

# NERP Tropical Ecosystems Hub – Project 10.2 Factsheet

## Activities and Preferences of Visitors to Gladstone to Mackay region

Hana Sakata<sup>1</sup>, Marina Farr<sup>1</sup>, Michelle Esparon<sup>1</sup>, Silva Larson<sup>1,2</sup> and Natalie Stoeckl<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> James Cook University School of Business; <sup>2</sup> Cairns Institute;

### Key messages

- The most popular and frequent activity was spending time at the beach.
- The average visitor spends more than \$1,300 in the region.
- The most important regional 'draw-cards' are healthy fish, sunshine/warmth, clean beaches and islands and clear ocean water.
- The strongest potential deterrents (things which would make visitors shorten their visits or not come at all) were rubbish, twice as many oil spills, ship groundings and waste spills, and murky ocean water.
- On average, visitors were willing to contribute from \$5 to \$10 per person per visit to a fund aiming to reduce various threats to the GBRWHA (improving water quality; protecting top predators; and/or reducing risk of shipping accidents).

### Who comes to the region?

221 people answered this survey at various locations in Management Area 3, which includes Gladstone, Yeppoon, Rockhampton and Mackay, between June 2012 and June 2013.

40% of our respondents were women, and 46% of those responding were 20-40 years of age. Most of the visitors (36%) were couples, followed by singles (21%) and groups of friends (7.5%). Some 28% were employed by government (including health and education) while 18% came from retail (including accommodation and tourism) and 24% from manufacturing (including mining and ports). Thirty-eight percent of respondents had completed university or were currently attending. Visitors were of varying annual household incomes with no specific trend.

An overwhelming majority of respondents (87%) came from Australia. The second most numerous group were visitors from Europe (5%). Most Australians were from Queensland (41%), 20% came from NSW and 15% from Northern Territory.

Many were repeat visitors. For only 23% this was the first visit to the region and 9% had visited once before. Twenty-nine percent had visited 2-4 times previously; while 23% had been to the region more than 10 times before.

### Where do people go, what do they do and how much do they spend?

Yeppoon and Rockhampton were reported as their favorite places in the GBRWHA (**Figure 1**), and they were looking forward to visiting Cairns and Cooktown. Most respondents, 78%, spent some time on the mainland beaches, on average visiting them 2.5 times (**Figure 2**). About a third of respondents or less participated in other activities.

The average amount of money each person spent in the region was A\$ 1,333. Most of it was spent on accommodation, followed by food items (**Figure 3**).

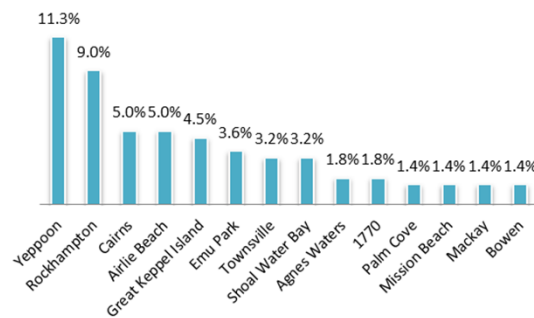


Figure 1. Favorite places in the GBR WHA visited

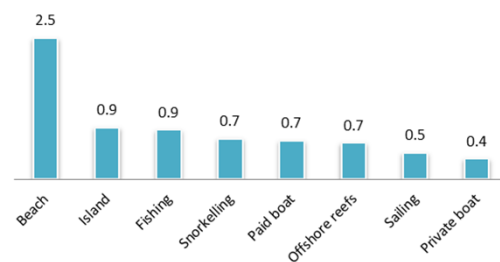


Figure 2. On average, number of times respondents went...

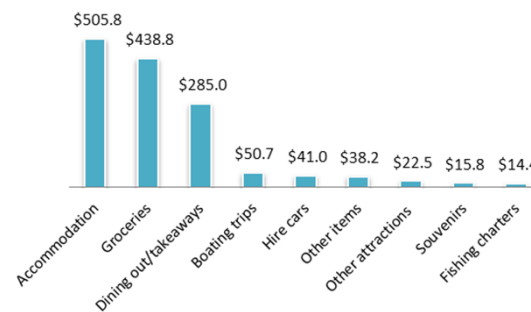


Figure 3. Expenditure per person per visit, on average

### What are the most important 'draw-cards' to the region?



# NERP Tropical Ecosystems Hub – Project 10.2 Factsheet

## Activities and Preferences of Visitors to Gladstone to Mackay region

### What are the most important 'draw-cards' to the region?

Healthy fish, sunshine and warmth, clean beaches and clear ocean water, were the most important factors that encouraged respondents to visit the region (Figure 4). Respondents expressed satisfaction with these important factors. The least important factors affecting decisions to visit were business, proximity from home and indigenous culture.

