

RAINFOREST TOURISM 'BAROMETER' PORT DOUGLAS AND DAINTREE SURVEY Quarterly Report # 3 July to September 2009

This quarterly report forms part of a series of reports presented by the Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility (MTRSF) and James Cook University (JCU) on tourism in Tropical North Queensland (TNQ) (see MTRSF Tourism Barometers at http://www.mtrsf.org.au/publications/tourism_barometers.html). The geographic area of focus was expanded to include the tourism 'hotspots' of **Port Douglas and Daintree** in far northern Queensland, and data presented in this report summarise the results from the **third quarter (Q3)** of data collection from **July to September 2009**. Overall, a total of **339 surveys** were returned for this quarter from locations in Port Douglas and the Daintree region. The results include tourists' socio-demographic characteristics, travel behaviour, motivations and planning, and activities.



Survey Methodology and Limitations

The methodology used in this research was structured visitor surveys collected by James Cook University researchers at various sites throughout the Port Douglas and Daintree area.

During this period, limitations included an overall drop in visitor numbers to the North Queensland region.

Additionally, the surveys were only collected in English, therefore the Japanese and Chinese visitor markets, for example, are under-represented in the data collected.



Findings

Gender, origin and age

The sample consisted of 62.9% females and 37.1% males, compared with 63.3%:36.7% in Quarter 2 (Q2) and 53.4%:46.6% in Quarter 1 (Q1).

Moreover, 50.1% of respondents were international visitors and 49.9% were domestic, compared with 43.0% international and 57.0% domestic in Q2, and 75.4% international and 24.6% domestic in Q1.

Figure 1 provides a summary of the international market, while Figure 2 shows a comparison between each of the Australian States in the domestic market.

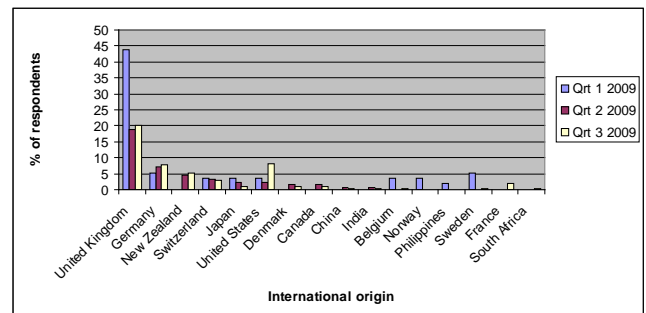


Figure 1: Origin of international survey respondents (Q1, Q2, Q3, 2009).

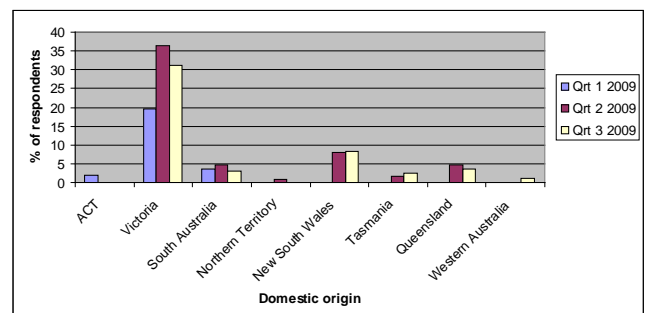


Figure 2: Origin of domestic survey respondents (Q1, Q2, Q3, 2009).

Figure 3 shows a comparison of the age groups of respondents in Q1, Q2 and Q3.

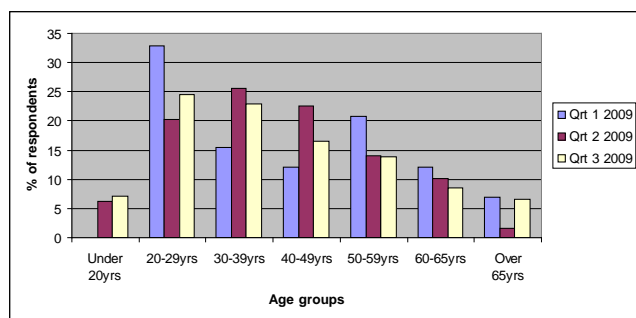


Figure 3: Age groups of survey respondents (Q1, Q2, Q3, 2009).

