



Sunshine Coast Region

Employment Report - January 2016

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Executive Summary

This report for the Sunshine Coast Business Council (SCBC) provides a summary assessment of the Sunshine Coast economic conditions, with a focus on employment issues particularly for the current term of the Sunshine Coast Council (SCC) and Noosa Councils. Longer-term contextual assessments are also provided.

Overview

On nearly every indicator, the Sunshine Coast economy is performing much better now than it was three years ago and much better than a number of other major non-metropolitan regions in Queensland. However, there are potential structural issues that need to be further investigated to understand any longer term impact including:

- The consistent net internal migration loss of those in the 15-24 year age group;
- The effect of a relatively old population on labour force participation and hence income generation;
- The risk of population growth underestimation particularly in the context of the forthcoming South East Queensland Regional Plan (SEQ Plan) review, and decisions on land supply;
- An overdependence on a very few industries to provide most of the recent rapid employment increase, and
- Low median family and personal incomes.

Population

Population growth has recovered in the past three years, mainly due to a significant increase in net internal migration more than doubling, from 1,684 in 2011 to 4,474 in 2014. In 2014, the Sunshine Coast region received the second highest net internal migration flow in Australia, second only to Western Melbourne.

The rapid increase in net internal migration, mostly comprising people in the prime working age groups and their dependent children, hides a potential structural weakness for the Sunshine Coast region. In every year from 2007 to 2014, there were significant net losses in the 15-24 year age groups. Among high net migration gain regions in Australia in 2014, the Sunshine Coast stands out as the region losing large numbers in the 15-24 age group.

Based on the rapid increase in Sunshine Coast dwelling approvals and record low rental vacancy rates, there is a risk that the ABS population estimates may understate actual Sunshine Coast population growth. New state population projections are due to be released shortly and these will underpin the SEQ Plan review, in particular the future land supply. As such, very close attention is needed to the alignment of the ABS Population Estimates for 2015 (due in March), the new State population projections and the Draft SEQ Plan due later in 2016.

Labour Force, Employment and Unemployment

Nearly all indicators show that the Sunshine Coast economy has improved substantially in the past three years, in particular employment growth and the decline in total and youth unemployment. The Sunshine Coast has improved over time and also relative to most other regions. Several key issues need to be addressed:

- The recent decrease in youth unemployment should be considered in conjunction with many other influencing factors i.e. migration losses and federal welfare policies;
- The Sunshine Coast has a relatively old population and as labour force participation declines with age, the Sunshine Coast has a relatively low total labour force participation rate that ultimately limits community income generation and will impact on the achievement of the SCC's GRP aspirations, and
- Employment increase in the past three years has been significant and much higher than during the two previous Council administrations, but over 90% of the growth is concentrated in four industries (Accommodation, Retail, Public Administration and Wholesale) and these industries are not the main focus of the SCC Economic Development Strategy.

Other indicators

Dwelling building approvals have increased markedly to 3,703 in the year to November 2015, a 36.7% increase over the previous year and well above those of the GFC period. At the same time, REIQ dwelling vacancy rates have declined from a peak of 4.9% in June 2011, to 1.7% in December 2012 and 1.3% in December 2015. The rental dwelling vacancy rate for the Sunshine Coast region was among the lowest in the state in December 2015.

The high level of dwelling approvals, implied occupancy rates and very low rental vacancy rates raises questions about the accuracy of current ABS population estimates, and the ABS estimates for 2015 to be released shortly should be examined closely.

Median personal and family incomes for the Sunshine Coast region are below those of Queensland and this will constrain community income, wealth and consumption.

Strategies

This is not a strategies document, but the analysis points to the following issues that the SCBC may wish to consider:

- The need to understand the reason for the sustained internal migration loss of those 15-24 years;
- The achievement of employment growth in those industries targeted in the SCC Economic Development Strategy;
- The growth of those industries that have higher average incomes to redress the current deficiency in median incomes;
- Flexibility and adaptability in planning responses should actual population growth increase above estimated and projected growth;
- The development of implementation paths to show how the employment objectives of the SCC Economic Development Strategy can be achieved, and
- The sustained implementation of long-term strategies to increase the proportion of the economically active population and so increase economic and employment participation rates, income, wealth and consumption.

1 Introduction

This report has been prepared for the Sunshine Coast Business Council (SCBC) to provide a summary assessment of the Sunshine Coast economic conditions, with a focus on employment issues particularly in the current term of the SCC and Noosa Councils.

2 Scope

2.1 Geographic

The report focuses on the following areas:

- The Sunshine Coast Region, described statistically as the Sunshine Coast SA4 region (which includes Noosa);
- The Sunshine Coast Council (SCC) Local Government Area (LGA), and
- The Noosa Shire LGA.

Changes to geographic boundaries between SCC and Noosa Shire in 2014 have been accommodated by concordances by statistical agencies so that comparisons on a 'like with like' basis are provided over time.

Comparisons are made, where relevant, to benchmark areas such as Australia, Queensland, Brisbane and other major Queensland regional centres.

For some data sets, the same information and time series are available for all areas but for others there is different coverage in scope and/or time.

Some additional data are available for small areas such as SA3 areas (i.e. Maroochydore, Noosa, Caloundra) and SA2 areas (i.e. Cotton Tree, Sunshine Beach, Golden Beach), but the reliability issues are as such to make the data somewhat more unreliable.

2.2 Data sources

The report relies mainly on direct data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and indirect or secondary data from the Queensland Government Statisticians Office (QGSO) within Queensland Treasury and economy id from the SCC website. Sources are given.

2.3 Time period

The focus of this report for the purposes identified by the SCBC is on the term of the current Council term, that is, from 2013 to 2016, the previous Council incumbency (2010 to 2013) and longer term perspectives. Due to data timing issues, this is not always possible.

2.4 Content

The content will in general proceed from the general to the particular based on the economic relationships between the variables and in so doing provide a coherent and integrated assessment.

2.5 Format

The general pattern of presentation will include:

- Indicator name, data source and most recent date for the information;
- An overview Chart;
- Summary data, and
- A brief commentary on the trends, comparative performance over time and with other key regions.

2.6 Data reliability

The labour force and employment data comes from the ABS Labour force Survey, which relies on sample surveys. The larger the survey aggregates (larger areas and larger components), the more reliable the data. Even at a national level, concern has been raised about the validity of relatively large measures such as the national unemployment rate.

At smaller geographic areas, such as the Sunshine Coast SA4, and for subdivisions of the data (such as Sunshine Coast employment in a particular industry or unemployment in a particular age group), large sampling errors are possible. For this reason, most of the data is presented as an average over a number of surveys which is designed to smooth out the errors.

