



TNQ TOURISM FACTSHEET 16

Visitors who utilised backpackers' hostels, July 2008 – June 2009

OBJECTIVES

This factsheet profiles repeat visitors to Tropical North Queensland (TNQ) who visit the Wet Tropics rainforests. It forms part of a series of factsheets that profiles visitors to TNQ funded by the Australian Government's Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility (MTSRF) and James Cook University.

METHODOLOGY

The data presented in this factsheet draws on 810 domestic and international visitor surveys, collected over a twelve-month period (July 2008 – June 2009) at key sites throughout the Wet Tropics region. Surveys were conducted both on site at rainforest locations or through distribution by rainforest tourism operators. Results reveal that 7.7% of visitors to the Wet Tropics rainforests stayed at a backpackers' hostel, making it the fifth most popular accommodation choice, following resorts (27.8%), holiday apartments/units (22.7%), hotels/motels (19.6%) and caravan parks/cabins (8.9%).

LIMITATIONS

During the reporting period, surveys were collected in English, potentially resulting in a bias towards English-speaking visitors. Results are aggregated and may not reflect specific visitor patterns at all Wet Tropics visitor sites.

PREVIOUS STUDIES OF THE TNQ BACKPACKER INDUSTRY

Prideaux, B., Falco-Mammone, F., Coghlan, A. and Thompson, M. (2006) [Backpacker shopping in the tropics: An overview of the shopping behaviour of backpackers in Cairns](#). Fact Sheet. James Cook University, Cairns.

Prideaux, B., Falco-Mammone, F. and Thompson, M. (2006) [Backpacking in the tropics: A review of the backpacker market in Cairns and their travel patterns within Australia](#). Fact Sheet. James Cook University, Cairns.

INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

The following data shows the percentage of *all* visitors who stayed in a backpackers' hostel during their visit to TNQ rainforest sites.

Gender

- The backpacker sample consisted of 50% males and 50% females.

Origin

- International (65.6%), domestic (34.4%).
- Australia (34.4), the United Kingdom/Ireland (21.3%), Europe (21.3%), Germany (8.2%), North America (8.2%) Asia (3.3%), New Zealand (1.6%) and Scandinavia (1.6%).

Age

- Under 20 years (6.6%), 20-29 years (63.9%), 30-39 years (21.3%), 40-49 years (0.0%), 50-59 years (6.6%), 60-65 years (1.4%) and over 65 years (0.0%).

Occupation

- Student (36.1%), professional (24.6%), service industry (8.2%), self-employed (6.6%), retail (3.3%), office/clerical (3.3%), tradesperson (1.6%), public servant (1.6%) and management (1.6%).

Travel party

- Couple (37.7%), friends (31.1%), travelling alone (23.0%), tour group (4.9%) and relatives (3.3%).

Length of Stay (average)

- Overall visitor rate of 8.95 nights, international backpacker hostel visitor rate of 9.61 nights, and domestic backpacker hostel visitor rate of 8.51 nights.

