

Economic Values of Tourism in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

Research funded by Rainforest CRC

Aims of the Research

- Update estimates of the economic contribution of tourism within the WTWHA,
- Discuss methods and/or models for estimating the economic contribution of tourism within the WTWHA on an ongoing basis,
- Provide an overview of the profile of visitors in the WTWHA, and
- Develop a baseline for future estimations of economic valuation of the WTWHA.

Research Methods

861 visitors to the WTWHA were surveyed at four WTWHA locations (Lake Barrine, Mossman Gorge, Murrumbidgee Boardwalk and Skyrail) and at the Cairns Domestic Airport Terminal. The sample represented almost equal groups of national (48.7%) and international visitors (51.2%) and consisted of 42.2% male and 57.8% female visitors.

Limitations

- This report did not attempt to calculate the flow on economic impact using multiplier analysis.
- The expenditure of local residents was not calculated.

Findings

Using data from a visitor survey the total annual visitor expenditure for travel to and while in the study region was estimated to be \$2 billion. This figure parallels the estimates made by Tourism Queensland using expenditure data collected by the National Visitor Survey and the International Visitor Survey.

Economic Contribution

$$\text{Total Visitor Expenditure} = \text{Number of Person Visits to WTWHA} \times \text{Average Expenditure per Person} \times \text{Average Time in WTWHA}$$

The findings of the research found that the gross economic value of tourism directly generated by the WTWHA was \$426 million. In overall terms, the estimated expenditure generated by visitation to the WTWHA represents 21.8% of all tourism expenditure by tourists in the study region.

Length of Stay

The research found that visitors spent an average of 3.17 days in the WTWHA out of their average overall holiday time of 7.36 nights in the region (Figure 1).

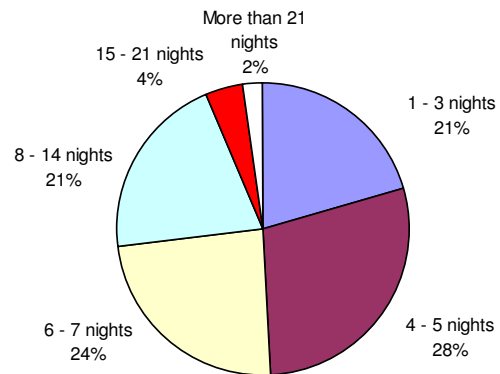


Figure 1: Length of stay (%)

Holiday Budget and Expenditure

The majority of visitors (61.4%) budgeted between \$500 and \$3000 for their holiday (Figure 2).

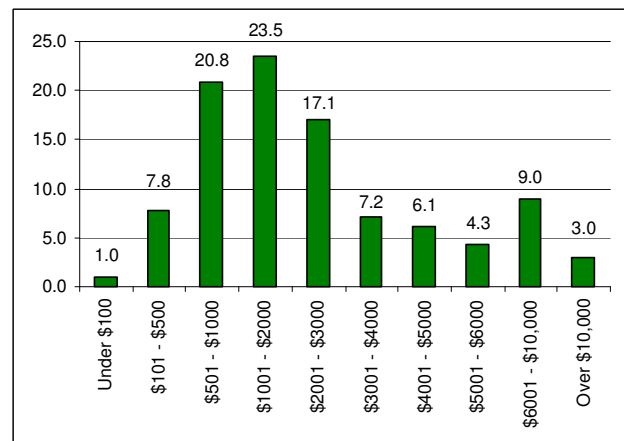


Figure 2: Overall budget (%)

Future Research

This report found that there are numerous methodological factors that could improve future economic evaluations of the WTWHA including: more accurate estimates of visitor numbers to WTWHA locations; inclusion of estimates of the financial contribution of local residents; estimates of the multiplier impact; further investigation of the substitution and exclusion factors of WTWHA and other significant attractions in the TNQ region; and continued support for monitoring of visitor characteristics at WTWHA locations.

How do I find out more?
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