

# Social Indicators 2019 Sunshine Coast



427,000 residents<sup>1</sup>

4.3m overnight visitors<sup>2</sup>  
(4.0m domestic / 322,000 international)

\$2.5bn total tourism contribution to gross regional product (13.9% of SSC'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 Sunshine Coast tourism region, 302 residents were surveyed.

This is our four 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.**

The tourism industry is prominent in the Sunshine Coast region (SSC). The region's 427,000 residents welcomed 4.3 million overnight visitors in the year ending June 2019, with tourism contributing 13.9% 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 quiet, relaxed, seaside community. Commonly used words were: beautiful, beaches, peaceful, quiet, community and friendly.



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 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. A total of 57% of Sunshine Coast residents say that they 'really like' living in their area and 'can't think of anywhere else they would rather live', more than any other region in Queensland.

	SSC		QLD
	2017	2019	2019
Really like it, can't think of anywhere else I would rather live	54%	57%	40%
Enjoy living here but can think of other places I would enjoy equally	41%	39%	51%
I only live here because circumstances demand it	5%	4%	9%

*i.e. 57% 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 had changed little at 38% in 2019. Just under half (45%) of residents simply tolerate tourists. There remains little negative sentiment towards tourism.

*"It is true that tourism has some negative consequences for permanent residents ... however these can be ameliorated by better infrastructure planning, to the benefit of all."*

*Sunshine Coast resident, 2019*

We saw that 58% of residents would like tourism numbers to remain 'about the same' in 2019, while 55% are happy for continued tourism development growth. Contact with tourists is common in the region, with only 9% reporting they never encounter tourists; compared with the Queensland average of 21%.

*"It is great watching the families coming and enjoying themselves. It doesn't worry me at all."*

*Sunshine Coast resident, 2019*

	2017	SSC 2019	QLD 2019
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### Feelings towards tourists

I really like tourists	39%	38%	50%
I tolerate tourists as they're good for the community	44%	45%	36%
I adjust my lifestyle to avoid tourism inconveniences	15%	15%	10%
I stay away from places tourists go	2%	2%	4%

### Number of tourists local area should attract

More	34%	34%	32%
About the same number	58%	58%	60%
Fewer	8%	9%	8%

### Preferred tourism development growth

Happy with continued growth	52%	55%	59%
Happy but no more growth	37%	35%	30%
Want less tourism	6%	7%	4%
More growth, different direction	5%	3%	7%

### Level of contact with tourists

Never come into contact with them	7%	9%	21%
See them around but don't usually talk to them	57%	53%	51%
Often interact with them as part of my job	12%	11%	9%
Often meet them around town and talk to them	19%	21%	14%
Have made friends with them, but not kept in contact	7%	8%	6%
Have made friends with them, and have kept in contact	4%	3%	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.

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	SSC 2019	QLD 2019
...the <b>community</b> as a whole <sup>1</sup>	65%	66%	45%
...their <b>personal</b> quality of life <sup>1</sup>	25%	19%	16%

Sunshine Coast residents are more likely than the average Queenslanders to feel that tourism has a positive impact. Two-thirds (66%) of residents agree that tourism has a positive impact on the community compared with 45% in Queensland. A fifth (19%) 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 13.9% 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)'.

Sunshine Coast residents overwhelmingly agree that, because of tourism, there is: greater cultural diversity (94%), economic benefits (92%), an increased regional profile (88%), increased local pride (73%), and new infrastructure (76%). 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 (71%), increased property prices (67%) and more disruption (59%). Since 2017 agreement with all of the statements about potential negative impacts has risen.

## Positive impacts of tourism

	% agree	SSC		QLD
		2017	2019	2019
Greater cultural diversity	91%	94%	91%	
Important economic benefits	94%	92%	89%	
Festivals and events attract tourists and raise awareness	96%	90%↓	89%	
Increased regional profile	87%	88%	83%	
Increased local pride	71%	73%	73%	
New infrastructure	72%	76%	69%	
Benefits shared evenly	46%	46%	51%	

*"All the impacts I've noticed are positive. New amenities in town benefit us all. I love having contact with a variety of people."*

*Sunshine Coast resident, 2019*

*"Better shopping centers and more restaurants have been built to cater for tourists."*

*Sunshine Coast resident, 2019*

Impact on...	SSC 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	15%	37%	17%	35%
Important economic benefits	20%	61%	17%	45%
Festivals and events attract tourists and raise awareness	20%	53%	18%	44%
Increased regional profile	16%	49%	17%	41%
Increased local pride	22%	49%	21%	41%
New infrastructure	32%	62%	31%	53%
Benefits shared evenly	22%	50%	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	SSC		QLD
	2017	2019	2019
Increased prices	68%	71%	50%
Increased property values	52%	67%↑	42%
Rise in delinquent behaviour	36%	37%	36%
More disruption	56%	59%	36%
Negative impact on the environment	37%	43%	34%
Negative impact on local character	42%	46%	33%
Misdirected public spending	22%	28%	28%
Lack of access for locals	28%	34%	22%

"Hard to go to certain places like beaches because of the parking is taken by tourists."

Sunshine Coast resident, 2019

"Makes it harder for renters to find properties at a lower rent."

Sunshine Coast resident, 2019

Impact on...	SSC 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	12%	12%	10%	10%
Increased property values	12%	13%	13%	13%
Rise in delinquent behaviour	10%	21%	8%	16%
More disruption	17%	19%	13%	16%
Negative impact on the environment	9%	23%	11%	19%
Negative impact on local character	7%	8%	6%	7%
Misdirected public spending	5%	12%	6%	12%
Lack of access for locals	18%	11%	11%	14%

## 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 4.3 million overnight visitors in the year ending June 2019.

Through the study, we saw that residents recognise a positive impact from tourism, 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 58% of residents are content with current tourism numbers, but 55% want continued tourism development.

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