



Whitsunday Shire LGA Profile

December 2007

Whitsunday Shire is one of the world's most desirable tourism destinations, serving as a gateway to the Great Barrier Reef while offering 74 idyllic island destinations. Major towns within the region include Proserpine, Airlie Beach and Cannonvale, whilst tropical resorts are dotted throughout Whitsundays Island chain, including those on Hayman, Hamilton, South Mille, Long, Lindeman and Daydream Island.

Aside from its strong tourism industry, the Whitsunday economy also derives significant income from sugar cane farming, cattle grazing, agriculture, small-scale manufacturing and a range of support and service industries.

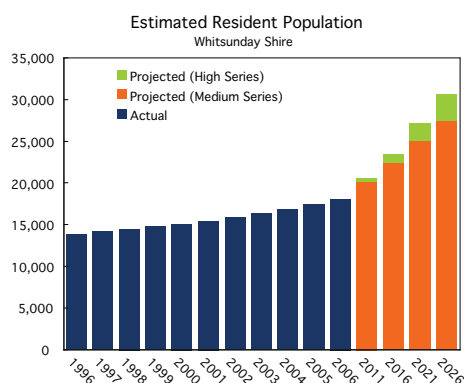
Whitsunday Shire amalgamated with Bowen Shire on 17 March 2008 following the local government election to form the Whitsunday Regional Council.



Population

There were an estimated 18,177 persons in Whitsunday Shire in 2006, 3.6% more than in 2005. Whitsunday Shire accounted for 11.4% of the Mackay Whitsunday Region population in 2006. Between 2006 and 2026, the population of Whitsunday Shire is projected to increase at an average annual rate of 2.1% to 27,609 persons by 2026. This translates to an extra 472 persons in the Shire each year between 2006 and 2026.

However, if current high growth experienced by the Mackay Whitsunday Region continues over the next 20 years, Whitsunday Shire is expected to experience a higher growth rate of 2.7% per annum to 30,862 persons by 2026.



Source: ABS 3218.0, QDLGP Population Projections 2006

Employment

Whitsunday Shire's trend labour force was an estimated 10,663 persons in the September Quarter 2007, 1.5% more than the September Quarter 2006. Trend employment also increased by

2.5% to 10,433 persons over the same period, while the number of trend unemployed persons declined by 31.5% to 241 persons in the September Quarter 2007.

Increases in employment in Whitsunday Shire in recent quarters have been fuelled by a number of significant tourism and marina projects being developed in the region.

Trend Employment Indicators, Whitsunday Shire

	Sep Qtr 2007	% Change on Sep Qtr 2006
Labour Force (no.)	10,663	1.5%
Employed (no.)	10,433	2.5%
Unemployed (no.)	241	-31.5%
Unemployment Rate (%) ^(a)	2.3%	-1.0%

Note: This data is derived through trending the unsmoothed series from DEWR, thus the trend labour force does not necessarily equal trend employed persons plus trend unemployed persons. (a) The change in the unemployment rate is in percentage point terms.

Source: DEWR Small Area Labour Market Surveys, AECgroup

The trend unemployment rate was an estimated 2.3% in the September Quarter 2007, 1.0 percentage point lower than one year ago. The trend unemployment rate for Whitsunday Shire has remained below 4% since the December Quarter 2005.



Source: DEWR Small Area Labour Market Surveys, AECgroup

Housing

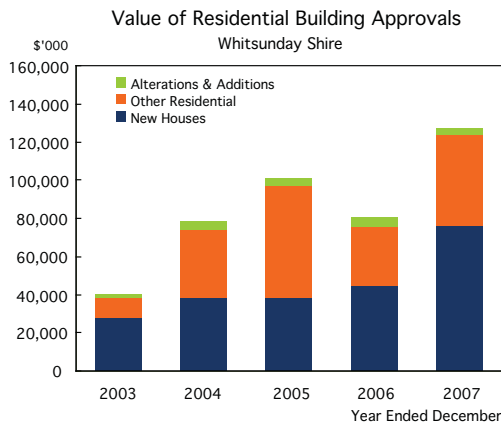
Whitsunday recorded a total of 405 residential building approvals in the 2007 calendar year, 26.2% more than in 2006. Increases were recorded for both new house approvals (up 7.5%) and other dwelling approvals (up 42.0%).

