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# HISTORIC DRIVERS OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE CAIRNS/ TROPICAL NORTH QLD REGION

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This analysis reviews the historic drivers of economic development of the Cairns/ Tropical North Queensland Region from the time of the founding of Cairns in the 1870s up until the early 2020s. It highlights the importance of 'base' industries that earn income from outside the region as locating employment and population in the region to form the basis for development of local service activities and especially the importance of industries based on natural resources and attributes, including agriculture, fisheries, forestry, mining and tourism. It highlights the early importance of mining up to the 1920s followed by agriculture (especially sugar) up to the 1960s, to be followed by tourism up to the early 2000s. It identifies however, the resurgence of mining and of agriculture (especially horticulture) in recent decades. It identifies that over the most recent period from 2007 on, growth in mining and agricultural income came through to exceed tourism growth. The analysis however, also highlights in recent decades the growth of outside earnings of skills-based sectors that have been developing in the region, especially in the maritime and aviation service sectors along with international education and defence activity. The analysis also highlights the strong growth of regional services in fields like education and health as the Cairns/ Tropical North Queensland region has emerged as the largest region in population in northern Australia.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 General

Essentially, the following analysis aims to identify, and where possible quantify, the major 'drivers' of development of Cairns city and region over time.

The objective of the work is to bring as much information to bear on the subject that can be assembled in a limited time period, rather than aiming to be a 'polished' review of the subject. For some periods, statistical data that could be accessed easily was not readily available. [Appendix 2](#) gives a note on the major reference publications and documents.

### 1.2 Area of Reference

The area covered is essentially the commercial sphere of influence of the city of Cairns stretching south to Cardwell (and a line of competition with Townsville), west to the Gulf of Carpentaria and the Northern Territory border and north to the Papua New Guinea border – essentially the Peninsula Australia Geographic Region. This large commercial region is one of some six large regions across northern Australia based on regional capitals and equivalent in area to the States across southern Australia (see [Map 1 Appendix 1](#)).

### 1.3 Important Features of the Region

The region lies deep into the tropics spanning 10 degrees of latitude, from 9°S to 19°S – half the depth of the State of Queensland (see [Map 2 Appendix 1](#)). The region accounts for about 25% of Australia's water runoff. Along the region's east coast are Australia's highest rainfall areas and most prolific rainforest vegetation, varied topography and a range of microclimates. Length of coastline from Cardwell north to the Torres Strait, down the west coast of the Peninsula and around to the Northern Territory border is equivalent in distance from Brisbane around to Adelaide.

There are substantial mineralised areas – base metals (especially behind Cairns), and sedimentary type deposits (especially in the Peninsula).

### 1.4 Timeframe

The following analysis is broken into three major periods:

1. Early development – late 1800s
2. Period up to the end of WWII – 1900 to 1950
3. The period since 1950.

## 1.5 Analytical Framework

The analysis in the first place looks at those activities that earn income from outside the region (export of goods and services to the rest of Australia and the world). These are the primary factors in locating activity and population into the region.

The analysis then looks at those that provide goods and services to the region that are mainly 'followers'.

The 'outside earners' are in turn identified as 'resource based' (i.e. are based on the natural resources and attributes of the region) or as 'skills based' (i.e. are based on the specialist skills developed in the region). The 'resource based' 'outside earners' dominate as drivers of the early development of the region and still dominate 'outside earnings'.

The resource based 'outside earners' are broadly classified by the type of resource:

- Plant growth based
  - = Pastoral
  - = Cropping based
  - = Forestry
- Marine – fishing
- Mineral – mining
- Tourism – based on natural attributes – reef/rainforest, etc.

However, as the economy has developed, 'skills based' earners of outside income have come into the picture (especially in the aviation and marine servicing sectors). On top of this, there is some activity that is due to 'strategic' location, especially defence that is dependent on 'outside' funding. The 'follower' type services are mainly located in Cairns as the regional city and the major service towns of Mareeba, Innisfail, Atherton, Tully and Mossman. These types of activities are mainly related to the level of population and industry in the region.

## 1.6 Infrastructure

Critical infrastructure development is identified.

## 1.7 Underlying Factors

In the analysis of what has been happening and driving economic development, four (4) major underlying factors are identified as follows:

1. Growth of world markets reaching out for resources;
2. Transport and communication developments breaking down old cost barriers of remoteness from markets (positive and negative);
3. Development of technology suited to the tropics;
4. Success breeds success factors as infrastructure and population builds up.

## 2. HISTORIC GROWTH OF CAIRNS AS A CITY

Cairns was founded in 1876 as a port to service the then newly discovered Hodgkinson goldfield.

Appendix 3 gives full details of population growth of Cairns as a city from about 1890. The following table summarises.

**Table 1: Long-Term Population Growth 1891 to 2011**

| Year                           | CAIRNS CITY LGA<br>(Total population including visitors<br>& excluding residents away) |                                                              |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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<br>overspill into Mulgrave Shire |
| 1971 - 1976                    | 2.9% pa                                                                                |                                                              |
|                                | <b>CAIRNS STAT DISTRICT<br/>(Residential Population)</b>                               |                                                              |
| 1976 - 1986                    | 3.6% pa                                                                                |                                                              |
|                                | <b>CAIRNS STAT DISTRICT<br/>(Revised) (Residential Population)</b>                     |                                                              |
| 1986 - 1991                    | 3.1% pa                                                                                |                                                              |
|                                | <b>CAIRNS COMBINED NORTH &amp; SOUTH SA3s<br/>(Residential Population)</b>             |                                                              |
| 1991 - 2001                    | 2.5% pa                                                                                |                                                              |
| 2001 - 2011                    | 2.8% pa                                                                                |                                                              |
|                                | <b>LONG TERM AVERAGE</b>                                                               |                                                              |
| <b>129 years (1891 - 2011)</b> | <b>3.4% pa</b>                                                                         |                                                              |

Source: Cummings Economics from early data up to 1958 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.

More recent growth of Cairns as defined by Cairns LGA 2010 to 2019 averaged 1.3% per annum.

The above table indicates strong long-term growth periods of the city from very small beginnings through to the 1940s when World War II suppressed growth. Growth in the 1960s was slower. The past decade's growth of Cairns city at 1.3% per annum is the slowest average growth of any of the periods identified.

Equivalent historical figures for the Cairns region overall were not readily available.

The following table gives growth over the period from 1976 to 2004 of the city and region. The table indicates a typical pattern of faster growth of the city compared with the rest of the region. More recent figures indicate that the city is growing at about the same pace as the rest of the region.

**HISTORIC DRIVERS OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
CAIRNS/ TROPICAL NORTH QLD REGION**

**Table 2: Estimated Residential Population & Growth Rates Cairns/ Far North Region (incl Gulf Shires) by Areas**

| Year June                    | Cairns City LGA | South Coastal | North Coastal | Tableland | Peninsula/ Torres | Gulf    | Total   |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|---------|---------|
| 1976                         | 57,060          | 23,450        | 4,490         | 26,320    | 12,830            | 5,890   | 130,040 |
| 1977                         | 59,190          | 23,520        | 4,580         | 27,070    | 13,090            | 5,960   | 133,410 |
| 1978                         | 60,620          | 23,550        | 4,630         | 27,570    | 13,290            | 6,020   | 135,680 |
| 1979                         | 62,000          | 23,640        | 4,670         | 28,110    | 13,550            | 6,130   | 138,100 |
| 1980                         | 64,040          | 23,690        | 4,760         | 28,920    | 13,850            | 6,260   | 141,520 |
| 1981                         | 66,280          | 23,870        | 4,850         | 29,810    | 14,210            | 6,410   | 145,430 |
| 1982                         | 68,660          | 24,100        | 5,260         | 30,820    | 14,370            | 6,470   | 150,030 |
| 1983                         | 71,480          | 24,400        | 5,650         | 31,830    | 14,530            | 6,650   | 154,540 |
| 1984                         | 73,950          | 24,680        | 5,890         | 32,140    | 14,660            | 6,680   | 158,000 |
| 1985                         | 75,700          | 24,950        | 6,050         | 33,180    | 14,920            | 6,700   | 162,900 |
| 1986                         | 79,730          | 25,120        | 6,545         | 33,898    | 15,100            | 6,827   | 167,212 |
| 1987                         | 81,760          | 25,357        | 6,531         | 34,291    | 14,930            | 6,770   | 169,639 |
| 1988                         | 84,890          | 25,560        | 7,016         | 34,798    | 15,248            | 6,799   | 174,317 |
| 1989                         | 89,187          | 25,918        | 7,644         | 35,665    | 15,664            | 6,808   | 180,886 |
| 1990                         | 91,428          | 26,268        | 7,780         | 36,528    | 16,048            | 6,789   | 184,841 |
| 1991                         | 92,563          | 26,548        | 7,783         | 36,849    | 16,392            | 6,763   | 186,892 |
| 1992                         | 95,627          | 26,783        | 7,975         | 37,484    | 16,705            | 6,815   | 191,389 |
| 1993                         | 100,083         | 27,125        | 8,370         | 38,193    | 16,926            | 6,850   | 197,547 |
| 1994                         | 104,458         | 27,675        | 8,842         | 38,599    | 17,001            | 6,963   | 203,538 |
| 1995                         | 109,537         | 28,078        | 9,283         | 39,153    | 17,163            | 7,013   | 210,227 |
| 1996                         | 113,507         | 28,894        | 9,698         | 39,894    | 16,529            | 8,092   | 216,614 |
| 1997                         | 115,404         | 29,259        | *9,636        | 40,075    | *19,856           | *5,624  | 219,854 |
| 1998                         | 116,978         | 29,413        | 9,844         | 40,327    | 20,225            | 5,747   | 222,534 |
| 1999                         | 118,166         | 29,543        | 9,955         | 40,358    | 20,633            | 5,895   | 224,550 |
| 2000                         | 119,288         | 29,922        | 10,587        | 40,523    | 21,012            | 6,103   | 227,435 |
| 2001                         | 119,909         | 30,113        | 10,466        | 40,801    | 21,570            | 6,305   | 229,164 |
| 2002                         | 121,700         | 30,347        | 10,867        | 41,180    | 22,131            | 6,422   | 232,647 |
| 2003                         | 124,508         | 30,624        | 11,160        | 41,477    | 22,412            | 6,361   | 236,542 |
| 2004                         | 127,312         | 30,763        | 11,275        | 41,566    | 22,640            | 6,330   | 239,886 |
| <b>Annual Percent Growth</b> |                 |               |               |           |                   |         |         |
| Year June                    | Cairns City LGA | South Coastal | North Coastal | Tableland | Peninsula/ Torres | Gulf    | Total   |
| 1977                         | 3.7%            | 0.3%          | 2.0%          | 2.8%      | 2.0%              | 1.2%    | 2.6%    |
| 1978                         | 2.4%            | 0.1%          | 1.1%          | 1.8%      | 1.5%              | 1.0%    | 1.7%    |
| 1979                         | 2.3%            | 0.4%          | 0.9%          | 2.0%      | 2.0%              | 1.8%    | 1.8%    |
| 1980                         | 3.3%            | 0.2%          | 1.9%          | 2.9%      | 2.2%              | 2.1%    | 2.5%    |
| 1981                         | 3.5%            | 0.8%          | 1.9%          | 3.1%      | 2.6%              | 2.4%    | 2.8%    |
| 1982                         | 3.6%            | 1.0%          | 8.5%          | 3.4%      | 1.1%              | 0.9%    | 3.2%    |
| 1983                         | 3.9%            | 1.2%          | 7.4%          | 3.3%      | 1.1%              | 2.8%    | 3.0%    |
| 1984                         | 3.5%            | 1.1%          | 4.2%          | 1.0%      | 0.9%              | 0.5%    | 2.2%    |
| 1985                         | 2.4%            | 1.1%          | 2.7%          | 3.2%      | 1.8%              | 0.3%    | 3.1%    |
| 1986                         | 5.3%            | 0.7%          | 8.2%          | 2.2%      | 1.2%              | 1.9%    | 2.6%    |
| 1987                         | 2.8%            | 0.7%          | 4.5%          | 0.7%      | 1.9%              | 0.5%    | 1.9%    |
| 1988                         | 3.8%            | 0.8%          | 9.0%          | 1.5%      | 2.1%              | 0.4%    | 2.8%    |
| 1989                         | 5.1%            | 1.4%          | 9.0%          | 2.5%      | 2.5%              | 0.1%    | 3.8%    |
| 1990                         | 2.5%            | 1.4%          | 1.8%          | 2.4%      | 2.4%              | (-0.3%) | 2.2%    |