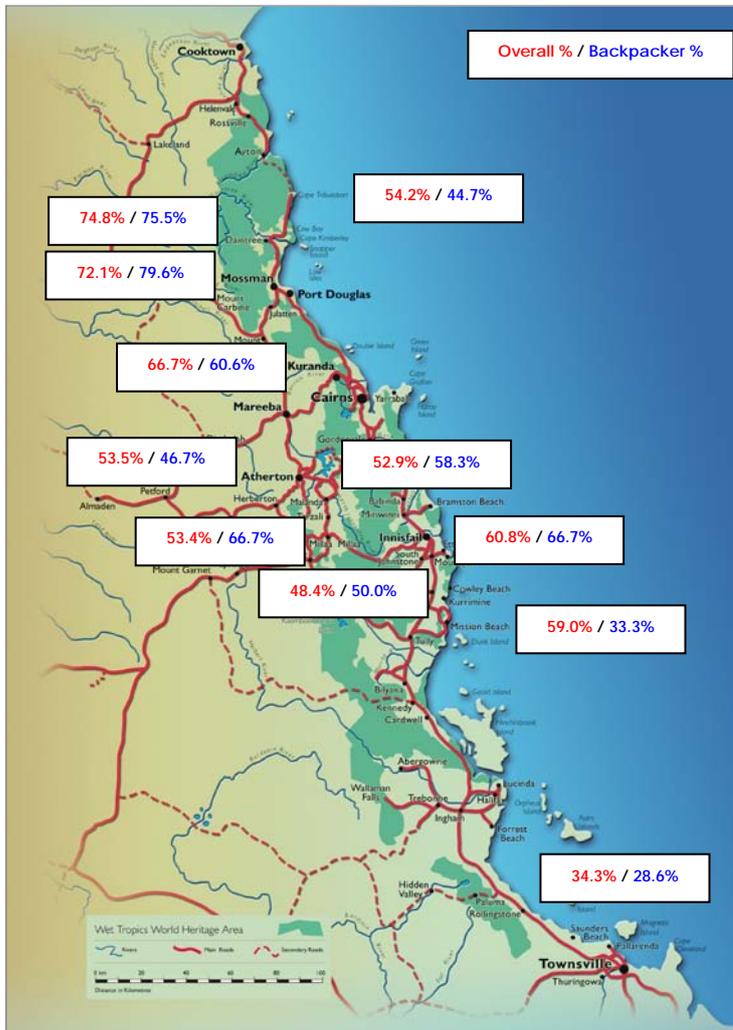
Information about TNQ (multiple answers possible)

- Friends/family (42.5%), internet (32.5%), have been before (28.6%), guide book (18.5%), TV documentary (13.1%), travel agent (10.1%), visitor information centre (6.7%), ads in print (6.7%) and ads on TV/radio (4.2%).

Where are visitors going?

Figure 1 illustrates visitor dispersal patterns at rainforest sites within the Wet Tropics region. In particular, it provides a comparison between the overall sample (data in red) and visitors who stayed at a backpackers' hostel (data in blue).

Figure 1: Rainforest sites visited by use of backpackers' hostels (data in blue) and by overall survey sample (data in red).



Some trends and markets

Almost forty percent (39.3%) of visitors who stayed at a backpackers' hostel considered a visit to the Wet Tropics rainforests in TNQ as 'important' while nearly half (48.2%) considered a visit 'very important'.

Based on visitor origin, some clear markets emerged in relation to visitors staying in a backpackers' hostel. Based on the number of *Scandinavian* visitors surveyed, 25.0% stayed in a hostel. Similarly for *Europeans* surveyed, 21.3% stayed in a hostel.

In terms of occupation, 37.9% of all *student* visitors stayed in a backpackers' hostel.

From all surveyed visitors travelling *alone*, 38.9% stayed in a backpackers' hostel.

The most popular activities engaged in while in the rainforest for visitors staying in a backpackers' hostel included walking (85.2%), viewing scenery (80.3%) and viewing wildlife (67.2%).

Budget and satisfaction

Visitors were asked to indicate the overall budget for their travel party for this trip (i.e. airfares, accommodation, tours and so on). The overall budget for visitors was \$4,637. For visitors who stayed at a backpackers' hostel, the overall budget was \$1,632. Visitors were asked to rate the overall quality of their visit to the region on a scale of 1 ('not at all satisfactory') to 10 ('highly satisfactory'). Overall, visitors indicated a satisfaction of 8.50. For hostel users, satisfaction rated 8.17. Domestic backpackers indicated a mean score of 8.38, while their international counterparts scored 8.05.

For further information about visitor surveys in the Wet Tropics region, contact:

Project Leader: Prof. Bruce Prideaux
(07) 4042 1039 Bruce.Prideaux@jcu.edu.au

Project Manager: Dr Karen McNamara
(07) 4042 1762 Karen.McNamara@jcu.edu.au

Citation: Sibtain, J. and McNamara, K. (2009) *Rainforest Tourism Factsheet 16: Visitors who utilised backpackers' hostels, July 2008 – June 2009*. Reef and Rainforest Research Centre Ltd, Cairns (<http://www.rrrc.org.au/>)

Photo by Karen McNamara / Published October 2009