

Social Indicators 2021

Sunshine Coast



Mooloolaba Beach, Sunshine Coast

About this study:

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.

Our study monitors local community views on tourism. Queensland residents were surveyed with a focus on understanding their sentiment towards tourism and their local area.

For our 2021 study, we surveyed 3,305 Queensland residents with fieldwork conducted between 10 June 2021 and 7 July 2021. In the Sunshine Coast tourism region, 301 residents were surveyed.

This is our fifth Social Indicators study, with previous studies run in 2010, 2013, 2017 and 2019. We have compared results for 2021 to the results from 2019.



The tourism industry is prominent in the Sunshine Coast region (SSC). The region's 446,000 residents welcomed 3.8 million domestic overnight visitors in the year ending June 2021, with tourism contributing 11.3% of the region's gross regional product (GRP). 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 the Sunshine Coast paint a picture of a beautiful, friendly, peaceful beachside community.

446,000
residents¹

\$2.3bn
total tourism
contribution to gross
regional product
(11.3% of SSC's GRP)³

3.8m
domestic overnight
visitors²

Notes:

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population, Australia, 2019-20
2. Tourism Research Australia, Domestic Visitor Surveys for the year ending June 2021
3. Tourism Research Australia, Regional Tourism Satellite Accounts 2019-20

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. A total of 48% of Sunshine Coast residents say that they 'really like' living in their area and 'can't think of anywhere else they would rather live'. This is higher than the Queensland average.

	SSC		QLD
	2019	2021	2021
Really like it, can't think of anywhere else I would rather live	57%	48%↓	38%
Enjoy living here but can think of other places I would enjoy equally	39%	47%↑	52%
I only live here because circumstances demand it	4%	5%	10%

i.e. 48% of Sunshine Coast 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 the proportion of Sunshine Coast residents who 'really like' tourists has decreased from 38% to 29% as the number which avoid tourists has increased from 15% to 23%.

"I live in a tourism area, so it's a part of life. I chose to live here so I choose to embrace it and I choose to see it in a positive light!"

Sunshine Coast resident, 2021

We saw that the number that want more tourists decreased from 34% to 21% with an increasing proportion either wanting tourism numbers to remain about the same or for fewer tourists. The proportion that are happy with continued tourism development also decreased.

"Needs more infrastructure to accommodate peak times, so local people aren't put out and are inconvenienced."

Sunshine Coast resident, 2021

Contact with tourists is common in the region, with only 12% reporting they never encounter tourists, compared with the Queensland average of 26%.

	SSC	QLD
	2019	2021

Feelings towards tourists

I really like tourists	38%	29%↓	42%
I tolerate tourists as they're good for the community	45%	44%	42%
I adjust my lifestyle to avoid tourism inconveniences	15%	23%↑	12%
I stay away from places tourists go	2%	4%	4%

Number of tourists local area should attract

More	34%	21%↓	31%
About the same number	58%	64%	60%
Fewer	9%	15%↑	9%

Preferred tourism development growth

Happy with continued growth	55%	45%↓	55%
Happy but no more growth	35%	41%	31%
Want less tourism	7%	9%	6%
More growth, different direction	3%	4%	9%

Level of contact with tourists

Never come into contact with them	9%	12%	26%
See them around but don't usually talk to them	53%	56%	49%
Often interact with them as part of my job	11%	10%	8%
Often meet them around town and talk to them	21%	17%	13%
Have made friends with them, but not kept in contact	8%	7%	5%
Have made friends with them, and have kept in contact	3%	2%	2%

↑ 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.

	SSC	QLD
	2019	2021

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...

...the community as a whole ¹	66%	56%↓	41%
...their personal quality of life ¹	19%	16%	14%

Sunshine Coast residents are more likely than the average Queenslanders to feel that tourism has a positive impact on their community. Over half (56%) of residents agree that tourism has a positive impact on the community compared with 41% in Queensland. One in six (16%) agree that tourism has a positive impact on their personal quality of life. High visibility of tourists in the region, as well as the industry's 11.3% contribution to the local economy may raise awareness of tourism's positive impacts.

i.e. 14% 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)'.