Trends over time are usually a reliable indicator, but a point in time measure needs to be treated with great caution. The Commonwealth Department of Employment that publishes the small area labour market data states: *Highly disaggregated estimates of unemployment and the unemployment rate at the SA2 and LGA level can display significant variability and should be viewed with caution. Indeed, quarter-to-quarter comparisons may not be indicative of actual movements in the labour market.*

In addition, the ABS states, for example, that in relation to monthly unemployment rates for the Sunshine Coast that *they are subject to sampling variability that is too high for most practical purposes.*

One consequence of the averaging for different periods for different data sets and the different geographical areas such as local government areas (LGAs) or the ABS SA4 'regions', is that there can appear to be inconsistent results.

2.7 Causation

The report provides the 'what' not the 'why'.

There are many international, national, state and local forces that drive the Sunshine Coast economy. In addition, the private sector accounts for the vast majority of the Sunshine Coast investment and employment.

In some cases the 'why' can be accounted for by international and national forces that wash over the Sunshine Coast, and the local economy rises and falls on the tide. In other cases, there are clear decisions and investment by government that lead to relatively clear outcomes. For example, employment in the Health sector is increasing rapidly in Australia and Queensland. It was increasing very rapidly in the Sunshine Coast for the past 10 years well before the major impacts of the new hospitals.

In addition, with major initiatives, the lead-time between investigation, decision, implementation and employment outcomes can take many years.

2.8 Employment and unemployment definitions

The data source is the SA4 Area Profiles 2015 prepared by the Commonwealth Department of Employment based on the ABS Labour Force Survey with definitions as follows:

- Sunshine Coast SA4: Data are three-month average of original data except for the youth unemployment rate, which is a 12-month average of original data.
- Queensland: The working age population and employment rate are three-month averages of original data. The unemployment rate and participation rate are seasonally adjusted data. The youth unemployment rate is a 12-month average of original data.
- Australia: The working age population and employment rate are three-month averages of original data. The participation rate, unemployment rate and youth unemployment rate are seasonally adjusted data.

3 Indicators

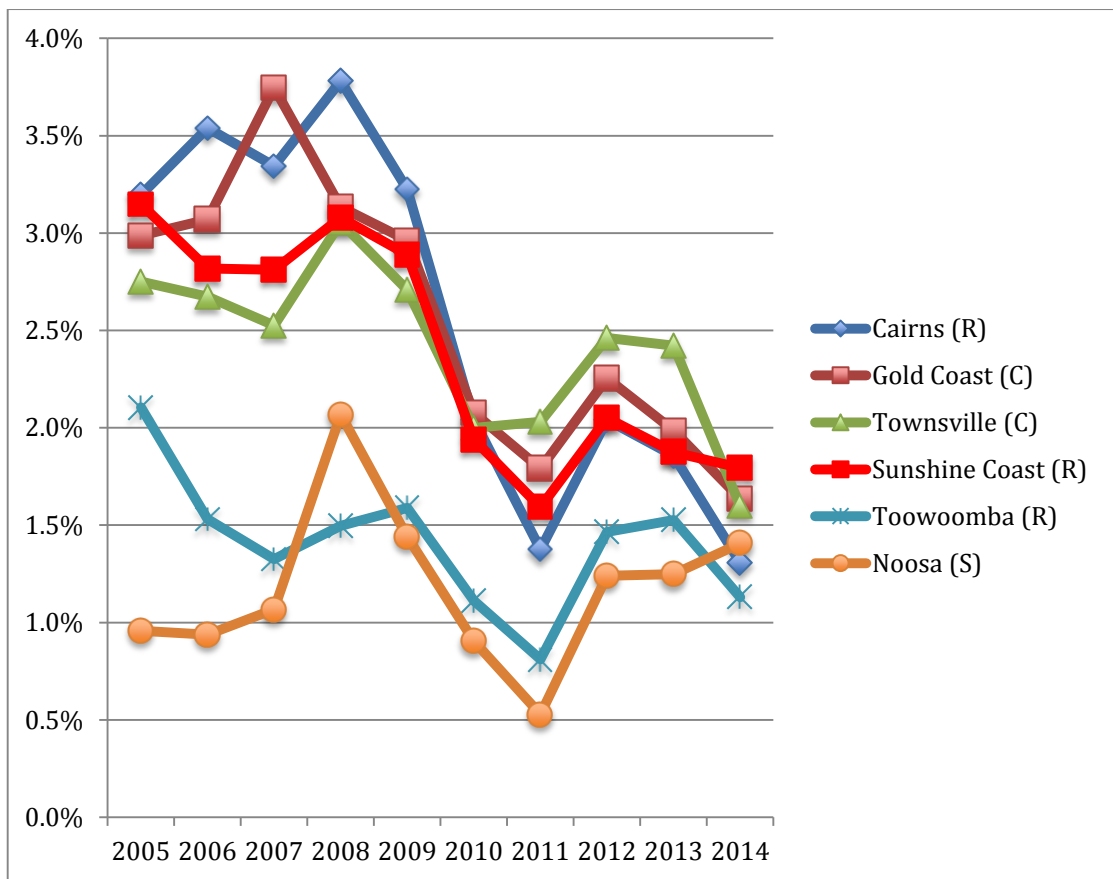
3.1 Population

3.1.1 Total Population

The series measures the estimated resident population in LGAs. The data series is available on an annual year to June basis and generally lags by 9 months, so the 2015 data should be available in late March 2016.

Population is a key variable as it drives most demand for housing, retail and many services as well as providing the basis for the labour supply.

Annual Population Growth Rate-Major Regional LGAs 2005-2014



Source: ABS Regional Population Growth. 3218.0

Key points to note:

- Apart from Noosa and to some degree Toowoomba, in the past decade, the population growth rate curves for the major Queensland regional LGAs have moved in generally consistent patterns;
- The growth rate curve for Sunshine Coast is in mid-field with Gold Coast, Cairns and Townsville, and
- The major demographic story for Queensland in the past decade has been the significant reduction in net migration particularly from Victoria and NSW and the Sunshine Coast has been affected by this to much the same degree as other major regional LGAs.

From the time of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), population growth slowed to bottom out in 2011 and since then has increased somewhat. From 2009 to 2014, during and after the amalgamation, the relative population growth contributions of Sunshine Coast LGA and

Noosa LGA to the region have remained relatively steady.

Annual Population Growth Sunshine Coast and Noosa LGAs 2009-2014

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Sunshine Coast (R)	7,247	5,006	4,188	5,482	5,113	4,986
Noosa (S)	715	455	268	633	645	736
Total Region	7,962	5,461	4,456	6,115	5,758	5,722
Sunshine Coast LGA share (%)	91.0%	91.7%	94.0%	89.6%	88.8%	87.1%

Source: ABS Regional Population Growth. 3218.

