

# NERP Tropical Ecosystems Hub – Project 10.2 Factsheet

## Cairns Airport Exit Survey 2013/14 - Drive Tourists

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### Key messages

- Data reported in this factsheet form part of a long term monitoring study of visitors departing Cairns Airport since 2007.
- Two-fifths of respondents surveyed at the airport rented a car during their visit.
- Spending time with families tends to be more important for respondents who hired cars compared to their counterparts.
- Repeat visitors, domestic visitors, visitors travelling as couples, family groups and Tigerair passengers were more likely to hire cars during their visit to the Cairns region.

### Overview

This factsheet reports on the characteristics of drive tourists to the Cairns region, based on a sample of 362 tourists who hired a car while in the TNQ region. The findings were collected as part of a larger sample of 876 visitors departing Cairns via the domestic terminal of Cairns International Airport, conducted between September 2013 and February 2014. All findings in this factsheet relate specifically to the **362 visitors** who hired a car while in the TNQ region.

Data were collected as part of a study investigating long-term trends and changes in the travel motivations and behavior of tourists to the Cairns region. Disclaimer: The study was not designed to report on overall visitor numbers to the study region and was distributed only in English. Care should be taken if results are generalised beyond the sample reported in this factsheet.

### Socio-Demographics Profiles

- 41.5% of overall respondents (n=876) hired a car during their visit to the Cairns region.
- There was an equal distribution of females and males, and domestic and international visitors.
- Countries of origin were UK and Ireland (35%), Europe (34%), North America (21%) and Europe (20%).
- Domestic respondents were from Victoria (40%), New South Wales (34%) and Queensland (17%).
- 28% were aged 20-29yrs, with 23% 30-39 yrs, 19% 50-59 yrs and 17% 40-49 yrs.
- 47% had a degree qualification.
- 32% were employed as professionals, 11% were students, 10% were retired, and 9% worked in the public service or management field respectively.
- 31% had an annual household income of AU\$32K-69K.

### Locations Visited

Figure 1 shows the locations visited in the Cairns region. Port Douglas (68%) was the most popular place for respondents who hired cars. Approximately half of the respondents visited Kuranda, Palm Cove, Daintree and Mossman Gorge, and 29% visited Cape Tribulation.

### Travel Behavior

For respondents who hired a car (n=362):

- 64% were first-time visitors, 36% were repeat visitors.
- Around a third flew with Qantas, followed by Virgin Australia (26%) and Jetstar (24%).
- 39% sometimes and 27% normally used the selected airline for holiday transport.
- 57% travelled as couples, 22% were families with children, and 12% were with friends.
- Around half of the respondents stayed in resorts/ hotels, and 27% stayed in holiday apartments/ units.
- 48% spent most of their nights in Cairns, 28% in Port Douglas and 11% in Palm Cove.
- 40% found information about the Cairns region via the Internet and friends and relatives respectively. 27% had been to the region before and a quarter obtained the information from tourist guide books.
- The average overall budget was AU\$5,602 for travel parties of 2 adults and 2 children. Those respondents who did not hire cars on average spent AU\$5,839 for the same combination of travel parties.

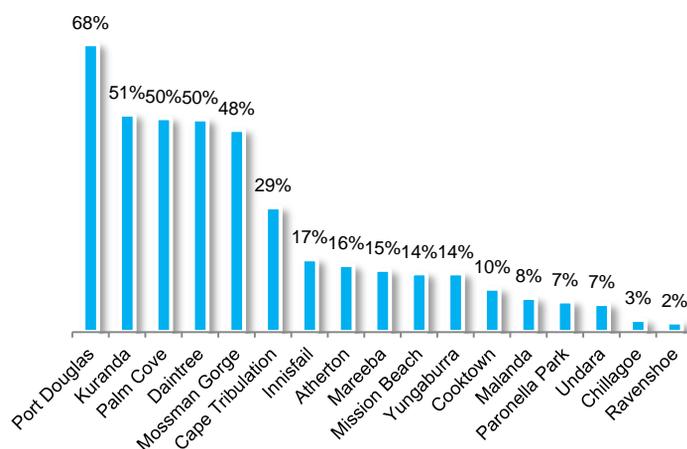


Figure 1. Locations visited in the Cairns region (n=362)

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## Cairns Airport Exit Survey 2013/14 - Drive Tourists (Cont.)

