

Capricorn Social Indicators 2010

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. It looks at the social, geographic and economic circumstances of respondents in order to give a context to the findings.

The Capricorn Coast is perhaps best known as the beef capital of Australia.¹ However, the diverse nature of the region, which takes in the sapphire gem fields of western Queensland, Carnarvon Gorge as well as the Great Barrier Reef including Great Keppel Island, offers visitors a wide range of beach and bush experiences.

Located on the Tropic of Capricorn, Rockhampton is a service centre for the region, with 79 smaller communities spread throughout the district. The majority of its 111,500 residents² were born and bred in Queensland and have lived in the area for more than 10 years.

Despite this relatively stable population base, on the question of whether respondents could think of a place they would like to live equally or more than Capricorn, only one in five said they could not. Further, one quarter of those surveyed said they only lived in the area because circumstances demanded it, higher than the Queensland average of 13 per cent.

In Rockhampton, the workforce is primarily employed in education and health services, hospitality and grocery industries.³

The tourism industry is continuing to develop a local presence. To date, leisure tourism has been focused around the Capricorn Coast – Yeppoon, and Great Keppel Island on the Great Barrier Reef, as well as the offerings of the outback. For the Year Ending March 2010, the region welcomed over 600,000 domestic and international visitors (588,000 and 73,000 respectively)⁴. The residents would like those numbers to grow.

Two thirds (67%) of the locals said more effort should be made to attract tourists, higher than the Queensland average of 43 per cent, and over half were happy with the type of tourism development that had taken place. However, one in five said they would like to see tourism grow in different ways, citing more attractions, facilities and events as possible areas for expansion.

67% of residents feel that their local area should be trying to attract more tourists

Feelings about local area and tourists

		Queensland %	Capricorn %
Feelings about local area	I like it, I can't think of anywhere else I would rather live	37	22
	I enjoy living here but can think of other places I would enjoy equally	50	54
	I only live here because circumstances demand it and would prefer to live somewhere else	13	24
Feelings about the number of tourists	Fewer	8	2
	About the same	50	32
	More	43	67

■ = statistically significant difference



"I often chat with people from other countries who are having a working/travelling holiday in the area. It is good to learn where they come from and what they think of Australia and my area in particular."

Capricorn Social Indicators
Respondent 2010

Overall, Capricorn locals view tourism as positive but from a personal rather than community perspective. They tend to be friendlier towards tourists than the average Queensland, and are more

likely to meet and talk to tourists as they go about their daily business around town. This is despite the fact that very few have direct involvement or investment in the tourism industry.

Seventeen per cent stated that tourism had a moderate to very positive affect on their personal lives and were most likely to feel this way if they:

- personally benefitted from tourism
- had met or made friends with tourists in their local area.

Again, this result was much higher than the Queensland average of 11 per cent. Where they did share sentiments with other Queenslanders was on the question of how tourism affects the community at large. Fifty-three per cent said tourism had a moderate or

very positive affect on the community. They were more likely to hold a positive view if they:

- were female
- had made friends with tourists in their local area.

This result differs from the results of other studies that show people tend to view the impacts of tourism as being more positive on the community than on their personal quality of life. Also, according to the same studies, communities that benefit financially from tourism tend to be more positive about its impacts on community life.

When asked what words immediately came to mind when they thought about their local area of Capricorn, residents most frequently said beef capital, beaches, tropical and mining town.

Contact with Tourists, Feelings and Development

		Queensland %	Capricorn %
Feelings about tourists	I really like tourists	49	67
	I tolerate tourists	35	27
	I adjust my lifestyle to avoid tourists	10	5
	I stay away from places tourists go	5	1
Contact with tourists	I never come into contact with tourists	18	14
	I see tourists around but don't usually talk to them	52	45
	I often interact with tourists as part of my job	13	11
	I often meet tourists around town and talk to them	14	25
	I have made friends with tourists during their stay but have not kept in contact	7	10
Preferred development growth	I have made friends with tourists and kept in contact after they have left	5	5
	Happy with continued growth	59	57
	Happy but no more growth	25	20
	Want less tourism	6	2
	More growth different direction	10	21

■ = statistically significant difference

Overall Impacts of Tourism

	Queensland		Capricorn	
	% positive affect	% negative affect	% positive affect	% negative affect
Overall impact on personal quality of life	11	4	17	1
Overall impact on local community	50	2	53	1

% 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).

% 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).

■ = statistically significant difference

Positive Impacts of Tourism

Because of tourism there is...	Queensland			Capricorn		
	% agree	% positive affect on personal quality of life	% positive affect on community as a whole	% agree	% positive affect on personal quality of life	% positive affect on community as a whole
Improved economic benefits	87	16	58	88	23	67
Increased regional profile	76	16	52	78	24	60
Increased local pride	65	20	50	73	30	62
Improved facility maintenance	60	25	53	67	35	57
New infrastructure	60	36	65	58	50	73
More interesting things to do	54	35	65	53	44	64

% 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).

■ = statistically significant difference

Negative Impacts of Tourism

Because of tourism there is...	Queensland			Capricorn		
	% agree	% negative affect on personal quality of life	% negative affect on community as a whole	% agree	% negative affect on personal quality of life	% negative affect on community as a whole
Increased prices	53	20	18	39	19	14
Increased property values	45	22	25	28	18	17
Rise in delinquent behaviour	36	15	31	23	9	18
More disruption	31	19	24	18	18	19
Negative impact on the environment	29	12	31	17	12	28
Negative impact on local character	29	9	11	18	8	12
Increased opportunity costs	25	19	24	13	14	24
Lack of access for locals	16	28	28	7	27	23

% 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).

■ = statistically significant difference

Demographics

		Queensland %	Capricorn %
Gender	Male	50	52
	Female	50	48
Life stage	Under 45 years, no children	29	24
	Under 45 years, with children	26	31
	45 years or more, no children	32	30
	45 years or more, with children	13	16
Years of residence	Less than 2 years	9	8
	2-5 years	21	23
	6-10 years	15	14
	11-20 years	19	17
	More than 20 years	14	18
	All my life	22	22
Place of birth	Within 50km of where you currently live	22	22
	Elsewhere in Queensland	24	39
	Elsewhere in Australia	34	26
	In another country	21	14
Education	Completed Year 10	11	11
	Completed Year 11/12	18	21
	Finished technical education	15	14
	Tertiary diploma	12	9
	Finished university degree	14	15
	Finished post-graduate degree	5	4
	Other	26	26
Employment status	Working full-time	41	46
	Working part-time	17	13
	Unemployed, looking for work	4	5
	Unemployed, not seeking work	1	2
	Retired	14	12
	Student	5	2
	Student/part-time work	3	2
	Home duties	10	14
	Other	4	5
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	8
	Family benefit	10	10
	No benefit	83	85
Income	Less than \$60,000	40	45
	\$60,000 - \$99,000	26	27
	\$100,000 or more	15	14
	Prefer not to say	18	13

■ = statistically significant difference

1. [Beef Australia](#), Australia National Beef Expositions

2. [Our Region](#), Rockhampton Regional Council

3. Census Data 2006, Australian Bureau of Statistics

4. National Visitor Survey and International Visitor Survey Year Ending March 2010, Tourism Research Australia

Base: Queensland n=3834; Capricorn n=200