

CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

2024/25



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decisions

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Industry Snapshot - 2024/25



\$2,593M

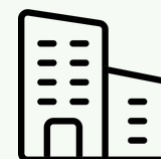
Output / Total Sales



7,147

Local Jobs

8.0% of total local jobs

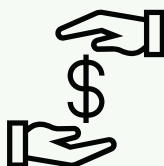


2,699

Local Businesses

17.8% of total GST

Registered Businesses

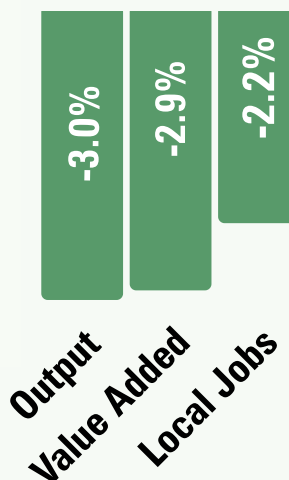


\$761M

Gross Value Added

7.2% of total industry value added

**5YR
GROWTH**



KEY SUB-INDUSTRIES



Construction Services

\$428M Value Added

4,641 Jobs



Building Construction

\$182M Value Added

1,694 Jobs

Sources: NIEIR, 2026; ABS ABR 2026

Industry Size and Composition



Output/Sales



Value Added



Employment

Direct

\$2,593M

\$761M

7,147

Indirect/Flow-on Impacts

Industrial

\$732M

\$343M

2,258

+

+

+

Consumption

\$1,083M

\$579M

5,454

Total Impact

\$4,408M

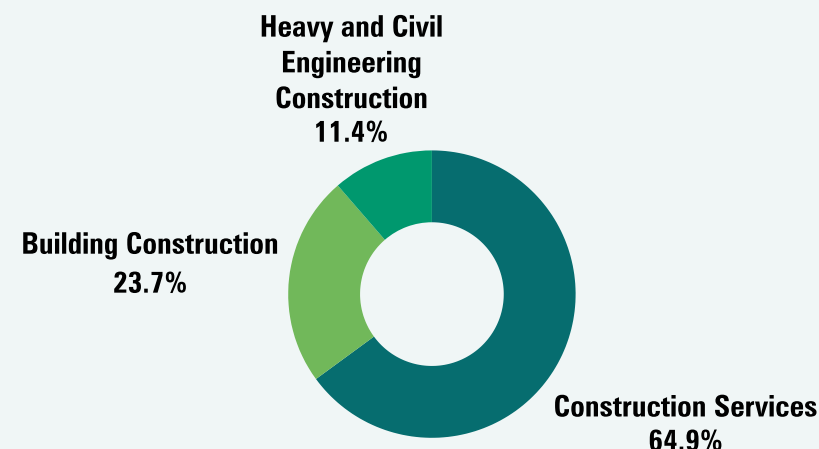
\$1,683M

14,859

In 2024/25, the Construction Industry in Cairns was estimated to have generated \$761M in direct plus an additional \$922M in indirect impacts for a total contribution of \$1,683M in Value Added. The industry supported 7,147 jobs directly and an additional 7,712 in indirect employment.

The largest sub-industry for direct employment was estimated to be Construction Services with 65% of the total sector's employment.

