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STATISTICAL NOTE – JOB SEEKER NUMBERS

ANALYSIS OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN TROPICAL QUEENSLAND AS INDICATED BY AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT NEWSTART AND YOUTH ALLOWANCE STATISTICS FOR MONTHS AUGUST TO NOVEMBER 2012-2016

1 Background

The Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Series is based on a sample survey and can be unreliable as an indicator of what is happening in the labour market, especially in regional areas where sample sizes are low.

Another indicator of trends in unemployment are statistics on numbers registered to receive unemployment benefits, ie. on Newstart and Youth Allowance (other).

The following analyses these statistics over the four years, 2012 to 2016, for Queensland from the Fitzroy region north designated as Queensland Northern Service Zone.

The figures analysed, are for the four months August to November compared with the same period each year.

They are given by labour force districts and grouped into the Cairns region, Townsville region, Mackay region and Fitzroy region down the coast with a separate Western region and a separate Indigenous (or mainly indigenous) region.

2 Economic Conditions

The period 2012 to 2016 represents the period following the peaking of mineral prices about 2012 and a major reduction in the value of the Australian dollar, especially after about mid-2014.

3 Limitations

It should be noted that changes in numbers on Newstart and Youth Allowance (other) while probably mainly due to labour market conditions, can be marginally subject to other influences such as moving onto other support programs such as education and training.

People can also move when facing unemployment to other more favoured locations.

There was a major change, especially for indigenous communities, with the CDEP scheme (Community Development Employment Scheme) ceasing at end June 2015.

4 Origin of the Statistics

The statistics are taken from a monthly profile published by the Australian Department of Social Services entitled "Labour Market and Related Payments". The tables record number of persons receiving Newstart Allowance and Youth Allowance (other) in that month.

5 Preliminary Analysis Only

This is an initial preliminary indicative analysis. A full analysis would involve further inquiry into any non-labour market factors affecting the figures.

6 The Results

Table #1 sets out numbers for August, September, October and November over the four years 2012 to 2014. **Charts #2 to #8** set out the average August to November figures for the different regions/categories.

In interpreting the overall results, it is important to look at **Chart #8** "Indigenous Centres and Communities" where the numbers were heavily affected by the cessation of CDEP at end June 2015. This caused an abnormal leap in job seekers of close to 2,000 between September 2014 and September 2015.

Chart #2 indicates that throughout the Northern Service Zone, numbers of job seekers were rising steadily in 2013 and 2014 but leapt up in 2015, partly due to the CDEP effect but also due to strong underlying rises in all regions.

However over the 12 months to the August to November period 2016, the overall rising trend has moderated but with variability between regions.

The numbers have kept rising strongly in the Fitzroy region.

In the Mackay region, the figures for Mackay itself have kept rising but dropped marginally in the Whitsunday and Bowen areas.

The pattern in the Western region was obviously heavily affected in the years 2012 to 2015 by the CDEP situation. However in 2016, the numbers fell slightly in Mt Isa in 2016 and in the Western area, overall the rise moderated.

In the Townsville region, after very strong rises since 2012, numbers fell marginally by about 3% in 2016.

In the Cairns region, after rising 2012 to 2015, numbers fell in 2016 in all districts except Mareeba and moved back down overall by about 4%.

7 Discussion

Mineral prices peaked about 2011 and started coming down, impacting on employment including on new mine related construction from about 2012 onwards.

Work on the LNG facilities at Gladstone wound down in 2015-16.

The indications are that these events are still impacting on the total Northern Service Zone overall, but especially in the Rockhampton/Gladstone/Fitzroy areas and Mackay that are heavily mining oriented.

However, the Australian dollar has been falling under the influence of reduced commodity prices and of lower Australian interest rates compared with the rest of the world. This has seen tourism flows bouncing back to former 2006 peaks by 2015 and passing through in 2016 to new record levels.

While the registered job seeker numbers in the Cairns region and Whitsundays/Bowen continued to rise up to 2015, the 2016 figures indicate that they are now on the way back down again, presumably mainly due to the improvement in tourism earnings.

However, the numbers in Townsville moving marginally back down again in 2016, seems more likely to be related to factors other than tourism that are not clear to us at this stage.

ANALYSIS OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN TROPICAL QUEENSLAND

