



REVIEW OF STATE GOVERNMENT LONG-TERM POPULATION PROJECTIONS IN REGIONAL QUEENSLAND

From the 1970s Onwards

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SUMMARY OF MAIN CONCLUSIONS

- The volatility of growth in the main Central and Northern regions make it difficult to project forward with accuracy.
- The earlier tendency to under estimate growth in the South East Queensland appears to have diminished.
- The consistent tendency to overestimate growth in the Outback regions has continued.
- There has been a tendency in the face of volatility in the Central and Northern regions for projections to be overly influenced by short-term accelerations due to specific industry conditions.
- Thus, the 1980s' projections grossly over emphasised the growth of the Fitzroy, Mackay and Northern regions that are strongly influenced by mining. However, by the late 1990s, the growth in the Far North under the influence of the very strong growth that had taken place in tourism from the 1970s to first half of the 1990s was being over projected into the future.
- The 2008 projections again appear to have over emphasised the impact of favourable conditions for mining that proved transitory.
- There seems to have been a general tendency to be over optimistic about the impacts of more favourable conditions for growth of mining to stimulate population growth in the relevant regions on a sustained basis.
- Looking at longer term trends, there is a very clear picture of the Cairns region and the Wide Bay region leading regional Queensland's population growth consistently over a 40-year period.
- Analysis of latest projections indicate that the forward projections over the next 25 years are not in accordance with those long-term trends and perpetuate a tendency to under project the Cairns region relative to other major regions.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

Population projections in regional Queensland have proved to be quite difficult in the past and prone to large variances from what actually occurred. The following paper reviews projections made from the 1970s onwards and what has actually happened and importantly, some comment on why it has happened with a view to helping improve methodology for further projections.

1.2 The Population Being Measured

Since 1976, estimated residential populations have been available and this analysis is based on this population measure.

1.3 Regional Boundaries

Changes in boundaries being used complicates comparisons of projections with outcomes over time. It should be noted that the regional boundaries used in the three sections of this paper vary.

Section 2: Actual Compared with Past Projections – This uses the old “Statistical Division” boundaries as defined by Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and used up to 2011. Over the period under review, there were some changes in boundaries. We believe we have identified and adjusted for the major boundary changes and any not identified would not significantly affect conclusions.

Section 3: Actual Growth Rates – Because of the availability of series on consistent boundaries, this analysis is on post 2011 SA4 boundaries. It should be noted that in most cases, the SA4 boundary coincides with the old Statistical Division boundaries or represents the bulk of the population covered by the old Statistical Division boundaries.

Section 5: Dealing with Volatility – Long Term Trends – This analysis is based on some previous work carried out for Cairns Regional Council and is based on commercial regions of the relevant major regional cities. These regions are built up initially using the old Statistical Division boundaries based on the regional cities and adding in the case of Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton and Toowoomba, the remote areas that looked to those cities for commercial services.

It should be noted that in terms of long-term trends, the different boundaries used would not drastically change the comparative patterns exhibited.

2. ACTUAL COMPARED WITH PAST PROJECTIONS

2.1 The 1970s Projections Cairns/Mulgrave

Projections of population prepared by W D Scott as part of a review of the Cairns economy c 1976, for, and adopted by the Coordinator Generals Department, indicate just how unexpected the continuing growth of Cairns was in State Government's official circles at that time.

The following table compares the projections against what actually occurred.

Table #1: Population Growth Projections adopted by Coordinator Generals Department mid 70s Cairns & Mulgrave LGAs (now Cairns Regional Council LGA)

Year	COG Projections		Actual		
	No.	Change on 1976	No.	Change on 1976	
1976	57,060		57,060		
1985	Low	54,420	(-2,640)	75,720	+18,660
	High	63,930	+6,330		
2000	Low	63,930	+6,870	122,609	+65,544
	High	89,690	+32,630		

Source: Cummings Economics from Coordinator Generals Department.

The low projection had Cairns/Mulgrave going backwards by 1985 and growing only 12% over the 24 years to 2000. High projection had a growth of 57% (1.9% pa) over the 24 years to 2000. Actual growth was 65,000 or 149% (ie. 3.2% pa). These projections were made despite the fact that Cairns/Mulgrave had grown from 27,127 (Census) in 1947 to 57,000 (ERP) in 1976 ie. by 110% over the previous 29 years, ie. an average of 2.6% per annum.

Clearly, there was a belief that the long-term population growth rate of the past would not continue into the future. This view was probably influenced by the fact that the growth had fluctuated and went through a slower period between the 1966 to 1971. Clearly, if the long-term growth rate had been used, the forward projection would have been much more accurate and put the 2000 population at 106,000.

2.2 The Early 80s projections

The following gives population projections prepared by Premiers Department in 1984 covering the period 1981 – 2006 for Queensland Statistical Divisions.

Table #2: Population Growth Projections prepared by Premiers Department for Queensland Statistical Divisions, 1981 - 2006

Statistical Divisions	Actual 1981	Projected 2006 (Medium Series)	Actual 2006	Difference Actual minus Projected
Brisbane	1,096,196	1,635,846	1,820,400	+184,554
Moreton	312,662	679,162	885,897	+206,735
Darling Downs	168,641	231,441	227,074	(-4,367)
South West	28,184	36,165	26,408	(-9,757)
Wide Bay	153,079	214,628	269,340	+54,712
Fitzroy	145,522	230,652	200,604	(-30,048)
Central West	14,324	19,586	11,565	(-8,021)
Mackay	89,763	173,615	⁽¹⁾ 146,729	(-26,886)
Northern	156,501	229,321	⁽¹⁾ 222,830	(-6,391)
North West	40,167	52,417	33,212	(-19,205)
Far North	140,165	243,633	247,589	+3,956

Note ⁽¹⁾: Adjusted to take Bowen out of Mackay and back into Northern.

Central, North & Outback (Commercial Regions)**Over Projected**

Townsville (North/North West)	(-25,596)
Mackay (Mackay)	(-26,886)
Rockhampton (Fitzroy Central West).....	(-38,069)

Under Projected

Cairns (Far North)	+3,956
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There were serious differences in the 2006 projections to actual. The South East corner Brisbane/Moreton was under projected by a substantial amount. Outside the SE corner, the adjacent region of Wide Bay was under projected by a large amount and Darling Downs over projected marginally. In the Centre and North and Outback regions, there were seriously over projections except for the Far North that in sharp contrast was marginally under projected.

2.3 Late 80s Projections

In 1989, the Applied Population Research Unit, Department of Geographical Science of University of Queensland published "Population Projections for the Local Government Areas of Queensland, 1981 – 2001).

The following table compares the projections by Statistical Divisions with what actually occurred.

Table #3: Population Growth Projections by Queensland Statistical Divisions – Medium Series, 1986 - 2001

Statistical Divisions	Actual 1986	Projected 2001	Actual 2001	Difference Actual minus Projected
Brisbane	1,197,050	1,535,171	1,629,133	+93,692
Moreton	402,010	670,285	741,473	+71,188
Darling Downs	189,950	212,912	210,341	(-2,571)
South West	28,700	30,095	27,002	(-3,093)
Wide Bay	168,960	204,531	236,492	+31,961
Fitzroy	159,040	202,456	181,747	(-20,709)
Central West	13,590	14,118	12,497	(-1,621)
Mackay	103,180	143,213	⁽¹⁾ 125,130	(-18,083)
Northern	170,770	219,812	⁽¹⁾ 202,708	(-17,104)
North West	38,600	40,944	34,283	(-6,661)
Far North	161,760	231,795	224,163	(-7,632)

Note ⁽¹⁾: Adjusted to take Bowen out of Mackay and back into Northern.

Clearly, the figures under projected for Brisbane/Moreton and over projected for the rest of the State. In the Central and Northern regions, comparative over projection was lowest in the Far North by a substantial margin.

Over Projected

Fitzroy/Central West	(-22,330)
Mackay	(-18,032)
Townsville/North West	(-23,765)
Far North	(-7,632)

2.4 Mid 90s Projections

In 1996, the Planning Information and Forecasting Unit of the Department of Local Government and Planning produced “Population Projections for Queensland”, 1995 to 2011.