Travel party and income

The composition of respondents' travel parties is illustrated in Figure 4. A common theme occurring in Q1, Q2 and Q3 is the preference to travel as a couple.

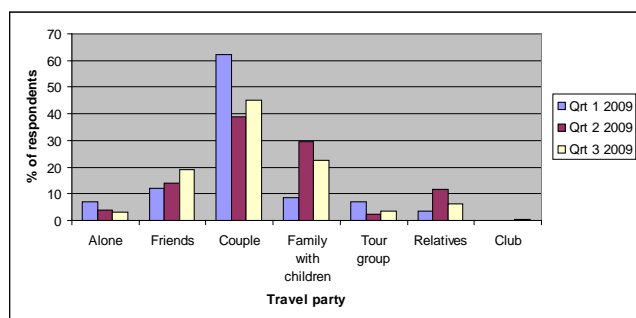


Figure 4: Survey respondents' preferred travel parties (Q1, Q2, Q3, 2009).

The majority of survey respondents reported an annual income of between AUD\$25,000 and \$45,000 in Q1; whereas in Q2 and Q3, the majority of respondents reported an annual income of over \$85,000 (Figure 5).

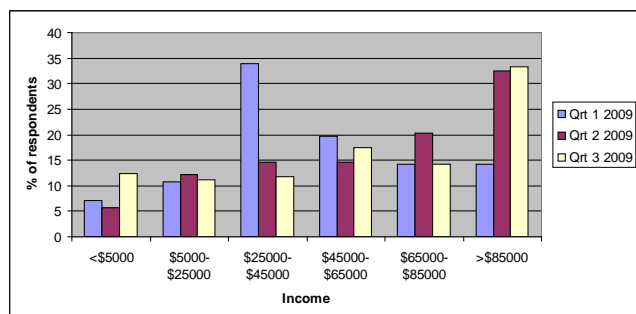


Figure 5: Reported annual incomes of survey respondents (Q1, Q2, Q3, 2009).

Previous visits and length of stay

A total of 63.9% of respondents (74.2% in Q2; 82.5% in Q1) indicated that this was their first visit to the Port Douglas and Daintree area. For those who had visited the area before, the average number of visits was 4.17 (3.61 in Q2; 4.40 in Q1).

Figure 6 provides a summary of the length of time respondents stayed in Port Douglas, Mossman, Daintree, Cape Tribulation and the regional beaches. Similarly for Q2 and Q1, day trips were a popular activity for visitors in Q3.

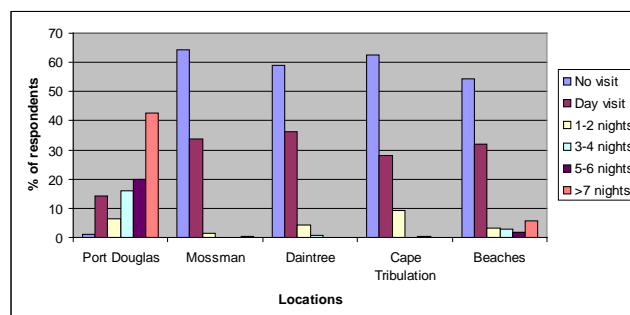


Figure 6: Length of time spent in locations throughout the Port Douglas and Daintree area (Q3, 2009).

Accommodation and transport

Figure 7 illustrates the most popular types of accommodation used by survey respondents in Q1, Q2 and Q3.

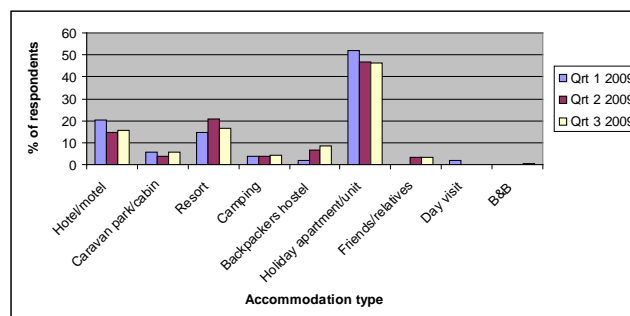


Figure 7: Most popular types of accommodation utilised by survey respondents (Q1, Q2, Q3, 2009).

