

CUMMINGS ECONOMICS

38 Grafton St (PO Box 2148) CAIRNS Q 4870

ABN 99 734 489 175

Tel 07 4031 2888 Fax 07 4031 1108

Email cummings@cummings.net.au

Website : www.cummings.net.au



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Note on Population Growth in the North, 2007/08

Recently released Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data for estimated residential population for 2007/08 reveal the extent of the strong economic growth taking place across the north in the 12 months up to June 2008.

As the following **Table #1** indicates, the residential population across the north grew by almost 31,600 and now stands at over 1.2 million – a growth of 2.7% compared with the national average of 1.7%.

Population across the north is closing up towards that of South Australia where the population stands at 1.6 million, but grew at only 17,600 (1.1%) in 2007/08.

Within the north, the fastest growth occurred in the Far North Queensland Statistical Division based on Cairns, which recorded a growth of 7,786 (3.1%) resulting in the Cairns/Far North region continuing to increase its lead as the largest in the north with a residential population of 262,095 compared with the Townsville based Northern Statistical Division at 220,656, Northern Territory 219,818 and the Rockhampton based Fitzroy Statistical Division of 214,753.

Queensland's northern regions based on Cairns and Townsville including the North West, Gulf and Peninsula with a population of 516,497 are now well past the State of Tasmania at 497,529. Population growth of the Cairns and Townsville based regions at 13,370 (2.6%) was three times that of Tasmania at 4,325 (0.9%).

Cairns also led city growth recording a very high rate of 4.1% (an increase of 5,597), and continued the process of closing on Townsville in size. Mackay continued to increase its lead over Rockhampton.

Table #1: Northern Australia – Estimated Population Growth, 2007/08				
Statistical Division	(Main City)	Growth		2008 Pop'n
		No.	%	
Far North Q'ld	(Cairns)	7,786	3.1%	262,095
Northern Q'ld	(Townsville)	5,290	2.5%	220,656
Mackay Q'ld	(Mackay)	4,037	2.5%	167,666
Fitzroy Q'ld	(Rockhampton)	3,820	1.8%	214,753
North West Q'ld	(Mt Isa)	294	0.9%	33,746
Central West Q'ld	-	-144	-1.2%	12,256
Total Northern & Central Q'ld		24,901	2.8%	911,172
Northern Territory	(Darwin)	5,014	2.3%	219,818
Pilbara WA	-	811	1.8%	45,983
Kimberleys WA	-	919	2.8%	34,185
Total Northern WA		1,730	2.2%	80,168
Total Northern Australia		31,645	2.7%	1,211,158
Main City Statistical Sub Division				
Cairns		5597	4.1	142001
Townsville		4703	3.0	162,730
Mackay		1719	2.2	81,148
Rockhampton		797	1.1	75,497
Darwin		3319	2.8	120,652

Source: ABS data.