## HISTORIC DRIVERS OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE CAIRNS/ TROPICAL NORTH QLD REGION

|      |      |      |         |      |       |         |             |
|------|------|------|---------|------|-------|---------|-------------|
| 1991 | 1.2% | 1.1% | 0.0%    | 0.9% | 2.1%  | (-0.4%) | <b>1.1%</b> |
| 1992 | 3.3% | 0.9% | 2.5%    | 1.7% | 1.9%  | 0.8%    | <b>2.4%</b> |
| 1993 | 4.6% | 1.3% | 5.0%    | 1.9% | 1.3%  | 0.1%    | <b>3.2%</b> |
| 1994 | 4.4% | 2.0% | 5.6%    | 1.1% | 0.4%  | 1.6%    | <b>3.0%</b> |
| 1995 | 4.9% | 1.5% | 5.0%    | 1.4% | 1.0%  | 0.7%    | <b>3.3%</b> |
| 1996 | 3.6% | 2.9% | n/a*    | 1.9% | n/a*  | n/a*    | <b>3.0%</b> |
| 1997 | 1.7% | 1.3% | n/a*    | 0.5% | n/a*  | n/a*    | <b>1.5%</b> |
| 1998 | 1.4% | 0.5% | 2.2%    | 0.6% | 1.9%  | 2.2%    | <b>1.2%</b> |
| 1999 | 1.0% | 0.4% | 1.1%    | 0.1% | 2.0%  | 2.6%    | <b>0.9%</b> |
| 2000 | 0.9% | 1.3% | 6.3%    | 0.5% | 1.8%  | 3.6%    | <b>1.3%</b> |
| 2001 | 0.5% | 0.6% | (-0.1%) | 0.7% | 2.7%  | 3.3%    | <b>0.8%</b> |
| 2002 | 1.5% | 0.8% | 3.8%    | 0.9% | 2.6%  | 1.9%    | <b>1.5%</b> |
| 2003 | 2.3% | 0.9% | 2.7%    | 0.7% | 1.3%* | (-0.9%) | <b>1.7%</b> |
| 2004 | 2.3% | 0.5% | 1.0%    | 0.2% | 1.0%* | (-0.8%) | <b>1.4%</b> |

Source: Cummings Economics from ABS - Cat 3212.3 & Cat 3202.3.

\***Note:** Boundary Changes = Aboriginal Communities, Kowanyama & Pormpuraaw from Carpentaria to Peninsula & Wujal Wujal from Douglas to Peninsula. 2003 & 2004 intercensal estimates may not be reliable.

Note: Cairns City LGA : Prior to 1995 Cairns City & Mulgrave Shire LGA's.  
 South Coastal : Johnstone & Cardwell Shires.  
 North Coastal : Douglas Shire.  
 Tableland Area : Atherton, Eacham, Herberton & Mareeba Shires.  
 Peninsula/Torres : Cook Shire, Weipa, Aurukun & Torres.



### 3. EARLY DEVELOPMENT – THE LATE 1800s

#### 3.1 Indigenous Population

Historically, there was a relatively dense population in the region of Aboriginal tribes and Melanesian Torres Strait Islanders in the Torres Strait. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) population today represents about 14% of the population of the region and accounts for the majority population in large parts of the Gulf, Upper Peninsula area and in the Torres Strait.

The need to protect and assist the advancement of the Aboriginal and Islander population has long been an element in the region's economy, initially through church missions and more recently through government programs.

Special government expenditure on ATSI population is a significant ongoing factor in the economy. In the early 2000s, it was estimated at about \$150m per annum. Productivity Commission report on special ATSI program spending put average per capita in Queensland in 2015-16 at \$40,000 per ATSI person. This works out at approximately \$160m for the region per annum. It is likely that the per capita rate in this region is higher than the State average.

Relatively high birth rates increase the region's average population growth.

#### 3.2 Early Settlement

European intrusion began before early settlement - on the marine frontier with very high value "beche-de-mere" collection for export to China and by cedar getters coming into the rainforests.

Earliest settlement started on the pastoral frontier with settlers moving into newly opened land north of Bowen after Queensland became a separate colony in 1859. Cardwell was established as a port to service the pastoral frontier until Townsville was established as a 'boiling down' works and took over.

The agricultural frontier started with planters moving in to establish sugar plantations with indentured labour on the Herbert and Johnstone River valleys.

A major pearling rush got underway on the marine frontier, especially in the Torres Strait.

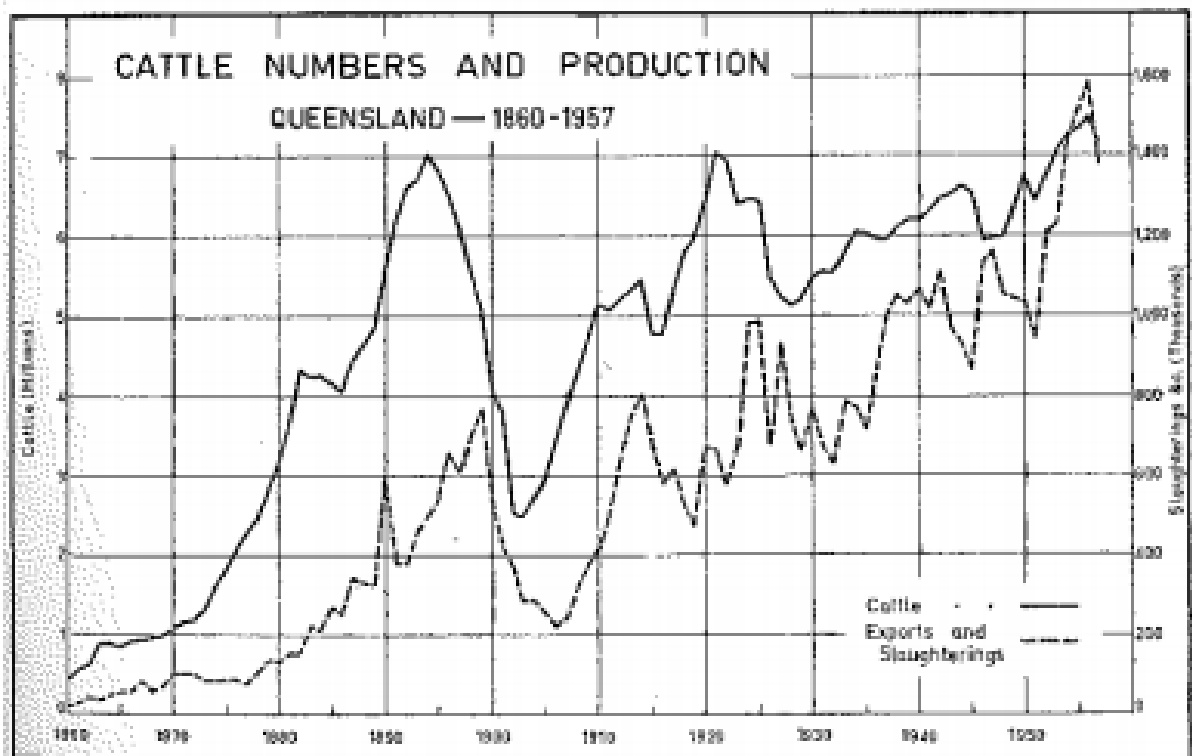
However, discovery of gold came early and gold rushes even vaulted beyond the pastoral frontier (with disastrous consequences on the Palmer).

The Palmer was followed by the Hodgkinson further south and the discovery of tin around Herberton and Irvinebank and subsequently other base metals in the area west of Cairns.

The expanding pastoral industry suffered a major setback in the 1890s with the arrival via the Northern Territory of tickborne redwater fever that decimated the British breeds and needed to be combatted with expensive chemical 'dipping' of cattle.

Chart of cattle numbers in Queensland overall illustrates.

Chart 1: Cattle Numbers in Queensland



Source: Cummings Economics from Queensland Year Book 1959.

While agriculture development (including tea, coffee and banana growing in the Innisfail area), forestry and the marine resource-based development occurred, it would be mining development that led. Ports were established at Cooktown, Port Douglas, Trinity Inlet (Cairns) and Mourilyan, mainly to service the mineral fields. A railway was started from Cooktown but the Palmer field faded quickly and it terminated at Laura.

Port Douglas and Mourilyan were eclipsed as ports with the decision to build the railway from Trinity Inlet as the superior port site. Construction commenced in the early 1880s with major target Herberton and the tin fields.

## 4. 1900 TO THE END OF WORLD WAR II

### 4.1 General

Mining dominated during the early 1900s with branches from the Herberton rail being extended from a Mareeba junction all the way to Mungana and to Mt Surprise and Forsyth opening up base metal fields around Chillagoe, the Einasleigh and Mt Garnet. Small settlements were dotted throughout the mining hinterland. However, most of the deposits were fairly small and a serious collapse of mineral prices by the 1920s followed by the depression and then the Second World War saw the mining fields fade leaving behind numerous 'ghost towns'.

**Table 3: Mineral Production - £**

| Year | Herberton | Etheridge | Chillagoe | Total   |
|------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| 1912 | 284,100   | 167,953   | 196,862   | 648,915 |
| 1914 | 104,668   | 43,426    | 114,390   | 262,484 |
| 1923 | 74,764    | n/a       | n/a       | 74,764  |
| 1925 | 139,380   | n/a       | n/a       | 139,380 |
| 1928 | 73,799    | n/a       | n/a       | 73,799  |
| 1934 | 125,788   | n/a       | n/a       | 125,788 |

Source: Cummings Economics from Cairns Chamber of Commerce Annual Reports for relevant years.

Note: Although the Etheridge and Chillagoe districts were still active, it is noteworthy that by 1923, they had become less important and reporting on mineral production from them was dropped from the Cairns Chamber of Commerce's annual reports. The following records tin production in Queensland (1875 to 1957). Most tin production was in the Cairns hinterland.