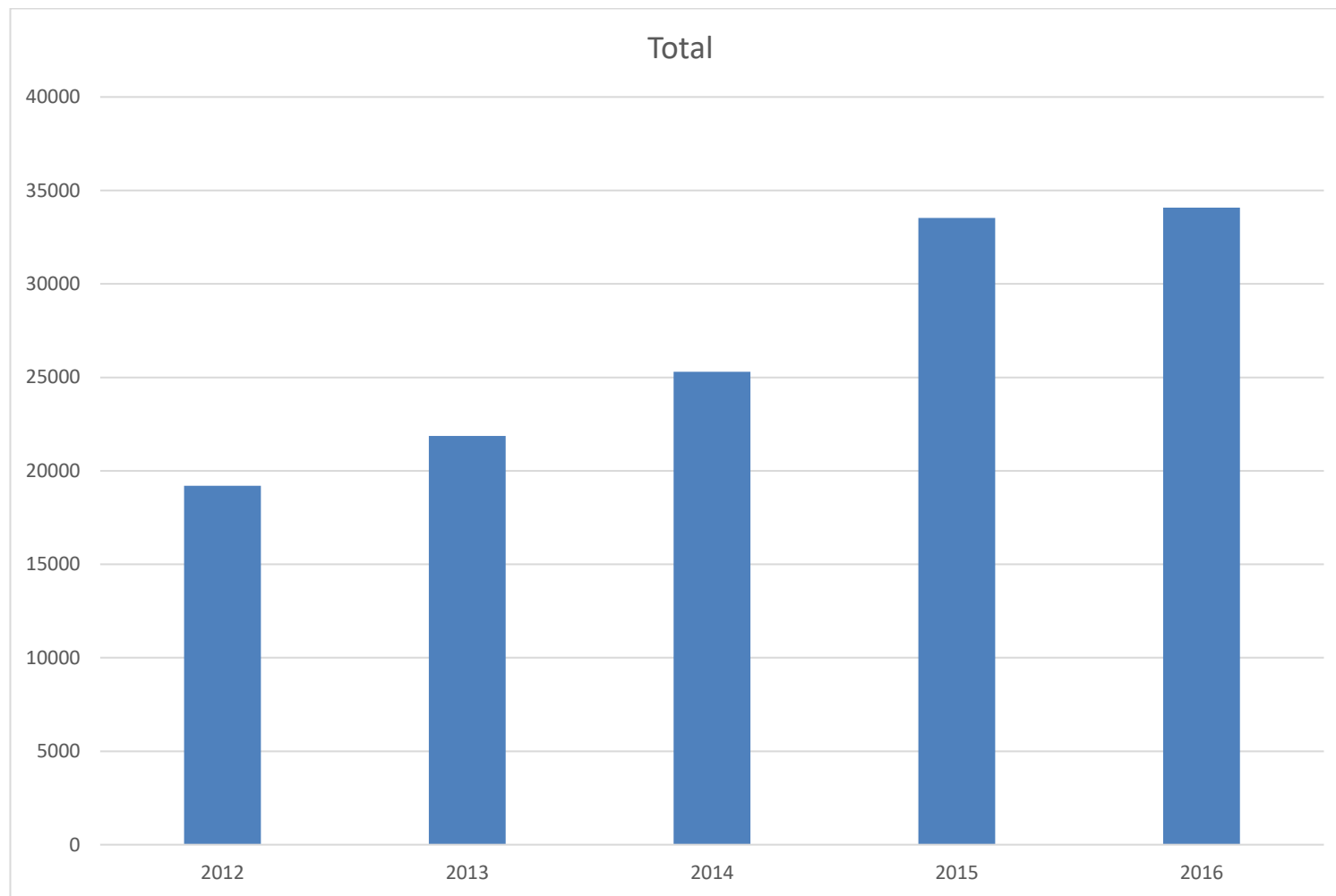
Table #1: Job Seekers Receiving New Start Allowance and Youth Allowance (Other) by Service Zone & Service Centre – Northern Queensland Service Zone – Aug & Nov, 2012 to 2016--

