

LANDMARK POSTCODE

4740



Mackay Street Scene
Image courtesy of Tourism Queensland. Photographer Peter Lik

LOCATION: Mackay
9 hours north of Brisbane

POPULATION: 90,000

INDUSTRIES: Resources, sugar, beef production and agriculture, retail services and tourism

CLIMATE: Temperate
Summer 30.1°C – 23.5°C
Winter 21.2°C – 12.8°C
Rainfall 1,555.2mm

Mackay is a gracious city with all the natural appeal of tropical Queensland - reef, beach and rainforest. But sugar cane, not tourists, shaped the economy of this prosperous regional centre. That was until the resources boom kicked in.

The Mackay Whitsunday region is the black coal mining capital of Queensland. The city is a major service centre for the mineral rich Bowen Basin and half an hour to the south, the Port of Hay Point is the world's largest coal export facility.

Mackay is reaping the benefits of this frenzy of activity. Its population is tipped to reach 129,000 by 2026 – that's nearly 1,800 new people each year. The regional growth rate is ranked fourth in the state and there's huge demand for housing. Residential building approvals jumped 46 per cent last year and a total of \$385 million worth of new construction projects were approved.

Set on the Queensland coast halfway between Brisbane and Cairns, Mackay has highly regarded health and education facilities, including a university campus and conservatorium of music.

There are 31 beaches within easy reach of the city and nearby is Eungella National Park, Australia's longest and oldest stretch of sub-tropical rainforest.

Captain Cook sailed past this stretch of coastline in 1770 but it was another 90 years before Captain John Mackay arrived inland, in search of grazing land. A small settlement on the banks of the Pioneer River grew quickly once sugar cane was planted. By 1939 a newly constructed artificial deepwater harbour was home to the largest sugar terminal in the southern hemisphere.

Sugar remains a major industry. Mackay is Australia's most important sugar producing area and boasts the world's largest bulk sugar terminal. The city has several sugar mills and one of only four sugar refineries in the country.

Transport services in Mackay are better than in many cities its size. The major airlines fly daily into the city, linking holidaymakers to Whitsunday destinations such as Brampton and Lindeman Islands. Mackay has always been an attractive stopping point for holidaymakers taking a leisurely trek up the coast but these days about one-third of visitors travel to the city on business.

Room occupancy rates are at record highs and despite 1,000 new beds becoming available over the next three years, demand will continue to grow. Tourism is a major growth industry and \$2.1 billion worth of construction has been approved for the Whitsunday coast.

Landmark's Gary Johns says the Mackay region is traditionally cane and cattle country.

"The smart players are still doing well out of cane but a lot of growers are turning to other enterprises such as hay, pasture or orchards of mango and lychees. Planning is underway for a new \$50 million bio-diesel plant near Mackay which could give canegrowers more options in the future."

"As far as lifestyle blocks go, ten acre blocks are as scarce as hen's teeth and people are buying 100 acres just to get a lifestyle option."

Gary says the market for cattle properties is strong because of the limited supply.

"The equity growth is attracting buyers and those that can are adding to their existing holdings."

PROPERTY GUIDE:

Residential: New four bedroom brick veneer home \$440,000

Small acreage: Four bedroom home on 3 acres, 20 minutes south of Mackay \$550,000

Larger acreage: Cane country \$5,000 to \$8,000 an acre

Fattening land \$4,000 to \$7,000 per beast area

Breeder country \$1,500 to \$4,000 per beast area