In terms of population growth, the Sunshine Coast region, and particularly the Sunshine Coast LGA has tended to move in concert with other major regional LGAs in Queensland, affected more by national forces washing over the area than by local conditions. Noosa is a slightly special case and its population growth has been lower and has not moved in alignment with the other LGAs.

3.1.2 Net migration

The Sunshine Coast region has depended heavily on net migration as a major contributor to population growth. Net migration is also highly responsive to economic conditions generally and to employment in particular.

The substantial net migration decline and recovery from the GFC period are demonstrated in the decline of net migration from nearly 4,000 per year in 2007 to 2008 to less than 1,700 in 2010/11 and an equally rapid increase to nearly 4,500 in 2013/14. In 2013/14, the Sunshine Coast region received the second highest flow of net internal migrants in any area of Australia (behind only Melbourne West).

Annual Internal Migration Sunshine Coast SA4 2007-2014

	Arrivals	Departures	Net
2006/07	22,944	19,073	3,871
2007/08	22,901	18,987	3,914
2008/09	21,704	19,432	2,272
2009/10	20,598	17,982	2,616
2010/11	19,473	17,789	1,684
2011/12	20,768	18,248	2,520
2012/13	20,743	17,775	2,968
2013/14	22,345	17,871	4,474

Source: ABS Migration Australia. 3412.

Throughout the period 2007-2014, internal migration departures remained relatively steady, with most of the change in net migration accounted for by the decline then recovery of arrivals.

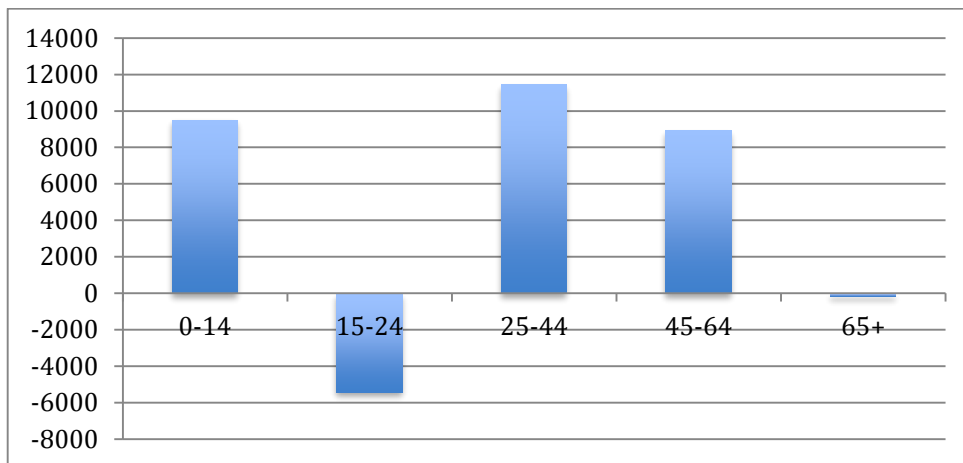
While the increase in net migration, most likely in association with increased employment opportunities on the Sunshine Coast is very welcome, the total increase hides very serious structural issues concerning those 15-24 years. The Sunshine Coast region gained over 24,000 in net terms from 2007 to 2014 but lost 5,420 15-24 years. The main age group gains are those 25-44 years and their dependent children 0-14 years, but the net loss of such a large number of 15-24 years raises serious issues.

Internal Net Migration by Age Group Sunshine Coast SA4 2007-2014

	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Total
2006/7 to 2013/14	9,505	-5,420	11,448	8,946	-160	24,319

Source: ABS Migration Australia. 3412.

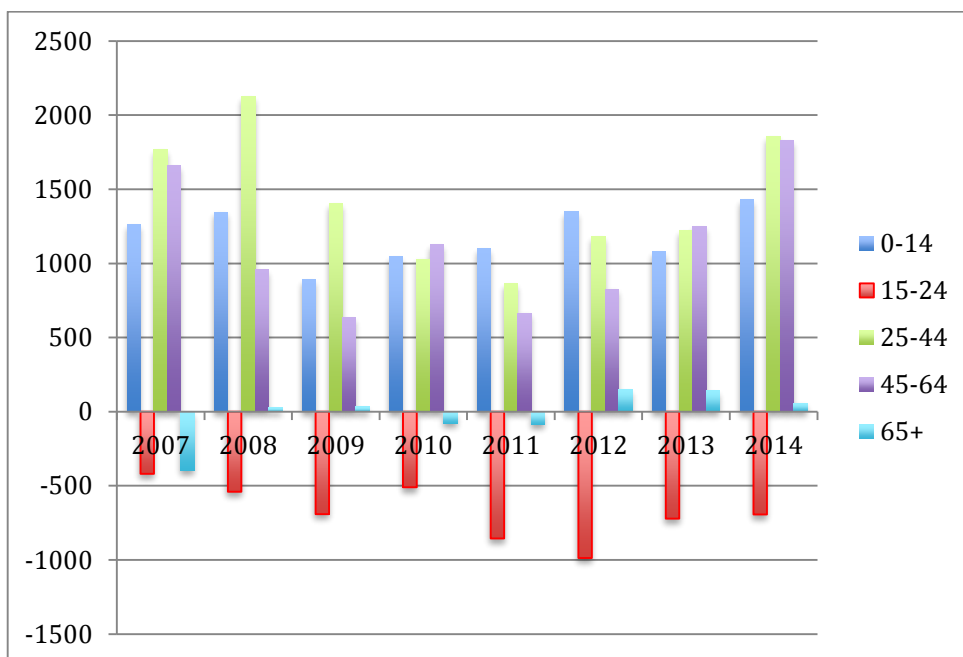
Internal Net Migration by Age Group Sunshine Coast 2007-2014



Source: ABS Migration Australia. 3412.

Not only is the net loss of 15-24 year olds significant in total, it happened in every year from 2007 to 2014, although has seen some improvement in the past two years. Further research is needed to determine the positive and negative reasons for the outward migration of the youth, and any subsequent impact on youth unemployment, as it goes to the core of the long-term economic well-being of the Sunshine Coast community. At the same time, the population in the 15-24 year age group continues to grow but the population pyramid does show imbalances in these and following age groups.

Annual Internal Net Migration by Age Group Sunshine Coast 2007-2014



Source: ABS Migration Australia. 3412

While the Sunshine Coast region received the second highest net flow of internal migrants in Australia in 2013/14, it was conspicuous among the top 10 net gain areas in that it had a very high net loss of 15-24 year olds.