Share of Total Sector Employment, 2024/25

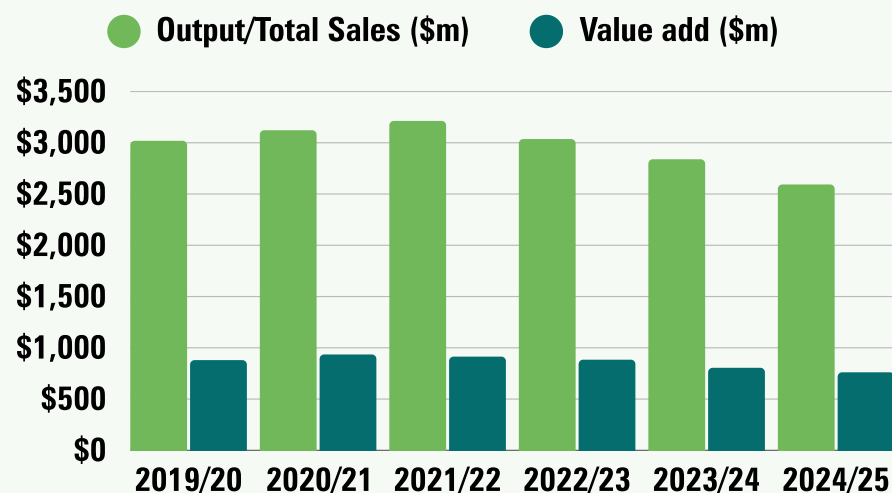


Sources: NIEIR, 2026

GROWTH TRENDS

In 2024/25, there were an estimated 7,147 employees working in the Construction Industry in Cairns and 6,590 full-time equivalents. The industry generated \$761M in Value Added, or \$106,446 per employee (\$115,443/FTE). Growth in the industry has averaged -2.2% p.a. for employment over the last five years and -2.9% p.a. for value added. Both change in jobs and economic value have been below the state average.

Economic Value, Cairns Region, Financial Year

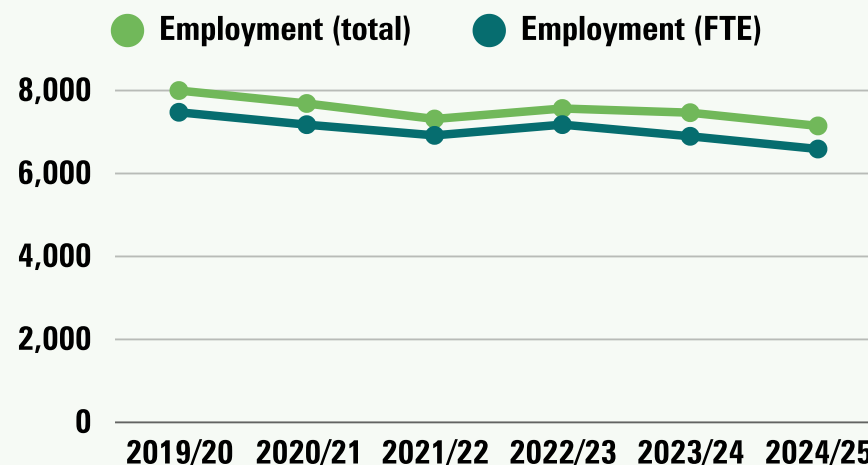


**5 YEAR
AVERAGE
ANNUAL
INDUSTRY
GROWTH**

-3.0%
Output/Sales
3.0% p.a.

-2.9%
Value Added
3.3% p.a.

Average Employment, Cairns Region, Financial Year



**5 YEAR
AVERAGE
ANNUAL
INDUSTRY
GROWTH**

-2.2%
Employment
3.8% p.a.

-2.5%
FTEs
3.8% p.a.

Sources: NIEIR, 2026

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE



Cairns has a balanced pipeline of development ensuring more consistent construction activity. In the past eight years, 53% of building approvals value was residential, compared to 58% for the rest of QLD.



Major projects including Cairns Hospital expansion, road network upgrades, marine precinct development (incl naval) and Council's Cairns Water Security Stage 1 Project will sustain non-residential development over the next decade.



Cairns has substantial developable residential land in the Southern Growth Corridor (Mount Peter Priority Development Area) supporting a long-term pipeline of residential development. The Australian and QLD Governments have committed a \$300m funding package for trunk infrastructure in Mt Peter.