Table #4: Population Growth Projections by Queensland Statistical Divisions – Medium Series, 1995 - 2011

Statistical Divisions	Actual 1995	Projected 2011	Actual 2011	Difference Actual minus Projected
South East (Brisbane/Moreton)	2,073,300	2,919,290	3,008,784	+89,194
Darling Downs	205,400	249,500	232,745	(-16,755)
South West	28,370	29,360	26,530	(-2,830)
Wide Bay	222,520	311,940	279,201	-(32,739)
Fitzroy	181,920	220,890	217,561	(-3,300)
Central West	12,940	12,840	12,391	(-449)
Mackay	118,740	143,070	⁽¹⁾ 158,080	+15,016
Northern	195,320	239,030	⁽¹⁾ 238,588	(-442)
North West	37,700	397,790	34,911	(-4,879)
Far North	200,920	271,810	265,945	(-5,865)

Note ⁽¹⁾: Adjusted to take Bowen out of Mackay and back into Northern.

Again, the South East corner was under projected and on balance the rest of the State over projected. However, Wide Bay was heavily over projected. The Outback regions were again over projected. Mackay was under projected by a substantial margin, with the Northern region about right. Fitzroy continued to be over projected. The Far North in this case was mildly over projected by about 2%.

2.5 Late 90s Projections

The Population and Forecasting Unit produced Population Projections Queensland 1998 Edition with projections through to 2032. The following analyses the 2016 projections against the actual 2016 figures.

The following table compares with what actually happened. (Note the calculation of actual for 2016 is complicated by the change in the Standard Geographical Classification in 2011 causing some difficulties in actually aligning figures and there could be some boundary discrepancies but they are believed to be minor.)

Table #5: Population Growth Projections, 1996 – 2016 (Note 1996 boundaries)

Statistical Divisions	Projected 2016	Actual 2016	Actual over Projected
South East Qld	3,062,160	3,328,389	+266,229
Darling Downs/South West	248,510	270,777	+22,267
Wide Bay	301,850	292,384	-9,466
Fitzroy	215,190	226,314	+11,124
Central West	11,250	9,874	-1,376
Mackay	151,750	173,898	+22,148
Northern	224,820	235,037	+10,217
North West	34,860	32,024	-2,836
Far North	292,400	281,003	-11,397

Again, there was an under projection of the South East corner and over projection of the Outback regions. However, the pattern of over projection of the Darling Downs, Fitzroy, Mackay and Northern regions of the 1980s and under projection of Wide Bay and Far North reversed.

2.6 Mid 2000s Projections

Projections were published by the Queensland Government in 2008 – “Queensland Government Population Projections to 2031 : Queensland and Statistical Divisions”. (See Table #6 over.)

The projections indicate a belief that SE Queensland would continue to grow strongly, that the decline in the Outback regions would reverse to growth over the 25 years 2006 to 2031. Wide Bay’s strong growth would continue, that Fitzroy, Mackay and Northern Divisions would accelerate very strongly but Far North’s growth would drop away to below the other central and northern regions.

We now have the first 10 years of actual and the patterns projected have not occurred so far. SE Queensland is about on track but the Outback regions continue to decline. Wide Bay’s growth has been weak and certainly unlikely to achieve the projection. Despite a slowing in growth, the Far North has continued to lead growth among the central and northern regions and outside the SE corner. The comparative reduction in growth in the Far North region has not taken place as projected and it would need only a minor acceleration over the 15 years 2016 to 2031 to reach the projected growth.

The other regions outside the SE corner would need major acceleration of growth to reach the projected levels for 2031

POPULATION PROJECTIONS IN REGIONAL QUEENSLAND
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Table #6: Population Growth Projections, 25 Years 2006 – 2031, Compared with Actual Growth 1986 – 2006, 2006 - 2016

Statistical Division	Actual 1986	Actual 2006	Actual % Growth 1986 – 2006 20 Years	Projected 2031	Projected % Growth 2006 – 2031 25 Years	Actual 2016	Actual % Growth 2006 - 2016	Projected % Growth 2006 – 2031 if at same rate as Actual 2006 - 2016	Difference in % Growth Rate Projected based on Actual 2006-2016 with Government Projected 2006 - 2031
South East Qld	1,592,897	2,706,297	69.9%	4,243,800	56.8%	3,328,397	23.0%	57.5%	+0.7%
Darling Downs	183,112	227,074	24.0%	} 358,200	32.6%	270,777	2.5%	6.3%	(-26.3%)
South West	28,791	26,408	(-8.3%)		38.6%				
Wide Bay	170,835	269,340	57.7%	407,000	51.1%	292,384	8.6%	21.5%	(-29.6%)
Fitzroy	160,120	200,604	25.0%	303,800	51.4%	226,314	12.9%	32.3%	(-19.1%)
Central West	13,619	11,565	(-15.0%)	12,600	8.9%	9,874	(-21.6%)	(-54.0%)	(-62.9%)
Mackay	117,511	159,869	36.0%	255,600	59.9%	173,892	9.5%	23.8%	(-35.9%)
Northern	157,732	209,588	32.9%	317,800	51.6%	235,037	12.1%	30.3%	(-21.3%)
North West	36,952	33,212	(-10.1%)	37,600	13.2%	30,688	(-3.5%)	(-8.8%)	(-22.0%)
Far North	162,981	247,589	51.9%	344,500	39.1%	281,534	13.7%	34.3%	(-4.8%)

2.7 Review

Clearly, the Queensland Government has had great difficulty with the projections with some very wide variations occurring in actual compared with projected.

While there was a consistent tendency to under project the South-East corner and over project the Outback areas, there have been wide swings in the accuracy of the projections in the remaining regions. By and large, apart from the 90s' projections, the Fitzroy, Mackay and Townsville regions have been over projected and there has been a strong contrast between projections for these regions and those for the Far North region.

The following section analyses actual changes in population growth rates 1991 to 1996.