Internal Net Migration by Age Group Net Internal Movement 2013/14

SA4 Regions	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Total
Melbourne - West	303	1,708	3,369	405	-120	5,665
Sunshine Coast	1,430	-694	1,855	1,826	57	4,474
Ipswich	631	834	1,188	819	-354	3,118
Perth - South West	420	811	1,172	343	-51	2,695
Gold Coast	1,086	125	702	706	11	2,630
Moreton Bay - North	464	644	721	708	-44	2,493
Geelong	583	-2	847	698	329	2,455
Moreton Bay - South	513	322	1,464	93	-32	2,360
Mandurah	238	411	830	974	-274	2,179
Bunbury	726	-124	929	556	43	2,130

Source: ABS Migration Australia. 3412

3.1.3 Population issues

A major issue facing the Sunshine Coast is the review of the current SEQ Plan (2009). The Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning's website states the review is now underway in response to updated population forecasts that indicate SEQ may need to accommodate an additional 2.2 million people by 2041. The Department also states that the State Government is committed to delivering a new draft SEQ Plan for public consultation in 2016.

The underlying population projections to 2041 are not publicly available, but are complete and awaiting approval for release. The ABS population estimates to June 2015 are expected to be released in March 2016 and the Census will be conducted in 2016.

At the 2011 Census, there was a marked discrepancy between the ABS Population Estimates and the Census results and considerable adjustment was needed to achieve alignment.

Because the new State population projections will underpin the SEQ Plan review, in particular the future land supply, very close attention will be needed on the alignment of the population estimates, population projections and the SEQ Plan review consideration of future land supply for the Sunshine Coast.

3.2 Labour Force

3.2.1 Labour force participation rate

The data series is available for the Sunshine Coast region (SA4) and not on a LGA basis. The series measures the percent of the population aged 15 years and over, working or seeking work. The data are available on a quarterly basis and the most recent is December 2015. Higher rates are better.

The labour force participation rate is significantly affected by the age structure of the population and the Sunshine Coast region's older age structure has a dampening impact on participation rates. The median age in the Sunshine Coast in 2011 was 42, well above Australia at 37 years. Among the Queensland non-metropolitan regions, the Sunshine Coast region's participation rate was in the lower half at December 2015.

Labour Force Participation Rate Queensland Regions December 2015

Comparable Regions (SA4)	Participation Rate (15+) Percent
Gold Coast	71.4
Mackay	69.9
Fitzroy	67.3
Darling Downs - Maranoa	63.7
Sunshine Coast	63.7
Toowoomba	62.4
Townsville	62.4
Cairns	60.1

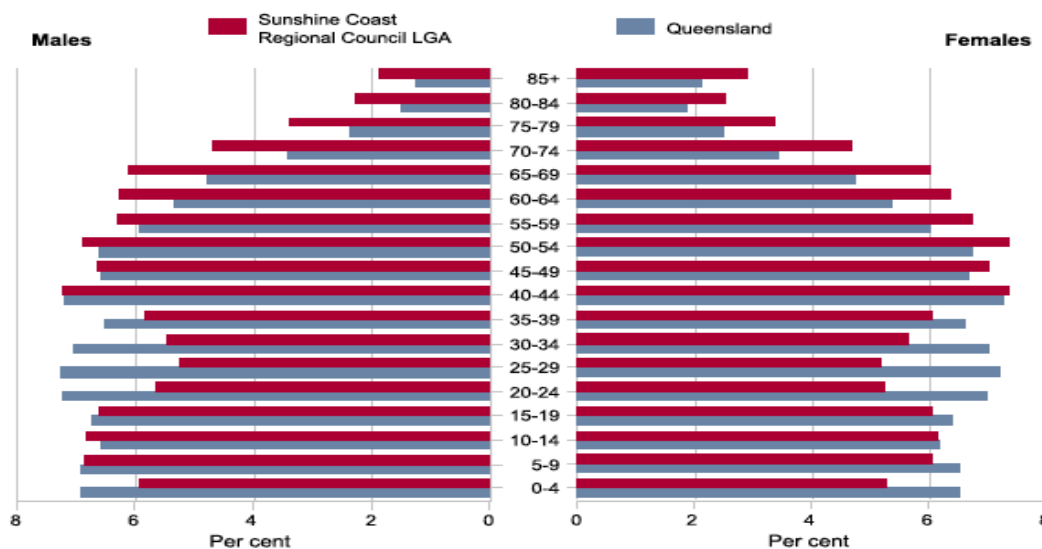
Source: ABS Labour Force Survey

On a comparative regional basis, the most recent data shows that the Sunshine Coast is performing at about average, but most likely held back by age structure issues.

The Sunshine Coast’s labour force participation in December 2015 was below that of Australia (65.1%) and Queensland (65.7%).

To illustrate the impact of the age structure on labour force participation, where participation decreases rapidly above age 55, in 2014 the Sunshine Coast had a higher proportion of its population than Queensland in every age cohort 40 years and over. In the age groups 20 to 39, the Sunshine Coast had a severe deficiency in its population pyramid, and this is the most active economic group in terms of employment participation. The net internal migration loss of those 15-24 is likely to be a contributing factor to the ‘hole’.

Population by Age Sunshine Coast LGA and Queensland 2014



Source: QGSO.

3.2.2 Employment participation rate

The series measures the percent of the population aged 15-64 years that is working. Data are available on a quarterly basis and the most recent is December 2015.

Compared with the labour force participation, this measure excludes the population aged 65 and over and thus removes some of the impact of the Sunshine Coast’s older population structure. It also removes the unemployed. Higher rates are better.

Once the impact of the older population in the Sunshine Coast is removed, the proportion of the population in the main economic active age groups (15-64 years) improves the standing of the Sunshine Coast region so that it performs quite well.

Employment Participation Rate Queensland Regions December 2015

Comparable Regions (SA4)	Employment Rate (15-64) Percent
Gold Coast	79.0
Darling Downs - Maranoa	76.5
Sunshine Coast	75.2
Mackay	73.6
Toowoomba	73.3
Cairns	70.5
Fitzroy	70.2
Townsville	69.8

Source: ABS Labour Force Survey

The employment participation rate is a critical measure as the number of people working and their incomes have a profound impact on, and make by far the most significant contribution to, the Sunshine Coast Gross Regional Income (GRI). More people working in those industries that are higher paid is the most direct pathway to higher economic wealth for the Sunshine Coast.

On a comparative regional basis, the most recent data shows that the Sunshine Coast is performing reasonably well. The Sunshine Coast's employment participation in December 2015 was above that of Australia (72.8%) and Queensland (73.2%).

3.2.3 Unemployment rate

The unemployment rate for those 15 years and over measures those that are seeking work. It is generally considered that about a five percent unemployment rate represents a level of non-inflationary full employment.

Previously, regional areas tended to have unemployment rates that were 'naturally' about 1% above those of capital cities. Recent data for Queensland shows that some regions, including the Sunshine Coast, no longer suffer this penalty.

