

CUMMINGS ECONOMICS

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Statistical Note

REGIONAL POPULATION GROWTH 2019-20

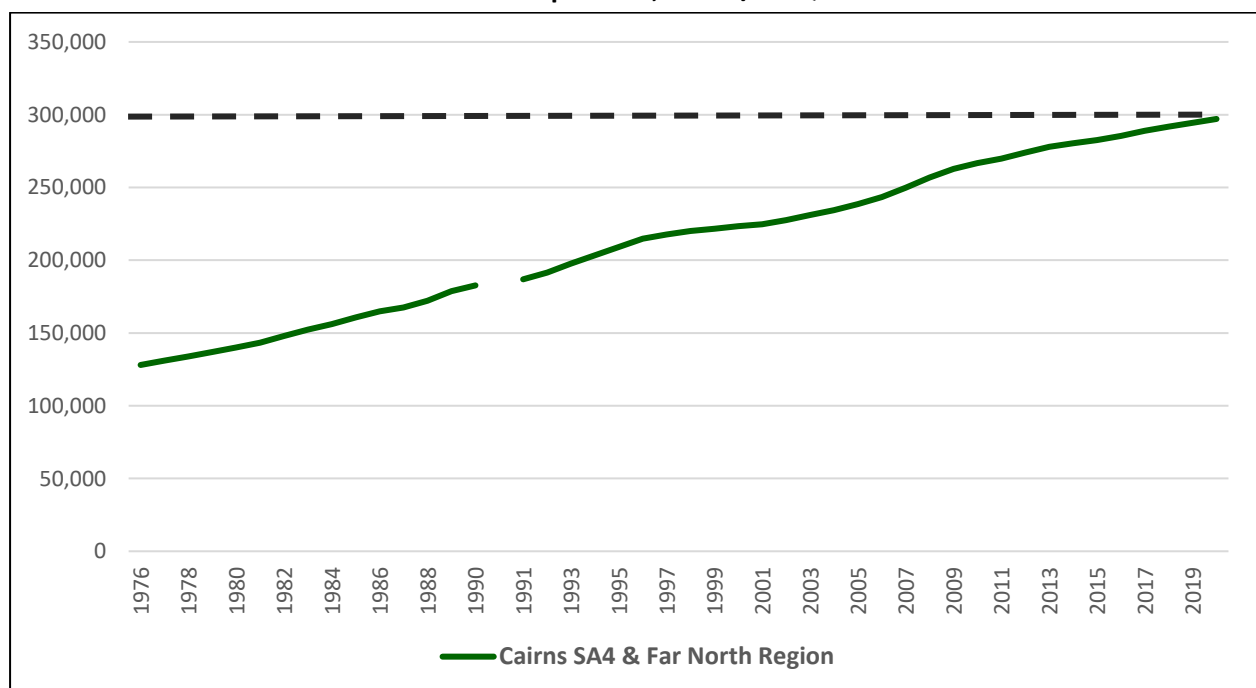
Cairns/Tropical North Qld Region on the Cusp of Passing the 300,000 Mark

Latest Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimates of residential population for 2020 indicates that northern Australia's most populous region based on Cairns is on the cusp of passing a landmark of 300,000 population.

Population from Cardwell across to Doomadgee and the Northern Territory border and north to the PNG border, commonly referred to as Tropical North Queensland (TNQ), recorded a 2020 population of 297,057, having grown by 2,725 in 2019-20.

Although COVID-19 will affect growth in 2020-21, the indications are that the Cairns/ TNQ region is likely to pass the 300,000 mark during 2021 (see Chart 1).

