

# Social Indicators 2019 Tropical North Queensland



292,000 residents<sup>1</sup>

2.9m overnight visitors<sup>2</sup>  
(2.0m domestic / 849,000 international)

\$2.8bn total tourism contribution to gross regional product (17.9% of TNQ's GRP)<sup>3</sup>

## About this study:

Our study monitors local community views on tourism. Queensland residents are surveyed with a focus on understanding their sentiment towards tourism, their local area, and the impacts of tourism on their local area.

For our 2019 study, we surveyed 3,316 Queensland residents with fieldwork conducted between 3 June 2019 and 9 July 2019. In the Tropical North Queensland tourism region, 301 residents were surveyed.

This is our fourth Social Indicators study, with previous studies run in 2010, 2013 and 2017. We have compared results for 2019 to the results from 2017.

**This study examines the social impacts of tourism on the local community, as perceived by its residents. The research is intended to inform the decision making of state and local authorities, as well as tourism bodies.**

Tourism supports 17.9% of the gross regional product (GRP) in the Tropical North Queensland region (TNQ). In the year ending June 2019, the region's 292,000 residents welcomed 2.9 million overnight visitors. Our Social Indicators study aims to monitor these residents' views on tourism.

In the study, the first words that come to residents' minds when thinking about their area showed that they see it as a beautiful, quiet and tropical. The ambiance is friendly and peaceful. Commonly used words were: tropical, beautiful, rainforest, quiet and peaceful.



### Notes:

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 3218 – Regional Population Growth, Australia 2017-18
2. Tourism Research Australia, International & Domestic Visitor Surveys for the year ending June 2019
3. Deloitte Access Economics, Regional Tourism Satellite Accounts 2016/17

## Attitudes towards living in their local area

In the study we asked respondents to select one of three statements to describe how they feel about living in their local area. The study revealed that almost half (47%) of TNQ residents 'really like' living in the area and 'can't think of anywhere else they would rather live'.

	TNQ		QLD
	2017	2019	2019
Really like it, can't think of anywhere else I would rather live	41%	47%	40%
Enjoy living here but can think of other places I would enjoy equally	50%	46%	51%
I only live here because circumstances demand it	9%	7%	9%

*i.e. 47% of Tropical North Queensland respondents chose this statement as best describing how they feel about living in their local area*

## Attitudes towards tourism in local area

Respondents answered a series of questions about their attitudes towards tourism in their local area. For each question they picked a statement that best reflects their view.

This showed that attitudes are positive towards tourism. Three in five residents 'really like' tourists. We also saw that over half (58%) would like more tourists in the local area, both remain higher than the Queensland average.

*"Without tourism my region would not prosper to the extent that it has."*

*TNQ resident, 2019*

residents have a relatively high level of interaction with tourists in their area; twice as many are making friends than the average Queenslanders and only 1% never come into contact with tourists. These positive interactions may be leading residents to want continued tourism growth in their local area, with 66% holding this view.

*"Generally, I believe tourism has resulted in some better-quality council provided facilities that make this area more attractive as a place for me and my children to live in..."*

*TNQ resident, 2019*

	TNQ		QLD
	2017	2019	2019

### Feelings towards tourists

I really like tourists	60%	57%	50%
I tolerate tourists as they're good for the community	33%	37%	36%
I adjust my lifestyle to avoid tourism inconveniences	5%	4%	10%
I stay away from places tourists go	3%	2%	4%

### Number of tourists local area should attract

More	56%	58%	32%
About the same number	39%	38%	60%
Fewer	5%	5%	8%

### Preferred tourism development growth

Happy with continued growth	69%	66%	59%
Happy but no more growth	20%	19%	30%
Want less tourism	3%	3%	4%
More growth, different direction	8%	12%	7%

### Level of contact with tourists

Never come into contact with them	6%	1%↓	21%
See them around but don't usually talk to them	54%	50%	51%
Often interact with them as part of my job	17%	17%	9%
Often meet them around town and talk to them	17%	25%↑	14%
Have made friends with them, but not kept in contact	12%	13%	6%
Have made friends with them, and have kept in contact	6%	6%	4%

## Attitudes towards tourism in local area cont.

Respondents were then asked to rate the overall impact tourism has on their community, and on them personally, by using a seven-point scale ranging from 'very negatively (-3)' to 'very positively (+3)'.

### % agree that tourism has a positive impact on...

	2017	TNQ 2019	QLD 2019
...the <b>community</b> as a whole <sup>1</sup>	80%	77%	45%
...their <b>personal</b> quality of life <sup>1</sup>	37%	36%	16%

TNQ residents are some of the most likely in Queensland to feel that tourism has a positive impact. Over three quarters (77%) of residents agree that tourism has a positive impact on the community compared with 45% in Queensland. A third (36%) agree that tourism has a positive impact on their personal quality of life, compared with 16% in Queensland. Frequent contact with tourists in the region as well as the industry's 17.9% contribution to the local economy may raise awareness of tourism's positive impacts.

