



Tropical North Queensland 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.

Tropical North Queensland (TNQ) generates around 13.0 per cent of the State's Gross State Product and is a services centre to a vibrant hinterland and communities of Cape York and the Torres Strait. Of its 250,000 residents, over half (54% compared with QLD 39%) cannot think of anywhere else they would rather live. Underpinning these idyllic conditions is a diverse mix of industries. The top three commercial sectors - retail, accommodation and food are strongly allied to tourism and not only deliver employment outcomes for locals but also support an annual influx of more than 2.35 million overnight visitors (year ended June 2013). Indeed, over one third of the population benefits from tourism, more than double the Queensland average (38% compared with QLD 16%).

68% of residents really like tourists

"The Centre of the Universe. The highest town in Queensland. A very beautiful part of the world to live in. Fabulous people, great climate and flora, fauna diversity."

TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND RESIDENT 2013

Feelings about local area and tourists		Queensland %		TNQ %	
		2013	2010	2013	2010
Feelings about local area	I like it, I can't think of anywhere else I would rather live	39	37	54	50
	I enjoy living here but can think of other places I would enjoy equally	50	50	35↓	43
	I only live here because circumstances demand it and would prefer to live somewhere else	12	13	11	8
Feelings about the number of tourists	Want more tourists	45	43	68	67
	About the same number	50	50	29	28
	Want fewer tourists	6	8	3	5

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

↑ Highlights a statistically significant increase in the region from 2010

↓ Highlights a statistically significant decrease in the region from 2010

Residents recognise the important role the industry plays in their economic structure and in recent years, their feelings about tourism and tourists have improved. Locals like the way the industry is developing (72%) and want tourist numbers to grow (68%). Fewer residents than in 2010 want development curtailed (14% compared with 22% in 2010). These positive views reflect in local attitudes to tourists. Almost everyone in the region has contact with tourists and on the whole, they like them (68% compared with 54% in 2010). Locals are now also three times more likely to stay in touch with tourists after they have left the region than other Queenslanders (13% compared with 4% QLD) up six percentage points on previous findings.

This same upsurge continues with the overall positive impacts of tourism, driven in the main by residents who: personally benefit from tourism; think the region should attract more tourists: or really like tourists. More TNQ residents agree that tourism enhances their local community (82% rated it +2 or +3 compared with 77% in 2010), higher than the Queensland average (46%). Agreement among residents on the top three positive outcomes of tourism also remains high:

- Greater cultural diversity (96% in 2013 and 95% in 2010)
- Important economic benefits (95% in 2013 and 91% in 2010), and
- Increased regional profile (92% in 2013 and 85% in 2010).

Additionally, there has been a jump in residents agreeing that tourism increases local pride (82% compared with 66% in 2010), and nine in ten (90%) believe festivals and events attract tourists and raise awareness of the region.

“Tourists make life more interesting and help employment opportunities for the young people.”

TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND RESIDENT 2013

Across the board TNQ residents have a stronger affiliation with each positive impact of tourism on their local community, than other Queenslanders. Nevertheless, agreement about the positive effects of tourism has softened over the time. For example, across the region locals believe the economic benefits to the community are less than 2010 (68% rated it +2 or +3 in 2013 compared with 76% in 2010). Positive affects that have softened include:

- More interesting things to do (66% compared with 79% in 2010)
- Improved facility maintenance (55% compared with 70% in 2010)
- Increased regional profile (58% compared with 72% in 2010), and
- Increased local pride (52% compared with 67% in 2010).

Notably, Port Douglas residents are more attune to the positive economic benefits on their community than the rest of the region.

At the other end of the scale the top two negative outcomes of tourism that TNQ residents most agreed with in 2010 remain the same in 2013:

- Increased prices (60% in 2013 and 67% in 2010), and
- Increased property values (45% in 2013 and 55% in 2010).

90% of residents agree that festivals and events attract tourists and raise awareness of the region.



Contact with Tourists, Feelings and Development

		Queensland %		TNQ %	
		2013	2010	2013	2010
Feelings about tourists	I like tourists	57↑	49	68↑	54
	I tolerate tourists	31↓	35	26↓	36
	I adjust my lifestyle to avoid tourists	10	10	5	8
	I stay away from places tourists go	3↓	5	1	2
Contact with tourists	I never come into contact with tourists	22↑	18	4	4
	I see tourists around but don't usually talk to them	51	52	45↓	53
	I often interact with tourists as part of my job	10↓	13	23	21
	I often meet tourists around town and talk to them	15	14	24	18
	I have made friends with tourists during their stay, but have not kept in contact	7	7	8	12
	I have made friends with tourists and kept in contact after they have left	4	5	13↑	7
Preferred development growth	Happy with continued growth	59	59	72	67
	Happy but no more growth	25	25	12↓	18
	Want less tourism	3↓	6	2	4
	More growth different direction	13↑	10	15	12