Chart 1: Growth in Estimated Residential Population, Cairns/ TNQ



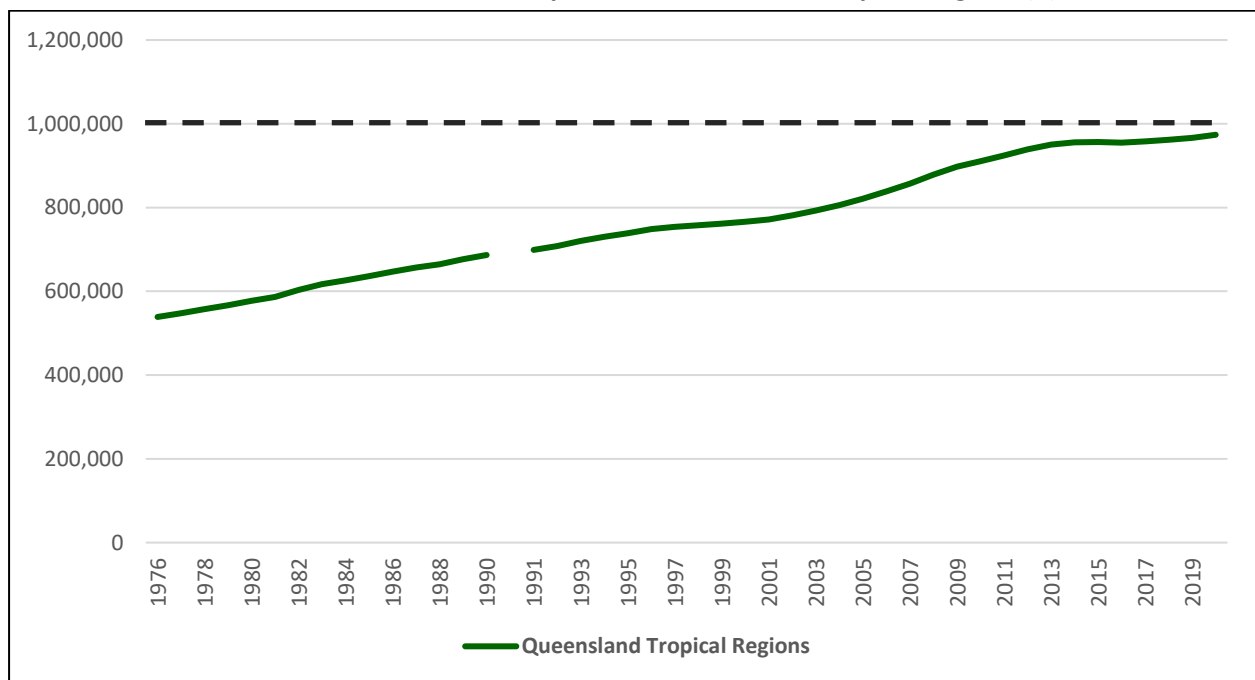
Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0.

Queensland Tropical Regions Close to One (1) Million Mark

At the same time, Queensland's four tropical regions are close to an historic one million mark at 973,812 in 2020.

On recent subdued growth rates, the historic million mark is likely to be reached by about 2024 (see Chart 2).

Chart 2: Growth in Estimated Residential Population, Queensland Tropical Regions (1)



Note (1): Central Qld, Central West, Mackay Isaac Whitsunday, Townsville Mt Isa region, Cairns/TNQ

Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0.

Another Poor Growth Year for Regional Qld But Cairns Region Leads

In another poor year for growth of Queensland's major regions outside the southeast corner, the Cairns/ TNQ region continued to lead growth along with the Wide Bay region that remains the largest in regional population by a small margin.

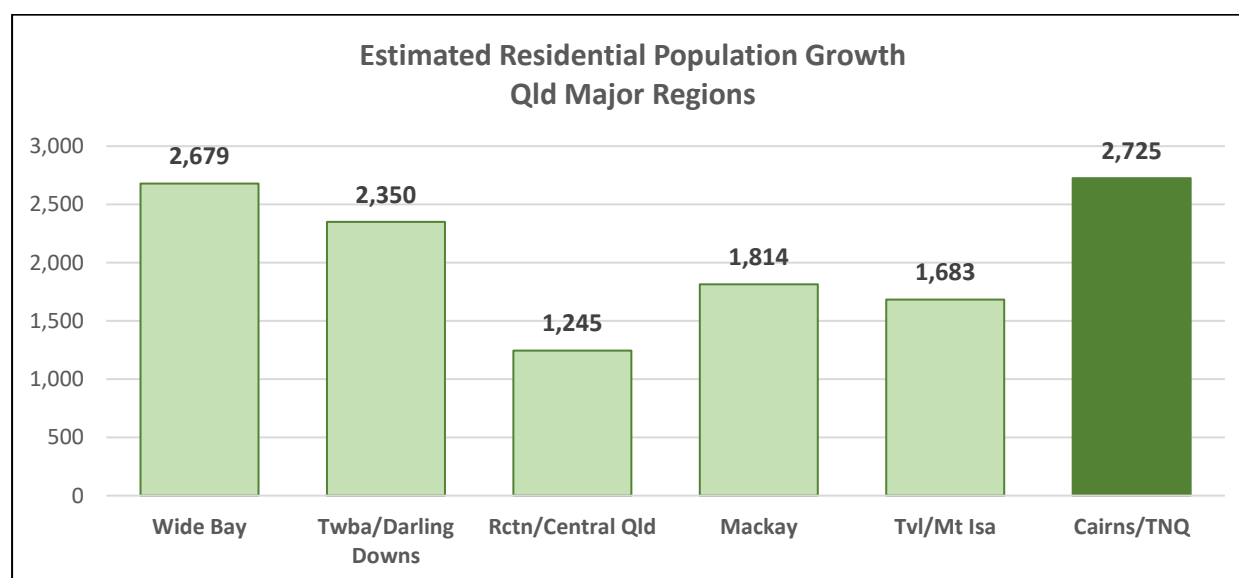
However, after a down period following the collapse of the mining boom, the Mackay region led in percentage growth (see Table 1 and Chart 3).

