

Fraser Coast 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.

As a tourism destination, the Fraser Coast has come of age in recent years. With one of the world's most unique island experiences, Fraser Island, sitting off its coastline, ready access to the wineries of the South Burnett and an enviable reputation as the eastern seaboard's Mecca for migrating whales, the region offers year-round leisure opportunities for people seeking nature-based experiences.

In 2005, access to these attractions was improved when Hervey Bay opened its new domestic airport with daily services operating through airlines specialising in regional routes. For the Year Ending

March 2010, the Fraser Coast attracted 734,000 domestic and 190,000 international visitors.¹

The tourism boom has emulated the region's population growth. Of the estimated 96,000 residents², just over half have lived in the area for 10 years or less and almost half came from other states of Australia. The warm climate and relaxed lifestyle has great appeal, particularly among retirees - the region has a higher than the Queensland average age with the majority of residents aged over 45 years. A recent national study conducted by Deakin University on wellbeing showed that people living in the Fraser Coast area were the happiest in Australia. A title they are also very happy to claim.

Like many of Queensland's coastal communities, the Fraser Coast has a diverse economic base. Most households earn an average annual income of \$60,000. Heavy engineering, sugar, forestry, agriculture and maritime sectors along with the tourism industry are major contributors.⁴ Though, according to 2006 ABS figures, residents are most frequently employed in the fields of education, hospitality, food and groceries, health, and local government.³

Local business⁴ groups see tourism as a means of providing the area with new employment opportunities and economic growth. They have the majority of community support behind them. Two-thirds or 66 per cent of residents feel the region should be trying to attract more tourists, much more than the Queensland average of 43 per cent. They also rate many of the positive impacts of tourism higher than the average too.

66% of respondents feel that their local area should be trying to attract more tourists

Feelings about local area and tourists

		Queensland %	Fraser Coast %
Feelings about local area	I like it, I can't think of anywhere else I would rather live	37	40
	I enjoy living here but can think of other places I would enjoy equally	50	47
	I only live here because circumstances demand it and would prefer to live somewhere else	13	13
Feelings about the number of tourists	Fewer	8	1
	About the same	50	33
	More	43	66

■ = statistically significant difference

Contact with Tourists, Feelings and Development

		Queensland %	Fraser Coast %
Feelings about tourists	I really like tourists	49	53
	I tolerate tourists	35	40
	I adjust my lifestyle to avoid tourists	10	6
	I stay away from places tourists go	5	1
Contact with tourists	I never come into contact with tourists	18	11
	I see tourists around but don't usually talk to them	52	48
	I often interact with tourists as part of my job	13	15
	I often meet tourists around town and talk to them	14	20
	I have made friends with tourists during their stay but have not kept in contact	7	10
	I have made friends with tourists and kept in contact after they have left	5	6
Preferred development growth	Happy with continued growth	59	65
	Happy but no more growth	25	21
	Want less tourism	6	3
	More growth different direction	10	11

■ = statistically significant difference

On the subject of how tourism impacted their personal quality of life, 22 per cent of Fraser Coasters stated tourism had an either moderate or very positive affect, double the Queensland average of 11 per cent. When questioned on how tourism affects the community as a whole, 73 per cent of those surveyed, again, returned a moderate or very positive response and again, this result was much higher than the State average of 50 per cent.

As is generally the case, locals are more inclined to feel tourism has a positive impact if they really like tourists, and it would seem many do. One in five local residents said they met tourists when they were out and about and talked to them, substantially more than the Queensland average (14%). Where their thinking did align with other Queenslanders was on the areas that benefitted most from the positive impacts of tourism. These included: the local economy, increases in the region's profile, improved local pride, facilities maintenance, new infrastructure and more interesting things to do.

"Tourists have not affected my quality of life. I think it is great for the community and great for stimulating the local economy. It also opens up greater options for recreational activities for locals and tourists and also employment."

Fraser Coast Social Indicators Respondent 2010.