The unemployment rate at December 2015 for Sunshine Coast was the fifth lowest for all 19 SA4 regions in Queensland. The unemployment rate was lower than all but one of the five SA4 regions in Brisbane, and lower than the regions around Brisbane such as Moreton Bay, Logan, and Ipswich.

A lower unemployment rate means that the economy is working closer to its potential, and is a pathway to higher GRP.

Unemployment Rate Queensland Regions December 2015

Comparable Regions (SA4)	Unemployment Rate (15+) Percent
Mackay	7.6
Cairns	7.4
Townsville	5.9
Fitzroy	5.3
Sunshine Coast	4.8
Gold Coast	4.5
Toowoomba	3.7
Darling Downs - Maranoa	2.5

Source: ABS Labour Force Survey

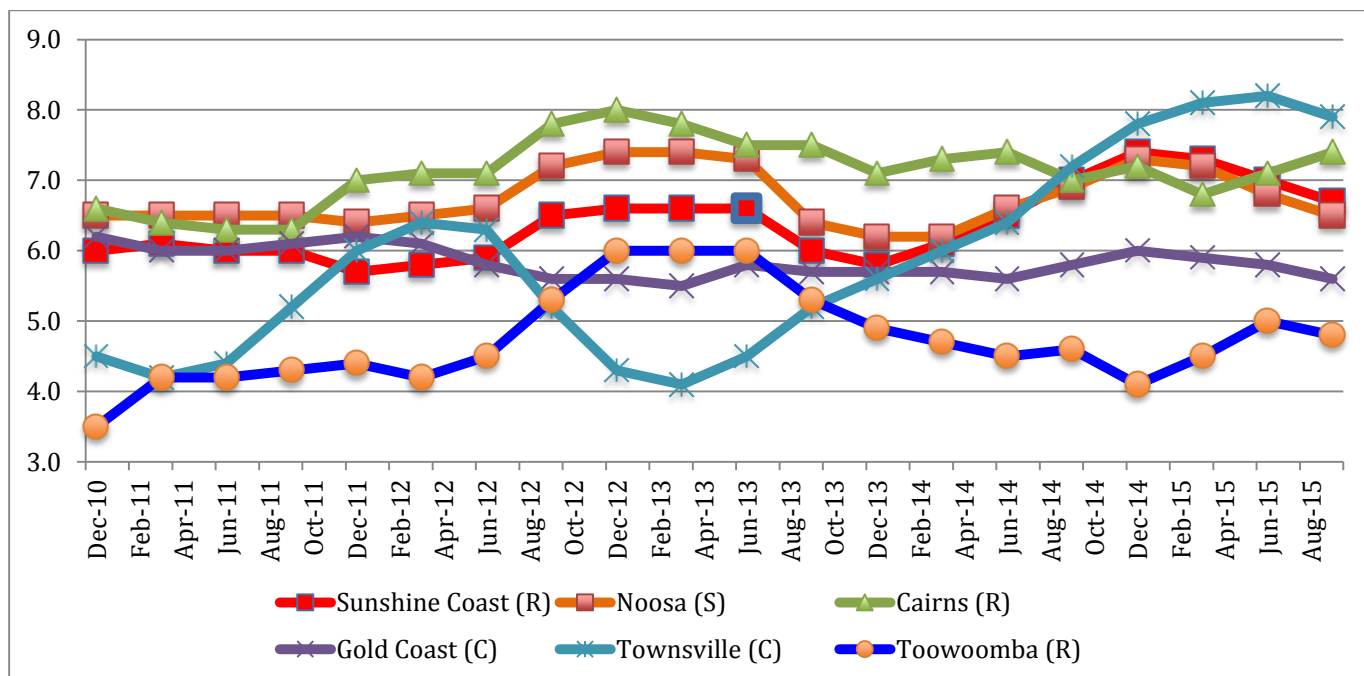
On a comparative regional basis, the most recent data shows that the Sunshine Coast is performing very well. The Sunshine Coast’s unemployment rate in December 2015 was below that of Australia and Queensland, both at 5.8%. The data in the table above represents a 3 month average as defined in section 2.8.

By comparison, the 12 month average for the Sunshine Coast sits at 6.1% which is an improvement from the prior 12 month average rate of 7.4%. This is still equal to, or slightly better than, the annualised averages for QLD and Australia of 6.3% and 6.1% respectively.

The monthly point of time rate for the Sunshine Coast for December 2015 was 4.4% being half the rate in May 2014 at 8.5%. While the ABS states that these single point monthly measures have too much variability for most practical purposes, it does indicate that significant improvement over that time period has occurred.

On a trend basis, the unemployment rate for both the Sunshine Coast and Noosa LGAs has declined substantially in the past year by about one percentage point.

Unemployment Rate Major Regional LGAs 2010-2015 (%)



Source: Unemployment Rate to September 2015 Employment Portal. Department of Employment

Reflecting essentially the same labour market, the unemployment rates for Noosa and Sunshine Coast have the same shapes. Generally, the Gold Coast and Toowoomba LGAs have lower unemployment than Sunshine Coast and Noosa LGAs. The Townsville and Cairns LGAs tend to have higher unemployment rates and even before the Nickel Mill layoffs, there were underlying problems for Townsville.

3.2.4 Youth unemployment rate

The unemployment rate for those 15-24 years is generally described as youth unemployment rate.

High youth unemployment rates are often associated with significant social as well as economic dislocation and hardship.

The Sunshine Coast region youth unemployment rate in December 2015 was one of the lowest of the non-metropolitan SA4 regions as well as one of the lowest in the state. It is about half the rate for Cairns and Townsville. It is well below the rate in the adjoining SA4 regions of Wide Bay (20.6%) and Moreton Bay North (14.1%).

On a comparative regional basis, the most recent data shows that the Sunshine Coast is performing very well. In December 2015, the Sunshine Coast's youth unemployment rate was well below that of Australia (12.1%) and Queensland (13.2%).

The data in the table below represents a 12-month average as defined in section 2.8.

As outlined previously, the sustained net internal migration loss of those 15-24 years needs to be better understood and considered in conjunction with any current or future changes to the youth unemployment rate.