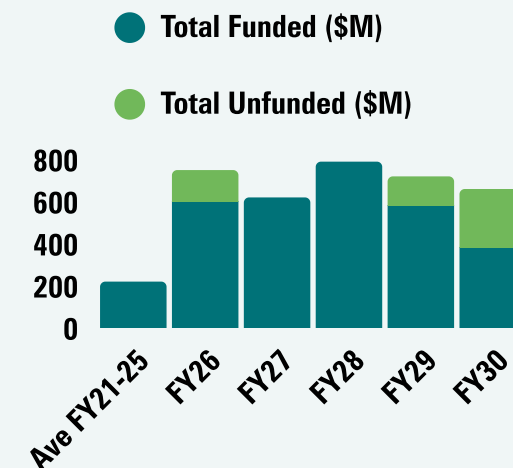


Cairns has benefited from pandemic led policies that have boosted apprenticeship and traineeship numbers. FNQ now has a record 1,500 construction and engineering apprentices in training.



A number of large scale renewable projects are planned for the FNQ region. While most are located outside the Cairns LGA, the projects will likely increase the demand for local construction services during development and operational phases.

\$2.96 Billion in the Project Pipeline over the next 5 years for the Cairns Region - 84% funded



Sources: Dept. Trade, Employment and Training, VET data; QMCA, Queensland Major Projects Pipeline 2025

WORKFORCE PROFILE

Workers in the Construction Industry in Cairns were slightly older than the state as a whole in 2021 with a median age of 41 compared to 39 for QLD. An estimated 83% were male and only 16% born overseas.

Approximately 70% of the workforce had Certificate III or above qualifications and 16% were working in professional or managerial roles.

In 2021, the FTE median income of the local workforce was lower than the state median.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, 2021 - CAIRNS REGION



41 years

Median Age

QLD - 39 years



\$71,527

Median Income FTE

QLD - \$74,997



83%

Male

QLD - 85%/15%



17%

Female



82%

Full Time

QLD - 80%



16%

Born Overseas

QLD - 22%



27%

Owner Manager

QLD - 29%



6.6%

Identified as First Peoples

QLD - 3.4%



16%

Professionals/Managers

QLD - 17%



8%

**Degree or
Above**

QLD - 10%

62%

**Certificate III to
Advanced Diploma**

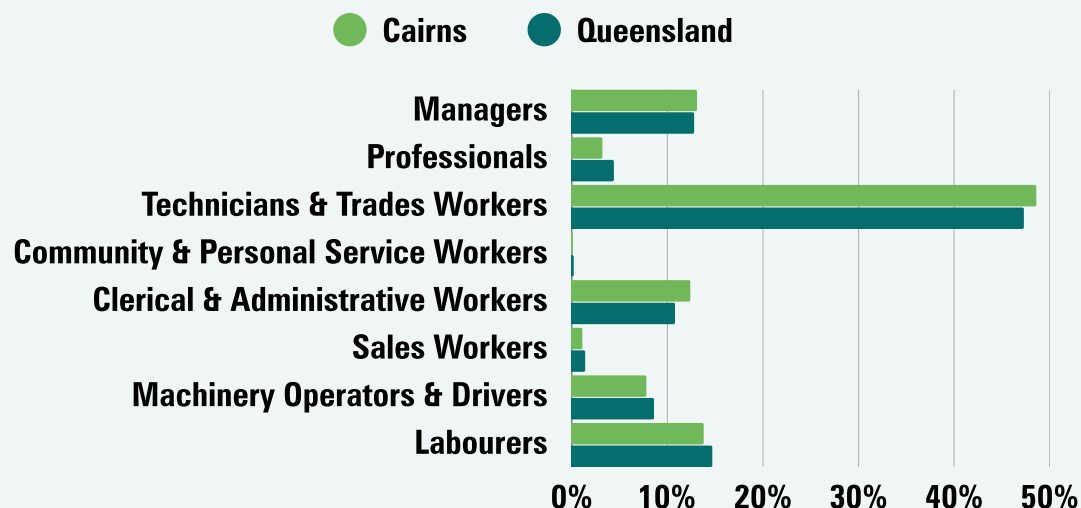
QLD - 58%

Sources: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2021

EDUCATION & SKILLS

The Construction Industry in Cairns had a lower share of workers in professional/managerial occupations in 2021 (16%) compared to the QLD average (17%). The top occupations were electricians and construction managers. The industry had a slightly higher share of qualified workers (69%) than the QLD average (70%), but a slightly lower share with degree level qualifications (7.5% vs 10% for QLD).