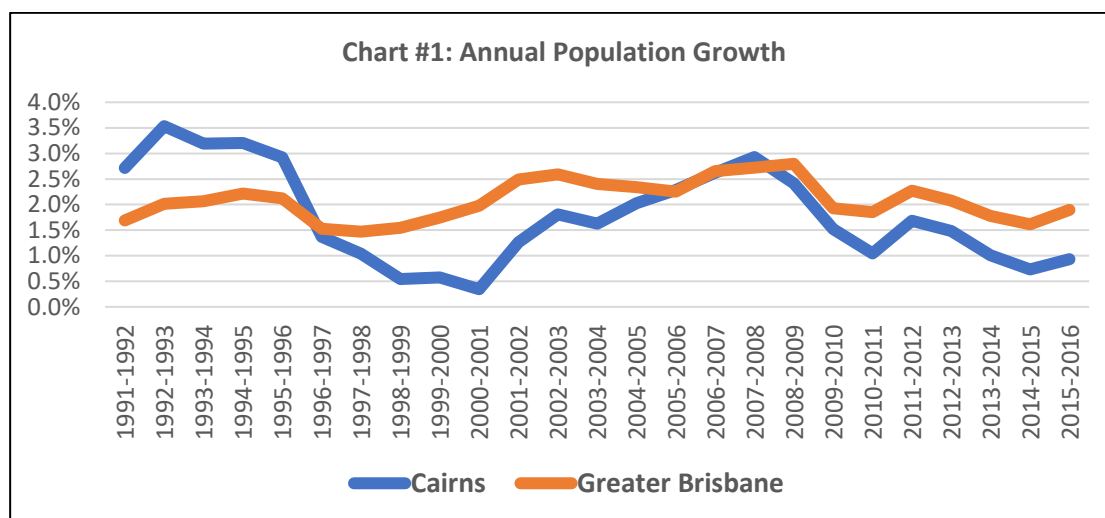
3. ACTUAL GROWTH RATES

3.1 General

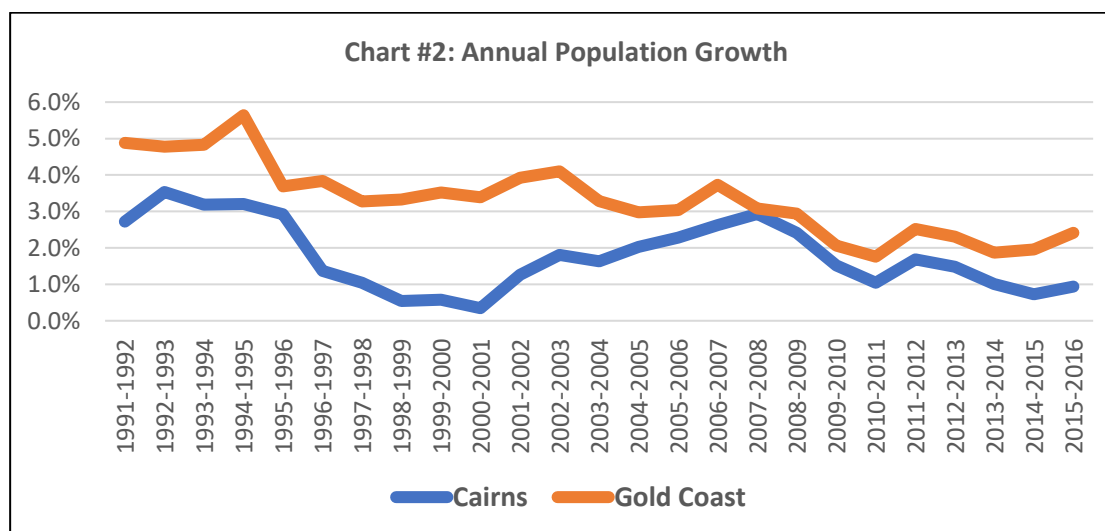
Easily available tables give population growth rates of the main regional SA4 regions back to 1991.

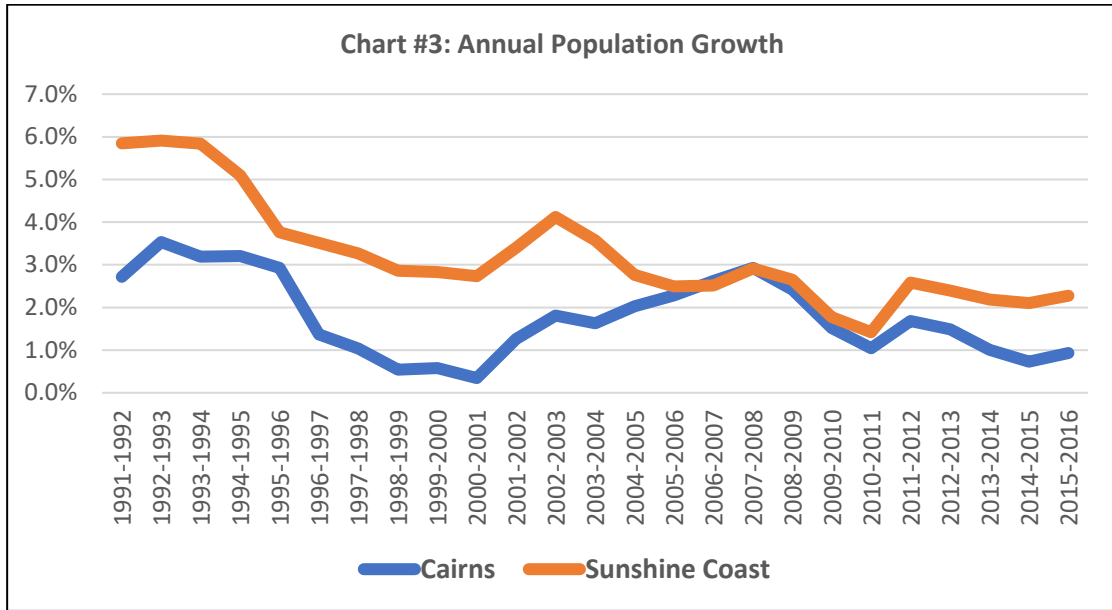
The following charts compare Cairns SA4 with other Queensland regions. They illustrate the very strong fluctuations in growth and especially in the Central and Northern regions.

3.2 Comparisons

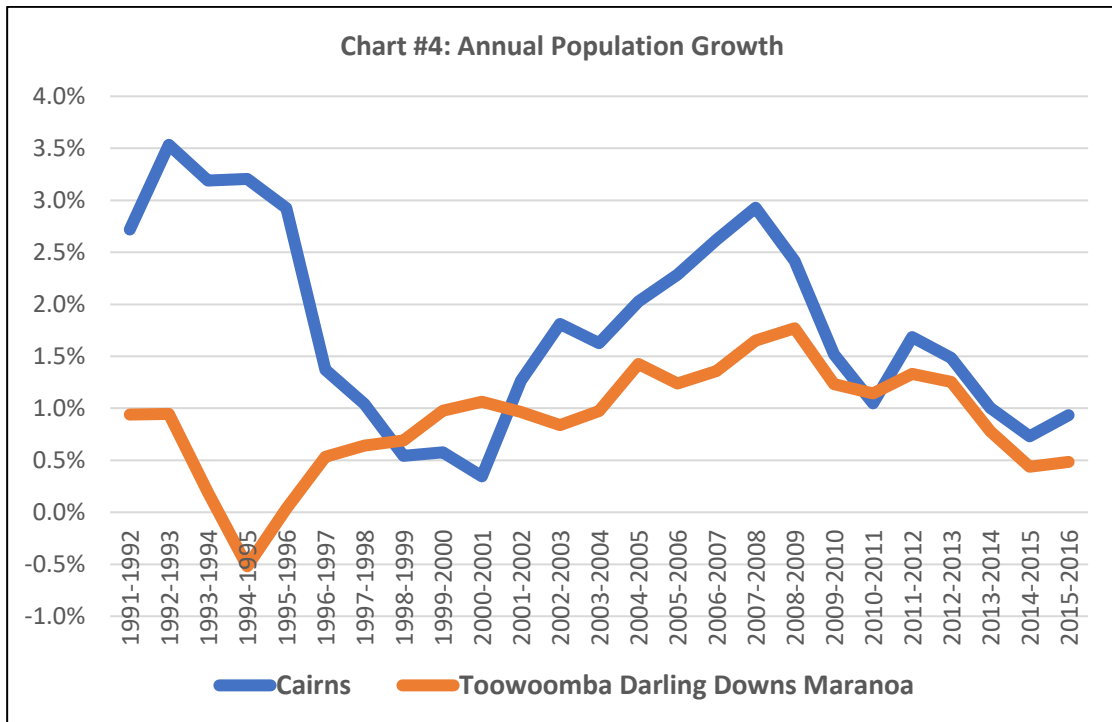


Greater Brisbane – The chart illustrates the comparative volatility of growth in the Cairns SA4 region with Cairns SA4 much more heavily affected by the post Asian Crisis downturn and the post GFC downturn but tracking overall at a little below Greater Brisbane over the long term.

