

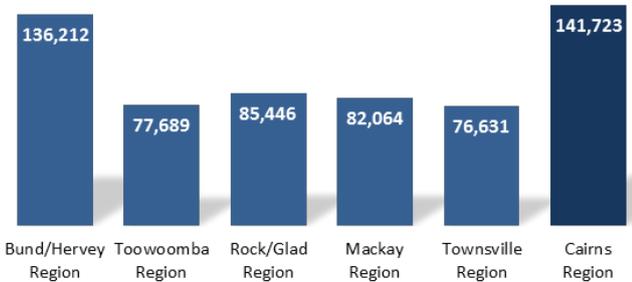
CAIRNS

LEADING LONG TERM POPULATION GROWTH IN REGIONAL QUEENSLAND



Since estimated residential population figures began being produced in 1976, Cairns and its region, along with the Bundaberg/Hervey Bay (Wide Bay) Burnett region have recorded by far, the largest increases in population outside the south east corner of Queensland.

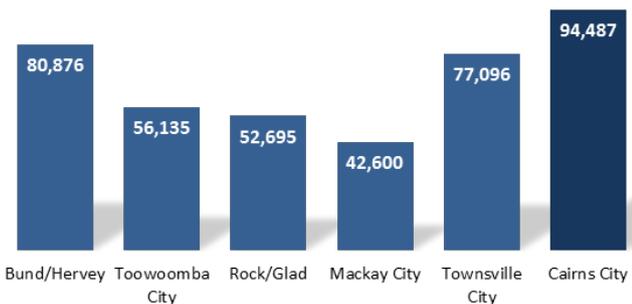
Long-term 35-year Increase in Regional Residential Population, Queensland Commercial Servicing Regions, 1976-2011



Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0 et al.

This regional growth is reflected in city growth with Cairns leading and combined Bundaberg/Hervey Bay/Maryborough next.

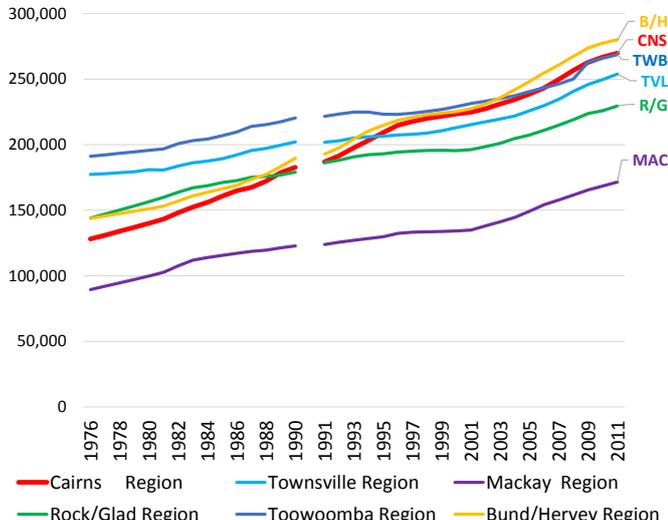
Long-term 35-year Increase in Residential Population, Queensland Regional Cities, 1976-2011



Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0 et al.

While relative growth in regional population will fluctuate to some degree over shorter periods, the trends have been consistent over the decades.

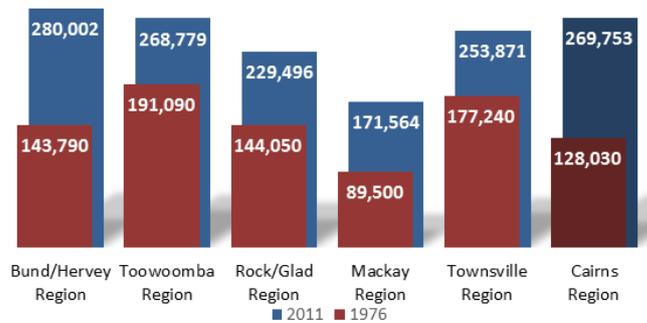
Residential Population, Queensland Commercial Servicing Regions, 1976-2011



Note: The break 1990-1991 indicates a break in series, in some cases involving minor changes in definitions of areas. Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0 et al.

These trends have resulted in major changes in the comparative size and ranking of Queensland regions.

Residential Population, Queensland Regions, 1976 and 2011

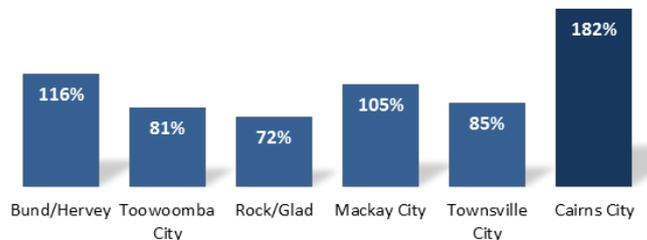


Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0 et al.

From being the second smallest, the Cairns based region has moved past the Rockhampton/Gladstone based region, the Townsville based region and the Toowoomba based region to become the second largest. The Bundaberg/Hervey Bay based region has moved from third smallest to the largest.

Cairns city recorded the fastest percentage growth followed by combined Bundaberg/Hervey Bay/Maryborough, and Mackay.

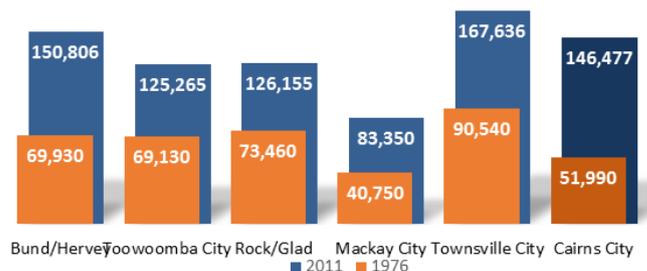
Percent Growth - Residential Population, Queensland Regional Cities, 1976-2011



Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0 et al.