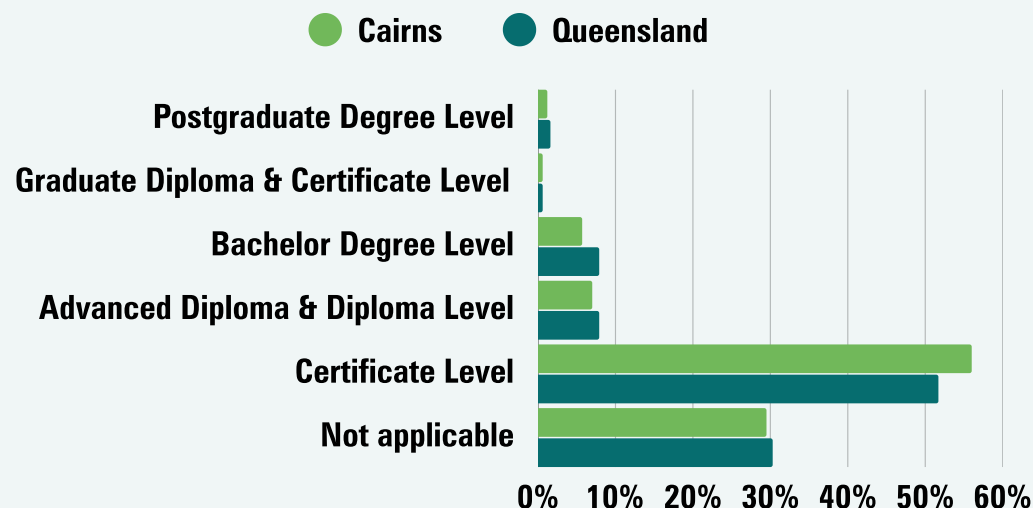
Local Workforce Occupations, 2021



Top Occupations

- Electricians
- Construction Managers
- Carpenters and Joiners
- Plumbers

Local Workforce Qualifications, 2021



Top Study Fields

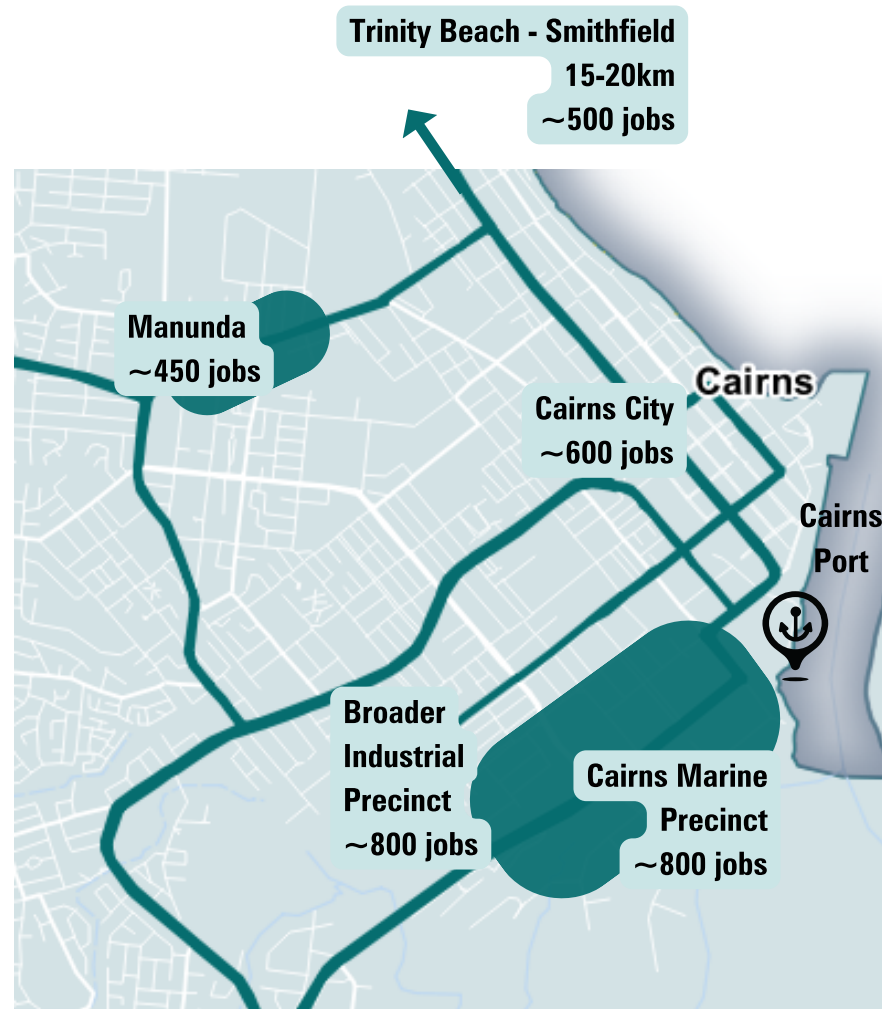
- Building (general)
- Carpentry and Joinery
- Electrical Engineering and Technology
- Plumbing