**Table 4: Tin Production Queensland <sup>(1)</sup>**

| Year | Tonnes |
|------|--------|
| 1875 | 3,133  |
| 1880 | 1,993  |
| 1885 | 2,277  |
| 1890 | 2,079  |
| 1895 | 1,480  |
| 1900 | 786    |
| 1905 | 2,762  |
| 1910 | 2,067  |
| 1915 | 1,488  |
| 1916 | 1,195  |
| 1917 | 824    |
| 1918 | 918    |
| 1919 | 696    |
| 1920 | 1,040  |
| 1921 | 735    |
| 1922 | 769    |
| 1923 | 632    |
| 1924 | 837    |
| 1925 | 708    |
| 1926 | 741    |
| 1927 | 778    |

|      |     |
|------|-----|
| 1928 | 711 |
| 1929 | 692 |
| 1930 | 422 |
| 1931 | 335 |
| 1932 | 496 |
| 1933 | 599 |
| 1934 | 739 |
| 1935 | 832 |
| 1936 | 776 |
| 1937 | 820 |
| 1938 | 704 |
| 1939 | 867 |
| 1940 | 890 |
| 1941 | 759 |
| 1942 | 522 |
| 1943 | 549 |
| 1944 | 863 |
| 1945 | 651 |
| 1946 | 684 |
| 1947 | 977 |
| 1948 | 478 |
| 1949 | 736 |
| 1950 | 600 |
| 1951 | 340 |
| 1952 | 330 |
| 1953 | 292 |
| 1954 | 730 |
| 1955 | 770 |
| 1956 | 630 |
| 1957 | 772 |

Source: *Cummings Economics from Queensland Year Book 1959.*

On the pastoral and agricultural frontier, the check that had occurred to pastoral expansion was added to by Federation and the White Australia Policy adopted in 1901. It resulted in a need to transition the sugar industry from Pacific Islander indentured labour to a small farmer supplied central mill system with expensive white cane cutting gangs. The industry survived under 'protection' of an import embargo.

The early tea and coffee industries faded as promised import protection did not eventuate. Expensive coastal shipping saw early development of banana growing fade.

However, progressively, expansion of the sugar industry took pace along the coast with new districts opening out by the 1920s around Babinda and on the Tully River. The following table illustrates the growth that occurred just in the immediate Cairns district.

Arrival of the railway on the Tablelands helped stimulate the development of dairying and maize growing and crops for local markets.

The 'pearling' boom resulted in over fishing of pearls and transitioned to trochus fishing spreading down the reef from the Torres Strait to Cairns.

**Table 5: Cane Crushed Sugar Mills Cairns District - Tonnes**

| Calendar Year | Mulgrave | Hambledon | Babinda | Total   |
|---------------|----------|-----------|---------|---------|
| 1907          | 80,042   | 79,196    | 0       | 159,238 |
| 1908          | 63,924   | 67,479    | 0       | 131,403 |
| 1909          | 58,943   | 65,470    | 0       | 124,413 |
| 1910          | 59,600   | 0         | 0       | 59,600  |
| 1911          | 51,373   | 59,729    | 0       | 111,102 |
| 1912          | 50,991   | 60,215    | 0       | 111,206 |
| 1913          | 71,752   | 77,698    | 0       | 149,450 |
| 1914          | 94,648   | 95,934    | 0       | 190,582 |
| 1915          | 52,389   | 46,086    | 47,014  | 145,489 |
| 1916          | 78,953   | 83,542    | 154,630 | 317,125 |
| 1917          | 108,650  | 101,558   | 150,600 | 360,808 |
| 1918          | 56,315   | 68,761    | 93,087  | 316,923 |
| 1919          | 79,022   | 97,685    | 140,216 | 316,923 |
| 1920          | 73,034   | 77,657    | 149,800 | 300,491 |
| 1921          | 89,936   | 83,625    | 112,676 | 286,237 |
| 1922          | 89,396   | 116,458   | 112,750 | 318,604 |
| 1923          | 138,864  | 126,085   | 163,821 | 428,770 |
| 1924          | 175,419  | 160,847   | 203,000 | 539,266 |
| 1925          | 179,754  | 187,799   | 164,238 | 531,791 |
| 1926          | 189,349  | 193,116   | 195,134 | 577,599 |
| 1927          | 163,706  | 150,784   | 178,319 | 492,809 |
| 1928          | 189,740  | 181,511   | 194,259 | 565,510 |
| 1929          | 207,856  | 216,019   | 212,057 | 635,932 |
| 1930          | 179,107  | 175,832   | 212,606 | 567,545 |
| 1931          | 241,910  | 235,588   | 237,718 | 715,216 |
| 1932          | 219,926  | 207,428   | 207,153 | 634,507 |
| 1933          | 239,526  | 216,479   | 260,636 | 716,641 |
| 1934          | 178,986  | 172,476   | 132,723 | 484,185 |
| 1935          | 224,652  | 182,635   | 196,204 | 603,491 |
| 1936          | 353,538  | 291,794   | 249,220 | 894,552 |
| 1937          | 305,740  | 287,445   | 257,228 | 850,413 |
| 1938          | 249,246  | 213,715   | 272,742 | 735,703 |
| 1939          | 271,518  | 212,011   | 216,711 | 700,240 |

Source: Cummings Economics from Queensland Year Book 1959.

**Note:** In addition to the mills in the Cairns district, sugar mills operated in the Innisfail and Mossman districts and in the 1920s a new mill developed in the Tully district.

The early beginnings of tourism came with the coastal shipping bringing freight north to be followed in the 1920s of the final linking of the railway from Brisbane (near Innisfail). The era of the Sunshine Express was ushered in, of “White Cars” around the Tablelands and the Kuranda Scenic Railway.

Threat of invasion in 1942 saw major movement of population to the south but counterbalanced by a major flow of military personnel, especially as the Tablelands became a training/ staging area for the New Guinea campaigns and as air bases were established in the area.

## 4.2 Infrastructure

During this period from 1900 to 1950, there was a very heavy investment in land transport infrastructure, initially in railways especially aimed at the mining centres, but also helping open up the Tablelands and coastal agricultural areas. The interior lines also supported the pastoral industry.

In the 1920s, the north coast railway was finally linked to Brisbane with major implications for coastal shipping that prior to this, was the main transport link between the region and southern Australia.

The advent of motor transport started being felt in the region with heavy investment progressively taking place in roads in the 1920s and 1930s (Captain Cook Highway with depression funding) and during the war (Kuranda Range Road and Rex Range Road).

The opportunities presented by aircraft was recognised and in the 1930s the saltpan north of the city started to be developed as an airport with pioneer aviator, Tommy McDonald, playing a major role in the development of services throughout the region and south to Brisbane. The Aerial Ambulance was established. The war brought major development of airports and airstrips throughout the region.

## 4.3 Cairns as Regional City

Although Cairns became the leading port and service centre, most urban development over this period was spread around the region in the various district towns.

Much of the servicing activity in Cairns was related to the expanding immediate sugar district.

## 4.4 Summary

Accurate figures are not readily available, however the picture is one of diversified early development of pastoral, agricultural, marine resources, but with hinterland mining leading.

The impact of 'tick' fever in the 1890s and Federation set back pastoral and agricultural development. The mining boom then fades. As mining fades, sugar takes over the lead. Marine resource activity remains strong along with forestry. A small early start of tourism emerges with coastal shipping and then the railways.

## 5. FROM THE 1950s

### 5.1 General

The following table illustrates the position in the 1950s for the region's 'base' industries mainly earning income from outside the region.

**Table 6: Gross Value of Recorded Production in Statistical Division, 1957-58**

| Item                                                   | Cairns<br>£1,000. | Peninsula<br>£1,000. |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Agricultural</b>                                    |                   |                      |
| Grain Crops                                            | 463               | 1                    |
| Green Forage                                           | 9                 | 0                    |
| Hay                                                    | 7                 | 0                    |
| Sugar Cane                                             | 18,966            | 0                    |
| Fruit                                                  | 214               | 2                    |
| All Other                                              | 2,130             | 10                   |
| <b>Agricultural Total</b>                              | <b>21,789</b>     | <b>13</b>            |
| <b>Pastoral</b>                                        |                   |                      |
| Wool                                                   | 1                 | 0                    |
| Sheep                                                  | 32                | 0                    |
| Beef Cattle                                            | 2,101             | 603                  |
| Horses                                                 | 1                 | 1                    |
| <b>Pastoral Total</b>                                  | <b>2,135</b>      | <b>604</b>           |
| <b>Dairying &amp; Pig raising</b>                      |                   |                      |
| Dairying                                               | 1,305             | 0                    |
| Pigs                                                   | 249               | 2                    |
| <b>Dairying &amp; Pig raising Total</b>                | <b>1,554</b>      | <b>2</b>             |
| <b>Poultry Total</b>                                   | <b>190</b>        | <b>1</b>             |
| <b>Bee-keeping Total</b>                               | <b>2</b>          | <b>0</b>             |
| <b>Forestry Total</b>                                  | <b>2,023</b>      | <b>19</b>            |
| <b>Fishing Total</b>                                   | <b>78</b>         | <b>385</b>           |
| <b>Mining</b>                                          |                   |                      |
| Gold, Silver, Copper, Lead, Tin, Zinc                  | 375               | 12                   |
| Coal                                                   | 77                | 0                    |
| Other Minerals, Gems, etc                              | 36                | 0                    |
| Quarry products                                        | 252               | 0                    |
| <b>Mining Total</b>                                    | <b>740</b>        | <b>12</b>            |
| <b>Total Primary</b>                                   | <b>28,511</b>     | <b>1,036</b>         |
| <b>Manufacturing (net)</b>                             | <b>11,638</b>     | <b>44</b>            |
| <b>Total Primary (gross) &amp; Manufacturing (net)</b> | <b>40,149</b>     | <b>1,080</b>         |

Source: Cummings Economics from Queensland Year Book 1959.

With sugar production accounting for almost £19m plus most of the manufacturing being sugar milling (note traditional split of sugar money 60% farmers, 40% mill), the region's economy could be characterised as one based on sugar production (about 70%), with some additional mining, other agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

When further sugar expansion failed to occur in the 1960s, it ushered in a slower growth period.

However, the 1960s would see some major developments occur that would set the region on a strong growth path for the next four (4) decades in agriculture, mining, fisheries and tourism.

**Table 7: Growth in Gross Value of Agricultural Production in FNQ Statistical Division**

| Year                    | Production<br>\$m | Growth<br>% |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1982/83                 | \$233 m           | -           |
| 1983/84                 | \$342 m           | 46.8%       |
| 1984/85                 | \$290 m           | (-15.2%)    |
| 1985/86                 | \$287 m           | (-1.0%)     |
| 1986/87                 | \$311 m           | 8.4%        |
| 1987/88                 | \$376 m           | 20.9%       |
| 1988/89                 | \$440 m           | 17.0%       |
| 1989/90                 | \$466 m           | 5.9%        |
| 1990/91                 | \$505 m           | 8.4%        |
| 1991/92                 | \$509 m           | 0.8%        |
| 1992/93                 | \$597 m           | 17.3%       |
| 1993/94                 | \$540 m           | (-9.5%)     |
| 1994/95                 | \$652 m           | 20.7%       |
| 1995/96                 | \$609 m           | (-10.6%)    |
| 1996/97                 | \$594 m           | (-2.3%)     |
| 1997/98                 | \$620 m           | 4.4%        |
| 1998/99                 | \$670 m           | 8.1%        |
| 1999/00                 | \$682 m           | 1.8%        |
| 2000/01                 | \$788 m           | 15.5%       |
| 2001/02                 | \$875 m           | 11.0%       |
| 2002/03                 | \$888 m           | 1.4%        |
| <b>Av Annual Growth</b> | <b>6.9% pa</b>    |             |

Source: Cummings Economics from Australian Bureau of Statistics Agstats.

