

Gladstone 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 Gladstone region is one of Australia's foremost industrial centres. With its expansive deep-water port facilities, it is a transport and shipping hub for the natural resource industries, a major commercial fishing port, and nucleus for heavy industry and refining. The region refines aluminium and coal and is home to the State's largest power station.¹ Future plans include shale oil and liquefied natural gas processing plants.

The workforce, particularly in Gladstone City, reflects the dependency on the industrial environment with most employment taken up in basic

non-ferrous metal manufacturing, education, hospitality, architecture, engineering and technical services, and groceries.² One third of the population lives there not by choice but because circumstances demand it. In general, people have moved into the region for work. The population is relatively new too. The city has experienced rapid growth through the years of the resources boom and most residents have lived in the area for six years or more. One in five was born within 50 kilometre radius of their current residence.

Although dominated by multi commodity and heavy industries, the area includes the picturesque Discovery Coast at the southern end of the Great Barrier. This stretch of coastline is the catalyst for the region's growing tourism sector with its township of 1770 and several tropical islands including Lady Elliot, Lady Musgrave. Several national parks also fall within its boundaries, including popular Carnia Gorge. For the Year Ending March 2010, the region saw 284,000 domestic and 64,000 international visitors.³ Nevertheless, very few people directly derive their income from tourism or in fact, personally benefit from it in any way.

However, this is not to say they overlook the opportunities tourism offers. Most residents feel the region should be trying to attract more tourists. They really like tourists, though, only about 50 per cent of respondents said they saw them out and about and on those occasions rarely had personal contact with them.

63% of residents feel that their local area should be trying to attract more tourists

Feelings about local area and tourists

		Queensland %	Gladstone %
Feelings about local area	I like it, I can't think of anywhere else I would rather live	37	28
	I enjoy living here but can think of other places I would enjoy equally	50	41
	I only live here because circumstances demand it and would prefer to live somewhere else	13	31
Feelings about the number of tourists	Fewer	8	3
	About the same	50	34
	More	43	63

■ = statistically significant difference

"[Tourism] Makes you appreciate your home area."
Gladstone Social Indicators Respondent 2010



On the whole, the locals view tourism with a degree of ambivalence. Given the low level of direct involvement with tourism, only nine per cent rated the impact of tourism on their personal quality of life as moderate to very positive. As for the impacts on their community, 50 per cent indicated tourism had a moderate or very

positive affect. By and large, the respondents who live in the region for necessity were less likely to view the impacts of tourism as positive, than those who are there because they enjoy it.

The study results show that Gladstone residents agree with the average Queenslander on what areas of the community are most likely to benefit from tourism. These include the local economy, the region's profile, local

pride and facilities maintenance. However, they are less likely to think tourism leads to new infrastructure (such as shopping, dining and other recreational opportunities) and more interesting things to do (such as attractions and events).

The same goes for their views on the negative affects of tourism. Locals are less likely than the average Queenslander to agree that tourism leads to a rise in delinquent behaviour, more disruption, a lack of access for locals or negative impacts on the local character.

Contact with Tourists, Feelings and Development

		Queensland %	Gladstone %
Feelings about tourists	I really like tourists	49	59
	I tolerate tourists	35	26
	I adjust my lifestyle to avoid tourists	10	8
	I stay away from places tourists go	5	8
Contact with tourists	I never come into contact with tourists	18	21
	I see tourists around but don't usually talk to them	52	48
	I often interact with tourists as part of my job	13	16
	I often meet tourists around town and talk to them	14	16
	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	2
Preferred development growth	Happy with continued growth	59	71
	Happy but no more growth	25	11
	Want less tourism	6	6
	More growth different direction	10	12

■ = statistically significant difference

Overall Impacts of Tourism

	Queensland		Gladstone	
	% positive affect	% negative affect	% positive affect	% negative affect
Overall impact on personal quality of life	11	4	9	7
Overall impact on local community	50	2	50	4

% 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).

Positive Impacts of Tourism

Because of tourism there is...	Queensland			Gladstone		
	% 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	84	16	55
Increased regional profile	76	16	52	80	18	60
Increased local pride	65	20	50	63	24	52
Improved facility maintenance	60	25	53	57	26	56
New infrastructure	60	36	65	40	32	67
More interesting things to do	54	35	65	40	43	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			Gladstone		
	% 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	50	16	15
Increased property values	45	22	25	44	25	33
Rise in delinquent behaviour	36	15	31	14	20	36
More disruption	31	19	24	14	17	20
Negative impact on the environment	29	12	31	23	18	23
Negative impact on local character	29	9	11	18	12	11
Increased opportunity costs	25	19	24	18	12	27
Lack of access for locals	16	28	28	7	28	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).

■ = statistically significant difference

Demographics

		Queensland %	Gladstone %
Gender	Male	50	52
	Female	50	48
Life stage	Under 45 years, no children	29	24
	Under 45 years, with children	26	33
	45 years or more, no children	32	35
	45 years or more, with children	13	8
Years of residence	Less than 2 years	9	7
	2-5 years	21	19
	6-10 years	15	16
	11-20 years	19	19
	More than 20 years	14	21
	All my life	22	19
Place of birth	Within 50km of where you currently live	22	19
	Elsewhere in Queensland	24	35
	Elsewhere in Australia	34	31
	In another country	21	16
Education	Completed Year 10	11	20
	Completed Year 11/12	18	21
	Finished technical education	15	20
	Tertiary diploma	12	5
	Finished university degree	14	9
	Finished post-graduate degree	5	2
	Other	26	23
Employment status	Working full-time	41	45
	Working part-time	17	17
	Unemployed, looking for work	4	5
	Unemployed, not seeking work	1	0
	Retired	14	16
	Student	5	0
	Student/part-time work	3	2
	Home duties	10	13
	Other	4	3
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	5
	Family benefit	10	7
	No benefit	83	89
Income	Less than \$60,000	40	37
	\$60,000 - \$99,000	26	24
	\$100,000 or more	15	24
	Prefer not to say	18	15

■ = statistically significant difference

1. Gladstone Power Station, Stanwell Corporation Limited

2. Census Data 2006, Australian Bureau of Statistics

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

Base: Queensland n=3834; Gladstone n=133