		2016					2015					2014					2013					2012				
		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Av	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Av	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Av	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Av	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Av
Atherton	C	924	880	896	873	893	1,012	988	955	929	971	922	904	910	896	908	863	872	837	846	855	748	709	708	715	720
Cairns Aplin	C	5664	5619	5,571	5,658	5628	6,096	6,025	5,779	5,720	5905	5320	5296	5,238	5,208	5266	4847	4751	4,715	4,788	4775	4148	4304	4,246	4,360	4265
Innisfail	C	1061	1047	1,050	1,034	1048	1,163	1,139	1,060	1,032	1099	962	956	951	969	960	871	863	848	853	859	751	745	735	743	744
Mareeba	C	987	984	982	996	987	977	949	955	941	956	811	811	821	796	810	770	746	751	768	759	625	610	628	632	624
Mossman	C	585	617	623	625	613	654	663	650	620	647	494	474	478	465	478	528	604	598	598	582	492	474	484	483	483
Total		9221	9147	9122	9186	9169	9902	9764	9399	9242	9577	8509	8441	8398	8334	8421	7879	7836	7749	7853	7829	6764	6842	6801	6933	6835
Ayr	T	520	480	483	477	490	509	519	507	496	508	419	404	403	399	406	347	332	332	345	339	302	281	266	268	279
Charters Tws	T	537	523	533	522	529	539	533	535	523	533	449	447	436	422	439	377	397	394	377	386	296	281	278	277	283
Ingham	T	405	364	367	360	374	453	438	425	409	431	382	360	362	361	366	330	338	333	359	340	255	249	237	251	248
TSV Ross R Rd	T	6160	6106	6,022	5,947	6059	6,368	6,333	6,206	6,079	6247	4858	4875	4,989	5,018	4935	4025	3951	3,959	4,034	3992	3243	3192	3,225	3,202	3216
Total		7622	7473	7,405	7,306	7452	7869	7823	7,673	7,507	7718	6108	6086	6,190	6,200	6146	5079	5018	5,018	5,115	5058	4096	4003	4,006	3,998	4026
Bowen	M	484	456	445	445	458	554	544	523	520	535	434	430	422	443	432	402	392	375	397	392	266	268	271	272	269
Mackay	M	3634	3477	3,419	3,380	3478	3,260	3,262	3,200	3,243	3241	2118	2168	2,249	2,342	2219	1494	1508	1,554	1,638	1549	1080	1062	1,080	1,111	1083
Whitsunday	M	704	676	655	634	667	766	737	720	715	735	649	628	642	636	639	554	563	570	580	567	477	462	447	442	457
Total		4822	4609	4519	4459	4602	4580	4543	4443	4478	4511	3201	3226	3313	3421	3290	2450	2463	2499	2615	2507	1823	1792	1798	1825	1810
Biloela	F	340	337	353	345	344	279	295	285	280	285	206	209	219	218	213	179	176	179	194	182	159	154	149	178	160
Emerald	F	619	606	615	592	608	654	664	641	627	647	485	476	469	490	480	341	333	352	359	346	226	254	254	266	250
Gladstone	F	2129	2133	2,161	2,168	2148	1,714	1,697	1,735	1,735	1720	1170	1179	1,197	1,201	1187	813	830	828	811	821	637	637	632	640	637
Rockhampton	F	3412	3446	3,426	3,366	3413	3,150	3,121	3,138	3,170	3145	2188	2314	2,334	2,349	2296	1887	1890	1,882	1,914	1893	1676	1580	1,560	1,542	1590
Yeppoon	F	884	870	862	860	869	770	780	759	750	765	562	584	611	629	597	454	443	448	448	448	380	359	344	361	361
Total		7384	7392	7417	7331	7381	6567	6557	6558	6562	6561	4611	4762	4830	4887	4773	3674	3672	3689	3726	3690	3078	2984	2939	2987	2997
Longreach	W	206	216	201	201	206	128	193	198	205	181	147	152	147	146	148	142	141	129	130	136	87	99	98	104	97
Mt Isa	W	1004	1003	1,001	998	1002	1,054	1,027	1,031	1,011	1031	649	652	625	616	636	748	733	708	687	719	667	663	718	708	689
Normanton	W	198	175	170	176	180	160	164	173	165	166	53	56	63	45	54	77	65	66	67	69	120	113	115	116	116
Total		1408	1394	1372	1375	1387	1342	1384	1402	1381	1377	849	860	835	807	838	967	939	903	884	923	874	875	931	928	902
Indigenous Service Ctr	I	1875	1920	1,947	1,991	1933	1,641	1,785	1,760	1,790	1744	783	809	833	858	821	516	669	777	837	700	1036	1030	1,012	998	1019
Nth Peninsula Remote Area Service Ctr	I	193	202	214	218	207	231	251	223	235	235	133	128	125	104	123	104	96	99	103	101	100	113	119	127	115
Palm Is	I	354	362	363	351	358	430	419	377	366	398	75	81	86	84	82	171	115	71	59	104	277	272	272	261	271
Thursday Is	I	211	217	211	222	215	192	225	245	255	229	59	63	67	61	63	276	203	141	104	181	317	338	336	339	333
Western Cape Remote Area Service Ctr	I	467	491	501	502	490	520	558	544	526	537	250	230	246	254	245	208	267	289	332	274	379	370	366	367	371
Yarrabah Remote Area Service Ctr	I	538	543	513	513	527	524	538	515	528	526	432	455	453	452	448	463	460	450	447	455	480	484	478	492	484
Total		3638	3735	3,749	3,797	3730	3538	3776	3,664	3,700	3670	1732	1766	1,810	1,813	1780	1738	1810	1,827	1,882	1814	2589	2607	2,583	2,584	2591
Other (a)		388	369	354	360	368		100	118	126	115	47	39	35	75	49	47	55	52	37	48	21	30	41	47	35
Total		34,483	34,119	33,938	33,814	34,089	33,890	33,947	33,257	32,996	33,523	25,057	25,180	25,411	25,537	25,296	21,834	21,793	21,737	22,112	21,869	19,245	19,133	19,099	19,302	19,195

Source: Department of Social Services – Labour Market & Related Payments, Monthly Profile, Av Aug-Nov, 2012 to 2016.