On the pastoral front, good markets, the introduction of superior Brahman stock and 'beef road' investment would see the pastoral industry set on a growth path.

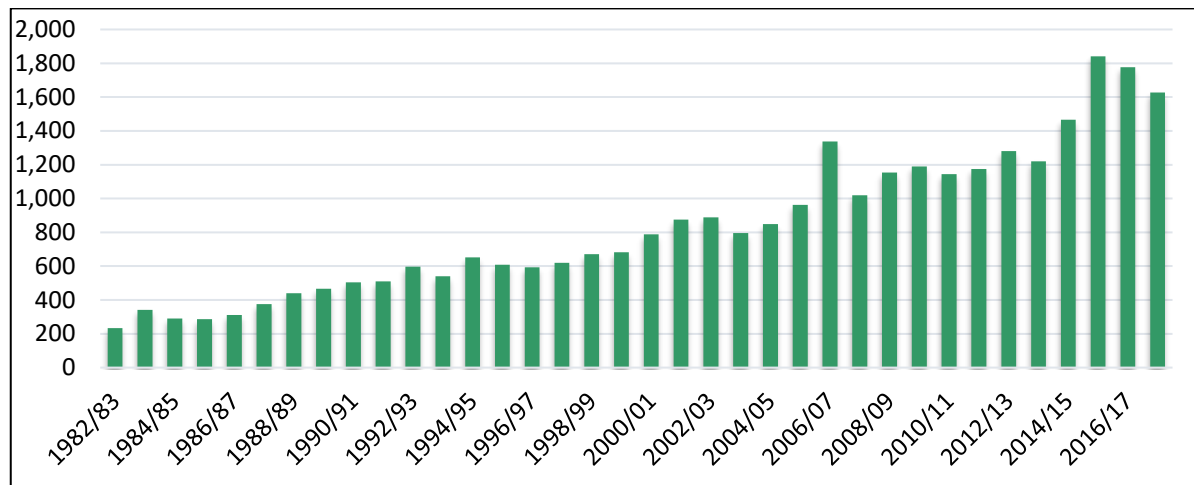
**Table 8: Gross Value of Agricultural Production by Type - \$million**

| Year                           | Crops          |              |                |             | Livestock Products |                |             | Livestock Disposals |              |             | Overall<br>TOTAL |
|--------------------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------|-------------|------------------|
|                                | Sugar<br>Cane  | Fruit        | Other          | Total       | Milk               | Other          | Total       | Cattle              | Other        | Total       |                  |
| 1982/83                        | 107            | 27           | 48             | <b>182</b>  | 15                 | 2              | <b>17</b>   | 32                  | 2            | <b>34</b>   | <b>233</b>       |
| (% of Total)                   | 46%            | 12%          | 21%            | <b>78%</b>  | 6%                 | 1%             | <b>7%</b>   | 14%                 | 1%           | <b>15%</b>  | <b>100%</b>      |
| 1992/93                        | 177            | 239          | 81             | <b>497</b>  | 31                 | 3              | <b>34</b>   | 63                  | 3            | <b>66</b>   | <b>597</b>       |
| (% of Total)                   | 30%            | 40%          | 13%            | <b>83%</b>  | 5%                 | 1%             | <b>6%</b>   | 11%                 | 1%           | <b>11%</b>  | <b>100%</b>      |
| 2002/03                        | 241            | 350          | 104            | <b>695</b>  | 44                 | 1              | <b>45</b>   | 129                 | 18           | <b>147</b>  | <b>888</b>       |
| (% of Total)                   | 27%            | 39%          | 11%            | <b>77%</b>  | 5%                 | 0%             | <b>5%</b>   | 15%                 | 2%           | <b>17%</b>  | <b>100%</b>      |
| <b>Av Annual<br/>Growth</b>    | <b>4.1%</b>    | <b>13.6%</b> | <b>3.9%</b>    | <b>6.9%</b> | <b>5.5%</b>        | <b>(-3.4%)</b> | <b>5.0%</b> | <b>7.2%</b>         | <b>11.6%</b> | <b>7.6%</b> | <b>6.9%</b>      |
| <b>Av "Real"<br/>An Growth</b> | <b>(-0.0%)</b> | <b>9.0%</b>  | <b>(-0.8%)</b> | <b>2.6%</b> | <b>1.3%</b>        | <b>(-7.2%)</b> | <b>0.8%</b> | <b>2.9%</b>         | <b>7.3%</b>  | <b>3.3%</b> | <b>2.6%</b>      |

Source: Cummings Economics from Australian Bureau of Statistics Agstats.



**Chart 2: Gross Value of Agricultural Production, Tropical North Queensland**



Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 7503.0.

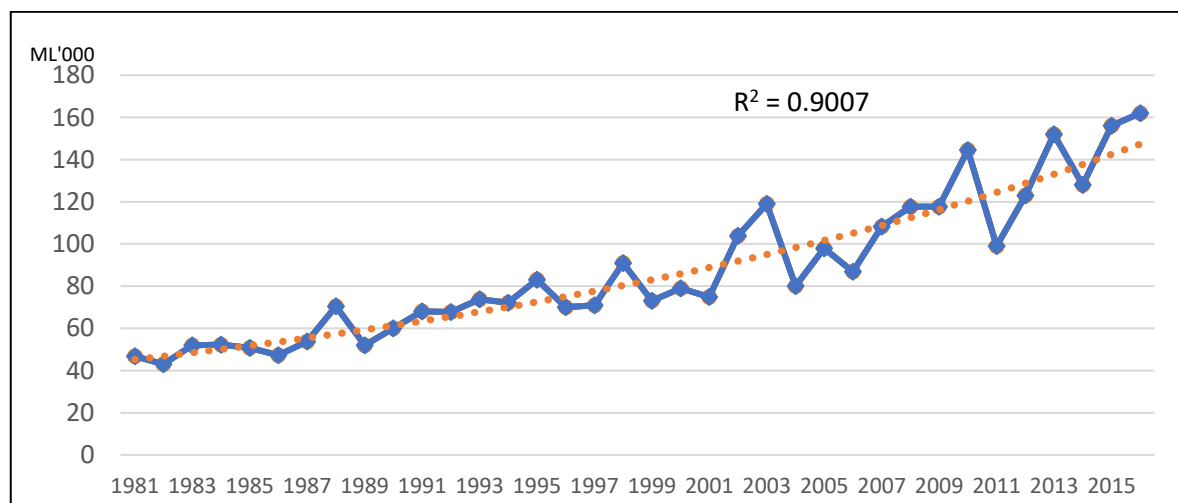
On the agricultural front, the invention of mechanised harvesters and investment in bulk sugar handling would see the industry be able to survive without protection by the late 1980s, survive bouts of very low prices and expand onto the Tablelands. However, the major development would be the restart of the horticultural type industries that started in the region before Federation but faded.

The major factor was the completion of sealing of the Bruce Highway in central Queensland in the early 1970s and semi-trailers coming north looking for backloading. Mechanisation saw tea and coffee production come back. Another major factor was the construction of Tinaroo Dam in the 1950s.

While the removal of protection in the 1990s saw the demise of the tobacco industry over the past 20 years, there has been an explosion in production of a whole range of horticultural crops in the Mareeba area and Tinaroo water is now fully allocated.

The following chart illustrates the growth that has occurred.

**Chart 3: Growth in Deliveries of Tinaroo Water 1981 to 2016**



Source: Sunwater Annual Report DNRM.

Notably, expansion of horticultural crops has been oriented to the Australian domestic market and to some extent the growth of the local tourism market, but with air links based on tourism growth, opening up limited international markets. The horticultural growth is continuing in scale and diversity especially related to irrigation. Horticulture on the Tablelands increased in value 2015-1019 from about \$350m to \$530m.

Lakeland has come on stream following the sealing of the Mulligan Highway from Mareeba.

Broadacre cropping has expanded into the Gulf and in the Peninsula west of Lakeland with issues of tree clearing and water access tending to hold back progress.

## 5.2 Forestry

Forestry's role in the economy has declined. The Wet Tropics World Heritage listing stopped logging of rainforests for high value cabinet timbers. Reafforestation plantings along the coast have suffered heavily from cyclone damage.

## 5.3 Fisheries

By the 1950s, the old marine industries of pearling, then trochus, had died. Wild gathered pearling was replaced by a few pearl farms in the Torres Strait. Plastic buttons killed the trochus shell industry. However, there was a resurgence through the discovery in the 1960s and development of a major prawn fishery in the Gulf with more recent development of barramundi and lower value species like mackerel. Prawns were overfished for a while but has come back to steady production.

**Table 9: Gross Value <sup>(1)</sup> of Production of Fisheries – FNQ**

| Calendar Year | Qld Fisheries \$m | Est Commonwealth Fisheries \$m | Total \$m |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| 1988          | 49.8              | na                             | na        |
| 1989          | 55.2              | na                             | na        |
| 1990          | 53.8              | na                             | na        |
| 1991          | 50.9              | na                             | na        |
| 1992          | 46.7              | na                             | na        |
| 1993          | 62.8              | na                             | na        |
| 1994          | 53.9              | na                             | na        |
| 1995          | 65.3              | na                             | na        |
| 1996          | 65.1              | na                             | na        |
| 1997          | 64.6              | na                             | na        |
| 1998          | 71.3              | na                             | na        |
| 1999          | 75.5              | na                             | na        |
| 2000          | 67.9              | 98                             | 166       |
| 2001          | 64.0              | 132                            | 196       |
| 2002          | 66.1              | 118                            | 184       |
| 2003          | 63.7              | 92                             | 156       |
| 2004          | na                | 75                             | na        |

Source: Cummings Economics from Qld Fisheries – QDPI Data; Commonwealth Fisheries – Cummings Economics estimate from ABARE Data.

**Note<sup>(1)</sup>** : These are 'landed' values and not market values. A substantial value added occurs in the region in terms of storage, transport, packaging and marketing.

Growing tourism-based air links led to the development of overseas markets for crayfish (mainly Torres Strait down to Cooktown), live coral trout and aquarium fish.

Crocodile farming for skins and meat started coming in during the late 1980s.

Aquaculture has come into the picture but little new has been developed in recent years.

Good statistical data is not easily available.

