



# LONG-TERM POPULATION STATISTICS

1891 – 2011

CAIRNS  
AUSTRALIA

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The following paper is designed to collate data on long-term population statistics for Cairns.

Early data up to 1958 is drawn from a paper prepared by the Cairns City Council Town Clerk of the time, probably prepared about 1959 or 1960.

Figures from 1958 onwards come from Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Year Book and other ABS population releases.

Up until 1976, the figures are for the old Cairns City Local Government area. From 1976 on, the ABS defined the Cairns Statistical District as the Cairns urban areas in both Cairns City and Mulgrave Shire and areas likely to be urban on a 15-year time frame. This definition commenced bringing in significant sections of Mulgrave Shire. This boundary was adjusted in 1991 to include the whole area from Gordonvale to Palm Cove, ie. the amalgamated Cairns City area less Yarrabah and the Babinda areas. The ABS provided estimates on the new boundaries back to 1986.

Up to 1976 figures, no distinction is made between residents and visitors and it can be assumed that the figures include visitors. From 1976, ABS commenced publishing “estimated residential populations”, ie. excluding visitors but including residents away at the time of the census.

In the following tables, from 1976 to 2011, both estimated residential and total census count type figures are given for Cairns Statistical District.

From 2011, a new system was adopted by ABS with Cairns as an urban area being effectively covered by the two Statistical Area Level 3 (SA3) areas of Cairns North and Cairns South reflecting boundaries close to the old Cairns Statistical District boundaries. ABS published figures on these boundaries back to 1991.

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## 2. POPULATION FIGURES

<u>Total Population (1)</u> <u>Including visitors and</u> <u>excluding residents away</u>				<u>Est Res Pop'n (1)</u> <u>Cairns Statistical</u> <u>District</u>		
<u>Year End</u> <u>30<sup>th</sup> June</u>	<u>Cairns</u> <u>City LGA</u>	<u>Cairns Stat</u> <u>Dist (1)</u>	<u>Combined</u> <u>Cairns North &amp;</u> <u>South SA3s</u>	<u>Initial</u> <u>Boundary</u>	<u>Revised</u> <u>Boundary</u>	<u>Combined</u> <u>Cairns North &amp;</u> <u>South SA3s</u>
1891	2,800					
1892	2,800					
1893	2,500					
1894	2,300					
1895	2,000					
1896	2,000					
1897	2,000					
1898	2,500					
1899	4,000					
1900	4,000					
1901	4,000					
1902	4,000					
1903	3,500					
1904	3,500					
1905	3,600					
1906	4,000					
1907	4,250					
1908	4,500					
1909	4,500					
1910	5,000					
1911	5,000					
1912	5,000					
1913	5,000					
1914	5,000					
1915	5,000					
1916	5,500					
1917	5,500					
1918	5,500					
1919	6,000					
1920	6,000					
1921	7,450					
1922	7,500					
1923	8,000					
1924	8,500					
1925	8,500					
1926	9,000					
1927	9,500					
1928	9,500					
1929	9,500					
1930	9,500					
1931	10,500					
1932	11,000					
1933	12,000					
1934	12,400					
1935	13,000					
1936	13,300					
1937	13,500					
1938	14,250					
1939	14,600					

Cont'd

LONG-TERM POPULATION STATISTICS  
CAIRNS AUSTRALIA

<u>Total Population (1)</u> <u>Including visitors and</u> <u>excluding residents away</u>				<u>Est Res Pop'n (1)</u> <u>Cairns Statistical</u> <u>District</u>		
<u>Year End</u> <u>30<sup>th</sup> June</u>	<u>Cairns</u> <u>City LGA</u>	<u>Cairns Stat</u> <u>Dist (1)</u>	<u>Combined</u> <u>Cairns North &amp;</u> <u>South SA3s</u>	<u>Initial</u> <u>Boundary</u>	<u>Revised</u> <u>Boundary</u>	<u>Combined</u> <u>Cairns North &amp;</u> <u>South SA3s</u>
1940	15,200					
1941	15,700					
1942	16,000					
1943	13,000					
1944	13,000					
1945	15,000					
1946	15,750					
1947	16,750					
1948	17,000					
1949	17,600					
1950	18,000					
1951	18,500					
1952	19,000					
1953	19,250					
1954	21,018					
1955	21,400					
1956	22,000					
1957	22,940					
1958	23,400					
1959	24,000					
1960	24,600					
1961	25,200					
1962	25,500					
1963	25,800					
1964	26,100					
1965	26,400					
1966	26,802					
1967	27,400					
1968	28,110					
1969	28,760					
1970	29,520					
1971	30,835					
1972	32,330					
1973	33,410					
1974	34,610					
1975	36,650					
1976	35,605					
1977						
1978						
1979						
1980						
1981		62,426	(2)			
1982						
1983						
1984						
1985						
1986		74,358				
1987						
1988						