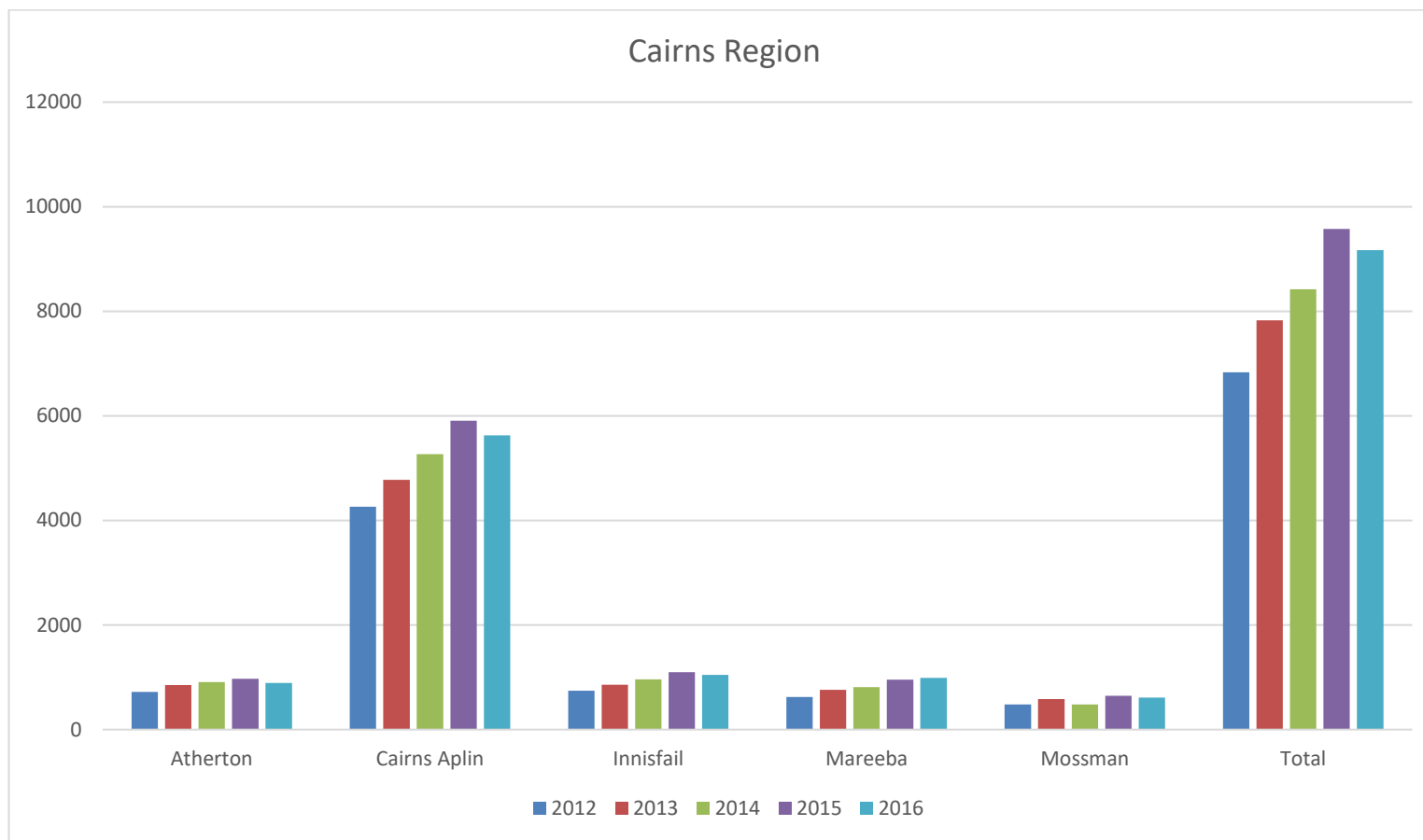
Chart #2: Job Seekers Receiving Newstart Allowance and Youth Allowance (Other) – Northern Queensland Service Zone – Av Aug-Nov, 2012 to 2016



Source: Cummings Economics from Department of Social Services – Labour Market & Related Payments, Monthly Profile, Av Aug-Nov, 2012 to 2016.