### Travel Motivations

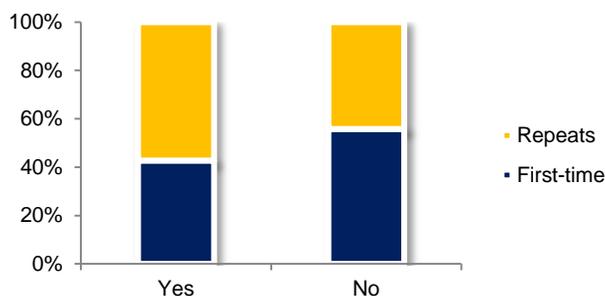
Table 1 shows the mean rank of travel motivations. The scale range is 1 ('not at all important') to 5 ('very important'). Respondents who hired cars were highly motivated to visit the Great Barrier Reef followed by rest and relax, and enjoying the tropical lifestyle. It was interesting to note that spending time with families was within the top 10 motives, while their counterparts in the overall survey ranked this motive as 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Table 1.** Top 10 motives for travelling to the Cairns region

Motivation (n=362)	Mean
Visit the Great Barrier Reef	4.17
Rest and relax	4.08
Enjoy the tropical lifestyle	3.77
Experience the natural environment	3.76
Snorkelling and diving	3.75
Climate	3.75
Visit the Wet Topics Rainforest	3.70
Visit the beaches	3.68
Spend time with my family	3.53
Visit the region's National Parks	3.48

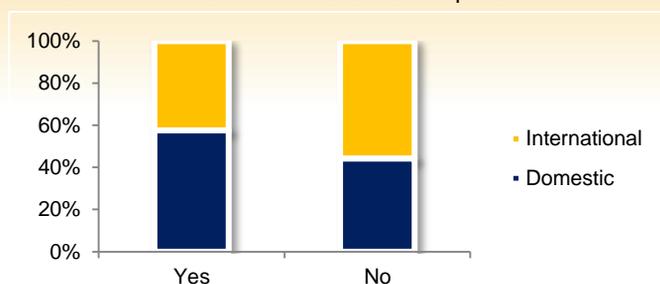
### Who hired cars?

The comparisons of socio-demographics and travel characteristics with car hiring behavior of respondents was examined. Significant differences were noted between: first-time and repeat visitors; domestic and international visitors; travel parties; and visitors using different airlines. The majority (62%) of first-time respondents did not hire cars while over half of repeat visitors did hire a car (Figure 2).



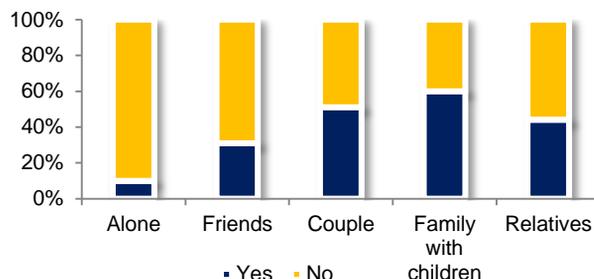
**Figure 2.** Car hiring behaviour between first-time and repeated visitors (n=362)

Figure 3 shows the car hiring behavior between domestic and international visitors. Domestic visitors were more likely to hire cars than their international counterparts.



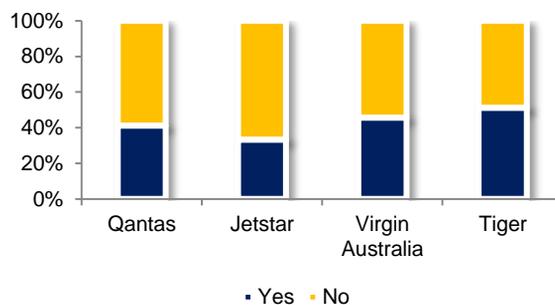
**Figure 3.** Car hiring behaviour between domestic and international responders (n=362)

Figure 4 shows the car hiring behavior of different travel parties. A significant number of respondents travelling as families and children (60%) and couples (51%) hired cars during their visit to the Cairns region.



**Figure 4.** Car hiring behaviour of travel parties (n=362)

Figure 5 shows the car hiring behavior of respondents using different airlines. Over half of the respondents flying Tiger hired cars during their visit. Respondents flying on other airlines were less likely to hire a car.



**Figure 5.** Car hiring behaviour of respondents based on airline used (n=362)

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 Theme 3: Managing for resilient tropical ecosystems  
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