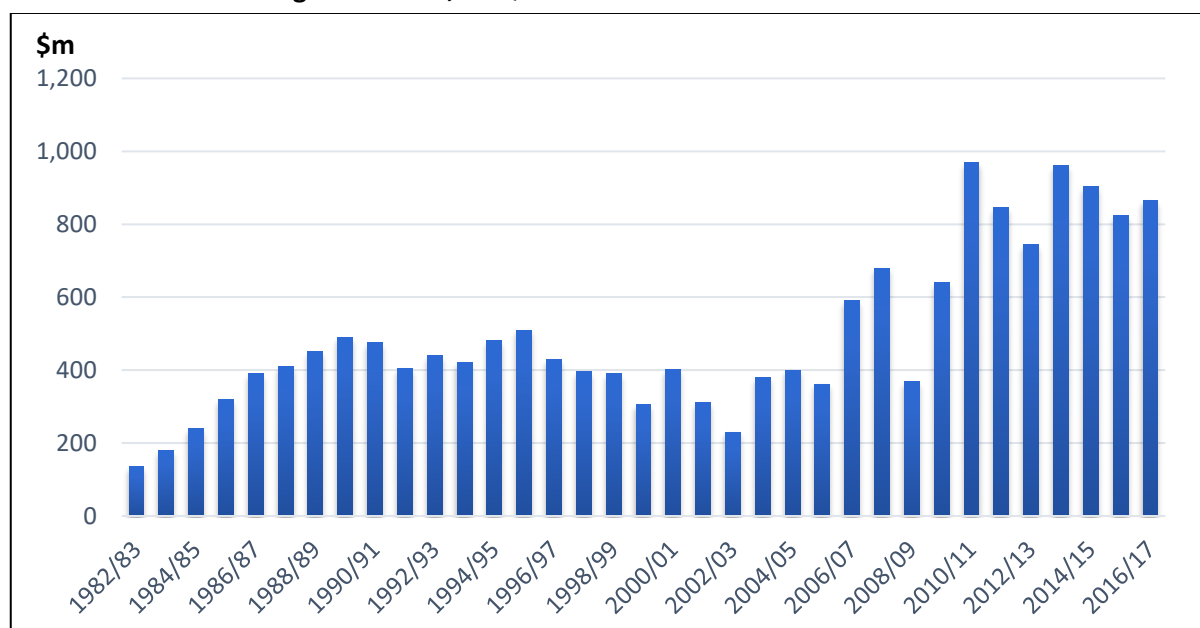
## 5.4 Mining

By the 1950s, mining was at a low ebb with tin production almost collapsing entirely after a price collapse in the early 1980s.

But again, there has been a resurgence. While there have been sporadic smaller scale flare ups in the old base metal mining fields west of Cairns depending on prices, large new developments started with the discovery during the 1950s of the world class deposits of bauxite in the Weipa area and the commencement of development during the 1960s followed by the silica sand development at Cape Flattery. Behind the development of these largely lower value sedimentary type deposits has been development in the post-war period of large bulk carrier ships.

The following chart illustrates the growth that has taken place.

**Chart 4: Value of Mining Production, TNQ**



Source: Cummings Economics from Queensland Department of Mining & Energy.

## 5.5 Tourism

The region's basic tourist product has been there since the beginning of settlement in the late 1800s - the reef, the rainforests, tropical beaches and scenery, a special outback, a different history and cultural mix.

The story of tourism development, against a background of a higher proportion of rising world incomes being spent on travel, can largely be written in terms of transport developments:

- The coastal passenger services;
- The linking of the railway from Brisbane during the 1920s;
- The post war family car boom and coach development and sealing of the Bruce Highway;
- Aircraft development, especially wide-bodied jets.

The Australian National Travel Association report of the early 70s indicates that the number of visitors coming into the region from Bowen north in the early 1970s was an estimated 293,000 (Queensland 35%, Interstate 54%, Overseas 11%), with expenditure estimated at \$50.6m, probably about \$30m in the Cairns region.

By the mid-1970s, international travelers on the great triangle (reef, rock and opera house), mainly from USA, resulted in about 26% of holiday visitors to Australia visiting Cairns.

Very rapid growth occurred during the 60s and 70s and following the opening up of Cairns airport in 1984 to long distance wide-bodied jets continued very strongly in the 1980s and 1990s. A check occurred during the Asian crisis late 1990s but growth recovering through to the GFC in 2008.

The following table records the growth in tourism expenditure from 1985 to 1999.

**Table 10: TNQ Visitor Expenditure by Origin, 1985 to 1999**

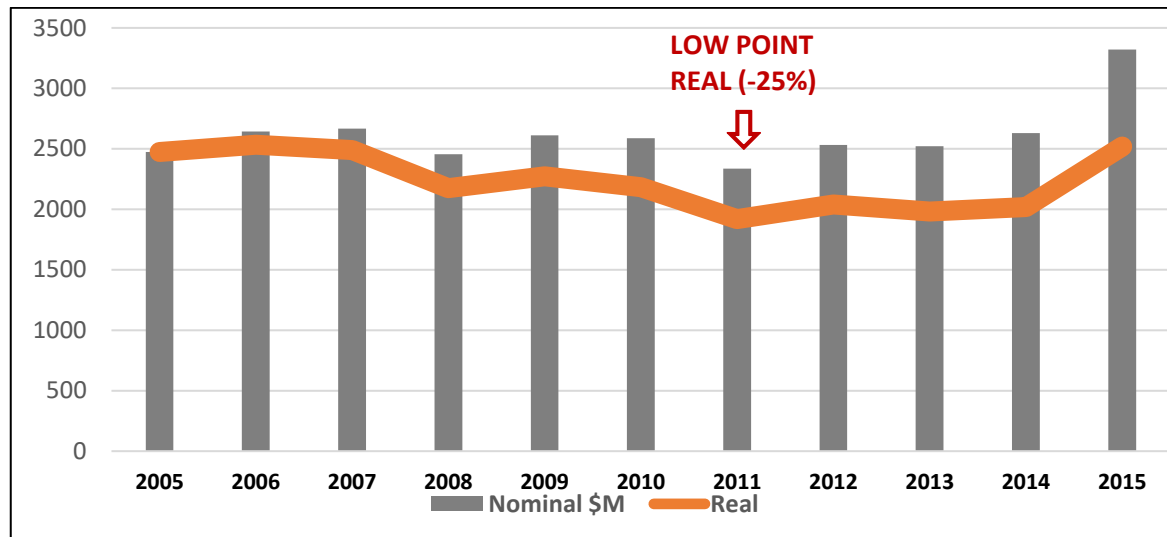
| Calendar Year | International Visitors<br>\$m | Interstate Visitors<br>\$m | Intrastate Visitors<br>\$m | TOTAL Visitors<br>\$m | Total as<br>% of Q'ld |
|---------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1985          | 33                            | 207                        | 101                        | 341                   | 11%                   |
| 1986          | 59                            | 301                        | 148                        | 508                   | 12%                   |
| 1987          | 76                            | 267                        | 196                        | 538                   | 11%                   |
| 1988          | 142                           | 290                        | 233                        | 665                   | 11%                   |
| 1989          | 179                           | 221                        | 255                        | 655                   | 12%                   |
| 1990          | 301                           | 300                        | 307                        | 909                   | 15%                   |
| 1991          | 364                           | 434                        | 333                        | 1,131                 | 17%                   |
| 1992          | 413                           | 455                        | 324                        | 1,192                 | 19%                   |
| 1993          | 465                           | 503                        | 315                        | 1,284                 | 18%                   |
| 1994          | 510                           | 520                        | 306                        | 1,335                 | 17%                   |
| 1995          | 568                           | 598                        | 321                        | 1,487                 | 17%                   |
| 1996          | 624                           | 715                        | 313                        | 1,652                 | 18%                   |
| 1997          | 609                           | 749                        | 369                        | 1,728                 | 17%                   |
| 1998          | 621                           | 763                        | 394                        | 1,778                 | 16%                   |
| 1999          | 676                           | 742                        | 439                        | 1,856                 | 16%                   |

Source: Cummings Economics from Queensland OESR.

Since 2007, the succession of the GFC, the extremely high dollar period and recent market failures (especially in China), have resulted in limited growth in the domestic market but no growth in the international market.

Expenditure levels fell then recovered. But if account is taken of inflation, there has been hardly any increase since 2006.

**Chart 5: Tourism Expenditure, Tropical NQ Region, Overnight Visitors Nominal & Real**



Source: Cummings Economics from Tourism Research Australia.

## 5.6 Resource Based Industries Overall

Thus, over the period since the 1950s, the Cairns region has experienced major growth of its resource-based industries earning income from outside the region.

From being highly dependent on the single crop of sugar, the primary industries have grown and diversified strongly. Mining has been resurgent. On top of this, came major growth of tourism. Since 2007 however, while the primary industries and mining have experienced continuing growth, tourism growth has almost stalled.

The following table summarises what happened from 1957 to about 2002-03.

**Table 11: Estimated Gross Value of Production 'Base Industries' – Current Prices (see Note below)**

| Year    | Item                        |                                    |          | Sub Total | TOTAL     |
|---------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1957    | Total Agriculture           | Sugar Cane                         | \$33.9 m | \$55.5m   | \$80.3 M  |
|         |                             | Other Agriculture/Pastoral/Fishing | \$21.6 m |           |           |
|         | Mining                      |                                    |          | \$ 1.5m   |           |
|         | Manufacturing (Value Added) |                                    |          | \$23.3m   |           |
|         | Tourism                     |                                    |          | na        |           |
| 1987/88 | Total Agriculture           | Sugar Cane                         | \$150 m  | \$400m    | \$1,921 M |
|         |                             | Other Agriculture                  | \$250 m  |           |           |
|         | Fishing (est)               |                                    |          | \$200m    |           |
|         | Manufacturing (Value Added) |                                    |          | \$250m    |           |
|         | Mining                      |                                    |          | \$408m    |           |
|         | Tourism (est)               |                                    |          | \$663m    |           |
| 2002/03 | Total Agriculture           | Sugar Cane                         | \$241 m  | \$888m    | \$4,288 M |
|         |                             | Other Agriculture                  | \$639 m  |           |           |
|         | Mining                      |                                    |          | \$230m    |           |
|         | Fishing                     |                                    |          | \$200m    |           |
|         | Manufacturing (Value Added) |                                    |          | \$650m    |           |
|         | Tourism                     |                                    |          | \$2,020m  |           |
|         | Other                       |                                    |          | \$300m    |           |

Source: See below.

### NOTE – WARNING

- The above tables are estimates only designed to give a picture of the changes in the structure of the region's 'base industries', i.e. those mainly oriented to earning income from outside the region.
- The figures from these tables should not be used for other purposes.
- Values of agriculture and mining in the various tables can be taken to be relatively accurate and from ABS sources.
- Fishing is an estimate based on information, some of which was anecdotal at the time, and changes should not be taken as accurate.

- Only in 1957 is the manufacturing value added from ABS sources. Figures for the other years are estimates based on total turnover figures. The 2002/2003 figure is a rough estimate only based on old data on turnover less an estimate of inputs of primary products processed.
- Tourism figures for 1987/88 are from Queensland OESR. For 2002-03, they are from Tourism Research Australia.
- Only in the 2002/03 figures, are 'other' industries included, although in 1987/88 & 1993/94, they are probably significant.

Thus, over the period 1957 to 1987-88, the following changes occurred.

**Table 12: Growth in Value of the Major Resource Based Sectors - 1957, 1987-88**

| Item              | 1957   | 1987-88 | Growth       |
|-------------------|--------|---------|--------------|
| Sugar             | \$34m  | \$150m  | \$122m       |
| Other Agriculture | \$23m  | \$250m  | \$227m       |
| Fisheries         | na     | \$200m  | (say) \$190m |
| Mining            | \$1.5m | \$250m  | \$248m       |
| Tourism           | na     | \$663m  | (say) \$640m |

Source: See previous Table 11 and notes thereto.