Youth Unemployment Rate Queensland Regions December 2015

Region	Youth Unemployment Rate (15-24)
Cairns	20.3
Townsville	18.4
Mackay	16.2
Fitzroy	13.0
Gold Coast	12.7
Sunshine Coast	9.6
Toowoomba	9.4
Darling Downs - Maranoa	7.7

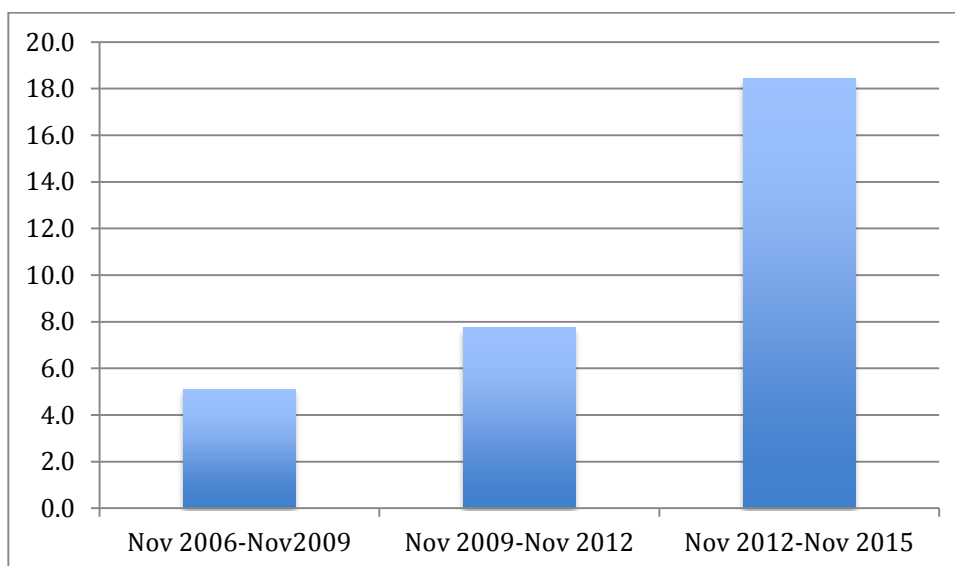
Source: ABS Labour force Survey

3.3 Employment

3.3.1 Total employment increase

The headline fact is that in the past three years (November 2012 to November 2015) total employment has increased at two to three times that in the two preceding three-year periods. While the increase in employment relative to earlier periods is a significant increase, particular care is needed as the employment numbers and those on a more disaggregated industry basis 'bounce' around inexplicitly.

Total Employment Increase Sunshine Coast Region 2006-2015 (000)



Source: ABS Labour Force Survey

Total Employment Increase Sunshine Coast Region 2006-2015

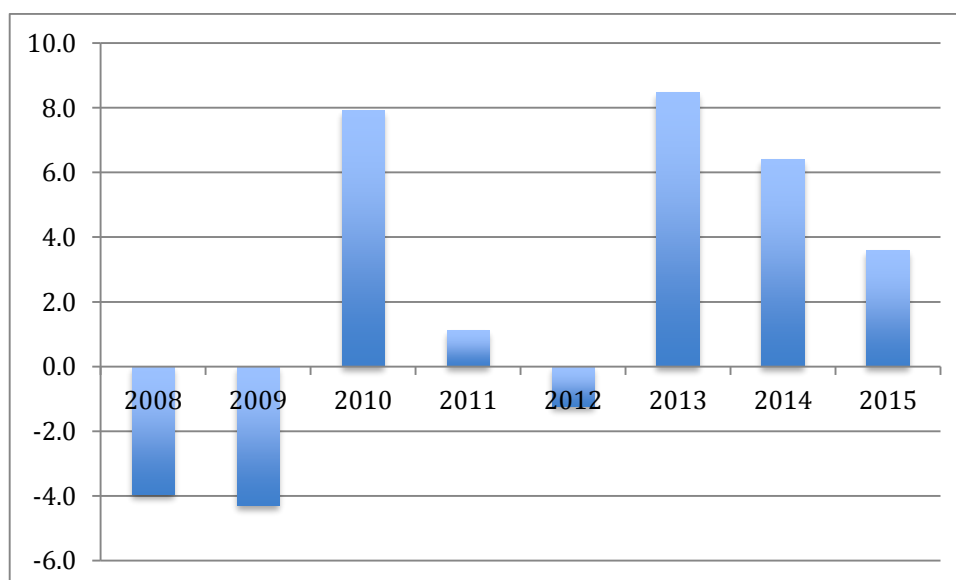
Sunshine Coast SA4	Nov 2006- Nov 2009	Nov 2009- Nov 2012	Nov 2012- Nov 2015
Employment increase (000)	5.1	7.8	18.4
Percent increase	3.8%	5.5%	12.5%

Source: ABS Labour Force Survey

The longer three-year periods provide a more reliable measure than annual and quarterly measures that inexplicitly bounce around. Employment growth in the period 2006 to 2009 and 2009 to 2012 was relatively slow in comparison with other areas and that from 2012 to 2015 was relatively fast, but the disruptions of the impact of the mining employment boom and bust need to be taken into account in comparisons with some other regions.

It is difficult to develop a narrative when examining the reported annual employment change for the Sunshine Coast region each year from 2008 to 2015, apart from the points that the impacts of the GFC in 2008 and 2009 were severe and that the employment increase in the past three years has been impressive.

Total Annual Employment Change Sunshine Coast Region 2008-2015



Source: ABS Labour Force Survey

On a LGA basis, from December 2010 to September 2015, Sunshine Coast LGA employment grew at a faster rate than did Noosa LGA.

On a gender basis, from December 2012 to December 2015, the employment of Sunshine Coast region males and females increased by about the same amount, with female percentage increase marginally higher than males.

3.3.2 Industry employment increase

A longer view is also a better way to consider the components of employment increase.

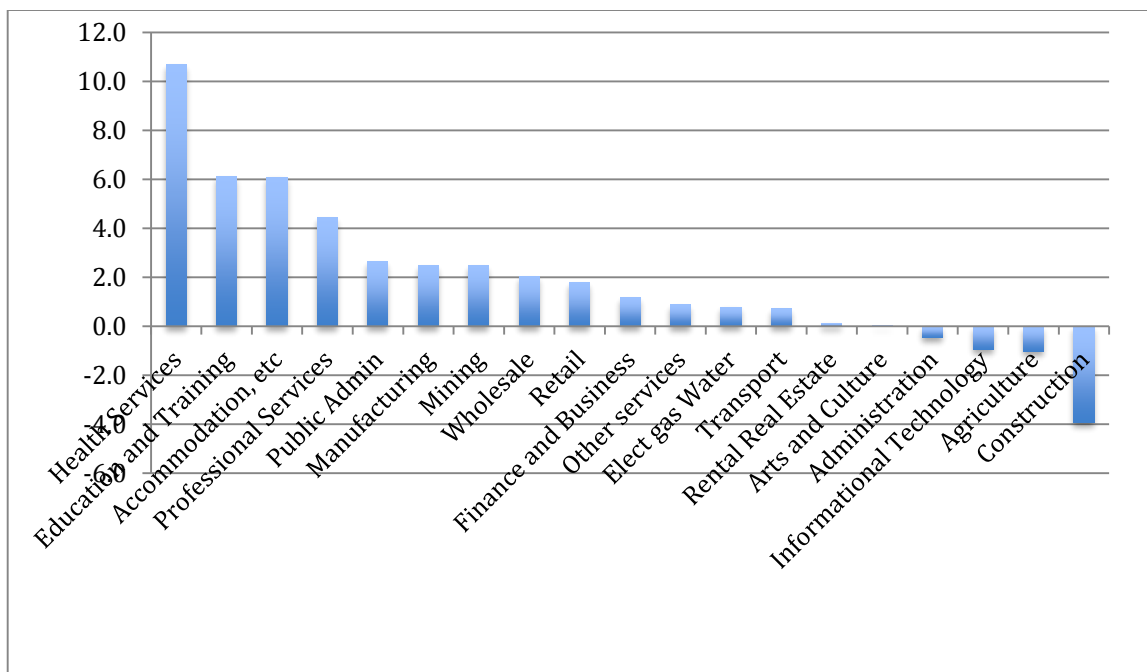
In the 10 years November 2005 to November 2015, total employment increased by 36,000 and four industries accounted for more than three quarters of that increase. The industries are Health (10,700), Education and Training (6,100), Accommodation (6,100) and Professional and Technical Services (4,400).