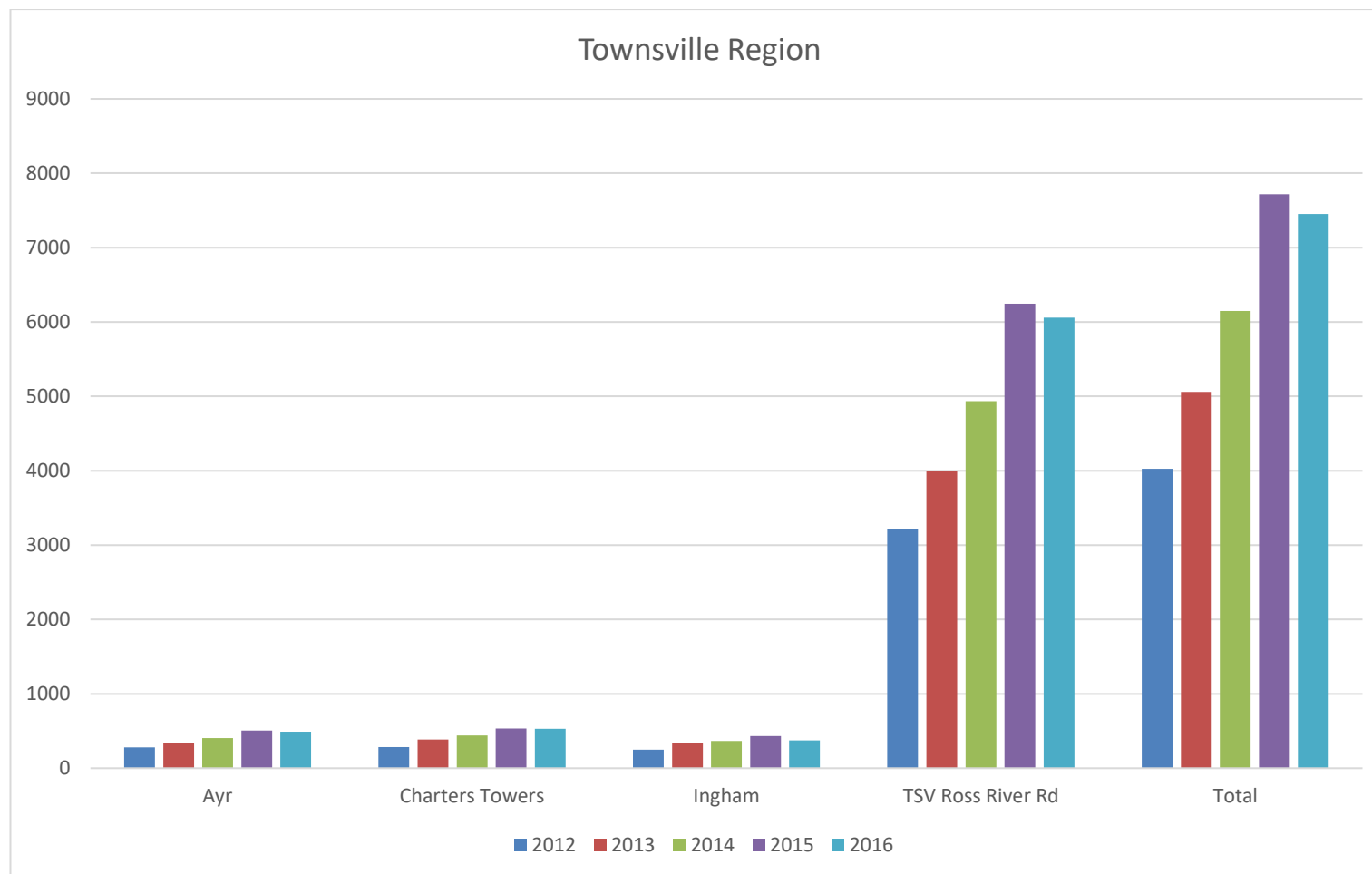


Chart #3: Job Seekers Receiving New Start Allowance and Youth Allowance (Other) by Service Zone & Service Centre – Cairns Region – Av Aug-Nov, 2012 to 2016



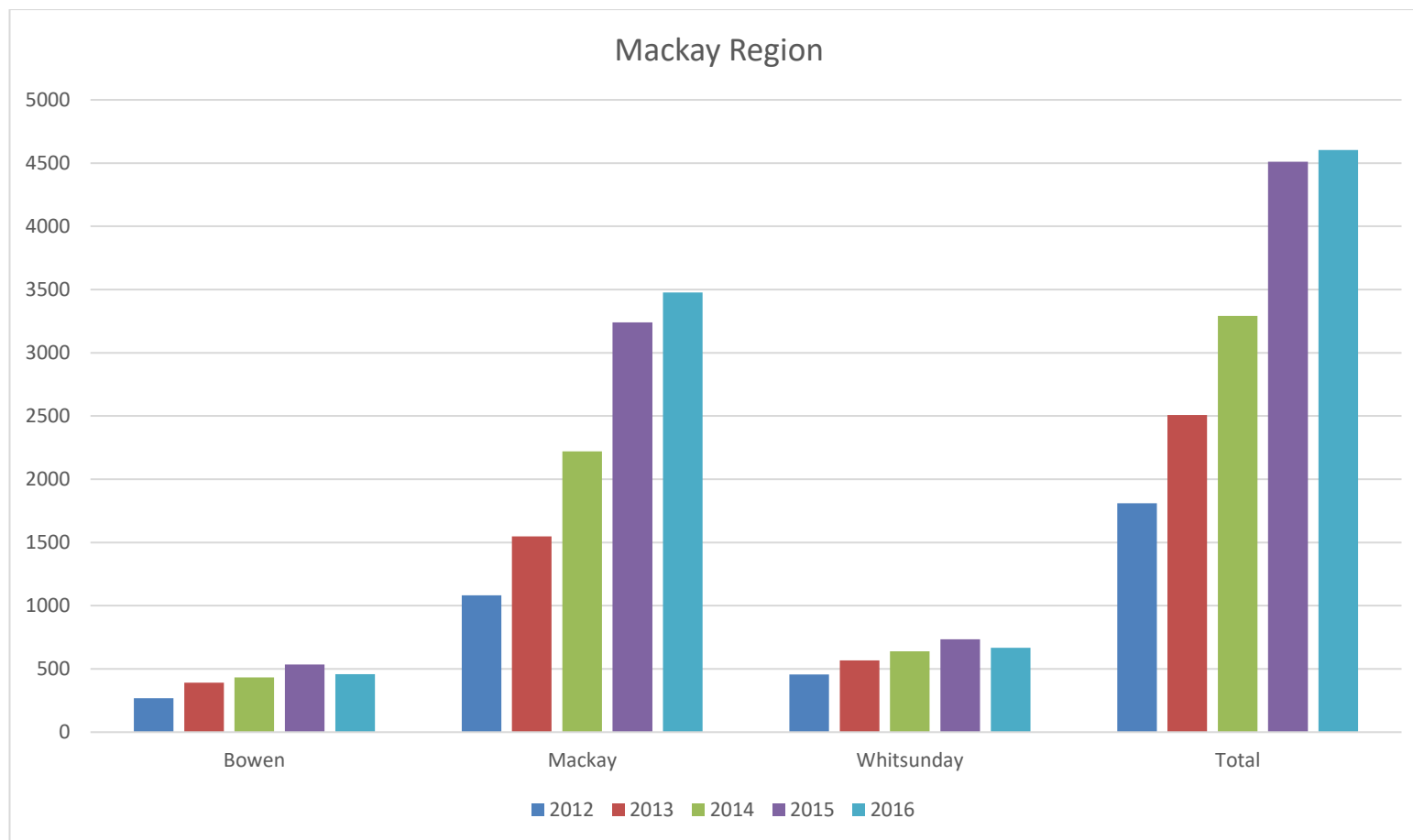
Source: Cummings Economics from Department of Social Services – Labour Market & Related Payments, Monthly Profile, Av Aug-Nov, 2012 to 2016.