Thus, over this period, tourism growth came through to almost match the value of growth in the other sectors in total. Inflation over the period 1957 to 1987-88 saw a 6.67-times rise in CPI Brisbane.

If account is taken of inflation, sugar declined in real terms, other crops grew strongly at a real rate of about 9% per annum, mining made a major comeback mainly due to Weipa, and tourism grew at a rate of 5 – 6% per annum in real terms.

Between 1987-88 and 2002-03, the following growth was recorded.

**Table 13: Growth in Value of the Major Resource Based Sectors - 1987-88, 2002-03**

| Item              | 1987-88    | 2002-03    | Growth    |
|-------------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Sugar             | \$150m     | \$241m     | \$91m     |
| Other Agriculture | \$250m     | \$647m     | \$397m    |
| Fisheries         | est \$200m | est \$200m | No growth |
| Mining            | \$250m     | \$230m     | Reduction |
| Tourism           | \$663m     | \$2020m    | \$1350m   |

Source: See previous Table 11 and notes thereto.

Thus, over this period, tourism dominated growth. Inflation occurred to raise CPI (Brisbane) 1.75 times. When inflation is taken into account, sugar went backwards in real terms, other agriculture continued growth at 2.6% per annum. Tourism continued to grow at 3.8% per annum.

After 2002-03, tourism would continue to grow but mining and farm-gate agriculture also continued to move up.

The following table sets out the period from 2005-06 to latest available figures.

**Table 14: Estimate of Value of Production of Major Resource Based Sectors, TNQ**

| Item                    | Estimated Gross Value |          | Year      |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------|-----------|
|                         | 2005-06               | Latest   |           |
| Agriculture (farm gate) | \$963m                | \$1,650m | (2017-18) |
| Mining                  | \$363m                | \$950m   | (2016-17) |
| Tourism                 | \$2,478m              | \$3,536  | (2019)    |

*Source: Cummings Economics from Agriculture - ABS Cat No. 7503.0; Mining – Qld Department of Mines advice (see Chart 4; Tourism – Tourism Research Australia-NVS & IVS overnight Visitors.*

Thus, growth over the above periods was:

Farm-gate Agriculture..... \$687m .....+71%

Mining ..... \$587m .....+161%

Tourism ..... \$1,058m .....+42%

If inflation is taken out of the above (CPI Brisbane), growth in real terms over the periods given is approximately as follows.

Farm-gate Agriculture..... \$388m .....+40%

Mining ..... \$478m .....+131%

Tourism ..... \$230m .....+9%

While the impact on the economy varies between the sectors, it is clear that expansion of real outside earnings from resource-based sectors was largely in the non-tourism sectors over the period since 2005-06.

The growth in tourism expenditure indicated in 'real' terms is about 9%.

Analysis of visitor numbers indicate no growth in international visitors over the period but growth in domestic visitor numbers and overall growth of 29%. The indications are that there has been a strong fall in 'real' average spending per visitor that could reflect a number of factors such as composition of visitor traffic, length of stay and general propensity to spend.



## 5.7 Skills Based Outside Earnings

Cairns has led the north in this field especially in three sectors:

- The development of marine services, shipyards and education;
- The development of aviation servicing including maintenance and education;
- The development of international education.

The first is based on the large fleet of small shipping in the region including:

- Tourism (Reef Fleet)
- Fishing
- Trading and workshops
- Government and Navy Base.

The second is based on the large numbers of small aircraft operating in the area including:

- Regional RPT services
- Charter aircraft
- Medivac
- Police and surveillance
- Tourism related.

Links across the north and Papua New Guinea/ Pacific are of special importance.

The marine servicing sector grew rapidly during the 70s and 80s with rapid growth of the fishing and tourism fleets and establishment in Cairns of Australia's operation North East Naval Base. It was further strengthened by NQEA winning the contract to build the Fremantle Class Patrol Boats and subsequently the Hydrographic Survey vessels. A review about 2006 indicated the sector had a turnover of the order of \$800 to \$1000m dollars and employed directly of the order of 4,000 <sup>(1)</sup>. Loss of naval shipbuilding, stagnation of tourism and some loss of fishing, saw the sector stagnate in more recent times although the addition of the Marine College has helped.

<sup>(1)</sup> Note: Includes all seaport operations including tourism, fishing and navy.

The aviation servicing sector development has been fueled by growing activity in the remote areas of the region in mining, fisheries and in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island populations and services to them. On top of this, has been tourism growth and pilot training, especially around Mareeba. A 2011 study on airport operations indicated activity probably had a turnover of about \$600m and employment of about 3,000 <sup>(2)</sup>. The Aviation Skills Centre has continued to develop and Hawker Pacific's operation.

<sup>(2)</sup> Note: Includes all airport operations.

International education growth was initially based on English language schools but has since diversified. Turnover in 2004 was put at about \$50 - \$60m and in 2018 of the order of \$130m.

## 5.8 Strategic Location Outside Earnings

These consist of two types:

- 1) Defence/ Border protection
- 2) Trade/ Services with the immediate South West Pacific region.

### 5.8.1 Defence & Border Force

Outside of normal Army Reserve Unit activity, major involvement came from the decision in the 1960s to locate the Navy's North East Operational Base in Cairns.

Impact has been progressively felt with expansion of operations in the 1970s through to the early 2000 period. About 2008, as part of the marine sector, value was put at approximately \$200m per annum with 900 employed.

Over the period 1960s to early 2000s, expansion took pace through:

- Location of Australia's North East Air Surveillance at Cairns airport;
- Substantial increase in Border Force personnel in the Torres Strait;
- Strong growth of Border Force (Customs, Immigration and Federal Police) associated with the growth of the airport included in airport value statistics.

### 5.8.2 Trade/ Services

There have been two major elements in this:

- FIFO workforce to other regions in Australia;
- Supply of goods and services to Papua New Guinea/ Indonesia.

FIFO grew during the mining boom up to about 2015-16 with peak estimated to be earning about \$200m in wages coming into the Cairns region. This has subdued but is still substantial and unmeasured.

About 1974, Freeport Indonesia located its Australian buying base in Cairns for its giant Grassberg Mine in Papua Indonesia with shipping and aircraft links. Value of trade reached as high as about \$300m during the 1990s (mainly transshipped goods from elsewhere in Australia), but progressively fell away and was lost in 2019.

Trade with Papua New Guinea has mainly been in workforce and shipment of goods by air with values of shipments varying with activity in Papua New Guinea but generally less than \$100m.

## 6. CAIRNS AS A REGIONAL SERVICE CENTRE

The primary economic role of Cairns is as a regional service centre – a transport, distribution, manufacturing, administrative and servicing hub/ capital for the region.

Typical of dynamics of regional economies in Australia, the city has increased in proportion of population and economic activity. There are two underlying major factors causing this:

- Increasing specialisation in the economy, especially of service type activities (tertiary and quaternary);
- Transport developments within the region facilitating access to/from higher order services in the regional cities.

On the other hand, there is a tendency of the regional cities to lose out in growth for the same reasons to other larger centres - in the case of Cairns, to the historically larger centre of Townsville and the metropolitan centre of Brisbane.

The following table gives the growth of Cairns as an urban centre compared with the rest of the region from 1947 on.

**Table 15: Cairns as Percent of Regional Population**

| Year |                                                                    | No.            | %           |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| 1947 | Cairns City                                                        | 16,644         | 23%         |
|      | Cairns Mulgrave                                                    | 27,124         | 37%         |
|      | <b>Cairns Division less Hinchinbrook plus Peninsula &amp; Gulf</b> | <b>71,606</b>  | <b>100%</b> |
| 1966 | Cairns City                                                        | 26,696         | 26%         |
|      | Cairns Mulgrave                                                    | 42,008         | 41%         |
|      | <b>Cairns Division less Hinchinbrook plus Peninsula &amp; Gulf</b> | <b>102,397</b> | <b>100%</b> |
| 1977 | Cairns LGA (old Cairns/ Mulgrave)                                  | 57060          | 43%         |
|      | <b>Tropical North Queensland (Far North &amp; Gulf Shires)</b>     | <b>130,040</b> | <b>100%</b> |
| 1986 | Cairns LGA                                                         | 79,730         | 47%         |
|      | <b>Tropical North Queensland (Far North &amp; Gulf Shires)</b>     | <b>167,212</b> | <b>100%</b> |
| 1996 | Cairns LGA                                                         | 113,507        | 52%         |
|      | <b>Tropical North Queensland (Far North &amp; Gulf Shires)</b>     | <b>216,614</b> | <b>100%</b> |
| 2006 | Cairns LGA                                                         | 136,632        | 53%         |
|      | <b>Tropical North Queensland (Far North &amp; Gulf Shires)</b>     | <b>254,267</b> | <b>100%</b> |
| 2016 | Cairns LGA                                                         | 161,573        | 56%         |
|      | <b>Tropical North Queensland (Far North &amp; Gulf Shires)</b>     | <b>285,452</b> | <b>100%</b> |
| 2019 | Cairns LGA                                                         | 166,862        | 56%         |
|      | <b>Tropical North Queensland (Far North &amp; Gulf Shires)</b>     | <b>295,346</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Source: Cummings Economics from ABS data.

Compared with the primary industries and mining, tourism tends to be more heavily located in the regional city and this influence is evident in the rapid rise of Cairns as a proportion of population in the 1980s to early 2000s. But slower growth in recent years has seen Cairns' proportion stagnate.

Of relevance to Cairns' growth as a regional servicing city, has been its relationship with Townsville.

Early development of northern and central Queensland was dominated by the pastoral industry followed by mining. Townsville and Rockhampton developed early as pastoral ports with railway lines running deep into the interiors.

In 1947, regional Queensland was dominated by three first line regional cities and three second line regional cities.

**Table 16: Regional City Population Queensland (LGAs), 1947 & 2019**

| Year |                      | Regional Cities | No.     |
|------|----------------------|-----------------|---------|
| 1947 | 1 <sup>st</sup> Line | Toowoomba       | 35,495  |
|      |                      | Rockhampton     | 34,988  |
|      |                      | Townsville      | 34,109  |
|      | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Line | Cairns          | 16,644  |
|      |                      | Bundaberg       | 15,926  |
|      |                      | Mackay          | 13,486  |
| 2019 | 1 <sup>st</sup> Line | Townsville      | 173,815 |
|      |                      | Cairns          | 144,780 |
|      |                      | Toowoomba       | 130,722 |
|      | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Line | Mackay          | 78,685  |
|      |                      | Rockhampton     | 76,985  |
|      |                      | Bundaberg       | 69,061  |

Source: Cummings Economics from ABS data.

Against this background, up to the 1980s, Cairns could not hope to compete against Townsville for the location of higher order 'metropolitan' level services in government, education, health, sporting facilities and many business services.

However, due to strong comparative 'resource based' development in hinterland populations, the Cairns/ TNQ region now exceeds the Townsville/ Northern/ North West region by a large margin and is now the most populous region.

During the period since 2006, a substantial element in the city's growth has been a 'catch up' occurring in fields like education and health. The following table illustrates the very strong growth in employment that has taken place in health services and education.