Building Approvals, Whitsunday Shire

	Year Ended Dec 07	% change on Year Ended Dec 06
Number		
New Houses	158	7.5%
Other Dwellings	247	42.0%
Total Residential	405	26.2%
Value (\$'000)		
New Houses	76,220	71.9%
Other Dwellings	47,196	51.3%
Alterations & Additions	3,749	-22.6%
Total Residential	127,145	58.2%
Non-Residential	63,176	-7.7%
Total Building	190,322	27.9%

Note: Other dwellings includes flats, units and apartments.
Source: ABS 8731.0

In line with the increase in residential building approval numbers, the value of residential building approvals increased significantly in 2007 to \$127.1 million, representing annual growth of 58.2% from 2006. Growth in value was recorded for both new house approvals (up 71.9%) and other dwelling approvals (up 51.3%), more than offsetting an annual decline in the value of approvals for alterations and additions of 22.6%.



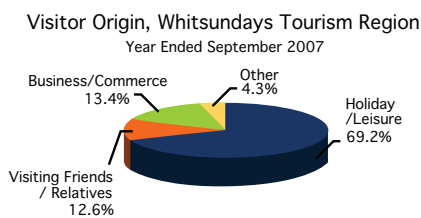
Source: ABS 8731.0

Compared to the previous year, the value of non-residential building approvals in Whitsunday Shire declined by 7.7% to \$63.2 million in 2007.

Industry

Tourism - Whitsunday Shire is one of the world's most popular tourism destinations. According to the National and International Visitor Surveys, there were a total of 1,295,800 visitors to the Whitsunday Tourism Region in the year ended September 2007. This figure was comprised of 567,600 domestic overnight (43.8%), 510,000 domestic day (39.4%) and 218,200 international visitors (16.8%) to the region.

Holiday/leisure remains the most common reason for visiting the Whitsunday Tourism Region (69.2%), followed by business/conference (13.4%).



Source: Tourism Research Australia, 2007

In 2007, the Whitsunday and Great Barrier Reef Airports are estimated to have had a combined total of 744,049 persons who arrived and departed from the region, 4.9% more than in 2006.

Overall, the Whitsunday Tourism Region recorded a total \$125.3 million in accommodation takings in the year ended September 2007, 1.2% less than in the year ended September 2006.

Agriculture - Sugar cane is one of the biggest industries in the Whitsunday Shire with all of the Shire's sugar cane processed at the Proserpine Sugar Mill.

In 2007, there were 1,757,505 tonnes of cane crushed at the Proserpine Sugar Mill, producing 238,183 tonnes of sugar with an estimated value of \$63.8 million. The Proserpine Sugar Mill accounted for approximately 17.7% of total sugar production in the Mackay Whitsunday Region in 2007.

Major Projects

There are approximately \$2.73 billion in development projects currently committed or under construction in Whitsunday Shire. The following list includes some of the significant current developments in the Whitsunday Shire:

Peppers Coral Coast Beach Resort - This Latitude Development Group project is currently under construction with expected completion set for 2009. This \$140 million project will feature 121 five star apartments, 11 penthouses, a conference centre, and retail facilities.

Energy Supply Cannonvale/Jubilee Pocket - Ergon Energy is currently constructing a \$19 million upgrade of energy infrastructure in the Whitsunday Shire to reinforce the current energy supply to Airlie Beach.

Port of Airlie Marina Development - The \$500 million Port of Airlie Marina Development includes the construction of a 240-berth marina, ferry and cruise terminal, a public boat ramp, a village square, and 510 residences (resort style and standard apartments, and houses).

Whisper Bay at Airlie Beach - The \$282 million project includes 98 three bedroom / study villas and apartments and six four bedroom penthouses. Many of the homes will have their own swimming pool, with two communal swimming pools available to service the other residents.

Dent Island Golf Course Resort - The \$85 million project that is expected to occur in four development stages. Stage 1 (\$25 million) is currently under construction and includes developing an international standard golf course, club house and a range of luxury homes and villas.

390 Shute Harbour Road - Projectworx has committed \$40 million to the construction of a 1,500 square metre arcade style retail centre, with 26 apartments over five levels.

Crystalline Shores - This \$55 million themed resort development is currently under construction (completion March 2009). The project includes the building of 55 luxury villas and a main resort building, which will house a health spa, sauna, gym, and delicatessen.

Dalrymple Residential Estate - Stage 1 of the estate will include 31 urban lots, 8 dual occupancy lots and open space with a total investment value of \$39 million.

Funnel Bay - A \$500 million project located in landmark proximity to Whitsunday National Parks, 1.2 km of beachfront and with scenic views to the North of the Whitsunday Islands. The project will include the construction of a 200-room hotel and 400 apartments.

Whitsunday Airport Park - This \$80 million Jeffery Ruddell development is currently under construction and will provide 80 - 90 hanger homes for small aircraft owners, an asphalt sealed runway, taxiways, a commercial precinct and conference and meeting facilities.

Whitsunday Springs (Links Living) - This \$700 million project will include the construction of 2,500 mixed density dwellings, including a hotel, apartments, and a PGA golf course.

For More Information

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