In contrast, five industries either did not increase or declined in employment in the same period. These were Arts and Culture, IT, Media and Communications, Agriculture and Construction.

The rapid increase in Health, Education and Professional Services provides support for the directions of the SCC Economic Development Strategy. Accommodation services relates closely to the Tourism sector.

The decline in Agriculture is a long-term national trend and the decline in Construction reflects the decline in construction activity following the GFC and the reduction in interstate migration to Queensland and the Sunshine Coast.

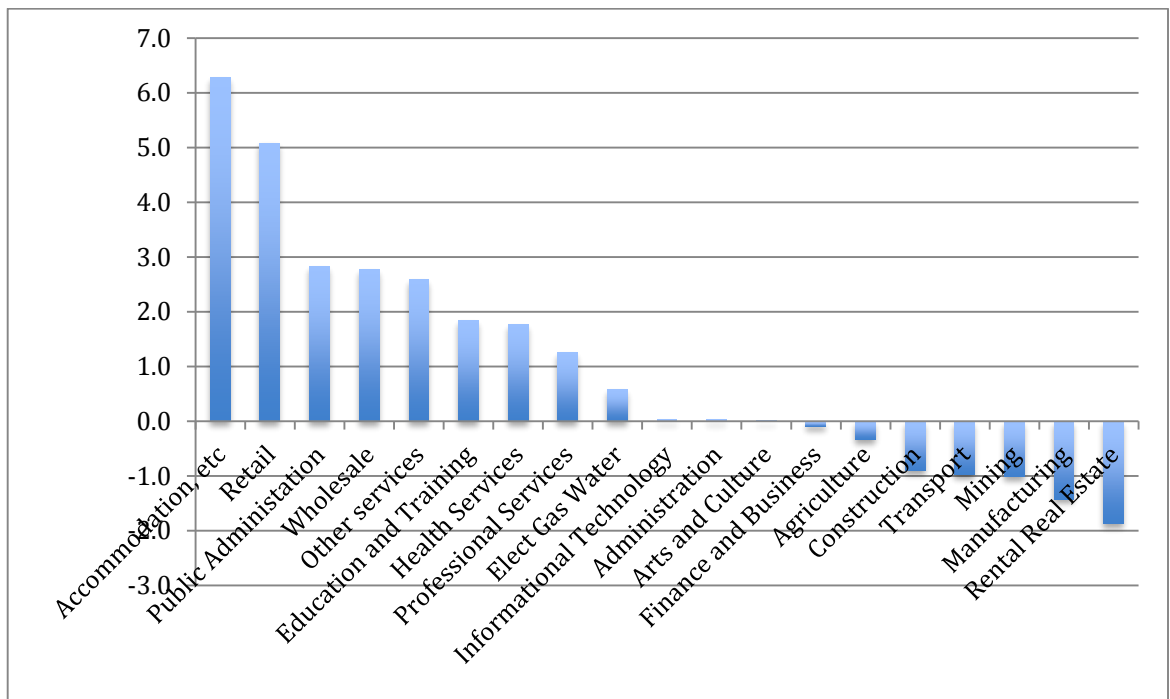
Employment Change by Industry Sunshine Coast Region 2005-2015 (000)



Source: ABS Labour Force Survey

The shorter-term perspective of the past three years again shows a concentration of employment increase in a few industries, but of concern is that the industries where the growth has occurred are, in general, not those targeted by the Economic Development Strategy. However, caution is urged when considering any fine grained employment disaggregation based on the Labour Force Survey.

Employment Change by Industry Sunshine Coast Region 2012-2015 (000)

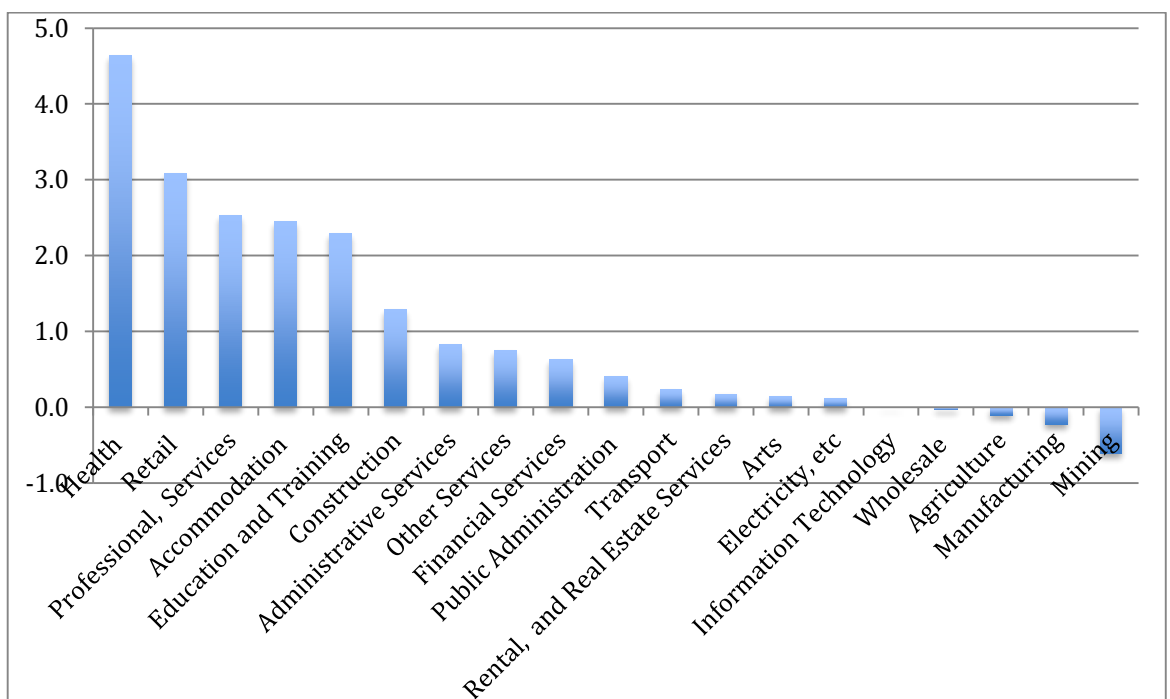


Source: ABS Labour Force Survey

3.3.3 Industry employment projections

The Commonwealth Department of Employment has prepared employment projections for regions on an industry and occupation basis. The usual caution should be exercised in assessing the projections, but they do point to continued strong growth in Health, Professional Services, Accommodation and Education and Training. Compared with the growth in the past 10 years, the projections expect strong growth in Retail and a resumption in growth in the Construction sector.

