

# Mackay 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.

*87% of residents agree that festivals and events attract tourists and raise awareness of the region*

The Mackay region is characterised by its strong and multifaceted economy. The mining boom and growth in ancillary industries has prompted corresponding growth in the region's population. Sixty-nine per cent of residents have lived in the region for 10 years or less. Home to around 116,000 residents, just over half (52%) are happy with their quality of life and surroundings, but can also think of other places they might equally enjoy. The emphasis on major employers like mining, construction and retail has failed to diminish the belief among locals that the tourism industry has a role to play in creating positive outcomes for their community.

Two in three (66%) residents like tourists. Many (59%) are comfortable with the way tourism is developing, while one in five (17%) would like to see the industry grow through initiatives like improved and affordable tourist infrastructure and more eco-tourism experiences. Of the region's 792,000 domestic and international overnight visitors (748,000 and 44,000 respectively) in 2013, the majority were regional Queenslanders, either on business or visiting friends and relatives. Two thirds of Mackay residents feel there is scope to increase that number and more should be done to attract tourists to the area.

Feelings about local area and tourists		Queensland %		Mackay %	
		2013	2010	2013	2010
Feelings about local area	I like it, I can't think of anywhere else I would rather live	39	37	29	28
	I enjoy living here but can think of other places I would enjoy equally	50	50	52	59
	I only live here because circumstances demand it and would prefer to live somewhere else	12	13	19	14
Feelings about the number of tourists	Want more tourists	45	43	64	64
	About the same number	50	50	33	31
	Want fewer tourists	6	8	3	5

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



Those living in Mackay City are more likely than the rest of the region to agree that tourism results in important economic benefits. However, on the whole (87%) residents believe festivals and events are great ways to attract tourists and raise awareness of the region.

*"I think local festivals and facilities are a great bonus for our community."*

MACKAY REGION RESIDENT 2013

In keeping with this general upsurge, residents are less likely to agree with their Queensland counterparts when it comes to the negative impacts from tourism, including:

- Increased prices (44% compared with QLD 56%)
- Negative impact on local charter (20% compared with QLD 29%)
- Negative impact on the environment (21% compared with QLD 29%); and
- More disruption (12% compared with QLD 32%).

The only exception to the trend is in response to the impact of increased property values on the community (27% rated it -2 or -3 compared with 16% of all Queenslanders).

The majority of Mackay residents are positive about the impact of tourism on the community with half rating it +2 or +3. At a broader level agreement on the benefits to the community show a consistent upturn.

- Greater cultural diversity (96% compared with 91% in 2010)
- Important economic benefits (92% compared with 87% in 2010), and
- Increased regional profile (90% compared with 76% in 2010).

**64% of residents feel that their local area should be trying to attract more tourists**

## Contact with Tourists, Feelings and Development

		Queensland %		Mackay %	
		2013	2010	2013	2010
<b>Feelings about tourists</b>	I like tourists	57↑	49	66	68
	I tolerate tourists	31↓	35	28	23
	I adjust my lifestyle to avoid tourists	10	10	5	3
	I stay away from places tourists go	3↓	5	2↓	7
<b>Contact with tourists</b>	I never come into contact with tourists	22↑	18	16	19
	I see tourists around but don't usually talk to them	51	52	50	54
	I often interact with tourists as part of my job	10↓	13	6	11
	I often meet tourists around town and talk to them	15	14	15	12
	I have made friends with tourists during their stay, but have not kept in contact	7	7	14↑	6
	I have made friends with tourists and kept in contact after they have left	4	5	4	5
<b>Preferred development growth</b>	Happy with continued growth	59	59	59	63
	Happy but no more growth	25	25	21↑	13
	Want less tourism	3↓	6	3	5
	More growth different direction	13↑	10	17	19