Positive impacts of tourism

Sunshine Coast residents continue to overwhelmingly agree that, because of tourism, there is: economic benefits (91%) and an increased regional profile (87%). However, there was a significant decrease in the proportion who agreed that tourism leads to greater cultural diversity (down from 94% to 87%), increased local pride (down from 73% to 65%) and new infrastructure (down from 76% to 68%).

% agree	SSC		QLD
	2019	2021	2021
Greater cultural diversity	94%	87%↓	89%
Important economic benefits	92%	91%	89%
Festivals and events attract tourists and raise awareness	90%↓	87%	88%
Increased regional profile	88%	87%	83%
Increased local pride	73%	65%↓	71%
New infrastructure	76%	68%↓	67%
Benefits shared evenly	46%	45%	44%

"Most tourism operators are very conscious that they are part of the local community and as such offer things such as local discounts and support local fundraising events."

Sunshine Coast resident, 2021

"Because of tourists we are more aware of what is available out and about in the area."

Sunshine Coast resident, 2021

Impact on...	SSC 2021		QLD 2021	
	personal quality of life ¹	community as a whole ¹	personal quality of life ¹	community as a whole ¹
Greater cultural diversity	18%	32%	15%	34%
Important economic benefits	14%	50%↓	12%	43%
Festivals and events attract tourists and raise awareness	14%↓	39%↓	15%	39%
Increased regional profile	15%	41%↓	14%	38%
Increased local pride	20%	45%	16%	39%
New infrastructure	28%	51%↓	28%	47%
Benefits shared evenly	20%	47%	16%	39%

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

While residents recognise the benefits of tourism, they are also more likely than the Queensland average to agree with negative statements including: that tourism can lead to increased prices (75%), increased property prices (73%) and more disruption (66%). Since 2019 there was a significant increase in the share which agree that tourism leads to a rise delinquent behaviour (up from 37% to 52%) and lack of access for locals (up from 34% to 46%).

% agree	SSC		QLD
	2019	2021	2021
Increased prices	71%	75%	60%
Increased property values	67%↑	73%	53%
Rise in delinquent behaviour	37%	52%↑	42%
More disruption	59%	66%	43%
Negative impact on the environment	43%	49%	36%
Negative impact on local character	46%	50%	30%
Misdirected public spending	28%	35%	28%
Lack of access for locals	34%	46%↑	26%

"Lack of long-term rental properties makes it hard for non-owning residents"

Sunshine Coast resident, 2021

"We do not go to beaches and other areas during school holidays because of the number of tourists. Everything is too crowded and unpleasant."

Sunshine Coast resident, 2021

Impact on...	SSC 2021		QLD 2021	
	personal quality of life ¹	community as a whole ¹	personal quality of life ¹	community as a whole ¹
Increased prices	13%	19% ↑	10%	13%
Increased property values	14%	29% ↑	10%	18%
Rise in delinquent behaviour	10%	22%	8%	15%
More disruption	20%	20%	12%	15%
Negative impact on the environment	9%	16% ↓	9%	17%
Negative impact on local character	13% ↑	9%	8%	7%
Misdirected public spending	9% ↑	13%	6%	14%
Lack of access for locals	20%	24% ↑	12%	17%

In summary

Sunshine Coast residents are some of the happiest in Queensland when it comes to really liking where they live. When residents describe their local area, the general picture is of a quiet, beautiful and peaceful community.

In terms of tourism, the region welcomed 3.8 million overnight visitors in the year ending June 2021.

Through the study, we saw that residents recognise the positive impact tourism has on their local area, more so than the average Queenslanders. There is strong agreement with a range of specific tourism benefits, and these are seen to impact the community more than them individually.

Around 64% of residents are content with current tourism numbers, while since 2019 a decreasing proportion want more tourists. Just under half (45%) want continued tourism development, this has also decreased since 2019.

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 2021 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