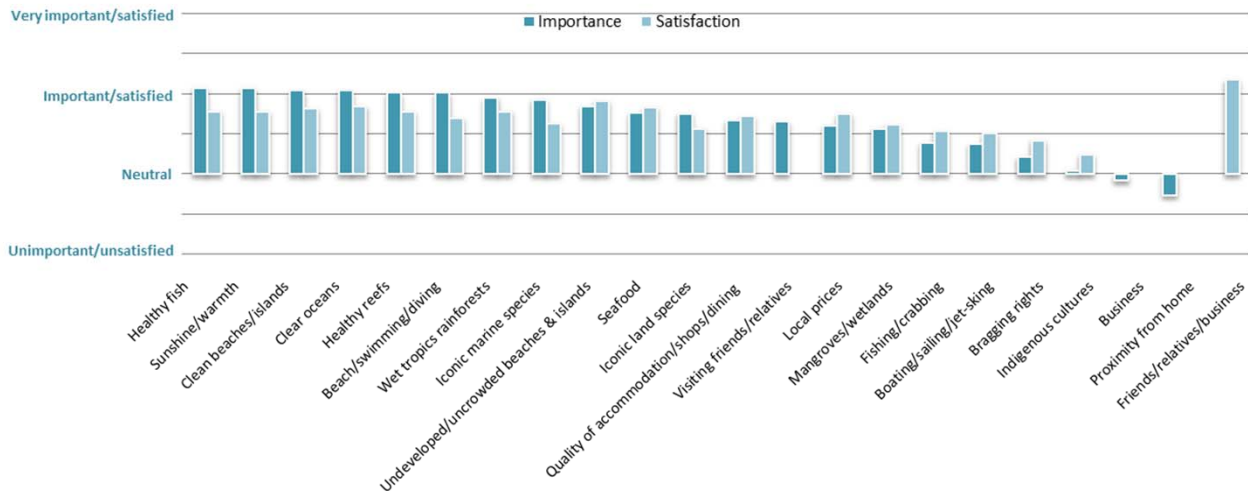


Figure 4. Most and least important 'draw-cards' in deciding to visit the region, and satisfaction with those

### How would potential changes to the GBRWHA impact their visitation?

Figure 5 below shows the reaction of respondents to hypothetical changes to the GBRWHA. Respondents appeared to be most sensitive to the idea of seeing more visible rubbish, twice as many oil spills, ship groundings and waste spills, and lower ocean water clarity. Few people were bothered by the idea of having less fish to look at or having more tourists.

On average, visitors were willing to contribute from \$5 to \$10 per person per visit to fund improvements in water quality; protect top predators; and/or reduce the risk of shipping accidents.

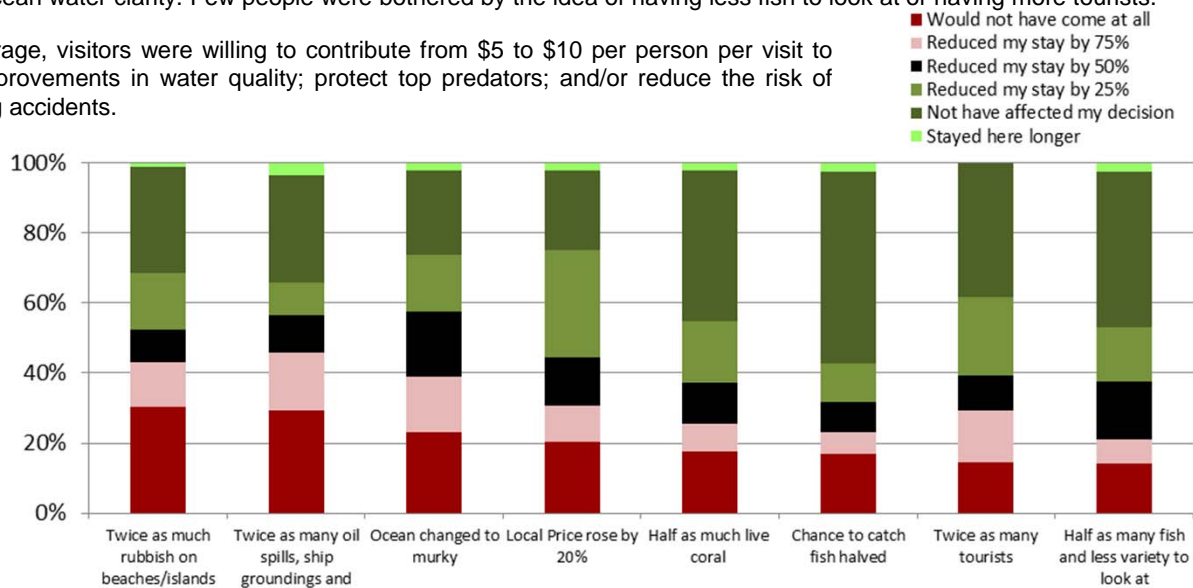


Figure 5. Respondents' reaction to hypothetical changes in the GBRWHA

Find this project at [www.nerptropical.edu.au](http://www.nerptropical.edu.au)  
 Theme 3: Managing for resilient tropical ecosystems  
 Program 10: Socio-economic value of GBR goods and services  
 Project: 10.2 Socio-economic systems and reef resilience

For more information, copies of this fact-sheet or a Technical Report with more details, please contact:  
 Prof Dr Natalie Stoeckl  
 JCU School of Business and The Cairns Institute  
[natalie.stoeckl@jcu.edu.au](mailto:natalie.stoeckl@jcu.edu.au)