From being second smallest and half the size of Townsville in 1976, Cairns has passed Toowoomba and Rockhampton/Gladstone and moved up to be about the same size as combined Bundaberg/Hervey Bay/Maryborough and not far behind Townsville.

Residential Population Sizes, Queensland Regional Cities, 1976 and 2011



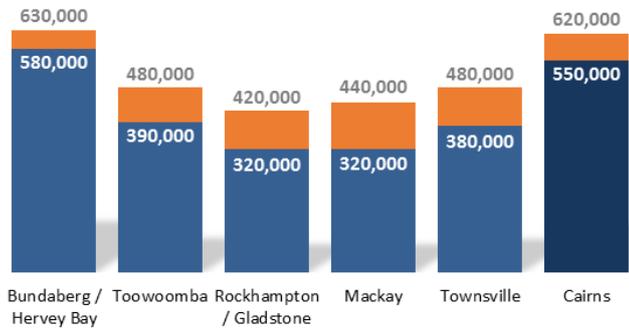
Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Cat No. 3218.0 et al.

After moderating below long-term averages since 2011, Cairns' growth is now re accelerating.

PROJECTING FORWARD

On the growth trajectories of the past 35 years, 20 years and 10 years, it can be expected that Cairns and the Bundaberg/Hervey (Wide Bay) regions will continue to pull away as the largest regions with the Cairns region reaching a population in the range of 550 to 620 thousand by 2050.

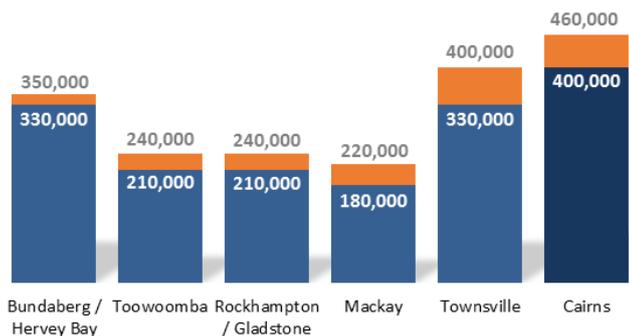
Projected Population Ranges of Q'ld Regions, in 2050, on past 35, 20 and 10-year Growth Rates



Source: Cummings Economics – Changing Patterns of Queensland Regional Populations.

On the 35, 20 and 10-year trajectories, by 2050, Cairns city would emerge as the largest city (in the range 400 to 460 thousand) followed by Townsville and combined Bundaberg/Hervey Bay/Maryborough.

Projected Population Ranges of Q'ld Regional Cities, in 2050, on past 35, 20 and 10-year Growth Rates



Source: Cummings Economics – Changing Patterns of Queensland Regional Populations.

WHY?

Strongly growing population in the Wide Bay/Burnett region simply reflects the expansion of the Gold Coast/Brisbane/Sunshine Coast population northwards along the coast.

Underpinning the Cairns region's growth are five major factors:

1. **The size of the region** - Spanning over half of Queensland latitudes.
2. The Cairns region is **deep into the tropics** and this presented greater historical challenges. The region was previously under developed compared with its resources.
3. The strength of the region's **biological resources** - While not as well-endowed as some other regions with mineral resources, the Cairns region accounts for 26 percent of Australia's water run-off, and leads the State in natural (biological) resources resulting in:

- **Agriculture** being a growth sector with expanding sugar areas and superior cattle breeds now available. Tropical fruit production has expanded since 1982-83 from \$12m to \$540m in 2012-13. Development as the State's leading **fisheries** region.
 - Development of a large **tourism** sector of national significance. The region is next to Sydney and Melbourne in international holiday visitors.
 - The Cairns area with its beautiful surroundings, tourism facilities, and larger population offers superior **lifestyle** advantages.
3. **A strategic location** - Being the closest Queensland city to the rapidly growing economies of eastern Asia gives distance advantages not only in tourism but in export of fresh products. Cairns is Queensland's closest city to Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and the Darwin top end with growing business links. Australia's north eastern naval base and air surveillance are located at Cairns.
 4. **Diversified industry composition** - The region has a diversified industry base including strong elements of tourism, agriculture and fisheries - industries that flow through to local employment and population much more than mining. Business services and manufacturing are not suppressed by being close to Brisbane.

A CORE BUSINESS AND SERVICES REGION IN THE NORTH

The Cairns region now has:

- The greatest concentration of population in the city and immediate region in northern Australia with alternative locations to Cairns itself for regional services.
- The largest number of businesses and non-government activity in northern Australia.
- The largest number of manufacturing establishments in the northern regions, including major skills based sectors servicing large aviation and marine activity.
- By far, the largest airport hub in northern Australia with direct international links to 11 other cities in the Asia Pacific region and direct services to 10 Australian cities.
- Five export seaports handling tonnages more than the Townsville region, South Australia, Northern Territory and Tasmania.
- The largest demand for hospital admissions in regional Queensland.
- Leadership in international education establishments with its previously underdeveloped university campuses expanding strongly.
- The greatest employment in arts, entertainment and creative activity outside of south east Queensland.

NOTE: For further details and statistical notes, reference www.cairns.qld.gov.au/population-forecast

Prepared for Cairns Regional Council by
Cummings Economics, www.cummings.net.au