Only for 30.5% of respondents (32.8% in Q2; 29.8% in Q1) did their chosen accommodation venue have an on-site restaurant. However, 84.7% of respondents (84.4% in Q2; 79.6% in Q1) reported having in-room cooking facilities available to them.

Respondents were asked to indicate, on average, how many meals they 'ate out' each day of their trip. The mean response was 1.55 meals (1.63 meals in Q2; 1.72 meals in Q1).

Figure 7 shows the types of transport utilised by respondents to travel to and around the Port Douglas and Daintree area in Q1, Q2 and Q3.

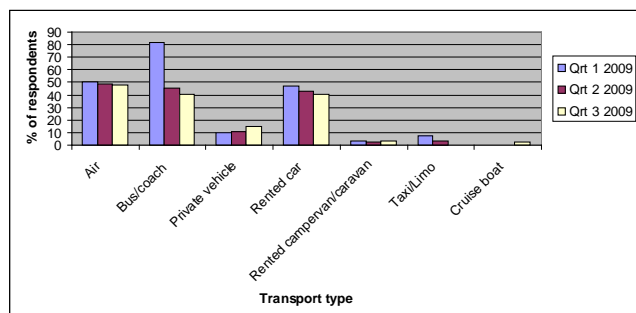


Figure 8: Most popular types of transport utilised by survey respondents (Q1, Q2, Q3, 2009).

Information sources

Sources of information about the North Queensland tourism region used by survey respondents in Q1, Q2 and Q3 are outlined in Figure 9.

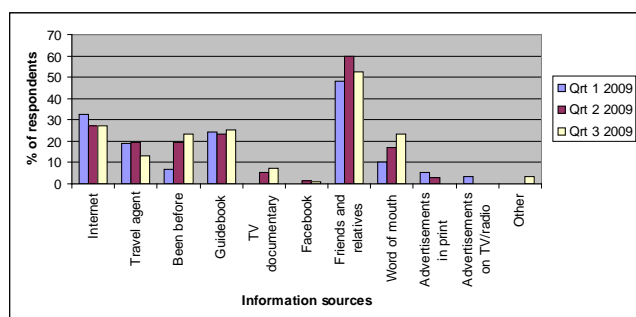


Figure 9: Sources of North Queensland tourism information utilised by survey respondents (Q1, Q2, Q3, 2009).

Trip booking

How visitors booked their trip to the Port Douglas and Daintree region is summarised in Figure 10. Note that responses presented here are only for the period August to September.

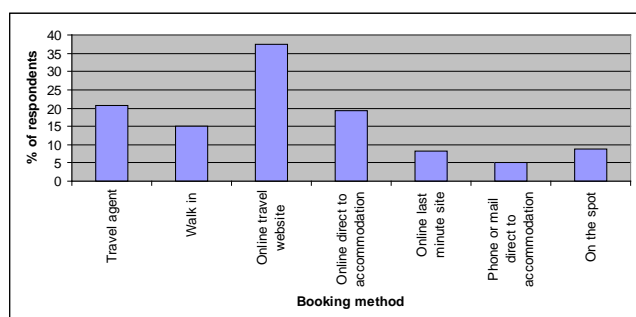


Figure 10: Methods utilised by survey respondents to book their trip to the Port Douglas and Daintree region (August and September of Q3, 2009).

Motivations for travel to the region

The most important motivations for visiting the area, measured on a scale of 1 ('not at all important') to 5 ('very important') are listed below. The comprehensive list is provided in Table 1.

Overall, the top five motives for travelling to the region in Quarter 3, 2009 were:

- Rest and relaxation (4.47; 4.52 in Q2; 4.50 in Q1);
- Climate (4.39; 4.35 in Q2; 3.98 in Q1);
- To visit the beaches (4.20; 4.14 in Q2; 4.11 in Q1);
- To visit the Great Barrier Reef (4.06; 4.06 in Q2; 4.31 in Q1); and
- To experience the natural environment (3.99; 3.92 in Q2; 4.04 in Q1).

Table 1: Overall motivations for travelling to the Port Douglas and Daintree region (Q1, Q2, Q3, 2009).

