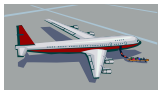


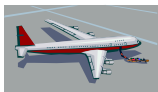
**TOURISM**  
**QUARTERLY REPORT #2: AIRPORT EXIT SURVEY**  
**TNQ Region**  
**April – June 2008**

This quarterly report forms part of a series of reports presented by the Marine and Tropical Science Research Facility (MTRSF) and James Cook University (JCU) on tourism in Tropical North Queensland (TNQ). The data presented in this report summarises the results from the current quarter of data collection in the TNQ region from **April to June 2008**. Overall, a total of **440 surveys** were returned for this quarter from the **Cairns Domestic Airport** Terminal. The results include socio-demographic characteristics, travel behaviour, alternative destinations, motivations and planning, and reef and rainforest experiences. This report marks the second barometer to compare the current quarter with the corresponding quarter for last year. This barometer also outlines the results of a new question related to service quality.



### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The MTRSF research Project 4.9.2 Sustainable Nature-based Tourism: Planning & Management aims *to identify major issues relating to tourist motivations and behaviours for visiting the Wet Tropics and to identify key trends and drivers of Wet Tropics visitor patterns including economic contribution*. Additionally, this study covers visitation to the Great Barrier Reef (GBR).

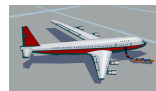


### **2. METHODOLOGY**

The data outlined in this report was obtained from visitor surveys distributed by the MTRSF research team at the Cairns Airport Domestic Terminal departure lounge.

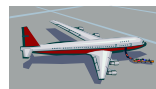
This location hosts domestic and international visitors travelling within Australia and transferring between international and domestic flights, linking Cairns with all of the Australian capital cities, most of the regional centres in the TNQ region, Great Barrier Reef islands and Alice Springs/Uluru in Central Australia.

Data was collected on visitors' socio-demographic characteristics, travel patterns, motivations, activities, travel expenditure, alternative destinations considered, and satisfaction.



### **3. SAMPLE & LIMITATIONS**

A total of 440 valid surveys were collected from domestic and international visitors at the Cairns Airport during this survey period. The survey was distributed in both English and Chinese.



### **4. FINDINGS**

#### ***Gender and origin of respondents***

The sample consisted of 440 respondents (n=416 in 2007) of whom 55.0% (57.2% in Qrt 2 2007) were females and 45.0% were males (42.8% in Qrt 2 2007). Figure 1 illustrates that visitors were mainly from Australia 44.3% (compared with 42.8% in Qrt 2 2007), the UK & Ireland 16.1% (17.3% in Qrt 2 2007) and North America 13.5% (18.5% in Qrt 2 2007).

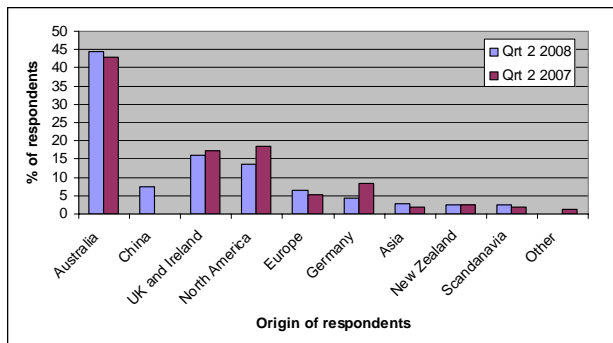


Figure 1: Origin of respondents

### Occupation

The most common types of occupation that respondents indicated were:

- Professional 21.7% (17.9% in Qrt 2 2007);
- Retired/semi-retired 13.8% (18.4% in Qrt 2 2007);
- Student 15.4% (21.8% in Qrt 2 2007);
- Management 7.9% (6.5% in Qrt 2 2007);
- Self-employed 9.6% (7.7% in Qrt 2 2007) and;
- Office-clerical 8.4% (4.8% in Qrt 2 2007).

### Age of respondents

As shown in Figure 2, the major age groups of respondents were 20-29 years 32.3% (32.0% in Qrt 2 2007), 50-59 years 19.7% (16.8% in Qrt 2 2007) and to a lesser extent 30-39 years 12.2% (15.4% in Qrt 2 2007).