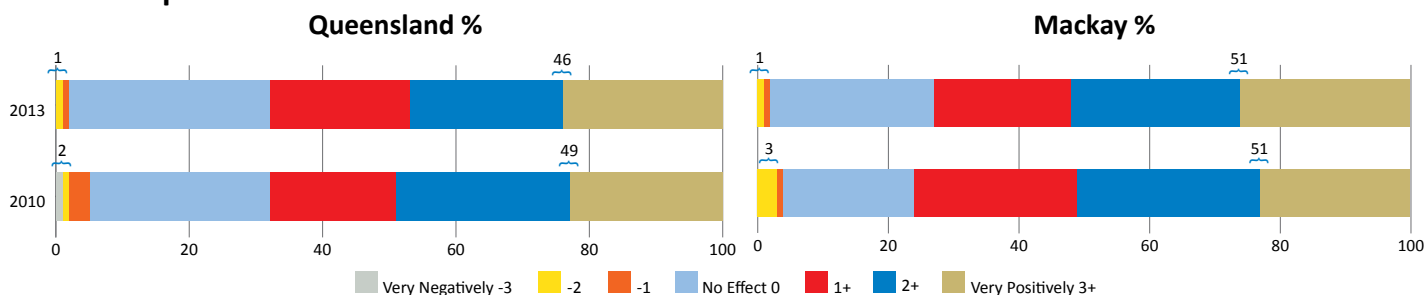
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↑ Highlights a statistically significant increase in the region from 2010

↓ 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, 51% of Mackay residents rated the impact of tourism on their community as positive, scoring a +2 or +3, similar to the ratings from the 2010 survey. One per cent of residents rated the impact of tourism on their community negatively, with a -3 or -2 in 2013.

## 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		Mackay % Agree	
	2013	2010	2013	2010
More interesting things to do	62↑	54	48	44
Important economic benefits	91↑	87	92	87
Improved facility maintenance	69↑	60	56	63
Increased local pride	72↑	65	76	69
Increased regional profile	86↑	76	90↑	76
New infrastructure	68↑	60	53	53
Greater cultural diversity	92↑	89	96↑	91
* Benefits of tourism shared evenly	38	-	39	-
** Festivals and events attract tourists and raise awareness	87	-	87	-

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↑ Highlights a statistically significant increase in the region from 2010

↓ 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.		Mackay % 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	56
Important economic benefits	45↓	58	48↓	59
Improved facility maintenance	43↓	53	44	51
Increased local pride	39↓	50	38	49
Increased regional profile	40↓	52	38↓	51
New infrastructure	49↓	65	58	66
Greater cultural diversity	29↓	32	28	30
* Benefits of tourism shared evenly	41	-	46	-
** Festivals and events attract tourists and raise awareness	49	-	51	-

% 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		Mackay % Agree	
	2013	2010	2013	2010
Increased opportunity costs	27	25	28	20
More disruption	32	31	12	17
Rise in delinquent behaviour	35	36	31	29
Negative impact on the environment	29	29	21	20
Increased prices	56↑	53	44	47
Lack of access for locals	17	16	10	8
Negative impact on local character	29	29	20	21
Increased property values	41↓	45	38	41

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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.		Mackay % 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	12↓	32
More disruption	14↓	24	-	-
Rise in delinquent behaviour	22↓	31	30	25
Negative impact on the environment	18↓	31	26	34
Increased prices	13↓	18	12↓	30
Lack of access for locals	18↓	28	-	-
Negative impact on local character	8	11	7	15
Increased property values	16↓	25	27	30

% 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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Base: Those that agree with each statement



## Demographics

		Queensland % 2013	Mackay % 2013
<b>Life stage</b>	Under 45 years, no children	26	23
	Under 45 years, with children	23	29
	45 years or more, no children	40	35
	45 years or more, with children	11	12
<b>Years of residence</b>	Less than 2 years	18	23
	2-5 years	20	19
	6-10 years	21	27
	11-20 years	23	10
	More than 20 years	17	21
<b>Place of birth</b>	Within 50km of where you currently live	21	16
	Elsewhere in Queensland	22	40
	Elsewhere in Australia	32	26
	In another country	24	18
<b>Directly benefit from tourism</b> (e.g. work in or own a business that profits from tourists or rent a property to tourists)	Personal benefit	10	7
	Family benefit	10	13
	No benefit	84	85
<b>Income</b>	Less than \$60,000	39	25
	\$60,000 - \$99,000	24	22
	\$100,000 or more	21	32
	Prefer not to say	17	21

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Base 2013 Queensland n=3855, Mackay 215  
Base 2010 Queensland n=3834, Mackay 175

<sup>i</sup> Source – Government Statistician, Queensland Treasury and Trade, *Queensland Regional Profile for Mackay Regional Local Government Area*.

<sup>ii</sup> Source – Government Statistician, Queensland Treasury and Trade, *Queensland Regional Profile for Mackay Regional Local Government Area*.

<sup>iii</sup> 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