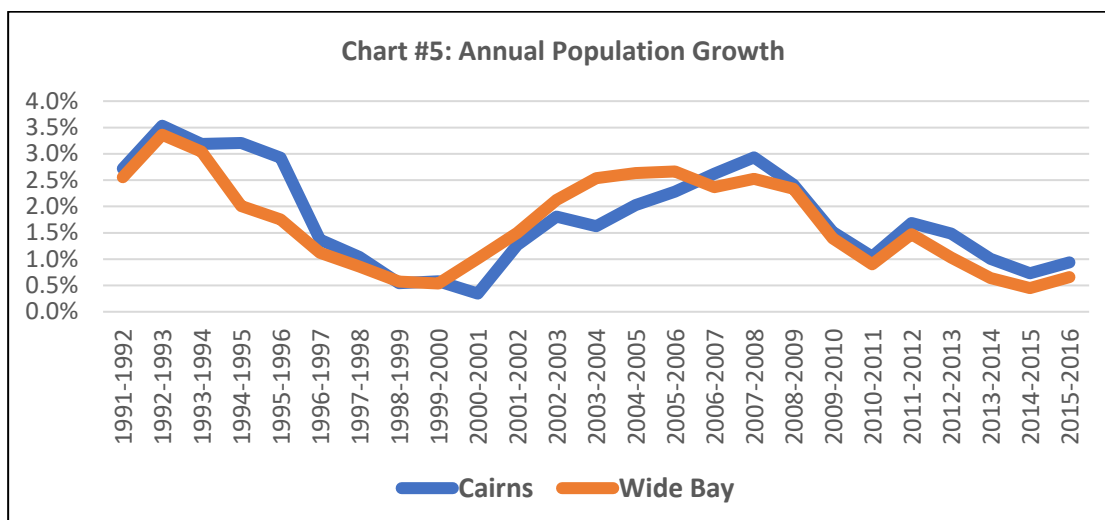




Gold Coast & Sunshine Coast - Overall growth rate is faster than the Cairns region. While Cairns is more volatile, it follows a very similar pattern of peaks and troughs.



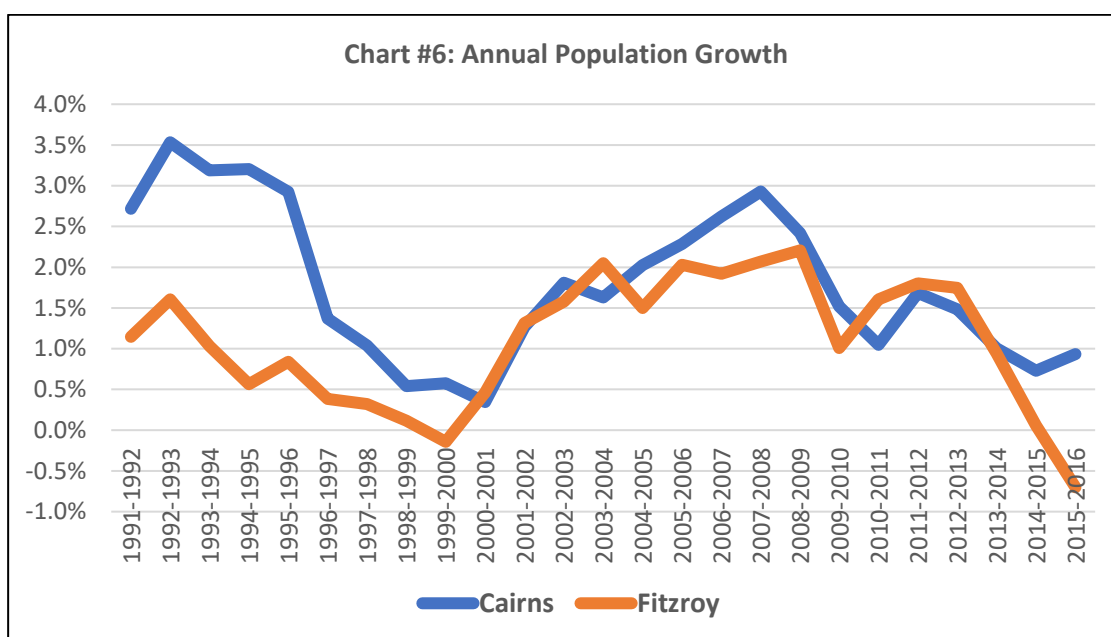
Toowoomba Darling Downs Manaroa - Cairns SA4 region growth has been much faster and very different 1991-92 to 2001-02.



Wide Bay – the chart illustrates that by and large, Cairns has marginally exceeded Wide Bay in growth rates throughout this period except for 2000-01 to 2005-06.

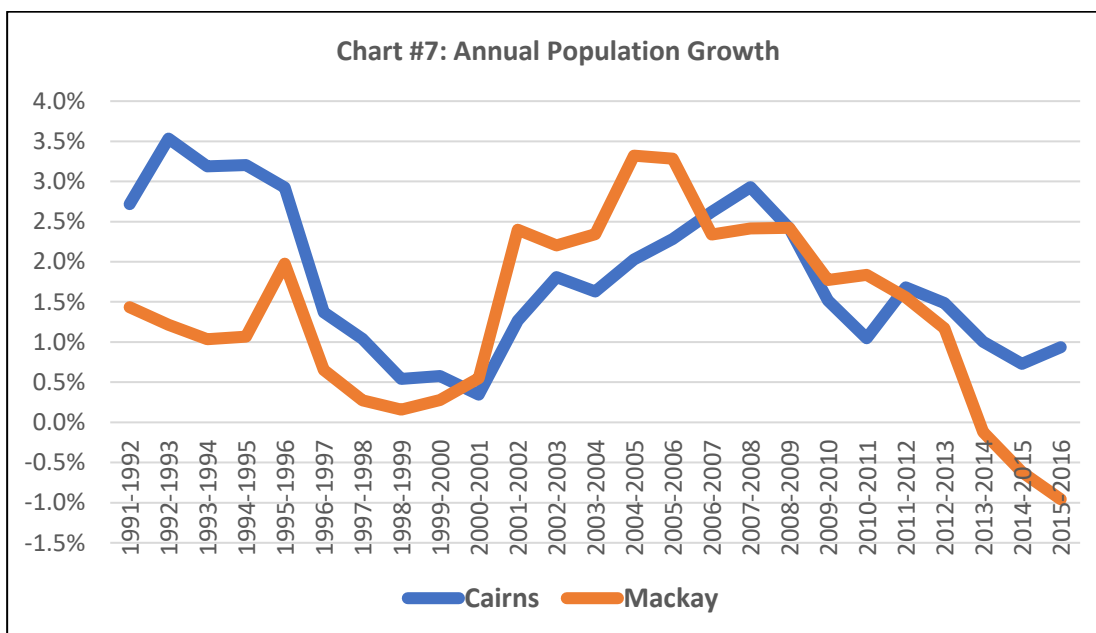
The pattern is very similar with a major high in the first half of the 1990s, a dip in the late 90s through to about 2000-01, a rise and then a fall off after 2008-09.

The dips follow the impact of the Asian crisis in the late 90s and the Global Financial Crisis commencing in 2008. Clearly the Wide Bay region came out of the dip following the Asian crisis faster than the Cairns region.

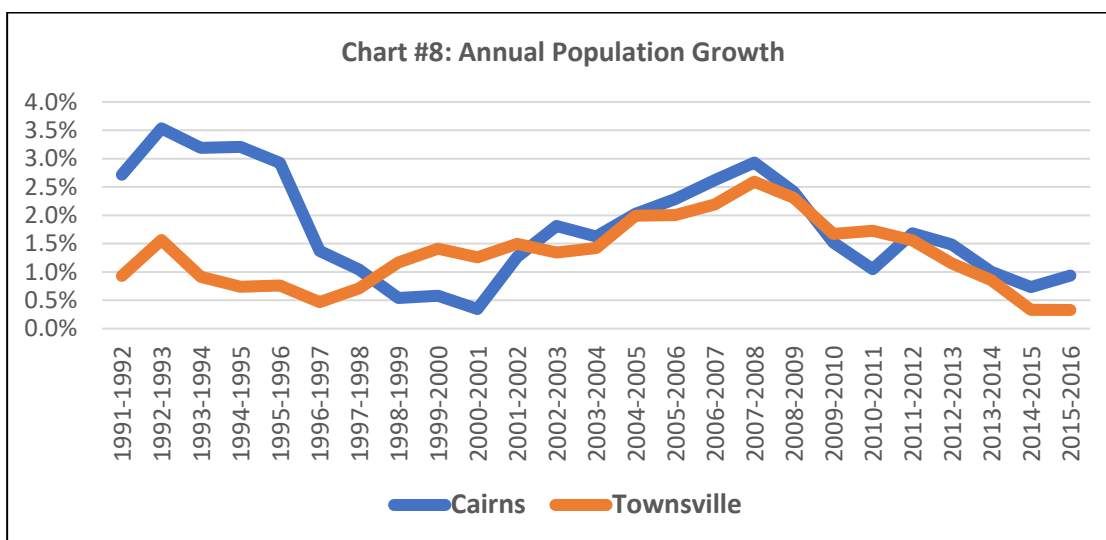


Fitzroy – Again the Cairns region exceeded the Fitzroy region in growth rate except for a couple of years 2003-04 and 2010-11 to 2012-13.