Chart #4: Job Seekers Receiving New Start Allowance and Youth Allowance (Other) by Service Zone & Service Centre – Townsville Region – Av Aug-Nov, 2012 to 2016



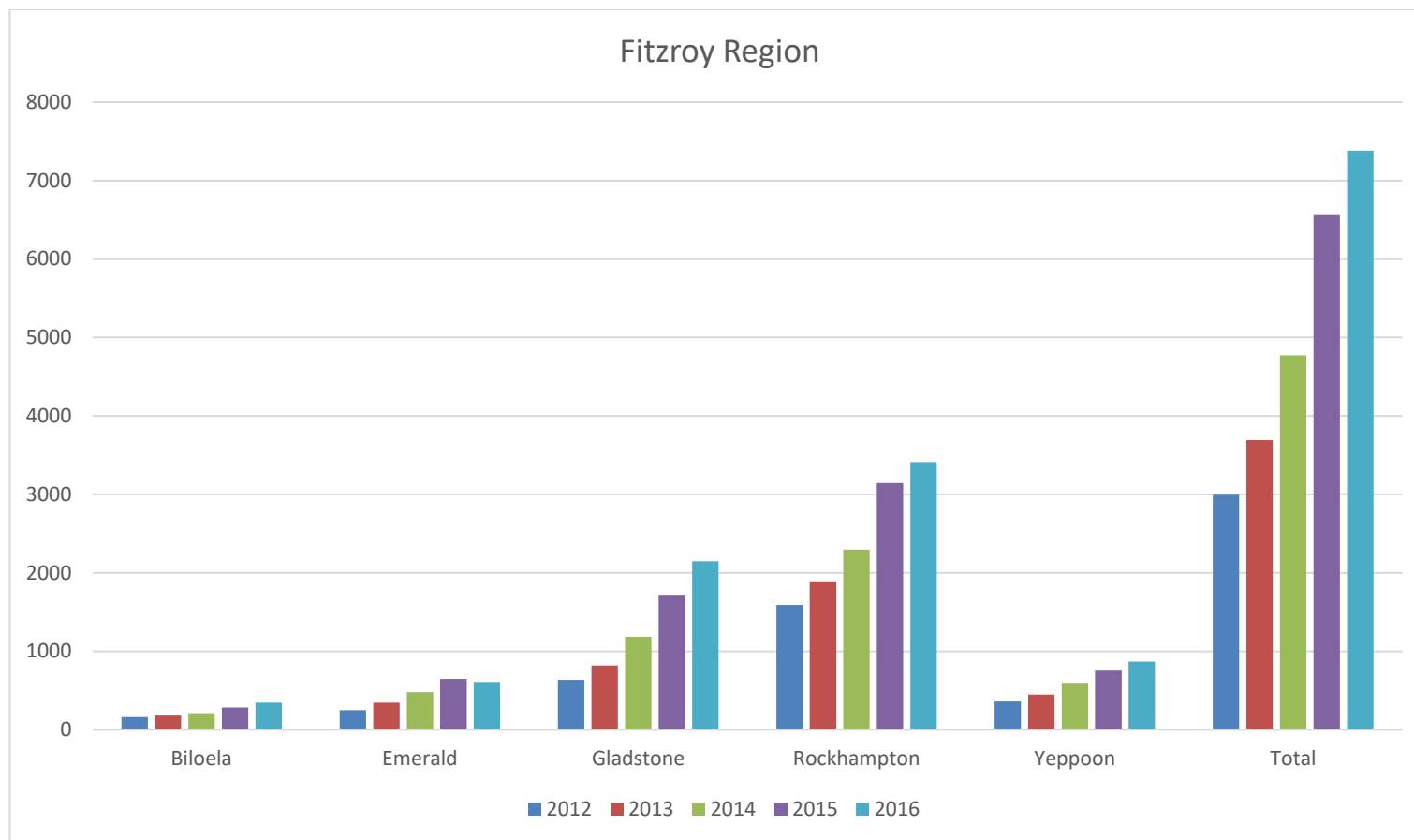
Source: Cummings Economics from Department of Social Services – Labour Market & Related Payments, Monthly Profile, Av Aug-Nov, 2012 to 2016.