Table 1a: Growth in Estimated Residential Population, Qld Major Regions Outside the Southeast Corner, 2019-20

Qld Major Regions	Population 2020 No.	Growth 2019-20 No.	Growth 2019 %
Wide Bay Region	302,105	2,679	+0.89%
Cairns/ TNQ Region	297,057	2,725	+0.93%
Toowoomba/ Darling Downs Region	275,099	2,350	+0.45%
Townsville/ Mt Isa Region	263,508	1,683	+0.64%
Rockhampton/ Central Qld Region	238,371	1,245	+0.53%
Mackay Region	174,816	1,814	+1.05%

Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0.

Chart 3: Growth in Estimated Residential Population, Qld Major Regions Outside the Southeast Corner, 2019-20



Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0.

Table 1b: Growth in Estimated Residential Population, Qld Cities Outside the Southeast Corner, 2019-20

Qld Major Cities	Population 2020 No.	Growth 2019-20 No.	Growth 2019 %
Townsville (C)	196,800	1,778	+0.91%
Toowoomba (R)	170,356	1,364	+0.81%
Cairns (R)	168,449	1,600	+0.96%
Mackay (R)	117,902	1,141	+0.98%
Rockhampton (R)	81,999	490	+0.60%

Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0.

Mackay and Cairns Local Government Areas led in growth rates with Cairns up marginally on 2018-19, but Townsville recovering from the post mining slump in recent years pipped Cairns in growth numbers.

Mareeba & Weipa Lead the Way in the Cairns/TNQ Region

Weipa with a growth rate of 2.58% and Mareeba Shire of 1.71% lead the way in 2019-20 estimated residential population growth rates (see Table 2).

Table 2: Estimated Residential Population Growth, Cairns/TNQ by Sub Areas

Area	Population 2020 No.	Growth 2019-20 No.	Growth 2019 %
Cairns (R)	168,449	1,600	+0.96%
Mareeba (S)	23,116	389	+1.71%
Cassowary Coast (R)	29,964	173	+0.58%
NPA & Torres Strait	12,326	169	+1.39%
Weipa (T)	4,445	112	+2.58%
Indigenous Communities Total	14,251	102	+0.72%
Tablelands (R)	25,667	95	+0.37%
Douglas (S)	12,426	61	+0.49%
Cook (S)	4,595	47	+1.03%
Etheridge (S)	794	1	+0.13%
Croydon (S)	285	1	+0.35%
Burke (S)	354	0	0.00%
Carpentaria (S)	1,970	-5	-0.25%

Source: *Cummings Economics* from ABS Cat No. 3218.0.

But overall, 2019-20 was another poor year for residential population growth in the Cairns/TNQ region with Cairns Local Government Area up fractionally on the previous year but stuck below 1% at 0.96%.

Unlike most regional areas, the growth in the rest of the region almost equaled that of the regional city with total regional growth, including Cairns, coming in at 0.93%.

Most of the Indigenous communities recorded stronger growth than indicated overall, with Aurukun recording a strong decline.