positive (+3).

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- Data not available

Base: Those that agree with each statement



Demographics

		Queensland % 2013	Whitsundays % 2013
Life stage	Under 45 years, no children	26	17
	Under 45 years, with children	23	32
	45 years or more, no children	40	38
	45 years or more, with children	11	13
Years of residence	Less than 2 years	18	3
	2-5 years	20	17
	6-10 years	21	20
	11-20 years	23	35
	More than 20 years	17	25
Place of birth	Within 50km of where you currently live	21	14
	Elsewhere in Queensland	22	22
	Elsewhere in Australia	32	42
	In another country	24	22
Directly benefit from tourism (e.g. work in or own a business that profits from tourists or rent a property to tourists)	Personal benefit	10	23
	Family benefit	10	22
	No benefit	84	67
Income	Less than \$60,000	39	33
	\$60,000 - \$99,000	24	19
	\$100,000 or more	21	34
	Prefer not to say	17	15

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Base 2013 Queensland n=3855, Whitsundays 194

Base 2010 Queensland n=3834, Whitsundays 146

ⁱ Source – *Queensland Regional Profile for Whitsunday Regional Local Government Area*, Government Statistician, Queensland Treasury and Trade.

ⁱⁱ Source – Tourism Research Australia's National and International Visitor Survey 2013.



Positive impact

Description

More interesting things to do	Because of tourism, there are more interesting things to do in my local area (e.g. attractions to visit, events to attend)
Important economic benefits	Tourism is good for the economy because the money that visitors spend when they come to the region helps to stimulate the economy, stimulates employment opportunities, and is good for local business
Improved facility maintenance	Tourism promotes the development and better maintenance of public facilities such as roads, parks, sporting facilities and/or public transport
Increased local pride	Tourism increases local residents pride in their town and makes them feel good about themselves and their community
Increased regional profile	Tourism showcases my region in a positive light. This helps to promote a better opinion of my region and encourages future tourism and /or business investment
New infrastructure	Because of tourism there are better shopping, dining and/or recreational opportunities in the region
Greater cultural diversity	Tourism brings people from different backgrounds and cultures into the community
Benefits of tourism shared evenly	The benefits of tourism are shared evenly across the local community
Festivals and events attract tourists and raise awareness	Festivals and events attract tourists and raise awareness of the region

Negative impact

Description

Increased opportunity costs	Too much public money is spent on developing facilities for tourists that would be better spent on other public facilities/activities
More disruption	Tourism disrupts the lives of local residents and creates inconvenience. Problems like traffic congestion, parking difficulties and excessive noise are worse when there are lots of tourists around
Rise in delinquent behaviour	Tourism is associated with some people behaving inappropriately, perhaps in a rowdy and delinquent way, or engaging in excessive drinking or drug use or other criminal behaviour
Negative impact on the environment	Tourism has a negative impact on the environment through excessive litter and/or pollution and/or damage to natural areas
Increased prices	Tourism leads to increases in the prices of some things such as some goods and services and/or property values and/or rental costs
Lack of access for locals	Tourists deny local residents access to public facilities, that is, roads, parks, sporting facilities, public transport and/ or other facilities are less available to local residents because of overcrowding
Negative impact on local character	Because of tourism the character of the region has changed for the worse
Increased property values	The increase in property values associated with tourism, makes it more difficult for some people to live in the area