Compared with the Cairns region, the Fitzroy region was experiencing very lacklustre growth throughout the 1990s. However, the mining boom saw it come up to about Cairns region levels through to 2012-13 after which it dropped off strongly again.



Mackay – The Mackay pattern is similar to Fitzroy with slower growth in the 1990s. A major upsurge in the 2000s through to 2010-11 but a sharp drop off thereafter – a pattern heavily influenced by the mining boom.



Townsville – Again, except for a few years 1998-99 to 2001-02 and in 2010-11, Townsville growth has remained below that of the Cairns region. Like Fitzroy and Mackay, growth was low in the 1990s when Cairns was very high but Townsville was not as affected by the Asian Crisis and started to pick up through to a peak in 2007-08 but has fallen strongly since then but not as strongly as Fitzroy and Mackay.

3.3 Conclusion

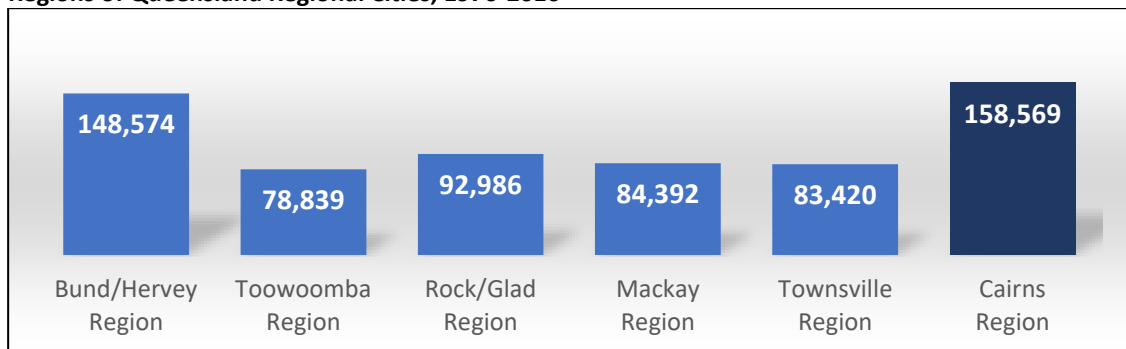
While Cairns region has led outside the South East corner consistently over the 25-year period, growth in all the regions has been volatile. Clearly the patterns were heavily influenced by economic factors.

4. DEALING WITH VOLATILITY – LONG-TERM TRENDS

Against a background of volatility, demographic factors of age structures, birth rates, etc., become relatively less important than economic factors that affect population retention and migration. However, economic conditions can fluctuate strongly. Obviously, economic factors need to be looked at over a longer period of time to pick up underlying long-term trends.

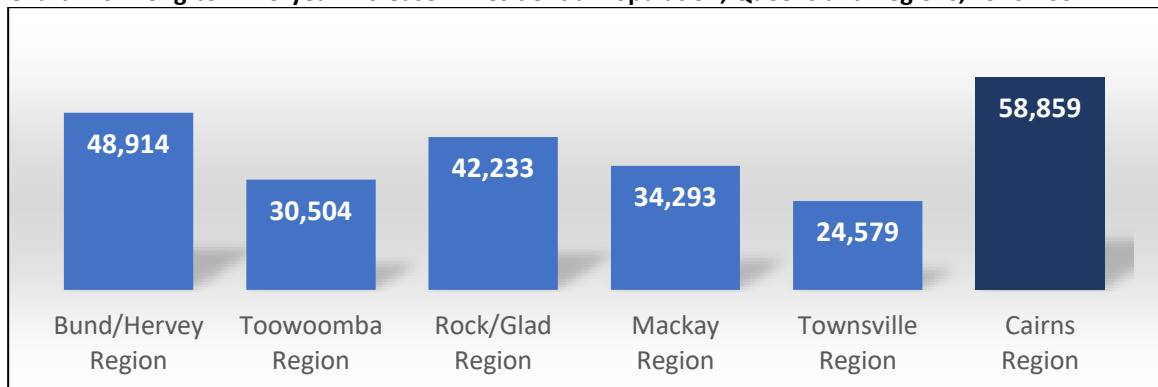
The following looks at long-term trends in the population growth in the Queensland regions outside the South-East corner giving growth that has occurred over 40 years since 1996 and then broken into three periods of 25 years, 15 years and last 10 years.

Chart #9: Long-term 40-year Increase in Regional Residential Population, Commercial Servicing Regions of Queensland Regional Cities, 1976-2016



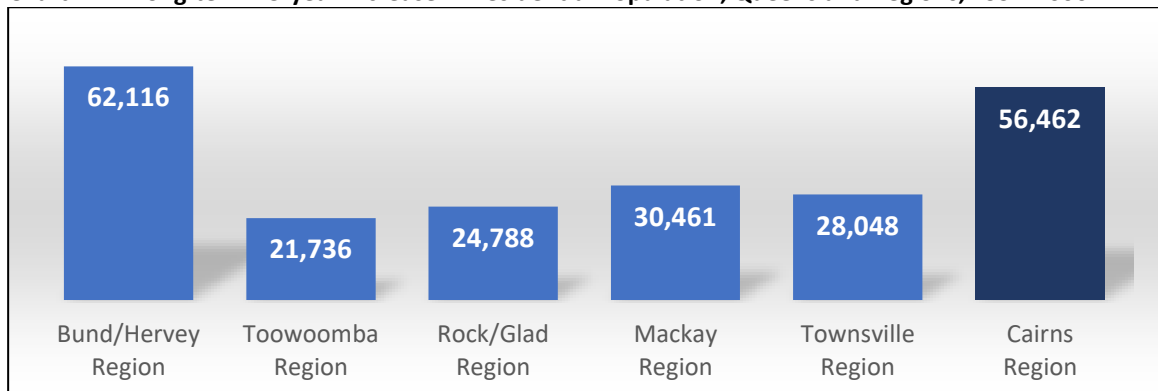
Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0 et al.

Chart #10: Long-term 15-year Increase in Residential Population, Queensland Regions, 1976-1991



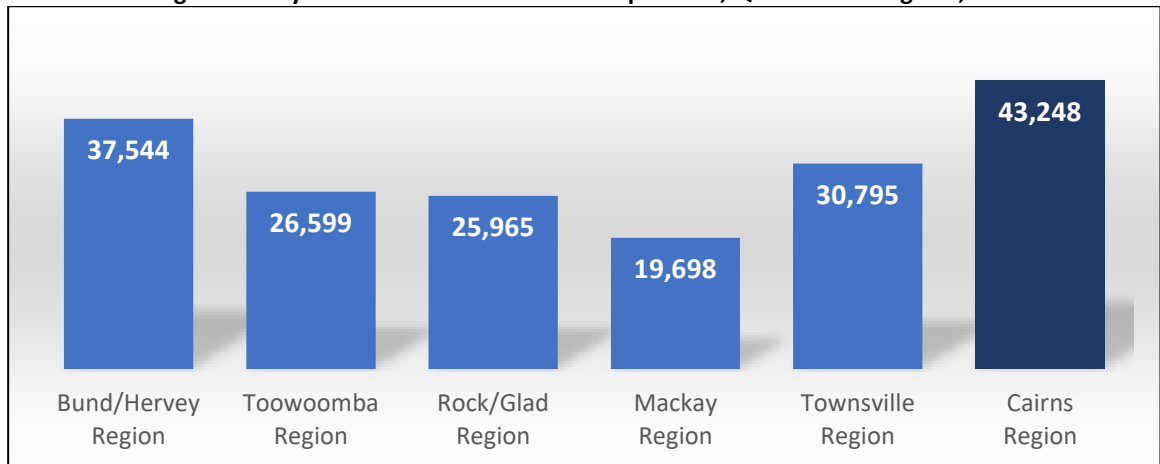
Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0 et al.