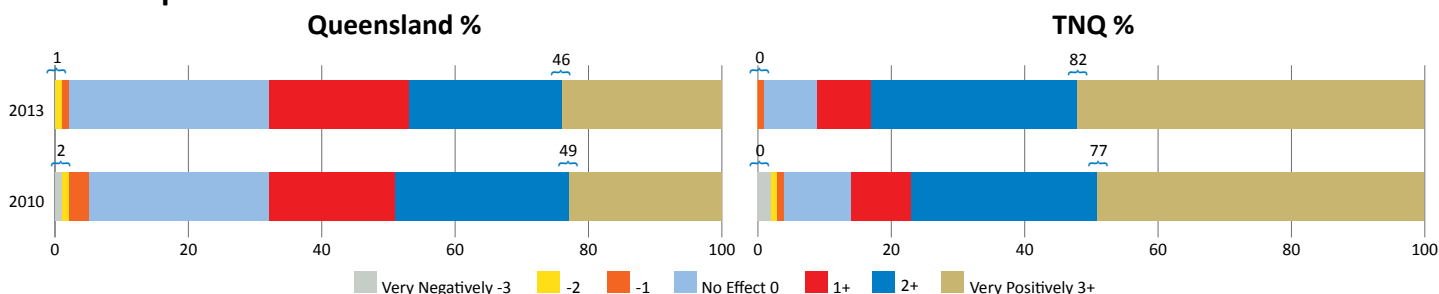
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Respondents were asked to rate the overall impact tourism has on their community as a whole, using a seven point scale ranging from very negatively (-3) to very positively (+3). In 2013, 82% of TNQ residents rated the impact of tourism on their community 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. On the following page is the proportion of respondents that agree with each impact.



Positive Impacts of Tourism

	Queensland % Agree		TNQ % Agree	
	2013	2010	2013	2010
More interesting things to do	62↑	54	69	68
Important economic benefits	91↑	87	95	91
Improved facility maintenance	69↑	60	70↑	61
Increased local pride	72↑	65	82↑	66
Increased regional profile	86↑	76	92↑	85
New infrastructure	68↑	60	75	70
Greater cultural diversity	92↑	89	96	95
* Benefits of tourism shared evenly	38	-	43	-
** Festivals and events attract tourists and raise awareness	87	-	90	-

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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.		TNQ % 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	66↓	79
Important economic benefits	45↓	58	68↓	76
Improved facility maintenance	43↓	53	55↓	70
Increased local pride	39↓	50	52↓	67
Increased regional profile	40↓	52	58↓	72
New infrastructure	49↓	65	65	70
Greater cultural diversity	29↓	32	43	45
* Benefits of tourism shared evenly	41	-	56	-
** Festivals and events attract tourists and raise awareness	49	-	62	-

% 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		TNQ % Agree	
	2013	2010	2013	2010
Increased opportunity costs	27	25	29	29
More disruption	32	31	23	22
Rise in delinquent behaviour	35	36	32↓	41
Negative impact on the environment	29	29	24	29
Increased prices	56↑	53	60	67
Lack of access for locals	17	16	10	12
Negative impact on local character	29	29	38↓	48
Increased property values	41↓	45	45↓	55

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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.

TNQ %
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	20	19
More disruption	14↓	24	12	16
Rise in delinquent behaviour	22↓	31	21↓	35
Negative impact on the environment	18↓	31	18↓	36
Increased prices	13↓	18	14↓	25
Lack of access for locals	18↓	28	-	-
Negative impact on local character	8	11	9↓	17
Increased property values	16↓	25	17↓	28

% negative affect is based on the proportion of respondents who cited the bottom two ratings on a seven point scale ranging from very negative (-3) to very positive (+3). Shaded box highlights a significantly greater response when comparing the region and Queensland

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- Data not available

Base: Those that agree with each statement

Demographics

		Queensland % 2013	TNQ % 2013
Life stage	Under 45 years, no children	26	20
	Under 45 years, with children	23	29
	45 years or more, no children	40	41
	45 years or more, with children	11	10
Years of residence	Less than 2 years	18	13
	2-5 years	20	16
	6-10 years	21	27
	11-20 years	23	24
	More than 20 years	17	20
Place of birth	Within 50km of where you currently live	21	14
	Elsewhere in Queensland	22	29
	Elsewhere in Australia	32	34
	In another country	24	23
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	25
	Family benefit	10	24
	No benefit	84	62
Income	Less than \$60,000	39	48
	\$60,000 - \$99,000	24	20
	\$100,000 or more	21	21
	Prefer not to say	17	12

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Base 2013 Queensland n=3855, TNQ n=293

Base 2010 Queensland n=3834, TNQ n=402

ⁱ Source – Cairns Regional Council. *Economic Profile 2012*, <http://economy.id.com.au/default.aspx?id=363&pg=12210>

ⁱⁱ Source – Queensland Treasury and Trade, Government Statistician, *Queensland Regional Profile for Far North Queensland and Gulf regional planning areas*.

ⁱⁱⁱ Source – Tourism Research Australia's National and International Visitor Surveys 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