**Table 17: Employment Related to Government Services, Cairns Regional Council Area (Usual Place of Residence), Census 2006, 2011, 2016**

| Item                            | 2006<br>No.   | 2011<br>No.   | 2016<br>No.   | % Growth<br>2006-2016 |
|---------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Public Administration & Safety  | 4,697         | 5,766         | 5,794         | +23%                  |
| Education & Training            | 4,414         | 5,534         | 6,500         | +47%                  |
| Health Care & Social Assistance | 6,107         | 8,856         | 10,446        | +71%                  |
| Arts & Recreation Services      | 1,089         | 1,268         | 1,436         | +32%                  |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>16,307</b> | <b>21,424</b> | <b>24,176</b> | <b>+48%</b>           |

Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Census data.

However, the following tables indicate there is still substantial room for 'catch up' growth.

**Table 18: Comparative Employment in Higher (University Level) Education, Cairns & Equivalent Sized Cities (Significant Urban Areas) (employment per 1000 head of pop'n), 2016 Census**

| SUA        | Higher Education<br>Employment<br>No. | Population<br>15 – 59 years<br>No. | Ratio per<br>1000 head | % Growth<br>2011-2016 |
|------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Hobart     | 2,151                                 | 118,306                            | 18.8                   | 20.2%                 |
| Townsville | 1,626                                 | 109,928                            | 14.8                   | 11.0%                 |
| Cairns     | 606                                   | 89,243                             | 6.8                    | 27.0%                 |
| Darwin     | 1,059                                 | 83,982                             | 12.6                   | 18.7%                 |
| Toowoomba  | 1,458                                 | 74,707                             | 19.5                   | 23.7%                 |
| Ballarat   | 1,057                                 | 57,847                             | 18.3                   | 21.8%                 |

Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Census 2016.

**Table 19: Hospital Admissions, Cairns & Hinterland Health & Hospital Services District Compared 2015-2016**

| Hospital & Health Service | Total<br>Admissions<br>No. | Income<br>No. | Income per<br>Admission<br>\$ |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|
| Cairns & Hinterland       | 97,180                     | \$839 m       | \$8,600                       |
| Townsville                | 75,172                     | \$864 m       | \$11,500                      |
| Mackay                    | 47,338                     | \$367 m       | \$7,600                       |
| Central Queensland        | 61,500                     | \$518 m       | \$8,400                       |

Source: Cummings Economics from Annual Report 2015-16, Hospital & Health Service Regions.

## 7. SUMMARY

| YEARS         | ITEMS                                                                            | MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1870s – 1900s | AGRICULTURE – Diversified – Strong but pastoral checked 1890s                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mining Ports – Cooktown, Port Douglas, Cairns</li> <li>• Cairns Hinterland – Railway commenced</li> <li>• Railway – Cooktown to Laura built</li> <li>• Sugar Mills – Mossman, Cairns, Innisfail.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                             |
|               | MARINE – Strong                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|               | FORESTRY – Strong                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|               | <b>MINING</b> - Very strong                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 1900s – 1920s | AGRICULTURE – Checked but <b>SUGAR</b> starts coming through                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cairns Harbour Board created</li> <li>• Hinterland Railway System completed</li> <li>• Babinda Sugar Mill established</li> <li>• Railway south towards Innisfail.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                            |
|               | MARINE – Strong                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|               | FORESTRY – Strong                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|               | <b>MINING</b> – Booms to 2010 then starts fading                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 1920s – 1940s | AGRICULTURE – <b>SUGAR</b> leads/ Tablelands growing                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tully Sugar Mill established</li> <li>• Railway north from Brisbane linked near Innisfail</li> <li>• Cairns Airport started – wartime numerous strips</li> <li>• Roads built - Palmerston, Gillies, Coastal roads to south followed by Cook, Kuranda, Rex</li> <li>• Barron Hydro Electric Scheme.</li> </ul>                           |
|               | MARINE – Continues but lower                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|               | FORESTRY – Strong                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|               | MINING – Fades                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|               | TOURISM - Starting                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 1950s – 1960s | AGRICULTURE – <b>SUGAR</b> dominant but growth slowing /Tablelands Strengthening | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interior road to Cooktown, Beef Roads - Gulf &amp; Peninsula (mainly unsealed)</li> <li>• Weipa port developed</li> <li>• Tully Hydro Electric Scheme</li> <li>• Bulk Sugar Terminals – Cairns &amp; Mourilyan</li> <li>• Tinaroo Dam built</li> <li>• Navy Base started</li> <li>• Reclamation Portsmouth Industrial Estate</li> </ul> |
|               | MARINE – Low                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|               | FORESTRY – Strong                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|               | MINING – Low                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|               | TOURISM - Emerging                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

**HISTORIC DRIVERS OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
CAIRNS/ TROPICAL NORTH QLD REGION**

| 1970s - 2006 | AGRICULTURE – Sugar minor growth/ Horticulture comes in strongly                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road Sealing – Cooktown, Gulf Road upgraded, Palmerston &amp; Rex Ranges upgraded, Last Link Bruce Hwy sealed in Central Qld</li> <li>• Cairns Port deepened, Marina &amp; Fishermen bases established</li> <li>• Marina Port Douglas</li> <li>• Zinc shipment facilities Karumba</li> <li>• Tableland Sugar Mill</li> <li>• NQEA Shipbuilding facilities</li> <li>• Major upgrading Cairns Airport</li> <li>• JCU Campus commenced</li> <li>• Major hotel building Cairns &amp; Douglas</li> <li>• Skyrail built, Casino built</li> <li>• Navy Base expanded</li> <li>• Microwave communication links Peninsula</li> </ul> |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|              | MARINE – Prawn boom then stalls                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|              | FORESTRY – Killed by Wet Tropics in late 80s                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|              | MINING – Bauxite & Silica come in                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|              | <b>TOURISM</b> – Very strong growth                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|              | SKILLS BASED SECTORS – Come in strongly                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|              | STRATEGIC LOCATION – Navy Base developed/ Freeport location Cairns                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|              |                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2007 - 2020  | AGRICULTURE – <b>HORTICULTURE</b> keeps growing                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cruise Ship Terminal upgraded</li> <li>• Seaport channel upgraded</li> <li>• Major upgrade Cairns hospital</li> <li>• Lotus Glen Prison major upgrade</li> <li>• CQU Campus established</li> <li>• JCU Campus extension</li> <li>• Crystalbrook Hotels expansion</li> <li>• Substantial sealing Peninsula Road</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|              | MARINE – Little growth                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|              | FORESTRY – Dead                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|              | <b>MINING</b> – Continuing growth                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|              | TOURISM – Stalled                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|              | SKILLS BASED SECTORS – Marine stalled/ Aviation continuing/ International Education stalled |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|              | STRATEGIC LOCATION – Navy plateaued                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|              | <b>REGIONAL</b> CITY GOVERNMENT SERVICES – Strong growth                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