Projected Employment Increase by Industry Sunshine Coast Region 2014-2019 (000)



Source: Department of Employment

3.4 Other indicators

3.4.1 Building activity

Population growth and subsequent building activity were major drivers of the Sunshine Coast economy. From about 300 residential approvals per month in 2006/07, the impact of the GFC saw a rapid drop to 100-200 per month from early 2009 to early 2013. The shock of the GFC on residential building construction was much greater for the Sunshine Coast than for Queensland.

Since that time, there has been a steady increase to about 300 per month. In the year to November 2015, there were 3,703 dwelling approvals, an increase of 995 or 36.7% over the previous year to November 2014.

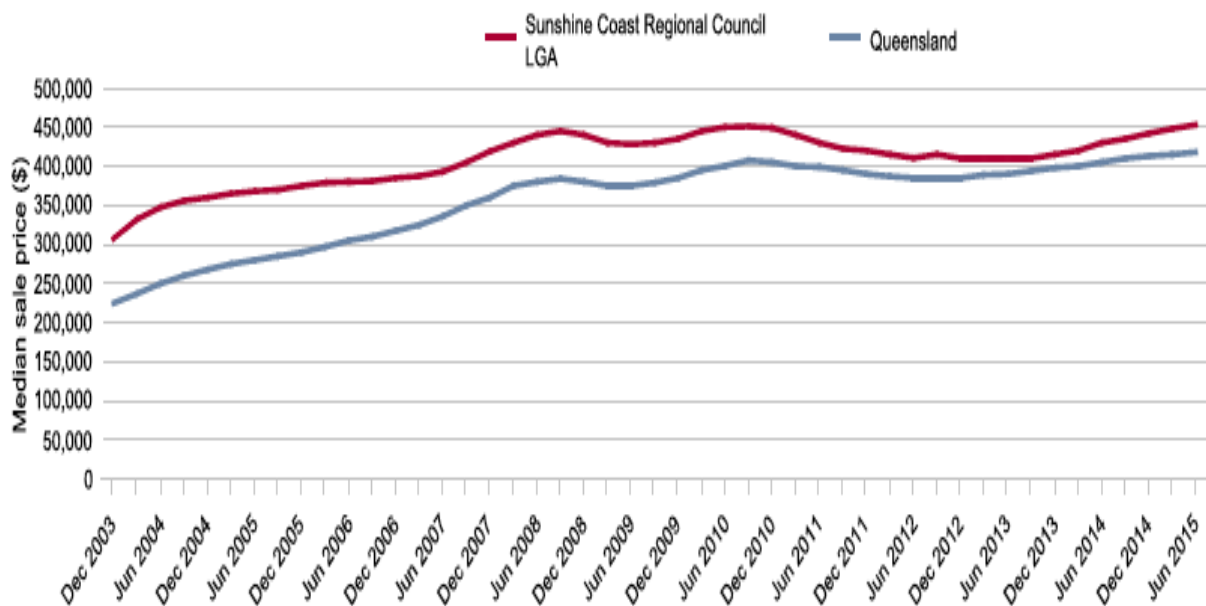
The Sunshine Coast LGA's share of regional building activity in 2014/15 of 88.5% corresponds closely to its share of regional population growth. The only areas where there were substantial variations to this share were that the Sunshine Coast LGA:

- Accounted for nearly all of the Other buildings (flats, units, etc.) with 97.3%;
- Accounted for nearly all the value of Non residential buildings at 96.7%, and
- Had only 73.9% of the value of alterations and additions that were relatively more important for Noosa Shire LGA.

The average value of new houses and new Other dwellings in Noosa Shire LGA were well above those in Sunshine Coast LGA with per dwelling differentials at about 25% for houses and 13% for Other dwellings.

The median value of residential sales increased rapidly from 2003 to mid-2008, but then stagnated to late 2010 and fell to late 2013. Since then, there has been a gradual increase in line with trends for Queensland.

Median Value Residential Dwelling Sales Sunshine Coast LGA and Queensland 2003-2015



Source QGSO

3.4.2 Social Service recipients

Social service recipient data are available from The Department of Human Services. The most recent data are September 2015 and provides data on a LGA, Commonwealth electorate and postcode basis. The main features for LGAs are:

- Reflecting the age structure, Aged Pension recipients per head of population in Sunshine Coast and Noosa LGAs were well above those for the major regional LGAs of Cairns, Townsville, Toowoomba and Gold Coast;
- Newstart (payments for unemployed people) recipients in Sunshine Coast and Noosa LGAs increased slightly in the year to September 2015 by 5.3% and 4.3% respectively, which contrasts with the increase of 14.1% in Townsville LGA;
- Social security payments are important for the Sunshine Coast LGA, and slightly above other major regions, with major payment types in 2015-
 - Pensioner Concession Card (60,124),
 - Age Pension (39,282),
 - Family Tax Benefit A (20,753),
 - Health Care Card (19,860),
 - Family Tax Benefit B (16,656),
 - Disability Support Pension (10,033), and
- Over 70% of the Sunshine Coast and Noosa populations were in receipt of some form of benefit for some part of the year to September 2015, which was higher than for other major non-metropolitan regions.

The higher benefit participation rate for Noosa and the Sunshine Coast mainly reflects the older age structure of the population and the health and age related benefits that flow to older age groups.

Due to the complexity, conditions and changes to social security payments from time to time, considerable care is needed in interpreting the data and trends.

3.4.3 Income

While dated, the 2011 Census shows that for the then Sunshine Coast LGA, (now Noosa and Sunshine Coast LGAs), the median personal income was 11.4% below that of Queensland and median family income 16.0% below that of Queensland.

ABS Estimates of personal income based on Taxation data for 2012/13 show that the Sunshine Coast SA4 region had median personal income 13.2% less than the Queensland average and that the new Sunshine Coast LGA had personal income levels 7.4% higher than that for the new Noosa LGA.