Chart #11: Long-term 15-year Increase in Residential Population, Queensland Regions, 1991-2006



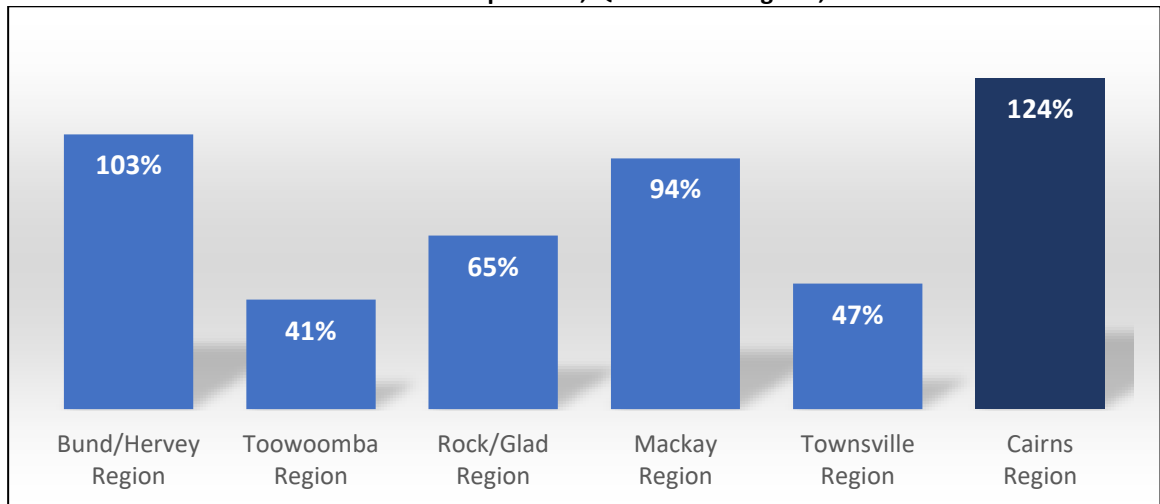
Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0 et al.

Chart #12: Long-term 10-year Increase in Residential Population, Queensland Regions, 2006-2016



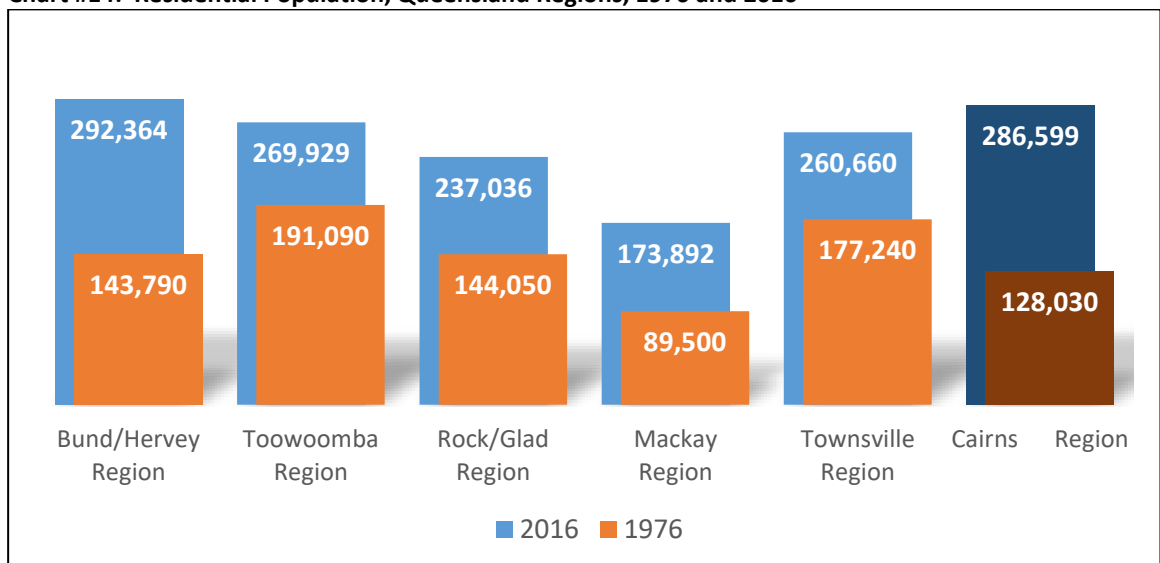
Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0 et al.

Chart #13: Percent Growth - Residential Population, Queensland Regions, 1976-2016



Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0 et al.

Chart #14: Residential Population, Queensland Regions, 1976 and 2016



Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0 et al.

Note: The regions used are commercial regions relating to the relevant cities.

Cairns Region

Includes old Far North Statistical Division plus Gulf LGAs of North West.

Townsville Region

Includes old Northern and North West (excluding Gulf LGAs) less Bowen LGA.

Mackay Region

Includes old Mackay Statistical Division plus Bowen LGA.

Rockhampton/Gladstone Region

Fitzroy Statistical Division plus Central West.

Bundaberg/Hervey Bay Region

Wide Bay Burnett Statistical Division.

Toowoomba Region

Includes old Darling Downs Statistical Division plus South West Statistical Division.

In the Wide Bay and Fitzroy/Central Queensland regions, there is not one dominant city and the cities are taken as a combination of Bundaberg/Hervey Bay/Maryborough and Rockhampton/Gladstone.

Chart #9 illustrates that growth over the 40-year period since 1976 has been led by the Cairns and Bundaberg/Hervey Bay regions by a substantial margin and this pattern has been consistent over the period 15 years 1976 to 1991, 15 years 1991 to 2006, 10 years 2006 to 2016 as shown in Charts #10, #11 and #12.

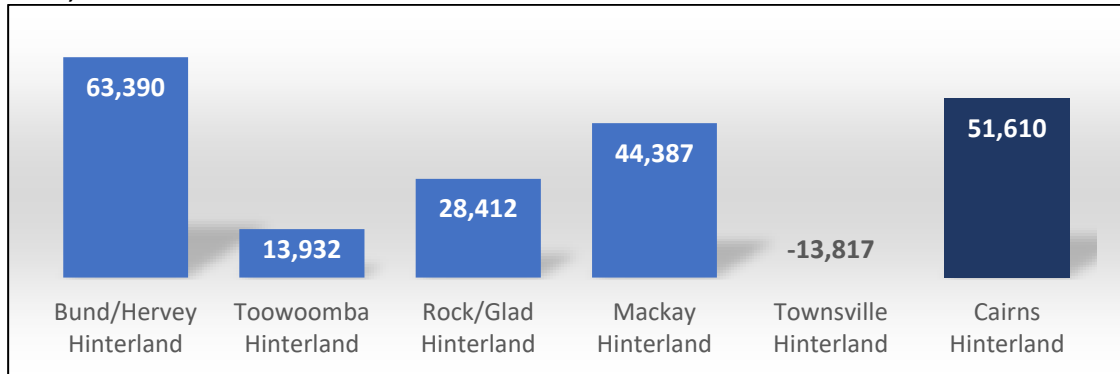
Outside these regions, the pattern of growth in numbers has been all in a range 79,000 to 93,000, 1976 – 2016, but varied in leadership - Rockhampton/Gladstone leading 1976 – 1991, Mackay 1991 – 2006 and Townsville 2006 – 2016.

In percentage growth terms, Cairns and Bundaberg/Hervey Bay regions lead but the smaller Mackay region comes next and the Townsville and Toowoomba regions lowest (see Chart #13).

Chart #14 shows how their growth patterns have led to a marked change in pattern of sizes with the previous two largest Toowoomba and Townsville regions now 3rd and 4th and Bundaberg/Hervey Bay and Cairns regions now 1st and 2nd.

As the following chart illustrates over this period in the northern regions of Cairns and Mackay, strong growth occurred in hinterland populations whereas the Townsville hinterland population retreated.

