

Queensland 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.

Queensland is one of Australia's favourite leisure destinations welcoming 18,000,000 domestic and international visitors in the past year¹. The tropical climate, laid-back lifestyle and World Heritage Listed attractions of the Great Barrier Reef and Tropical Rainforest region, along with a vibrant Outback, huge array of national parks, beaches and islands, are major drawcards and offer visitors a wide choice of contrasting and high quality experiences.

For these reasons, tourism has long been a staple of Queensland's economy. The industry is consistently positioned among the State's top economic performers and for the Year Ending June 2009, its export

earnings saw it ranked second behind coal². During 2008, tourism contributed \$9.2 billion to the Queensland economy and accounted for 4.7 per cent of the Gross State Product (GSP)³. As such, the benefits of tourism are widespread and enjoyed by communities, large and small, across the state.

The industry is made up of thousands of small businesses, many of which are located in regional areas. While Queenslanders are most likely to work in fields such as education, hospitality, health services, grocery supplies and residential building construction⁴, tourism directly employs 122,000 Queenslanders, 5.7 per cent of all Queensland jobs³. Given this amount of vested interest, it is understandable why the majority of Queenslanders feel positive about tourism. Perhaps in recognition of the development growth that tourism brings, most Queenslanders stated they felt tourism had a positive impact on both their personal quality of life as well as on the life of their local community as a whole.

A snapshot of Queenslanders shows that most people have moved to their local area for reasons of personal choice as opposed to circumstances demanding it. The number of residents that were born outside of Queensland (55%) outnumbers those who were born here. To further define that figure, 34 per cent have come from other parts of Australia and 21 per cent from overseas. Almost the same proportion, 22 per cent of Queenslanders have lived in their local area all their lives, while a further 14 per cent have lived in their local area for more than 20 years. It would seem the vast majority are happy about where they live too. Eighty-seven per cent of residents enjoy living in their local area, though, over half can think of other places they would equally enjoy.

43% of residents feel that their local area should be trying to attract more tourists

Feelings about local area and tourists

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



Generally speaking, the locals look favourably on tourism in their cities and towns. Half the Queensland population thinks tourist numbers should stay the same. However, a further 43 per cent believes their local area should be trying to attract more tourists. Again, almost half of the people surveyed said they really like tourists. Though, at the same time, the majority also admitted that while they saw tourists around, they tended not to speak to them.

50% of respondents feel that their local area should keep attracting the same number of tourists

Given this reserve, when asked how tourism affected their personal quality of life, 11 per cent indicated moderately or very positively, much lower than the 49 per cent who said tourism had a moderate or very positive impact on their community as a whole.



Queensland residents are more likely to indicate that tourism has a positive effect on their personal quality of life, if they:

- were born outside of Queensland
- personally and directly benefit from tourism or have family that directly benefits from tourism
- earn an income over \$100K
- want to see more tourists
- have made friends with tourists and kept in contact with them.

Contact with Tourists, Feelings and Development

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



On average, Queenslanders are more likely to indicate that tourism has a positive impact on their community, if they:

- **have lived in the local area for 11 years or more**
- **were born elsewhere in Australia**
- **want to see more tourists**
- **have made friends with tourists and kept in contact with them**
- **are over 45 with no children living at home.**

There are similarities between residents that are less likely to indicate that tourism has a positive influence on their personal quality of life and those less likely to indicate that tourism has a positive impact on their local community. On average, Queenslanders are less likely to feel tourism has a positive affect on **their quality of life**, if:

- they only live in the local area because circumstances demand it and they would prefer to live elsewhere
- they want to see less tourism in their local area.

They are less likely to think tourism has a positive impact on **their community**, if:

- they only live in the local area because circumstances demand it and they would prefer to live elsewhere
- they stay away from where tourists go
- they want to see less tourism in their local area
- neither they nor their family directly benefit from tourism.

However, the great majority of Queenslanders agree that tourism has a positive impact on the local economy, increases the region's profile and feelings of local pride, improves facilities maintenance and leads to new infrastructure and more interesting things to do. Of these, they show strongest agreement on the positive benefits of new infrastructure and more interesting things to do has on their

personal **quality of life** as well as the quality of life of their community.

When it comes to assessing the negative impacts of tourism, one third or less of Queenslanders agree that it can lead to a rise in delinquent behaviour, more disruption, a negative impact on the environment and on the local character, and lack of access for locals. Even so, the majority of residents do agree that tourism leads to increased prices.

Of the 14 regions canvassed, the residents of the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Tropical North Queensland (TNQ) are more likely than the average Queenslanders to like where they are living and can't think of anywhere else they would rather be. These three regions also share other common traits. For example:

- they are more likely than the average Queenslanders to directly benefit from tourism or have one of their family members directly benefit from tourism
- they tend to agree that tourism has a positive impact on their personal quality of life, more so than the average Queenslanders
- the majority also believes that tourism has a positive impact on the community as a whole
- in all three locations they are more likely than the average Queenslanders to agree that tourism leads to increased prices and has a negative impact on local character.

The three regions do slightly differ on some points though. While residents of the TNQ and Gold Coast are happy with the continued development of tourism in their areas, people on the Sunshine Coast are divided on the issue, with equal numbers citing more development and no more development. Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast residents would like tourist numbers remain the same, whereas, TNQers diverge on this point and support their region trying to attract more tourists. These sentiments are reflected in their general attitude towards visitors. TNQers also really

like tourists but most people on the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast either tolerate or try to avoid them altogether.

Given that other studies show communities are more likely to favour tourism, both in view of their personal life and the life of the community as a whole, if they gain financially from it, Brisbane residents buck the Queensland trend. Like many other regions across the State, half the local population really like tourists, and the vast majority (four in five) are happy with the type of tourism development to date. This is regardless of the fact that they are less likely than the average Queenslanders to agree tourism has a positive impact on their personal quality of life or, indeed, on the life of the community. These perceptions, combined with the lack of exposure to tourists or the fact that few indicated that they directly benefit from tourism are key factors in the survey findings.

In other parts of the State, there are also signs of commonality. For instance, residents of the Fraser Coast, Bundaberg, Capricorn, Gladstone, Toowoomba, Townsville and Mackay are more likely than average Queenslanders to share the view that their regions should be trying to attract more tourists. They also really like tourists, much more than the Queensland average, and are happy with the tourism development in their areas and want it to continue.

On the matter of personal and community impacts, Capricorn and Fraser Coast locals are more positive than the average about the affects of tourism on their personal quality of life, while Bundaberg, Townsville and the Fraser Coast share the same heightened view of the positive impacts of tourism on the life of their local communities.

The majority of people living at the Fraser Coast, Bundaberg, Capricorn, Gladstone, Toowoomba, Townsville and Mackay agree that tourism leads to improvements in the local economy, an increase in regional profile and feelings of local pride, improved facilities maintenance, new infrastructure and improved justice.

Overall Impacts of Tourism

	Queensland	
	% positive affect	% negative affect
Overall impact on personal quality of life	11	4
Overall impact on local community	50	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).

Positive Impacts of Tourism

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

% 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 Impacts of Tourism

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

Demographics

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

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

2. YE June 2009, Office Of Economic and Statistical Research

3. YE June 2008, Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre

4. Census 2006, Australian Bureau of Statistics

Base: Queensland n=3834