Sources: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2021

Main employment precincts



Estimated Industry Jobs, 2021



Sources: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2021

Key employers

- BESIX Watpac
- Brookfield Residential
- FGF Developments
- Field Construct
- FKG Group
- Fortress Group
- Hansen Yuncken
- Hedley Homes
- HPS Contractors
- Hutchinson Builders
- JAC Estates
- John Holland
- Kenfrost Homes
- Kerdic Homes
- Koppen Construction
- Kroymans Developments
- Lendlease
- MiHaven
- QBuild
- Satterley Property Group
- Vis Constructions



PROJECTS & TRENDS SHAPING THE FUTURE



Strong pipeline of investment

Cairns has a large investment pipeline of non-residential construction including major new health, cultural/arts and education facilities, and the Cairns Marine Precinct expansion.



Mount Peter Southern Growth Corridor

This corridor is the largest remaining greenfield development area in the Cairns LGA. Council is supporting the progression of the Cairns South State Development Area and the Mount Peter Priority Development Area, both of which support industrial and residential development in the Southern Growth Corridor.



Higher densities

Like other regional cities, Cairns can increase residential densities at key locations and promote more diverse housing typologies. This dwelling type is not just for young people with a third of Cairns residents in high density dwellings being aged 60+.



Sustainability needs

Climate change and ecological impact awareness will influence the scale and location of urban growth planning. Developers will face greater pressure to lower the carbon footprint of new construction by using new technology or materials.

SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS

- Lifestyle factors continue to attract new residents meaning market demand is typically strong
- Strong manufacturing sector supports supply chain for materials and cross-over trades workers
- Cairns has major transport and export gateways/precincts that necessitate regular infrastructure upgrades (feeds pipeline)
- State and Federal Governments have generally been willing to co-support funding for infrastructure projects
- Designated Cairns South State Development Area and Mount Peter Priority Development Area



WEAKNESSES

- Distance to other markets and centres means input costs are usually higher
- Natural geography and designated world heritage sites place a constraint on the location of growth
- Growth areas in conflict with high value agricultural land in some areas
- Slow population growth in recent years
- Contribution to growth from international migration much lower than SE QLD



THREATS

- Labour constraints and material costs to potentially continue for some time. The region is still dealing with a backlog of residential projects from the pandemic policy-driven boom
- Strong growth in SE QLD to draw development interest and workers away from FNQ
- Increased severity of storms/cyclones may generate increased costs for developments
- Ongoing conflict in the Middle East and its impact on fuel prices



OPPORTUNITIES

- Major expansion of areas including Cairns Health and Marine precincts as well as infrastructure upgrades to offer sustainable non-residential work
- The Towards 2050 Shaping Cairns Growth Strategy adopted in 2025 will provide better certainty around residential and infrastructure planning
- Greater State and Federal funding for growth corridor infrastructure would unlock accelerated development and improve affordable housing supply
- Greater diversification of housing offers potential to address land constraints and attract different residents





For more economic data on the
Cairns Region, visit economy.id