Note – During this period, Cairns urban growth started to spill heavily into Mulgrave Shire.

Initial  
Boundary  
48,752

49,590  
51,560  
53,000  
54,380  
56,230  
58,270  
60,660  
62,950  
65,250  
68,140  
70,600  
74,088  
76,195  
79,103

Cont'd



LONG-TERM POPULATION STATISTICS  
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<u>Total Population (1)</u> <u>Including visitors and</u> <u>excluding residents away</u>				<u>Est Res Pop'n (1)</u> <u>Cairns Statistical</u> <u>District</u>		
<u>Year End</u> <u>30<sup>th</sup> June</u>	<u>Cairns</u> <u>City LGA</u>	<u>Cairns Stat</u> <u>Dist (1)</u>	<u>Combined</u> <u>Cairns North &amp;</u> <u>South SA3s</u>	<u>Initial</u> <u>Boundary</u>	<u>Revised</u> <u>Boundary</u>	<u>Combined</u> <u>Cairns North &amp;</u> <u>South SA3s</u>
1989		<u>Revised</u>			83,148	
1990		<u>Boundary</u>			85,262	
1991		97,698			86,294	87,061
<b>1992</b>					<b>89,279</b>	<b>89,981</b>
1993					93,645	94,118
1994					97,846	98,249
1995					102,850	102,937
1996		121,036			106,694	106,798
1997					109,404	108,452
1998					111,823	109,829
1999					113,778	110,737
2000					115,631	111,410
2001			126,364			111,737
2002						113,691
2003						116,729
2004						119,837
2005						123,667
2006			143,436			128,283
2007						132,500
2008						137,672
2009						142,287
2010						145,330
2011			158,888			147,505
2012						150,578
2013						153,405
2014						155,490

Note 1 : See Definitions Section 1.

Note 2 : This census was taken at the time of school holidays with an abnormally large number of visitors in the count.

### 3. POPULATION GROWTH RATES

The following gives average annual population rates (mainly by decades).

<b><u>CAIRNS CITY LGA</u></b>	
<b><u>(Total population including visitors &amp; excluding residents away)</u></b>	
1891 - 1901	3.6% pa
1901 - 1911	2.3% pa
1911 - 1921	4.1% pa
1921 - 1931	3.5% pa
1931 - 1941	4.1% pa
1941 - 1951	1.7% pa World War II
1951 - 1961	3.1% pa
1961 - 1971	2.0% pa 1960s slow down, increasing
1971 - 1976	2.9% pa overspill into Mulgrave Shire
<b><u>CAIRNS STAT DISTRICT</u></b>	
<b><u>(Residential Population)</u></b>	
1976 - 1986	3.6% pa
<b><u>CAIRNS STAT DISTRICT</u></b>	
<b><u>(Revised) (Residential Population)</u></b>	
1986 - 1991	3.1% pa
<b><u>CAIRNS COMBINED NORTH &amp; SOUTH</u></b>	
<b><u>SA3s</u></b>	
<b><u>(Residential Population)</u></b>	
1991 - 2001	2.5% pa
2001 - 2011	2.8% pa
<b><u>LONG TERM AVERAGE</u></b>	
<b>129 years (1891 - 2011)</b>	<b>3.4% pa</b>

## 4. COMMENT

World War II caused a drop in population but was offset to some degree by a strong resumption of growth after the war. The 1960s saw slower growth in Cairns City due to poorer conditions in the sugar industry and a curtailment of expansion. Also by this time, Cairns' population was starting to spill over substantially into Mulgrave Shire.

Growth was curtailed in the late 1990s by the effects of the Asian Crisis and in the second half of the 2000s by the Global Financial Crisis.