What do residents and tourists ‘value’ in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area?

Project 12.3

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WHAT DID WE HOPE TO LEARN AND WHY?

- The relative ‘value’ (benefit) of the goods and services provided by the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (WTWHA) to residents of and visitors to the region

**Tells us about what the WTWHA does to/for the economy**
(also provides indication of likely environment/social/economy trade-offs)

**Workshops with key stakeholders to identify:**
- A variety of different ecosystem services (use/non-use ‘values’) for assessment & other goods/services to be compared with
  - Key management issues/problems for assessment
    - Appropriate sampling strategies

**Insights used to develop two questionnaires**

- Also – testing and comparing different methods for attempting to ‘value’ non-market good and services
KEY SECTIONS OF THE RESIDENT SURVEY

• Background demographics, activities in the WTWHA
• Importance of and satisfaction with 27 different goods and services (randomized order)
• Satisfaction with life overall
• Impact of 12 different hypothetical “changes” to different goods and services on overall quality of life
• WTP (a) for improvements in water quality; (b) to protect native plants & animals; (c) to maintain undeveloped scenery; (d) to protect the Aboriginal cultural values.

Tourism survey similar; included extra questions to assess expenditure and ‘consumer surplus’
OVERVIEW OF PROJECT DATA

1167 surveys in total

- 621 from tourists:
  - Lagoon
  - Domestic terminal
  - International terminal

- 386 mail-out surveys
- 160 Rainforest Aboriginals
Key Insights Residents...
Which ‘values’ are more important to overall quality of life...

- Widespread agreement that the safety of family and friends is the most important contributor
- Intrinsic (environmental) values are more important than other (economic) values
Comparison of the top 10 most important ‘values’

Indigenous residents vs. Non-Indigenous residents
SIMILAR ‘VALUES’...

• Responses indicate recognition (even if only implicit) of important inter-relationships between values, evidenced in
  – analysis of correlation coefficients
  – principal component analysis
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIETY</th>
<th>ENVIRONMENT</th>
<th>ACCESS TO NATURE</th>
<th>CULTURE</th>
<th>INDUSTRY</th>
<th>CITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Importance score for the group:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends and family being safe</td>
<td>Undeveloped scenery to look at</td>
<td>Bitumen roads</td>
<td>Hearing from Aboriginals about their culture</td>
<td>Tourism industry</td>
<td>Enjoying city entertainment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good quality roads and hospitals</td>
<td>Walking tracks</td>
<td>Preserving Indigenous culture</td>
<td>Importance of the mining industry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spending time with family and friends</td>
<td>Rail and skyrail</td>
<td>Learning about a unique environment</td>
<td>Importance of agricultural industry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Having 'some' control of one's life</td>
<td>Preserving for future generations</td>
<td>Protecting other cultures</td>
<td>Importance of other industries</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Two WHAs side by side</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Being able to relax and reflect</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Iconic land species</td>
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<td>Rainforest walks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Waterfalls and clear clean rivers</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uncrowded camping and picnic areas</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+ QLD born</td>
<td>- Mining &amp; ports</td>
<td>- Income</td>
<td>+ Indigenous</td>
<td>- Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Male</td>
<td>- age</td>
<td>- Male</td>
<td>- Male</td>
<td>- HH size</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Income</td>
<td>- Agriculture</td>
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<td>- Agriculture</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
How much do values differ across sectors?
(controlling for income and other factors)

How important are each of the following to your overall quality of life?

- 2 very unimportant; 2 very important

- Having healthy native plants & animals (e.g. free from diseases, pests & weeds)
- Having beautiful undeveloped scenery to look at
- Protecting places that have Aboriginal cultural values
BUT ITS ABOUT MORE THAN JUST ‘IMPORTANCE’ ....
Most residents indicated satisfactory quality of life.

- Would not move away from the region even if it ‘deteriorated’
- Some variation in responses between Indigenous and non-Indigenous
- Also spatial differences
How satisfied are you with your life overall? Why do you feel that way ...?