*i.e. 16% of Queensland respondents rated tourism as affecting their personal quality of life 'positively (2)' or 'very positively (3)'.*

## Positive and negative impacts of tourism

Respondents were then asked if they agree or disagree with seven positive and eight negative statements about the possible impacts of tourism. Those that agree with a statement were asked to rate its impact on their community, and on them personally, by using a seven-point scale ranging from 'very negatively (-3)' to 'very positively (+3)'.

TNQ residents overwhelmingly agree that, because of tourism, there is: greater cultural diversity (93%), economic benefits (93%), an increased regional profile (91%), increased local pride (74%), and new infrastructure (73%). These positive benefits are seen to impact the community more than the individual.

While residents recognise the benefits of tourism, they also agree that tourism can lead to increased prices (52%) and a negative impact on the local character (42%).

## Positive impacts of tourism

	% agree	TNQ		QLD
		2017	2019	2019
Greater cultural diversity	95%	93%	91%	
Important economic benefits	93%	93%	89%	
Festivals and events attract tourists and raise awareness	90%	94%	89%	
Increased regional profile	89%	91%	83%	
Increased local pride	76%	74%	73%	
New infrastructure	75%	73%	69%	
Benefits shared evenly	44%	48%	51%	

*"Tourism creates more business not only directly, but indirectly by work being generated in local industries to support the tourism industry."*

*TNQ resident, 2019*

*"I just like mixing with people from other cultures."*

*TNQ resident, 2019*

Impact on...	TNQ 2019		QLD 2019	
	personal quality of life <sup>1</sup>	community as a whole <sup>1</sup>	personal quality of life <sup>1</sup>	community as a whole <sup>1</sup>
Greater cultural diversity	30%	51%	17%	35%
Important economic benefits	33%	68%	17%	45%
Festivals and events attract tourists and raise awareness	30%	61%	18%	44%
Increased regional profile	25%	56%	17%	41%
Increased local pride	34%	59%	21%	41%
New infrastructure	45%	75%	31%	53%
Benefits shared evenly	36%	63%	20%	43%

#### Notes:

1. positive impact is based on % who cited the top two ratings on a 7-point scale from very negatively (-3) to very positively (+3)

↑ Statistically significantly higher/lower than previous year at 95% confidence level

□ Significantly higher when comparing the region to Queensland at the 95% confidence level

## Potential negative impacts of tourism

Respondents were asked if they agree or disagree with seven positive and eight negative statements about the possible impacts of tourism. Those that agree with a statement were asked to rate its impact on their community, and on them personally, by using a seven-point scale ranging from 'very negatively (-3)' to 'very positively (+3)'.

% agree	TNQ		QLD
	2017	2019	2019
Increased prices	53%	52%	50%
Increased property values	35%	37%	42%
Rise in delinquent behaviour	40%	36%	36%
More disruption	24%	25%	36%
Negative impact on the environment	30%	33%	34%
Negative impact on local character	41%	42%	33%
Misdirected public spending	21%	28%↑	28%
Lack of access for locals	12%	14%	22%

"The cost of living has escalated recently, and I think it is because there are far more tourists around now than before.

TNQ resident, 2019

"Tourism has taken away from us our ability to have a quite Sunday picnic away from the madding crowd

TNQ resident, 2019

Impact on...	TNQ 2019		QLD 2019	
	personal quality of life <sup>1</sup>	community as a whole <sup>1</sup>	personal quality of life <sup>1</sup>	community as a whole <sup>1</sup>
Increased prices	13%	18%	10%	10%
Increased property values	12%	16%	13%	13%
Rise in delinquent behaviour	8%	21%	8%	16%
More disruption	11%	21%	13%	16%
Negative impact on the environment	11%	29%	11%	19%
Negative impact on local character	4%	9%	6%	7%
Misdirected public spending	14%	24%	6%	12%
Lack of access for locals	19%	17%	11%	14%

## In summary

The majority of TNQ residents enjoy living where they do, and they describe their area as a beautiful and tropical with a friendly, peaceful vibe.

Tourism contributes 17.9% of the region's gross regional product. The region's 292,000 residents welcomed 2.9 million overnight visitors in the year ending June 2019.

Through the study, we see a positive attitude towards tourists. Residents are more likely than the average Queenslanders to 'really like' tourists and to want more tourism. They are also twice as likely to make friends with tourists.

Residents are more likely than average to recognise the benefits of tourism and acknowledge the impact on the community. Since 2017, on balance, the level of agreement with the positive and negative impacts is relatively stable.

A number of statements used in the questionnaire have been abbreviated for ease of reporting. The full statements, as asked in the questionnaire, are listed at the end of our Social Indicators 2019 Queensland report on our website: [teq.queensland.com/research-and-insights/domestic-research/queensland-research](http://teq.queensland.com/research-and-insights/domestic-research/queensland-research)

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**Notes:**  
1. negative impact is based on % who cited the bottom two ratings on a 7-point scale ranging from very negatively (-3) to very positively (+3).

↑ Statistically significantly higher/lower than previous year at 95% confidence level

■ Significantly higher when comparing the region to Queensland at the 95% confidence level