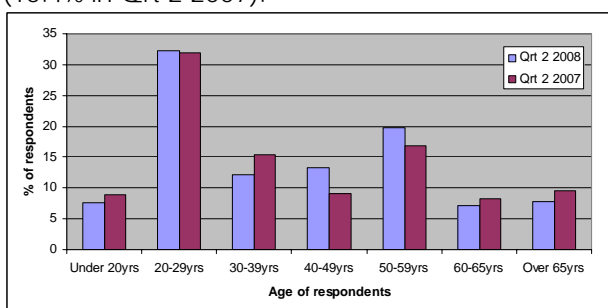


Figure 2: Age of respondents

### Travel party

Respondents mainly travelled as a couple 47.6% (39.6% in Qrt 2 2007), with friends 16.7% (12.8% in Qrt 2 2007), alone 13.9% (17.6% in Qrt 2 2007), as a family with children 9.5% (12.8% in Qrt 2 2007) or with relatives 6.3% (6.5% in Qrt 2 2007), as part of a tour group 5.6% (10.6% in Qrt 2 2007) or club 0.5% (0% in Qrt 2 2007).

### Previous visits and length of stay

70% of respondents said this was their first visit to Tropical North Queensland. Only 43.7% of domestic visitors were first timers, while 90.0% of international visitors were first time visitors to the region.

Overall, only 30.0% of respondents were repeat visitors (32.8% in Qrt 2 2007). Over 90% of repeat visitors had visited 1-3 times before.

The overall average length of stay in the region was 7.87 nights, compared with 9.34 nights in Qrt 2 2007.

### Accommodation and transportation

Table 1 below outlines the main types of accommodation used by respondents.

Table 1: Accommodation used by respondents

	Qrt 2 2008 (%)	Qrt 2 2007 (%)
Hotels/Motels	34.6	34.2
Holiday apartments	21.0	18.2
Resorts	15.2	15.7
Backpacker hostels	19.4	17.2
Friends and relatives	4.4	9.3
Caravan park/cabins	3.9	2.0
Camping	1.2	3.2
B&B	0.2	0.2

Table 2 below illustrates the popularity of the different types of transport used by respondents to travel to and around the region while holidaying.

Table 2: Transport used by respondents

	Qrt 2 2008 (%)	Qrt 2 2007 (%)
Air	49.9	52.7
Rented car	18.0	17.9
Bus/coach	23.2	17.9
Private vehicle	3.3	6.5
Rented campervan	3.3	2.2
Other	0.9	1.4
Cruise boat	0.5	1.0
Rail	0.9	0.5

## Information

Table 3 outlines the most common sources of information used by visitors.

**Table 3: Information sources used by respondents**

	Qrt 2 2008 (%)	Qrt 2 2007 (%)
Friends and family	40.0	40.4
Internet	31.4	22.8
Tourist guide books	28.0	28.1
Travel agents	21.2	19.2
Been before	20.0	16.3
TV documentaries	5.0	7.0
Visitor centres	5.0	4.6
Ads print	5.0	4.6
Ads on the TV/radio	3.6	4.3
Other	5.2	11.8

## Motivations

The mean (measured on a scale of 1 = not at all important, to 5 = very important) for the most important motivations for visiting the region are listed in Table 1.

Overall, the top five motives for Qrt 2 2008 were similar to those in Qrt 2 2007. These were:

- Rest & relax 4.31 (3.83 in Qrt 2 2007);
- Climate 4.25 (3.75 in Qrt 2 2007);
- Visit the GBR 4.23 (4.22 in Qrt 2 2007);
- Visit the rainforest 4.02 (4.01 in Qrt 2 2007);
- Experience natural environment 4.00 (3.87 in Qrt 2 2007).

As shown in Table 4, domestic and international visitors had quite different mean rankings for the major motives for visiting the region.

Domestic visitors were mainly motivated by resting and relaxing (4.39) and experiencing the natural environment (3.99), while international visitors were most motivated by visiting the Great Barrier Reef (4.50), Wet Tropics rainforest (4.12) and the climate (4.31).