Furthermore, there was stronger agreement amongst Fraser Coast residents than the average Queensland resident that tourism leads to more interesting things to do, (such as attractions and events) and increased local pride and regional profile. They also indicated these aspects had a flow-on effect and were more likely than the average Queenslanders to cite that their personal quality of life benefitted. On the contrary, according to residents, the key perceived down side to tourism was increased prices and tourism's negative impact on the local character.

As far as local character goes, the region has a geographic structure that includes the historic and aesthetically beautiful city of Maryborough as its main service centre, the coastal community and tourism hub of Hervey Bay and the outlying agricultural and pastoral localities of Woocoo and Tiaro. Of all residents in the region, it is those who live in Hervey Bay that are most likely to view tourism as a catalyst for better shopping, dining and recreational options. They are also more likely to believe tourism has a positive impact on their personal quality of life as well as on the life of the community as a whole.

With the majority of tourists in their part of the region, it also comes as no surprise that Hervey Bay dwellers are more likely than other residents of the district to agree that tourism disrupts the lives of local residents (40% compared with 26%).

However, no matter where residents were geographically located within the region, there was a common understanding among them when it came to how they saw the place. The most common words used when asked to describe their local area were Fraser Island, whale watching, heritage and fishing.

Overall Impacts of Tourism

	Queensland		Fraser Coast	
	% positive affect	% negative affect	% positive affect	% negative affect
Overall impact on personal quality of life	11	4	22	2
Overall impact on local community	50	2	73	2

% 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			Fraser Coast		
	% 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	91	21	72
Increased regional profile	76	16	52	86	21	65
Increased local pride	65	20	50	75	24	60
Improved facility maintenance	60	25	53	68	30	60
New infrastructure	60	36	65	66	43	75
More interesting things to do	54	35	65	62	41	77

% 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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Negative Impacts of Tourism

Because of tourism there is...	Queensland			Fraser Coast		
	% 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	52	12	8
Increased property values	45	22	25	40	21	19
Rise in delinquent behaviour	36	15	31	30	5	22
More disruption	31	19	24	26	4	14
Negative impact on the environment	29	12	31	28	5	27
Negative impact on local character	29	9	11	39	3	4
Increased opportunity costs	25	19	24	29	14	25
Lack of access for locals	16	28	28	10	18	18

% 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).

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Demographics

		Queensland %	Fraser Coast %
Gender	Male	50	50
	Female	50	50
Life stage	Under 45 years, no children	29	20
	Under 45 years, with children	26	23
	45 years or more, no children	32	45
	45 years or more, with children	13	12
Years of residence	Less than 2 years	9	8
	2-5 years	21	31
	6-10 years	15	18
	11-20 years	19	20
	More than 20 years	14	12
	All my life	22	12
Place of birth	Within 50km of where you currently live	22	12
	Elsewhere in Queensland	24	24
	Elsewhere in Australia	34	43
	In another country	21	22
Education	Completed Year 10	11	14
	Completed Year 11/12	18	24
	Finished technical education	15	18
	Tertiary diploma	12	8
	Finished university degree	14	7
	Finished post-graduate degree	5	3
	Other	26	27
Employment status	Working full-time	41	25
	Working part-time	17	22
	Unemployed, looking for work	4	6
	Unemployed, not seeking work	1	0
	Retired	14	27
	Student	5	3
	Student/part-time work	3	1
	Home duties	10	10
Directly benefit from tourism (e.g. work in or own a business that profits from tourists or rent a property to tourists)	Other	4	7
	Personal benefit	10	10
	Family benefit	10	11
Income	No benefit	83	83
	Less than \$60,000	40	59
	\$60,000 - \$99,000	26	18
	\$100,000 or more	15	7
	Prefer not to say	18	16

■ = statistically significant difference

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

2. [Population Housing Factsheets](#), Department of Infrastructure and Planning

3. Census Data 2006, Australian Bureau of Statistics

4. [About the Fraser Coast](#), Fraser Coast Business

Base: Queensland n=3834; Fraser Coast n=223