

Social Indicators 2019

Whitsundays



35,000 residents¹

870,000 overnight visitors²
(643,000 domestic / 227,000 international)

\$651m total tourism contribution to gross regional product (25.0% of WSY's GRP)³

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 Whitsundays tourism region, 204 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 a quarter of the gross regional product in the Whitsundays region (WSY). In the year ending June 2019, the region's 35,000 residents welcomed 870,000 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 are beautiful, beach and paradise. Other commonly used words were: islands, tourism 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. Whitsunday residents are more likely than the average Queenslanders to say that they 'really like' living in their area and 'can't think of anywhere else they would rather live'. However, this has decreased since 2017.

	2017	WSY 2019	QLD 2019
Really like it, can't think of anywhere else I would rather live	58%	46%↓	40%
Enjoy living here but can think of other places I would enjoy equally	37%	45%	51%
I only live here because circumstances demand it	6%	9%	9%

i.e. 46% of Whitsunday 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. Over two thirds of residents (67%) 'really like' tourists and over three quarters (78%) think their local area should attract more tourists.

These attitudes may be driven in part by the frequent, and positive, interactions that locals have with tourists. Residents interact with tourists much more than the average Queenslanders.

We also saw that over two thirds of residents (69%) are happy with continued growth in tourism. A further one in six (16%) would like growth, but in a different direction. These residents suggested a variety of possible directions, see examples below:

"We need investment in stuff that is not just water-based and relies on good weather - aqua parks, cinemas, better lagoon area... so much potential."

Whitsundays resident, 2019

"Activities for children and tourist in our local area."

Whitsundays resident, 2019

"Focus on other areas than just the reef to encourage tourist to come and stay for longer periods of time."

Whitsundays resident, 2019

"I believe that we need to offer more activities for tourists to fill in their days."

Whitsundays resident, 2019

	2017	WSY 2019	QLD 2019
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Feelings towards tourists

I really like tourists	67%	67%	50%
I tolerate tourists as they're good for the community	28%	30%	36%
I adjust my lifestyle to avoid tourism inconveniences	2%	3%↓	10%
I stay away from places tourists go	3%	0%	4%

Number of tourists local area should attract

More	79%	78%	32%
About the same number	18%	20%	60%
Fewer	4%	2%	8%

Preferred tourism development growth

Happy with continued growth	69%	69%	59%
Happy but no more growth	12%	14%	30%
Want less tourism	0%	1%	4%
More growth, different direction	18%	16%	7%

Level of contact with tourists

Never come into contact with them	3%	2%	21%
See them around but don't usually talk to them	38%	31%	51%
Often interact with them as part of my job	26%	31%	9%
Often meet them around town and talk to them	25%	30%	14%
Have made friends with them, but not kept in contact	12%	12%	6%
Have made friends with them, and have kept in contact	8%	11%	4%

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

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

Attitudes towards tourism in local area (cont.)

	WSY	QLD
	2017	2019

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	2019	QLD 2019
...the community as a whole ¹	72%	82%↑	45%
...their personal quality of life ¹	35%	46%↑	16%

Whitsunday residents are more likely than the average Queenslanders to feel that tourism has a positive impact. Four quarters (82%) of residents agree that tourism has a positive impact on the community compared with 45% in Queensland. Almost half (46%) agree that tourism has a positive impact on their personal quality of life, compared with 16% in Queensland. High visibility of tourists in the region as well as the industry's 25% 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)'.

Whitsunday residents overwhelmingly agree that, because of tourism, there is: greater cultural diversity (96%), economic benefits (92%), an increased regional profile (90%), increased local pride (80%), and new infrastructure (71%). These positive benefits are seen to impact the community more than the individual.

While residents recognise the benefits of tourism, they also are more likely than the average Queenslanders to agree that tourism can lead to increased prices (54%), increased property prices (40%), a rise in delinquent behavior (41%) and a negative impact on the local character (39%). Agreement with statements about potential negative have decreased since 2017.

Positive impacts of tourism

% agree	WSY		QLD
	2017	2019	2019
Greater cultural diversity	98%	96%	91%
Important economic benefits	93%	92%	89%
Festivals and events attract tourists and raise awareness	96%	93%	89%
Increased regional profile	94%	90%	83%
Increased local pride	82%	80%	73%
New infrastructure	72%	71%	69%
Benefits shared evenly	48%	49%	51%

"Without tourism many of us would be out of work and would be struggling to pay the bills."
Whitsundays resident, 2019

Overall I think if tourism promotes a clean, happy productive community it benefits all who live in it."
Whitsundays resident, 2019

"The tourists I see and interact with boost my personal income a little to provide us with a few little extras in life. We enjoy meeting and interacting with new and diverse visitors to our region."

Whitsundays resident, 2019

Impact on...	WSY 2019		QLD 2019	
	personal quality of life ¹	community as a whole ¹	personal quality of life ¹	community as a whole ¹
Greater cultural diversity	31%	52%	17%	35%
Important economic benefits	42%	70%	17%	45%
Festivals and events attract tourists and raise awareness	41%	71%	18%	44%
Increased regional profile	34%	62%	17%	41%
Increased local pride	41%	65%	21%	41%
New infrastructure	49%	71%	31%	53%
Benefits shared evenly	45%	76%	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	WSY		QLD
	2017	2019	2019
Increased prices	56%	54%	50%
Increased property values	43%	40%	42%
Rise in delinquent behaviour	42%	41%	36%
More disruption	21%	17%	36%
Negative impact on the environment	26%	25%	34%
Negative impact on local character	43%	39%	33%
Misdirected public spending	18%	26%↑	28%
Lack of access for locals	8%	9%	22%

"Just rental prices being too high and lack of availability during tourist season."

Whitsundays resident, 2019

"Noise from bars late at night, fights. Can not walk down main street after 9pm."

Whitsundays resident, 2019

Impact on...	WSY 2019		QLD 2019	
	personal quality of life ¹	community as a whole ¹	personal quality of life ¹	community as a whole ¹
Increased prices	9%	11%	10%	10%
Increased property values	8%	13%	13%	13%
Rise in delinquent behaviour	14%	26%	8%	16%
More disruption	10%	20%	13%	16%
Negative impact on the environment	2%	35%	11%	19%
Negative impact on local character	*	*	6%	7%
Misdirected public spending	4%	15%	6%	12%
Lack of access for locals	5%	21%	11%	14%

In summary

* Small sample size - results not shown for these cells as they are not statistically robust

Whitsunday residents love where they live. They are more likely than the average Queenslanders to say they 'can't think of anywhere else I would rather live'. When asked, they describe their local area using the words beautiful, beaches, paradise, and friendly.

Tourism contributes 25% of the region's gross regional product, with 870,000 overnight visitors to the region in the year ending June 2019. These visitors are hosted by the region's small population of 35,000 people.

Through the study, we see that sentiment towards tourism is more positive than the Queensland average. Just over two thirds of residents 'really like' tourists and even more (78%) would like their local area to attract more tourists. There is a strong desire for continued tourism development, with some suggesting a different direction for growth.

Residents are more likely than the average Queenslanders to recognise the benefits of tourism and acknowledge its impact on the community.

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

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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