**Table 4: Motivations for travelling to the region**

Motivations	Mean		
	Overall	Dom	Int'l
Rest & relax	4.31	4.39	4.24
Climate	4.25	4.16	4.31
Visit GBR	4.23	3.86	4.50
Visit Wet Tropics rainforest	4.02	3.92	4.12
Experience the natural environment	4.00	3.99	3.98
See Australian wildlife	3.85	3.41	4.18
Snorkelling and diving	3.83	3.26	4.25
Walk in the rainforest	3.81	3.79	3.87
Price matched my budget	3.76	3.66	3.85
Visit a world heritage area	3.73	3.71	3.76

## Last holiday and alternative destinations

The most popular (single) destinations given in response to "where did you spend your last holiday?" were the United States of America (2.8%), New Zealand (4.9%), Thailand (2.0%), Melbourne (1.8%), Sydney (3.2%), France (1.4%), Italy (1.6%) and the Gold Coast (1.8%).

Respondents were also asked to list up to 3 alternative destinations considered for this trip. The most popular alternative destinations considered when planning this trip included Fiji (4.4%), United States of America (6.2%), Europe (4.4%), New Zealand (12.4%), Sydney (12.0%), Melbourne (8.8%), the Gold Coast (4.4%) and Brisbane (4.2%).

## Visits to the rainforest

Overall, the majority of respondents, 81.0%, visited the Wet Tropics rainforest during their holiday in TNQ this quarter, compared with 78.3% of respondents in the same quarter in 2007.

Respondents who said they had visited the rainforests during their holiday, were asked to indicate which locations they had visited, indicated in Figure 3.

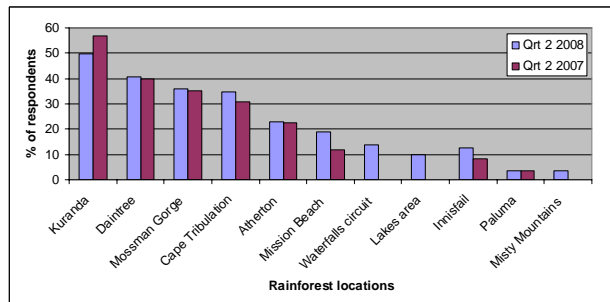


Figure 3: Rainforest Locations Visited

Respondents who had not visited the rainforest during their holiday (19.0% of respondents) mainly said there was 'not enough time' (16.4%).

### Rainforest activities

Walking and viewing rainforest scenery were the most popular rainforest activities to visitors (see Table 5).

Table 5: Interest in rainforest activities

Rainforest activities	%		
	Overall	Dom	Int'l
Walking	63.9	65.8	63.2
Viewing scenery	57.0	61.6	54.8
Viewing wildlife	47.8	43.9	51.5
Swimming	33.0	36.3	30.1
General relaxation	41.8	52.1	34.7
Film/Photography	40.2	35.3	45.2
Guided tour	38.4	34.7	42.3
Visiting information centres	24.1	24.2	25.1
Socialisation	20.2	21.6	19.2
Reading site interpretation	15.8	14.3	17.2
Bird watching	18.0	15.8	20.1
Hiking	17.5	16.3	19.2
4WD	11.2	7.9	13.0
Rafting	7.5	5.3	9.6
Camping	5.7	1.6	8.8
Bike riding	5.2	4.7	5.9

### Visits to the GBR

76.5% of respondents visited the GBR on their trip to the region, compared with only 68.9% of respondents during the same quarter in 2007. Figure 4 shows the departure sites used to travel to the GBR in Qrt 2 of both 2008 and 2007.

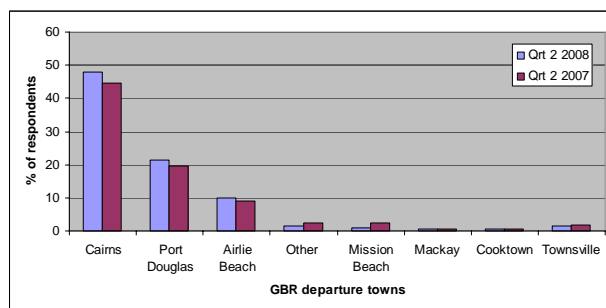


Figure 4: Departure locations for reef trips

Respondents who had not visited the GBR during their holiday (only 23.5% of respondents) gave the following reasons – 'no time' (11.8%), 'been before' (8.2%) and 'no money' (4.5%).

### Reef activities

Snorkelling and swimming were the most popular rainforest activities to visitors (Table 6).