Chart #5: Job Seekers Receiving New Start Allowance and Youth Allowance (Other) by Service Zone & Service Centre – Mackay Region – Av Aug-Nov, 2012 to 2016



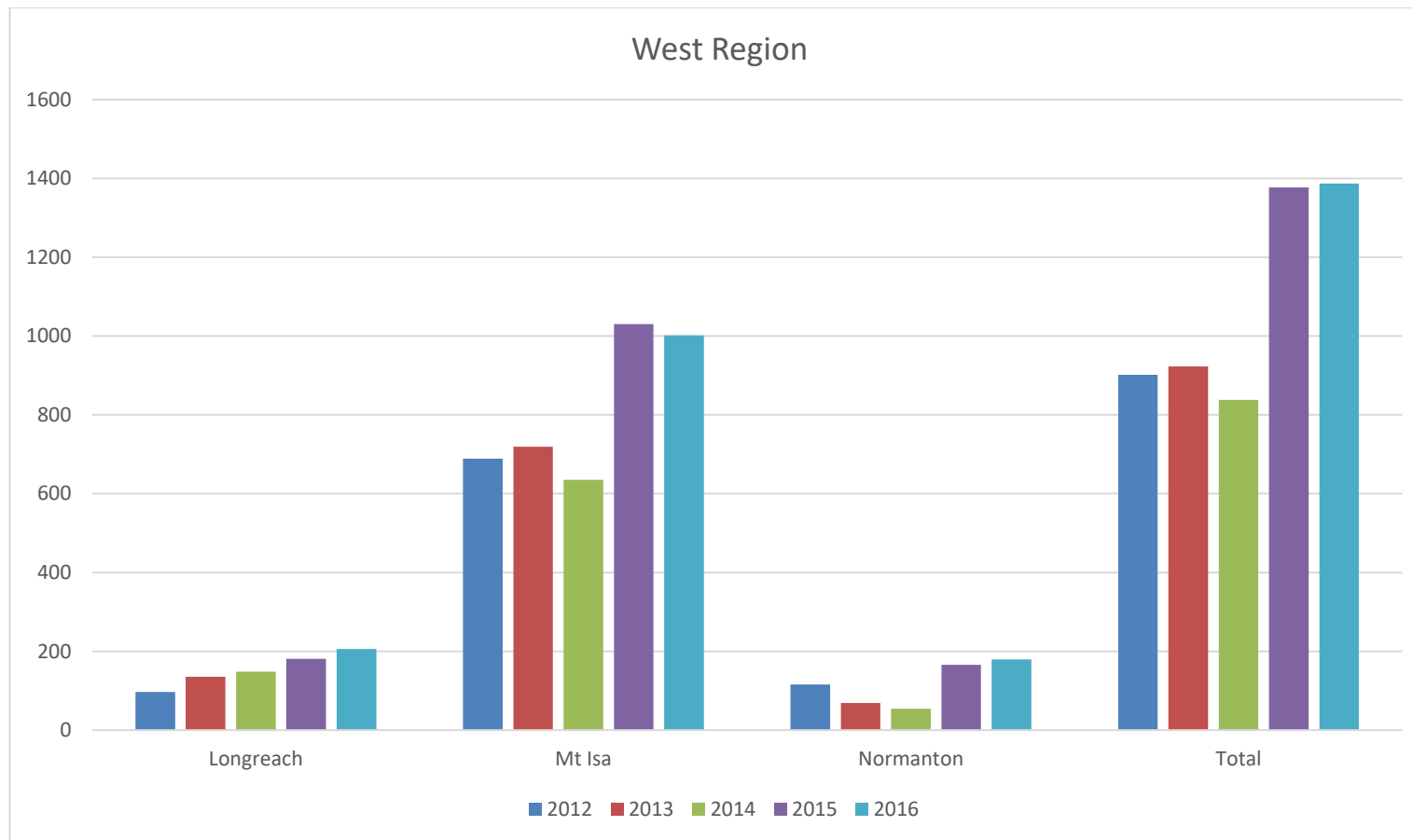
Source: Cummings Economics from Department of Social Services – Labour Market & Related Payments, Monthly Profile, Av Aug-Nov, 2012 to 2016.