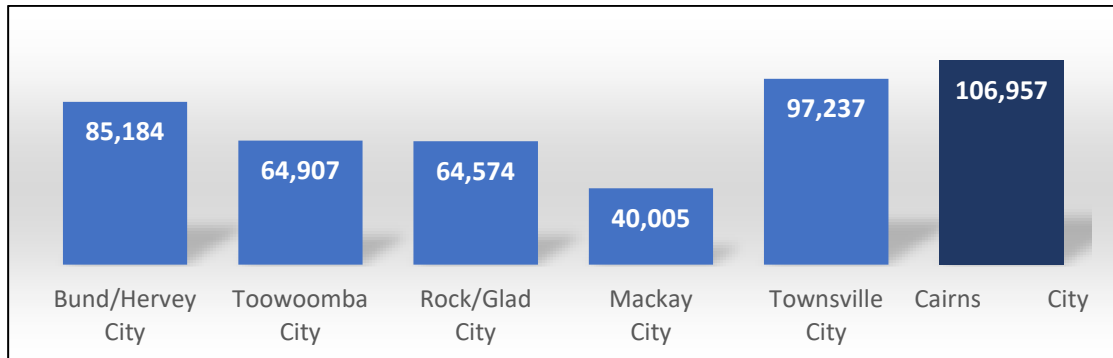
Chart #15: Long-term 40-year Increase in Hinterland Residential Population, Queensland Regional Cities, 1976-2016



Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0 et al.

Looking at the regional cities (Chart #15) themselves, as the chart illustrates, the two northern cities of Cairns and Townsville have grown faster than the rest.

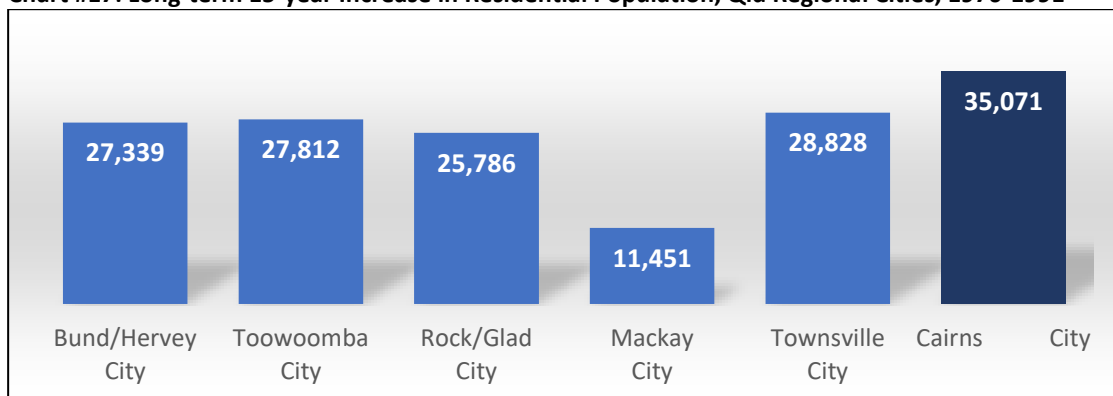
Chart #16: Long-term 40-year Increase in Residential Population, Queensland Regional Cities, 1976-2016



Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0 et al.

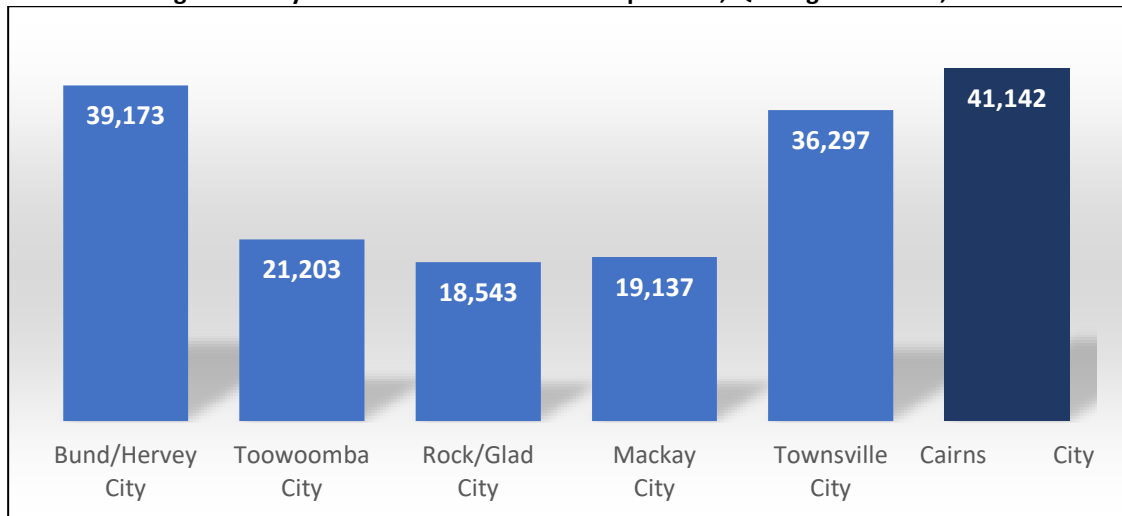
This pattern has been fairly consistent over time except for 2006 to 2016 (see Charts 16, 17 & 18). Despite heavy government expenditure in Townsville in defence, university development and other government agencies, Townsville still recorded lower absolute growth than Cairns 1976 – 2016 and only exceeded Cairns by a narrow margin in 2006 – 2016 period when Cairns growth was negatively affected by the impact of the GFC and a high dollar on tourism and Townsville was impacted positively by the mining boom and a strong expansion of army base personnel.

Chart #17: Long-term 15-year Increase in Residential Population, Qld Regional Cities, 1976-1991



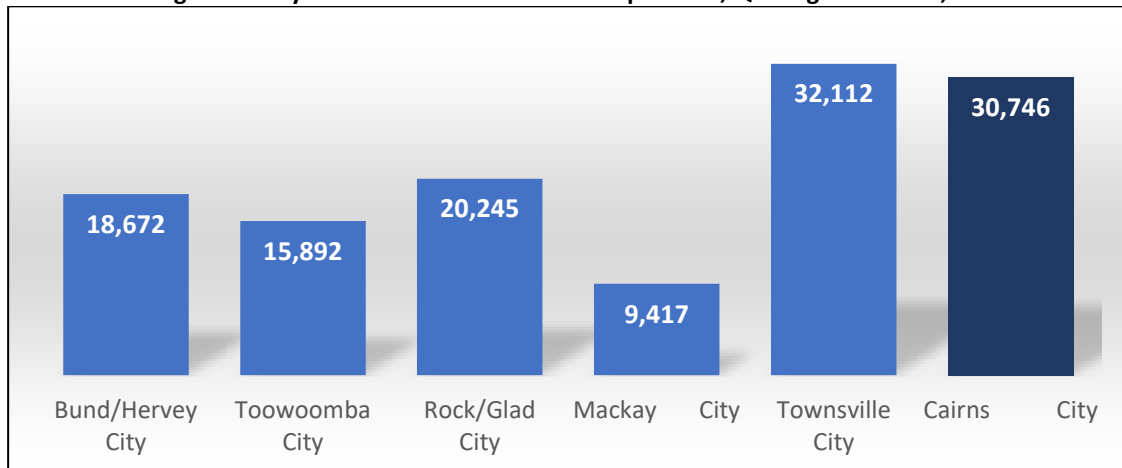
Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0 et al.

Chart #18: Long-term 15-year increase in Residential Population, Qld Regional Cities, 1991-2006



Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0 et al.