**HISTORIC DRIVERS  
OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
CAIRNS/ TROPICAL NORTH QLD REGION**

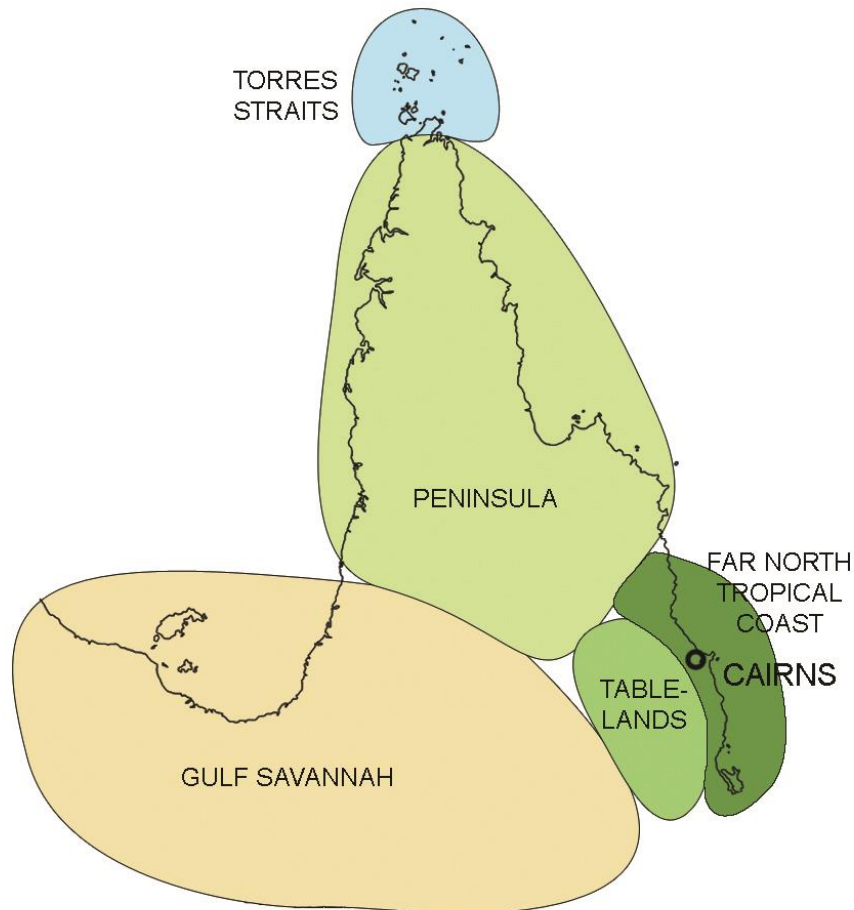
# **APPENDICES**





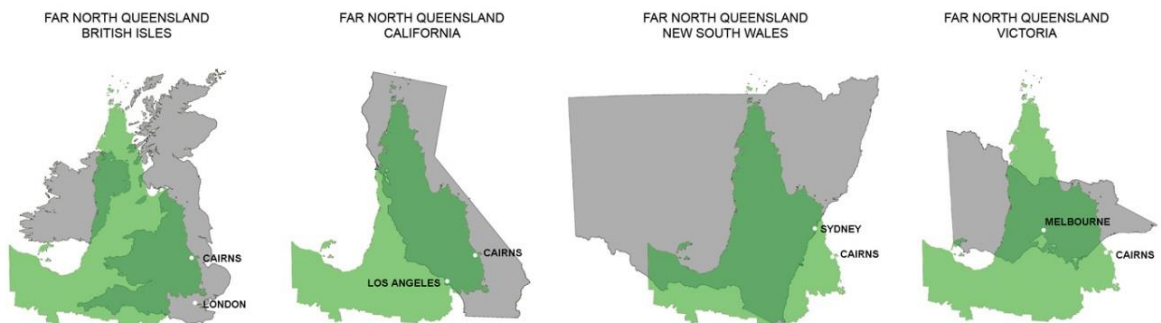
## APPENDIX 1 - MAPS

**Map 1 - Cairns Commercial Servicing Region**  
**Tropical North Queensland/ Peninsula Australia Geographic Region**



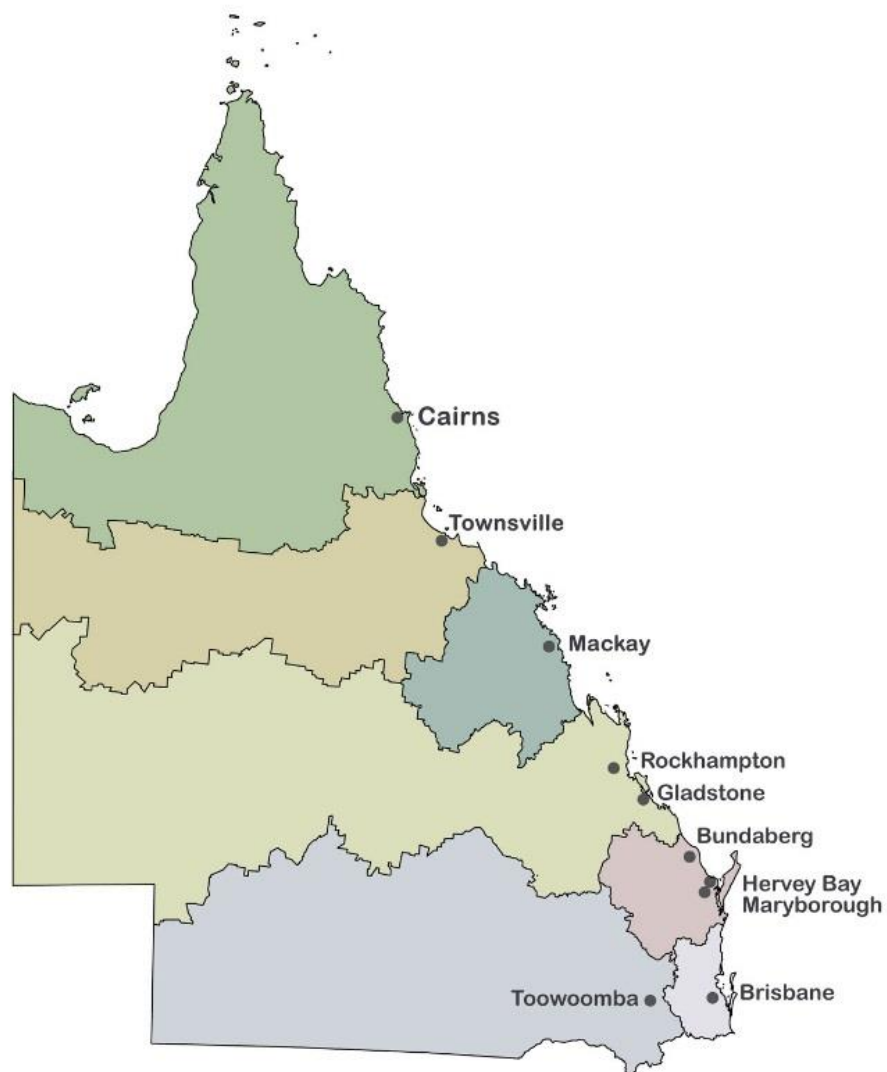
Source: Cummings Economics

**Map 2 – Comparative Size of Region**



Source: Cummings Economics

**Map 3 – Commercial Servicing Areas of Queensland Regional Cities**



Source: Cummings Economics

**Map 4 – Tropical Location – Areas Similar Latitudes to the Cairns Region**



## APPENDIX 2 – MAJOR REFERENCES

### Major References and Sources of Information and Data

#### **Cairns 2020-2050 – Business Research Manual.**

This 600-page publication was prepared by Cummings Economics in 2005. It looks back on 20 and 50-year time frames and forward on 20 and 50-year time frames.

#### **Queensland Year Book 1959**

This gives a table showing the value of production in 1957 of the major base industries earning income from outside the Cairns and Peninsula Statistical Division regions as defined at the time. The area includes Hinchinbrook Shire but not the Gulf Shires.

#### **Australia's Tropical North**

This 190-page unpublished report prepared by Cummings Economics in 2014 is based on submissions prepared for Cairns Regional Council to the *Australian Government's Green Paper on Northern Development*. It gives an analysis of initial challenges, historical development, current progress and future prospects and policies needed to progress the north's development.

#### **Cairns Chamber of Commerce**

Annual Reports published over the period from about 1914 to 1990 were referred to, especially for statistics on mineral production and sugar production.

#### **Mining Statistics**

These are from data published in Cairns Chamber of Commerce Annual Reports or provided, over time, as special advice to Cummings Economics from Queensland Department of Mines and Energy.

#### **Tourism Statistics**

These are primarily from Tourism Research Australia, National and International Visitor Surveys.

#### **Agricultural Statistics**

These are primarily from Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Catalogue No. 7503.0 or earlier ABS Agstats data.

## APPENDIX 3 – LONG-TERM POPULATION STATISTICS





# LONG-TERM POPULATION STATISTICS

1891 – 2011

CAIRNS  
AUSTRALIA

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Statistical Note  
CE Ref-2950  
January 2016

## 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.

Note: This report contains information and statements obtained from sources believed to be reliable and also which express the opinions of the publisher only. The publisher gives no Warranty and makes no representation as to the accuracy or correctness of the information statements or opinions or as to the reliability of the sources from which they were obtained. The Publisher undertakes no responsibility in any way whatsoever in respect of the contents of this report including any errors or omissions therein however caused and excludes all liability whatsoever whether in tort or in contract or otherwise that it might otherwise have to any person or company who acts upon the contents of the report and either directly or indirectly suffers any loss or damage in consequence of the information statements and/or opinions contained or expressed in the report.

## 2. POPULATION FIGURES

| <u>Year End<br/>30<sup>th</sup> June</u> | <u>Total Population (1) includes<br/>visitors &amp; excludes residents away</u> |                                 | <u>Combined<br/>Cairns North &amp;<br/>South SA3s</u> | <u>Est Res Pop'n (1)<br/>Cairns Statistical District</u> |                             | <u>Combined<br/>Cairns North &amp;<br/>South SA3s</u> |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
|                                          | <u>Cairns<br/>City LGA</u>                                                      | <u>Cairns Stat<br/>Dist (1)</u> |                                                       | <u>Initial<br/>Boundary</u>                              | <u>Revised<br/>Boundary</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                                                                          |                                 |                                                       |                                                          |                             |                                                       |

**LONG-TERM POPULATION STATISTICS  
CAIRNS AUSTRALIA**

|                                                        | <b><u>Total Population (1)</u><br/><u>Including visitors and</u><br/><u>excluding residents away</u></b> |                                                                                              |                                                                            | <b><u>Est Res Pop'n (1)</u><br/><u>Cairns Statistical</u><br/><u>District</u></b> |                                           |                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><u>Year End</u><br/><u>30<sup>th</sup> June</u></b> | <b><u>Cairns</u><br/><u>City LGA</u></b>                                                                 | <b><u>Cairns Stat</u><br/><u>Dist (1)</u></b>                                                | <b><u>Combined</u><br/><u>Cairns North &amp;</u><br/><u>South SA3s</u></b> | <b><u>Initial</u><br/><u>Boundary</u></b>                                         | <b><u>Revised</u><br/><u>Boundary</u></b> | <b><u>Combined</u><br/><u>Cairns North &amp;</u><br/><u>South SA3s</u></b> |
| 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                                                                                                   | Note – During this period, Cairns urban growth started to spill heavily into Mulgrave Shire. |                                                                            |                                                                                   |                                           |                                                                            |
| 1971                                                   | 30,835                                                                                                   |                                                                                              |                                                                            |                                                                                   |                                           |                                                                            |
| 1972                                                   | 32,330                                                                                                   |                                                                                              |                                                                            |                                                                                   |                                           |                                                                            |
| 1973                                                   | 33,410                                                                                                   |                                                                                              |                                                                            |                                                                                   |                                           |                                                                            |
| 1974                                                   | 34,610                                                                                                   | <u>Initial</u>                                                                               |                                                                            |                                                                                   |                                           |                                                                            |
| 1975                                                   | 36,650                                                                                                   | <u>Boundary</u>                                                                              |                                                                            |                                                                                   |                                           |                                                                            |
| 1976                                                   | 35,605                                                                                                   | 48,752                                                                                       |                                                                            | 49,590                                                                            |                                           |                                                                            |
| 1977                                                   |                                                                                                          |                                                                                              |                                                                            | 51,560                                                                            |                                           |                                                                            |
| 1978                                                   |                                                                                                          |                                                                                              |                                                                            | 53,000                                                                            |                                           |                                                                            |
| 1979                                                   |                                                                                                          |                                                                                              |                                                                            | 54,380                                                                            |                                           |                                                                            |
| 1980                                                   |                                                                                                          |                                                                                              |                                                                            | 56,230                                                                            |                                           |                                                                            |
| 1981                                                   |                                                                                                          | 62,426                                                                                       | (2)                                                                        | 58,270                                                                            |                                           |                                                                            |
| 1982                                                   |                                                                                                          |                                                                                              |                                                                            | 60,660                                                                            |                                           |                                                                            |
| 1983                                                   |                                                                                                          |                                                                                              |                                                                            | 62,950                                                                            |                                           |                                                                            |
| 1984                                                   |                                                                                                          |                                                                                              |                                                                            | 65,250                                                                            |                                           |                                                                            |
| 1985                                                   |                                                                                                          |                                                                                              |                                                                            | 68,140                                                                            |                                           |                                                                            |
| 1986                                                   |                                                                                                          | 74,358                                                                                       |                                                                            | 70,600                                                                            | 74,088                                    |                                                                            |
| 1987                                                   |                                                                                                          |                                                                                              |                                                                            |                                                                                   | 76,195                                    |                                                                            |
| 1988                                                   |                                                                                                          |                                                                                              |                                                                            |                                                                                   | 79,103                                    |                                                                            |

Cont'd





**LONG-TERM POPULATION STATISTICS  
CAIRNS AUSTRALIA**

| <u>Year End<br/>30<sup>th</sup> June</u> | <u>Total Population (1)<br/>Including visitors and<br/>excluding residents away</u> |                                 | <u>Combined<br/>Cairns North &amp;<br/>South SA3s</u> | <u>Est Res Pop'n (1)<br/>Cairns Statistical<br/>District</u> |                             | <u>Combined<br/>Cairns North &amp;<br/>South SA3s</u> |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
|                                          | <u>Cairns<br/>City LGA</u>                                                          | <u>Cairns Stat<br/>Dist (1)</u> |                                                       | <u>Initial<br/>Boundary</u>                                  | <u>Revised<br/>Boundary</u> |                                                       |
| 1989                                     |                                                                                     | Revised                         |                                                       |                                                              | 83,148                      |                                                       |
| 1990                                     |                                                                                     | Boundary                        |                                                       |                                                              | 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><br><b><u>(Total population including visitors</u></b><br><b><u>&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<br>overspill into Mulgrave Shire |
| 1971 - 1976                     | 2.9% pa                                                                                                                              |                                                              |
|                                 | <b><u>CAIRNS STAT DISTRICT</u></b><br><b><u>(Residential Population)</u></b>                                                         |                                                              |
| 1976 - 1986                     | 3.6% pa                                                                                                                              |                                                              |
|                                 | <b><u>CAIRNS STAT DISTRICT</u></b><br><b><u>(Revised) (Residential Population)</u></b>                                               |                                                              |
| 1986 - 1991                     | 3.1% pa                                                                                                                              |                                                              |
|                                 | <b><u>CAIRNS COMBINED NORTH &amp; SOUTH</u></b><br><b><u>SA3s</u></b><br><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.