

# Social Indicators 2017

## Mackay



136,000 residents<sup>1</sup>

928,000 overnight visitors<sup>2</sup>  
(883,000 domestic / 45,000 international)

\$283m total tourism contribution to gross regional product (1.6% of MKY'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 2017 study, we surveyed 3,346 Queensland residents with fieldwork conducted between 8 June 2017 and 12 July 2017. In the Mackay tourism region, 208 residents were surveyed.

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

**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.**

The tourism industry provides residents of the Mackay region (MKY) with 1.6 per cent of their gross regional product. In the year ending June 2017, the region's 136,000 residents welcomed 928,000 overnight visitors. Our Social Indicators study aims to monitor these residents' views on tourism.

In the study, we asked residents the first words that come to mind when thinking about the region. Their answers depict Mackay as a beautiful, tropical region with a friendly community and prominent mining industry.



#### Notes:

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census, Place of Usual Residence by SA2 aligned to tourism region
2. Tourism Research Australia, International & Domestic Visitor Surveys for the year ending June 2017
3. Deloitte Access Economics, Regional Tourism Satellite Accounts 2015/16

## 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 the majority of Mackay residents 'enjoy living here' and around a quarter (26 per cent) 'really like' living in the area. A minority only live in their area 'because circumstances demand it', but this proportion is higher than the Queensland average.

	MKY		QLD
	2013	2017	2017
Really like it, can't think of anywhere else I would rather live	29%	26%	37%
Enjoy living here but can think of other places I would enjoy equally	52%	54%	52%
I only live here because circumstances demand it	19%	20%	11%

*i.e. 26% of Mackay 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 relatively stable and remain positive towards tourism. Almost three in four residents (72 per cent) 'really like' tourists and a similar proportion (69 per cent) think their local area should attract more tourists.

We also saw that almost two thirds of residents (64 per cent) are happy with continued growth in tourism. A further one in four (24 per cent) would like growth, but in a different direction. These residents suggested a variety of possible directions, see examples below:

*"Fishing/beaches/island tours etc...it would be nice to see the beautiful local areas fully developed to accommodate locals and tourists alike. Our area has so much potential..."*  
Mackay Resident, 2017

*"More major sporting events. Live music events."*  
Mackay Resident, 2017

*"We need more family friendly things to do, parks, etc. so when families look at Mackay they are more likely to come."*  
Mackay Resident, 2017

*"I would like to see the Council approve for caravan park/camping grounds on the beachfront, encourage cheap camping areas for more tourists to be able to afford."*  
Mackay Resident, 2017

*"This is a mining region. We need to develop tourism with the help of the mines as an attraction."*  
Mackay Resident, 2017

	MKY		QLD
	2013	2017	2017

### Feelings towards tourists

I really like tourists	66%	72%	46%
I tolerate tourists as they're good for the community	28%	23%	40%
I adjust my lifestyle to avoid tourism inconveniences	5%	4%	11%
I stay away from places tourists go	2%	1%	3%

### Number of tourists local area should attract

More	64%	69%	36%
About the same number	33%	28%	57%
Fewer	3%	3%	7%

### Preferred tourism development growth

Happy with continued growth	59%	64%	58%
Happy but no more growth	21%	10%↓	29%
Want less tourism	3%	2%	6%
More growth, different direction	17%	24%	7%

### Level of contact with tourists

Never come into contact with them	16%	16%	21%
See them around but don't usually talk to them	50%	52%	54%
Often interact with them as part of my job	6%	10%	10%
Often meet them around town and talk to them	15%	16%	13%
Have made friends with them, but not kept in contact	14%	6%↓	6%
Have made friends with them, and have kept in contact	4%	7%	3%

## 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...

	2013	MKY 2017	QLD 2017
...the <b>community</b> as a whole <sup>1</sup>	51%	53%	43%
...their <b>personal</b> quality of life <sup>1</sup>	17%	18%	18%

Mackay residents are significantly more likely than the average Queenslanders to agree that tourism has a positive impact on the community. Fifty-three per cent of residents agree that tourism has a positive impact on the community, compared with 43 per cent in Queensland. Eighteen per cent agree that tourism has a positive impact on their personal quality of life. Perceptions of tourism's impact are stable compared to 2013.

*i.e. 18% 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)'.

Mackay residents overwhelmingly agree that, because of tourism, there is: greater cultural diversity (90 per cent), economic benefits (92 per cent), an increased regional profile (85 per cent), increased local pride (77 per cent), and new infrastructure (65 per cent). These positive benefits are seen to impact the community more than the individual.

Agreement with statements about tourism's potential negative impacts is mostly stable. However, fewer Mackay residents agree that tourism leads to increased property values and misdirected public spending than in 2013.

### Positive impacts of tourism

% agree	MKY		QLD
	2013	2017	2017
Greater cultural diversity	96%	90%↓	89%
Important economic benefits	92%	92%	89%
Festivals and events attract tourists and raise awareness	87%	92%	88%
Increased regional profile	90%	85%	83%
Increased local pride	76%	77%	69%
New infrastructure	53%	65%↑	69%
Benefits shared evenly	39%	48%	48%

*"Tourists spend money in our town and we all benefit."*  
Mackay Resident, 2017

*"I enjoy the diversity of meeting people from all kinds of places and it's great for the region."*  
Mackay Resident, 2017

*"It feels good to see young international tourists in the area."*  
Mackay Resident, 2017

Impact on...	MKY 2017		QLD 2017	
	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	19%	39%	17%	33%
Important economic benefits	18%	48%	16%	43%
Festivals and events attract tourists and raise awareness	27%	55%	19%	44%
Increased regional profile	20%	47%	17%	41%
Increased local pride	21%	47%	21%	40%
New infrastructure	40%	55%	32%	49%
Benefits shared evenly	18%	45%	21%	40%

#### 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	MKY		QLD
	2013	2017	2017
Increased prices	44%	38%	50%
Increased property values	38%	22%↓	38%
Rise in delinquent behaviour	31%	26%	35%
More disruption	12%	15%	35%
Negative impact on the environment	21%	18%	29%
Negative impact on local character	20%	25%	29%
Misdirected public spending	28%	14%↓	25%
Lack of access for locals	10%	8%	18%

"We avoid peak tourism times."

Mackay Resident, 2017

"Not tourism itself, but more needs to be spent on activities that can be used by locals."

Mackay Resident, 2017

Impact on...	MKY 2017		QLD 2017	
	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	4%	7%	9%	11%
Increased property values	6%	12%	13%	15%
Rise in delinquent behaviour	2%	9%	8%	18%
More disruption	7%	9%	11%	14%
Negative impact on the environment	5%	3%	8%	20%
Negative impact on local character	3%	5%	5%	6%
Misdirected public spending	8%	7%	7%	14%
Lack of access for locals	*	*	16%	16%

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

## In summary

Mackay's 136,000 residents describe it as a beautiful, tropical region with a friendly community. The majority of residents enjoy living where they do.

The mining industry is top of mind for many residents, while the tourism industry contributes 2 per cent of the local economy. Residents welcomed 928,000 overnight visitors in the year ending June 2017.

Through the study, we see that sentiment towards tourism is more positive than the Queensland average. Almost three in four residents 'really like' tourists and a similar proportion 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.

Since 2013, agreement with the positive impacts of tourism is relatively stable. Residents recognise the benefits of tourism and acknowledge their impact on the community. They are also less likely than the Queensland average to agree with the potential negative impacts of tourism.

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 2017 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