

WORKER ACCOMMODATION (MACKAY) FACTSHEET

The source of all the data below is the Greater Whitsunday Housing Playbook unless another source is quoted.

How do we solve for workforce accommodation for agriculture (seasonal), tourism, energy and resources



Employment Growth

Mining and METS

- 7,141 employed in mining and METS in the Mackay region (30% of workforce) (REMPPLAN)
- Understated because there would be scientific engineering services and transport also linked to this sector

Health

- 8,324 employed in the health and social services sector in Mackay (REMPPLAN)
- 1,097 are nurses: <http://www.performance.health.qld.gov.au/Hospital/Index/172>

Agriculture: 1,659 employed in agriculture (REMPPLAN)

Education

- 4,471 employed in education (REMPPLAN)

Students at CQU:

- Higher Ed 517
- Vocational 2922
- School of Trades 1372

Construction: 5,006 employed in construction (REMPPLAN)

Tourism: 3,565 employed in accommodation and food services (REMPPLAN)

Retail: 5,662 employed in retail trade in Mackay (REMPPLAN)

Future: Energy with Queensland Hydro – 3,000 jobs in construction planned for 2027



Seasonality / Spikes in demand

Agriculture:

- Wild-catch prawns: 100 seasonal workers required from December to May across Mackay and Whitsundays (DAF)
- Cane harvesting: May – mid-November: Approximately 1500 to 1800 seasonal workers from June to November; may not necessarily require 1800 each month, this figure would be what is required for duration of harvest for Mackay and Whitsundays (DAF)
- Lychees: Approximately 8 farms average 3 seasonal workers per farm (Mackay) (DAF)

Tourism:

During the winter months, the tourism industry is busier: the Caravan Parks and Campgrounds are full and the support services to the drive market are also busy. The Events Calendar that runs through the region from May to October, also boosting visitor numbers through winter. The Visitor Information Centres, the Sugar Shed, products in the Pioneer Valley through to Eungella are all busier.



Considerations:

- Opportunities for shared accommodation solutions and middle to low density accommodation to house those on lower wages in the services industry, agriculture, construction and METS.
 - Real Estate stakeholder engagement highlighted need for 2 bedroom - 2-bathroom and 4 bedroom - 4 bathroom share house stock
- Many employers buy housing for the staff to address the high cost of rentals / offer for rent at below market rates.
- Employers consulted during the stakeholder engagement indicated a willingness to collaborate to address workforce housing needs.



Opportunities identified in the Greater Whitsunday Playbook:

Partnerships and collaboration theme:

- Bring existing and prospective employers and accommodation providers together to explore **strategies to collaboratively meet the ranging short-term accommodation needs of multiple sectors** (e.g. tourism, agriculture, government, resources, students etc.)
- **Consider cross-sector opportunities to package Build-to-Rent project opportunities** that includes identification of well-located and serviced land and precommitted housing volumes for set periods of time.
- Identify **locations** that can accommodate different worker groups; unlock vacant land – potentially contributed by local government.
- Explore **a trust fund model that incorporates employers as investors** to support building and rent of affordable housing.
- **Incentive the development of attached housing solutions or medium density solutions on small lot sizes.**
- Work with local government to **streamline processes** for this type of accommodation.
- **Multi-use facilities** that are used for other accommodation needs out of season.
- Address **transport links** between facility/facilities and key workplaces.
- **Housing “connect” service** for short-term and long-term accommodation needs for use by multiple industries and employers.
- Program to enable access to spare bedrooms / **home-share campaign.**

Enabling the Market theme:

- **Employer partnerships with a Tier 1 CHP** to develop affordable homes for workforces with legacy supplemented by State and Federal funding.
- Identify and **develop opportunities** for regional and local Community Housing Providers and Housing Trust bodies to partner with the public and private sector to deliver new housing.
- Develop, prepare and promote **development prospectus packages** (including site identification) connected to committed rental or purchase demand for Build-to-Rent, retirement living, aged care, short-term accommodation, infill attached housing, affordable housing and conversion of non-residential buildings to housing.

Government and Leadership theme:

- **Bi-annual regional forum** to identify barriers to workforce housing and opportunities to collaborate.