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Research Note:

Cairns Arrives on the List of Australia's Main Cities

The once remote tropical outpost of 50 years ago with a population of about 16,000 has now made it onto the list of Australia's "Main Cities". The Commonwealth Government's Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics report "*Changes in Australia's Industry Structure: Main Cities 2001 – 06*" lists 15 main cities.

Cairns came in as 14th in size, ahead of Darwin. However, it recorded the third fastest population growth over the 2001 to 2006 period after the metropolitan fringe cities of Gold Coast/Tweed and Sunshine Coast.

Cairns also recorded along with Canberra, the highest level of structural change in employment with general construction up and the city's small agricultural sector down as a proportion of workforce. The report also shows relatively high levels of growth in employment in government and defence, and health and education, activities in which the city has been deficient in the past.

The report is available on www.bitre.gov.au

City Stat Sub Divisions		Est Res Population	
		2008	Growth 07/08
15	DARWIN	120,652	3,319
14	CAIRNS	142,001	5,597
13	TOWNSVILLE	162,730	4,703
12	GEELONG	172,300	2,261
11	HOBART	209,287	1,957

		Census Count (Total incl visitors), 2006
15	DARWIN	117,332
14	CAIRNS	143,436
13	TOWNSVILLE	148,414
12	GEELONG	159,254
11	HOBART	198,945

		Pop'n (Est Residential), 1976
	Cairns	49,590
	Rockhampton	53,660
	Bendigo	55,152
	Orange/Bathurst	55,933
	Albury Wodonga	63,409
	Ballarat	68,450
	Toowoomba	69,390
	Launceston	81,636
	CAIRNS	49,590
	TOWNSVILLE	90,540

Source: Cummings Economics from ABS data.