Table 6: Interest in reef activities

Reef activities	%		
	Overall	Dom	Int'l
Snorkelling	54.8	44.2	63.2
Swimming	42.9	37.4	47.3
Glass bottom boat/semi-sub	36.1	34.2	37.7
Viewing marine animals	31.9	28.4	34.7
Visiting the islands	21.2	17.9	23.8
Sailing	15.4	6.3	22.6
Certified scuba diving	10.7	5.3	15.1
Resort/uncertified scuba diving	8.9	3.7	13.0
Diver training course	5.1	2.6	7.1
Helicopter flight	4.9	4.2	5.4
Overnight cruise	6.5	2.1	10.0
Marine biologist tour	8.2	6.8	9.2

## Service quality

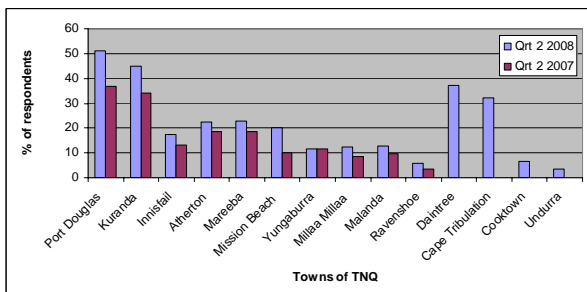
Respondents were asked to reflect on their level of satisfaction with a number of aspects of their visit to the region, on a scale of 1 (not at all satisfactory) to 5 (very satisfactory; see Table 7).

**Table 7: Satisfaction with service quality**

Service quality aspects	Mean		
	Overall	Dom	Int'l
Friendly accommodation staff	4.23	4.26	4.21
Accomm – value for money	3.96	4.10	3.85
Accomm service standard	4.24	4.13	4.32
Tour guides were informative	4.40	4.10	4.60
Tours – value for money	4.06	3.76	4.26
Tour service standards	3.99	4.01	3.98
Tours were on-time	4.21	4.22	4.21
Attractions – value for money	3.97	3.67	4.18
Restaurant staff were efficient	3.77	3.99	3.60
Restaurant – value for money	3.42	3.55	3.31
Restaurant menu selections	3.86	3.72	3.96
Shopping was good	3.66	3.45	3.81
Variety of shopping	3.37	3.41	3.35
Shop closing times	3.32	3.41	3.25
Public transport was accessible	3.81	3.55	4.00
On-time public transport	3.78	3.50	3.97
Visitor information was accurate	3.99	4.01	3.97
Visitor info was accessible	4.06	4.10	4.03
Felt safe/secure moving around	4.32	4.24	4.38

## Locations driven through in region

Figure 5 compares the main locations that respondents drove through in Ort 2 2007 & 2008.



**Figure 5: Locations travelled to by respondents**

Table 8 illustrates the locations in TNQ visited in Ort 2 2008 by domestic and international respondents.

**Table 8: Locations in TNQ travelled to**

Locations	%		
	Overall	Dom	Int'l
Port Douglas	51.5	68.4	38.0
Kuranda	45.8	55.3	38.2
Daintree	37.5	50.0	27.4
Cape Tribulation	32.7	38.9	27.7
Mareeba	22.9	36.3	12.2
Mission Beach	20.8	25.3	17.2
Atherton	22.7	38.4	10.1
Innisfail	17.5	27.4	9.7
Yungaburra	12.1	21.6	4.6
Millaa Millaa	12.4	19.5	6.7
Malanda	12.9	19.5	7.6
Cooktown	6.5	9.5	4.2
Ravenshoe	5.6	8.5	3.4
Undurra	3.3	4.2	2.5

## Satisfaction levels

Respondents were highly satisfied with their overall visit to the region. On a scale of 1 (very unsatisfactory) to 10 (very satisfactory), the mean value was 8.35, compared with a mean value of 8.49 in Ort 2 2007. For international visitors the overall mean was 8.30, and for domestics was 8.40.

For further information, contact JCU:

Professor Bruce Prideaux (Project leader)  
[Bruce.Prideaux@jcu.edu.au](mailto:Bruce.Prideaux@jcu.edu.au)

Dr Karen McNamara (Project manager)  
[Karen.McNamara@jcu.edu.au](mailto:Karen.McNamara@jcu.edu.au)

For future updates, visit  
[www.rrc.org.au/publications](http://www.rrc.org.au/publications)