“I love the area we live in, the lifestyle it offers and the variety of wildlife in the area”

“My health is good, reasonably financially secure, I live with unpolluted air in a nice quiet area”

“I love where I live, I have a good job, I am able to control my life”

“I have access to my land and live with my elders. I learn, walk, eat culturally everyday and I love it”
SOME INSIGHTS TOURISTS...
Tourists: Importance as a reason for coming to this part of Australia

- Undeveloped scenery
- Weather
- Budget
- Iconic land species
- Scenic beauty & peacefulness
- Protection of the WTWHA for future generations
- Proximity of GBRWHA & WTWHA
- Time with family & friends
- Quality guided tours & attraction venues
- Walking tracks
- Uncrowded camping & picnic areas
- City entertainment
- Protection of places with other cultural values
- Community activities
- Business

Neutral Important Very important
**NATURE**

- Enjoying the scenic beauty and peacefulness
- Waterfalls and clear clean rivers
- Iconic land species
- Being able to relax and reflect
- Rainforest walks
- Uncrowded camping and picnic areas
- Weather
- Iconic marine species
- Learning about a unique environment

**Mean visitor score for Nature**

- **Mean score**
  - Rest of Europe*
  - Germany
  - North America
  - UK
  - QLD
  - Asia*
  - Rest of Australia*

- **Origin**
So how would tourists react if the things they value deteriorated?
IMPACT OF HYPOTHETICAL CHANGES ON DECISION TO COME TO THE REGION - RAINFOREST

"Beautiful landscape and nature, but missing of Aboriginal heritage"
A CLOSER LOOK AT IMPORTANCE & SATISFACTION
Tourists
Satisfaction with overall experience: 1.02 (n=578)

Rainforest Aboriginal residents
Satisfaction with life overall: 0.69 (n=140)

Non-Indigenous residents
Satisfaction with life overall: 1.24 (n=368)
ARE PEOPLE WILLING TO PAY TO HELP PROTECT THE THINGS THEY CLAIM TO VALUE MOST?
NON-INDIGENOUS RESIDENT WILLINGNESS TO PAY, PER ANNUM...

- To protect native plants & animals from weeds & pests
- To maintain undeveloped scenery & peacefulness
- To improve water quality
- To protect Aboriginal cultural values

Percent of respondents

- $0
- up to $5
- $5 - $10
- $10 - $30
- $30 - $50
- $50 - $100
- $100 - $250
- $250 - $500
- more than $500
To protect native plants & animals from weeds & pests
To maintain undeveloped scenery & peacefullness
To improve water quality
To protect Aboriginal cultural values

WTP $AUS

Indigenous residents  Non-Indigenous residents  Tourists
INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS INCOMES COMPARED

Percent of respondents

Household income per annum

$1-$20,000
$20,000 - $40,000
$40,000 - $60,000
$60,000 - $80,000
$80,000 - $100,000
$100,000 - $150,000
$150,000 - $200,000
>$200,000

Indigenous Residents
Non-Indigenous Residents
Mean WTP by origin – Tourists (controlling for difference in income)

Willingness to pay, per visit (AUD $)

- QLD
- The 'base': Australia (exc. QLD), UK, North America and Asia
- Germany
- Rest of Europe

- Protecting native plants and animals from weeds & pests
- Improving/maintaining undeveloped scenic beauty & peacefulness of the area
- Improving/maintaining quality & clarity of rivers & streams
- Protecting the Aboriginal cultural values of the area
IN SUM

• Grouping of environmental and cultural values suggests symbiotic relationship
• Quality of life/decision to visit depends on multiple things, including, but not limited to:
  • Safety of family & friend/self & travelling companions; culture; environment; economy
• May need to watch the ‘gap’ between importance and satisfaction relating to
  • environment and Indigenous culture; roads, hospitals, schools and safety
• Potentially vulnerable to some types of change, since people in this region are so reliant upon environment for livelihoods and wellbeing.
  • Higher prices viewed less negatively than environmental degradation.
• If we damage the environment, it may ‘bite back’.
  • Likely to also be the case if we degrade or damage culture
  • The ‘average’ resident/tourist is likely to prefer developments that do not substantially degrade the ecosystem services provided by the WTWHA
Changes in the economy affect the environment. These changes feed back and affect people and economy.

Changes in one part of the economy can impact other parts of the economy and/or multiple environments.

Social and environmental values are important to people: deterioration thus has a real impact on the economy and on well-being.
THANK YOU
COMMENTS, IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS
WELCOME 😊

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