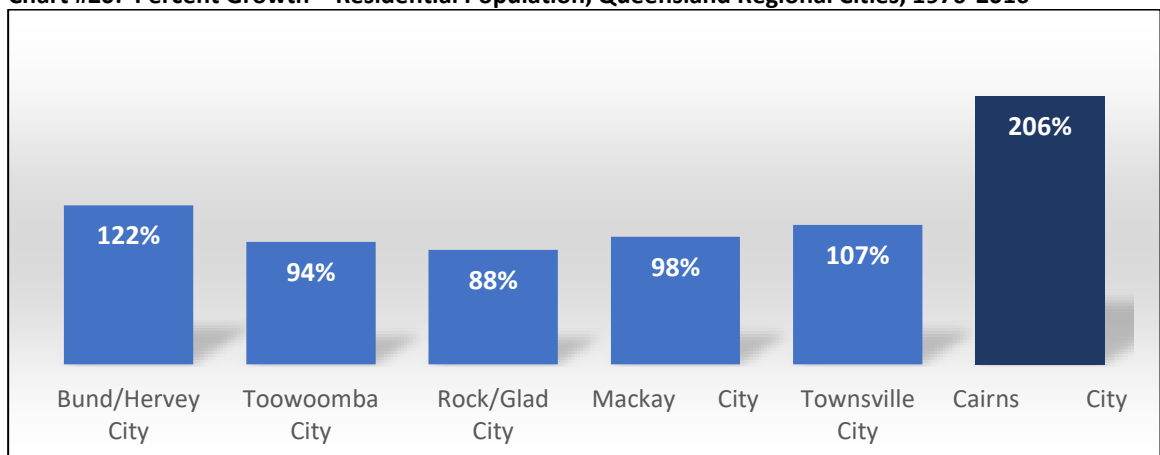
Chart #19: Long-term 10-year increase in Residential Population, Qld Regional Cities, 2006-2016



Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0 et al.

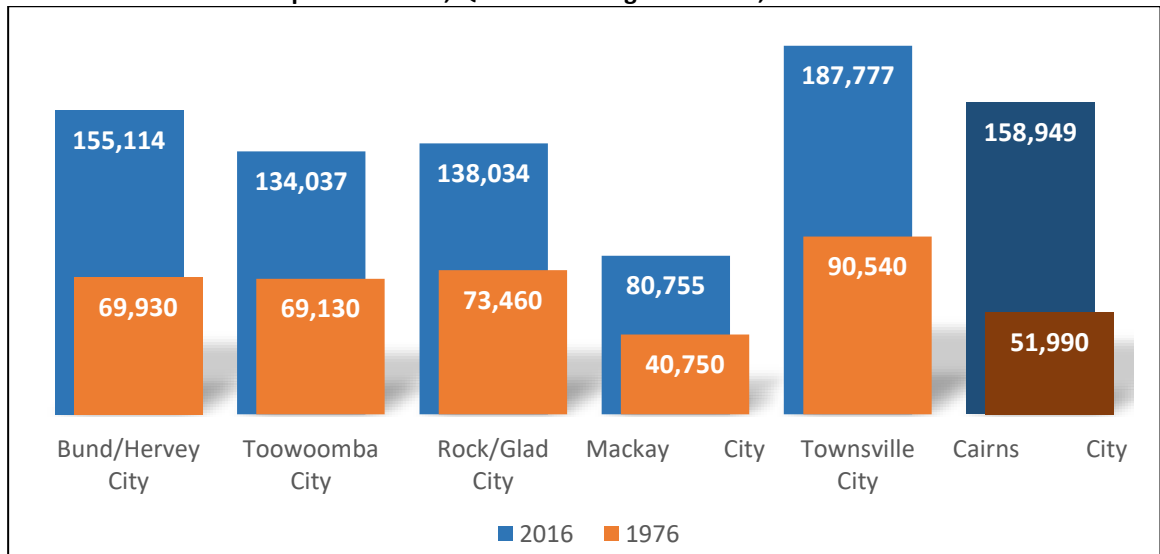
In percentage growth terms, Cairns has led by a large margin with Bundaberg/Hervey Bay next. All the others have been in a band 88% to 107%.

Chart #20: Percent Growth – Residential Population, Queensland Regional Cities, 1976-2016



Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0 et al.

Chart #21: Residential Population Sizes, Queensland Regional Cities, 1976 & 2016



Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0 et al.

Townsville and Rockhampton have failed to consolidate as “capitals” of a two-region structure of Northern and Central Queensland which has increasingly assumed a four-region structure.

For instance, Townsville has increased as a proportion of its immediate regional population. However, its proportion of the wider regional population including the Cairns and Mackay regional population has hardly increased.

	Townsville City	Wider Northern Regional Population - Cairns, Townsville & Mackay Regional Populations	Townsville As %
1976	90,540	394,770	23%
2016	187,777	721,151	26%

5. LATEST FORWARD PROJECTIONS

The following table gives Queensland Government forward projections of growth by region over the 25-year period, 2016 – 2041.

Table #7: Forward Population Growth Projections by SA4 regions, 2016 - 2041

SA4 Regions	% Growth
Gold Coast	64%
Sunshine Coast	64%
Greater Brisbane	56%
Cairns	38%
Townsville	38%
Mackay	31%
Fitzroy	22%
Wide Bay	22%
Darling Downs/Toowoomba	19%

Note 1: Greater Brisbane and Darling Downs/Toowoomba combined SA4 region

The following table gives actual population growth over the past 25-year period by SA4 regions compared with the government's forward projection growth rates over the next 25 years. It illustrates an overall fall in the State's growth rate. There are major differences between regions.

Table #8: Population Growth Rates Actual Past 25 Years Compared with Projected next 25 Years

SA4 Regions	Past 25 Years Actual	Next 25 Years Projected	Projected as % of Past Actual
Wide Bay	52%	22%	43%
Gold Coast	126%	64%	51%
Sunshine Coast	121%	64%	53%
Cairns	54%	38%	70%
Fitzroy	31%	22%	71%
Darling Downs/Toowoomba	25%	19%	76%
Mackay	40%	31%	78%
Greater Brisbane	67%	56%	84%
Townsville	39%	38%	97%

Thus, compared with past 25 years, in the south, the Wide Bay, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast regions are projected to slow strongly and Toowoomba Darling Downs also slow. However, greater Brisbane is projected to slow only marginally.

In the Centre and North, Cairns and Fitzroy are projected to slow substantially but Mackay and Townsville only marginally.

The following table compares the projections against a continuation of actual rates over the past 10-year growth rates projected forward over 25 years.

Table #9: Population Growth Rates Next 25 Years at Actual Compared with Projected Past 10 Year-Growth Rate

SA4 Regions	Next 25 Years at Actual Past 10-year Growth Rate	Next 25 Years at Projected	Proportion as Projected as % of Actual
Gold Coast	69%	64%	93%
Sunshine Coast	64%	64%	100%
Wide Bay	37%	22%	59%
Cairns	44%	38%	86%
Fitzroy	34%	22%	65%
Darling Downs/Toowoomba	30%	19%	63%
Greater Brisbane	59%	56%	95%
Mackay	31%	31%	123%
Townsville	39%	38%	97%

The table indicated the projections have a closer relationship with the 10-year averages 2006- - 2016 but with a strong fall off in Wide Bay and Toowoomba Darling Downs with hardly any change in Brisbane, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast.

In the Centre and North, Mackay is projected to increase, Townsville remain the same but Fitzroy decline along with Cairns.

Given the trends over time and past experience, there must be a real question about the underlying justification of these projections.

Based on using highest and lowest rates over the past 25, 15 and 10 years, growth rates over the next 25 years gives comparisons as follows.

Table #10: Population Growth Rates Next 25 Years Based on Highest & Lowest Historical Growth Rates Past 25 Years Compared with Projected

SA4 Regions	Past Actual Low → High	Projected
Gold Coast	69% → 126%	64%
Sunshine Coast	64% → 121%	64%
Greater Brisbane	59% → 67%	56%
Cairns	44% → 56%	38%
Wide Bay	37% → 52%	22%
Mackay	31% → 47%	31%
Townsville	38% → 43%	38%
Fitzroy	31% → 39%	22%
Darling Downs/Toowoomba	25% → 30%	19%

Two that appear to be out of alignment with comparative long-term trends are the Townsville region with growth projected up with the Cairns region. The Cairns region could have been expected to be closer up on Greater Brisbane. Wide Bay would appear to be under projected compared with comparative historical trends, especially relative to Townsville. Fitzroy could be expected to be closer to Mackay.