Motivation to visit	Q3 Rating	Q2 Rating	Q1 Rating
Rest and relaxation	4.47	4.52	4.50
To visit the Great Barrier Reef	4.06	4.06	4.31
To visit the beaches	4.20	4.14	4.11
To experience the natural environment	3.99	3.92	4.04
Climate	4.39	4.35	3.98
To visit the Daintree rainforest	3.70	3.46	3.69
Snorkelling and diving	3.60	3.65	3.68
Restaurants and dining	3.40	3.46	3.55
Cheap accommodation	3.40	3.30	3.49
To see Australian wildlife	3.60	3.35	3.43
To spend time with family	3.64	3.90	3.26
Adventure activities	3.21	3.14	3.21
Cheap airfares	3.40	3.47	3.19
Socialising and meeting new people	2.86	2.76	2.96
To experience Aboriginal culture	2.76	2.62	2.66
Eco-accredited products	2.31	2.40	2.60
Nightlife and entertainment	2.61	2.55	2.56
Carbon offsetting programs	2.12	2.16	2.51
To visit friends and relatives	2.13	2.00	2.23
Shopping	2.28	2.46	2.11
Fishing	1.86	1.92	1.89
Business/conference/meeting	1.33	1.38	1.44
To attend a wedding	1.55	1.43	1.35

Visits to the rainforests and reefs

Survey respondents were queried about their rainforest and reef visitation patterns. A large number of respondents visited rainforests in the Mossman area (43.3% of respondents; 40.3% in Q2; 58.6% in Q1) and Cape Tribulation (41.2%; 40.3% in Q2; 48.3% in Q1). The next most popular area to visit and experience rainforests was Daintree village (32.2%; 29.8% in Q2; 36.8% in Q1).

As for the Great Barrier Reef, the most popular destination for experiencing the reef was the outer reef (39.1% of respondents; 36.8% in Q2; 43.1% in Q1), followed by departing for the reef from Cairns (20.2%; 18.4% in Q2; 12.1% in Q1) and the Low Isles (16.1%; 19.4% in Q2; 27.6% in Q1).

Service quality

Respondents were asked to reflect on nine given aspects of service quality during their time in the Port Douglas and Daintree area. Service quality was gauged on a scale of 1 ('very unsatisfied') to 5 ('highly satisfied'). Table 2 provides a summary of the mean values for Q1, Q2 and Q3.

Table 2: Survey respondents' satisfaction with service quality aspects in the Port Douglas and Daintree area (Q1, Q2, Q3 2009).

Service quality aspect	Q3 Rating	Q2 Rating	Q1 Rating
Felt safe and secure	4.59	4.57	3.88
Courteous and friendly staff	4.33	4.39	3.76
Accommodation – value for money	4.01	4.20	3.53
Standard of restaurants	4.02	4.08	3.47
Visitor information	4.01	4.08	3.47
Attractions – value for money	3.75	3.90	3.33
Tours – value for money	3.76	3.87	3.28
Shopping / retail	3.53	3.68	3.10
Public transport	3.35	3.39	3.02

Travel budget and overall satisfaction

The average mean budget for survey respondents who holidayed in the Port Douglas and Daintree area was AUD\$4,334, with an average of 2.04 adults and 0.58 children, compared with \$3,962 and an average of 1.95 adults and 0.58 children in Q2, and \$3,910 and an average of 1.96 adults and 0.02 children in Q1.

Respondents were largely satisfied (mean=8.65; 8.82 in Q2; 8.07 in Q1) with their visit to the Port Douglas and Daintree area, based on a scale of 1 ('very unsatisfactory') to 10 ('very satisfactory'), although some possible improvements might be necessary to boost this mean score further into the 9s.

Domestic visitors were particularly satisfied with their visit, with a mean of 8.73 (8.90 in Q2; 8.43 in Q1), compared to international visitors with a mean of 8.58 (8.73 in Q2; 7.95 in Q1).

Moreover, 97.2% of respondents (97.6% in Q2; 98.1% in Q1) indicated that they would recommend the Port Douglas and Daintree area to prospective visitors.

For further information about the MTSRF-funded North Queensland tourism surveys, contact James Cook University:

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To access and download the series of quarterly Rainforest Tourism 'Barometers', visit http://www.rrrc.org.au/publications/tourism_barometers.html