Chart #6: Job Seekers Receiving New Start Allowance and Youth Allowance (Other) by Service Zone & Service Centre – Fitzroy Region – Av Aug-Nov, 2012 to 2016



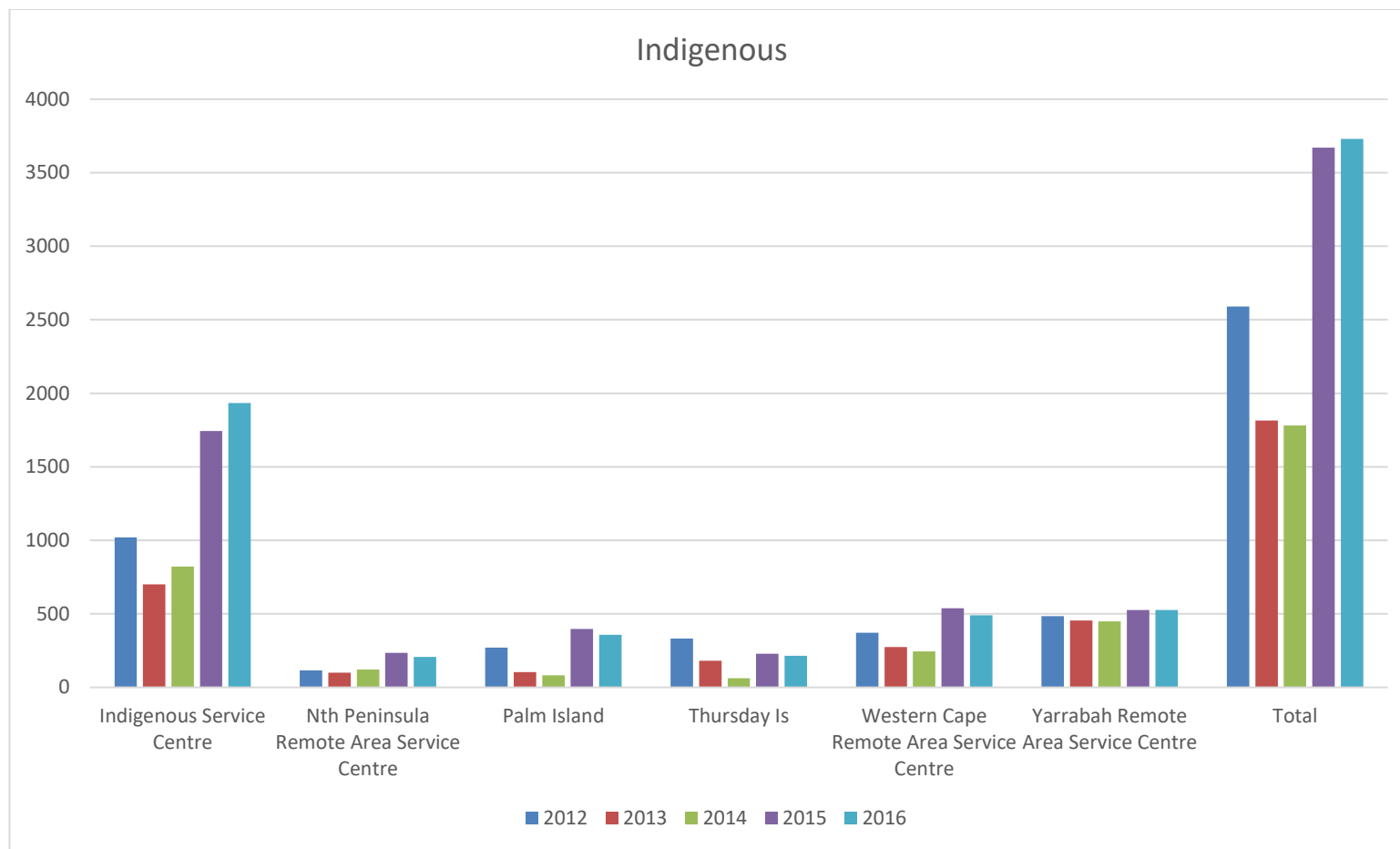
Source: Cummings Economics from Department of Social Services – Labour Market & Related Payments, Monthly Profile, Av Aug-Nov, 2012 to 2016.

Chart #7: Job Seekers Receiving New Start Allowance and Youth Allowance (Other) by Service Zone & Service Centre – Western Region – Av Aug-Nov, 2012 to 2016



Source: Cummings Economics from Department of Social Services – Labour Market & Related Payments, Monthly Profile, Av Aug-Nov, 2012 to 2016.

Chart #8: Job Seekers Receiving New Start Allowance and Youth Allowance (Other) by Service Zone & Service Centre – Indigenous Centres & Communities – Av Aug-Nov, 2012 to 2016



Source: Cummings Economics from Department of Social Services – Labour Market & Related Payments, Monthly Profile, Av Aug-Nov, 2012 to 2016.