

Community report

Cairns (R)

Prepared from Community Explorer topic selections for briefing, planning and reporting use.

AREA

Cairns (R)

COMPARISON

Regional Qld

POPULATION

Persons

GENERATED

1 April 2026

Included sections

1 selected topic will be included in this report.

01 Employment status

Sources and method

- Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2021 and, where available, 2016 comparison data.
- Percentages are calculated from the denominator supplied for each topic. Change (pp) is the 2021 percentage minus the 2016 percentage when the topic is comparable across years.
- Usual residence topics describe where people usually live, rather than where they were counted on Census night.

Employment status

Cairns (R) | Regional Qld comparison | Persons

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Key takeaway

In 2021, Employed was the most common category among residents aged 15 and over in Cairns (R), accounting for 94.3% (79,649 people). This share was lower than Regional Qld (94.8%). Since 2016, the biggest change was in Employed, which increased by 7,244 people and 2 percentage points.

About this topic

Employment status shows whether people aged 15 years and over are employed full-time or part-time, unemployed, or not in the labour force. It is one of the main Census indicators of labour market participation and economic engagement.

This topic is useful for understanding workforce participation, unemployment, and the broader socio-economic profile of an area. Results from 2021 should be read carefully because COVID-19 restrictions increased the number of people who were employed but away from work around Census time.

Interpretation notes

- Labour force status is based on the week before Census night for people aged 15 years and over.

- In 2021, lockdown instructions could shift more people into 'employed, away from work', so over-time comparisons need care.

- The 'away from work' group also includes people who reported having a job but did not state hours worked.

Labour force status

Cairns (R) – Persons aged 15+ (Usual residence)

Category	2021			2016			Change	
	Count	%	Regional Qld %	Count	%	Regional Qld %	Count	pp
Employed	79,649	94.3%	94.8%	72,405	92.3%	92.2%	+7,244	+2.0
Employed full-time	46,588	55.1%	55.0%	45,184	57.6%	56.6%	+1,404	-2.5
Employed part-time	27,791	32.9%	31.8%	23,276	29.7%	30.6%	+4,515	+3.2
Employed, away from work	5,268	6.2%	7.9%	3,950	5.0%	5.1%	+1,318	+1.2
Unemployed (Unemployment rate)	4,853	5.7%	5.2%	6,056	7.7%	7.8%	-1,203	-2.0
Looking for full-time work	2,727	3.2%	2.9%	3,748	4.8%	4.8%	-1,021	-1.6
Looking for part-time work	2,127	2.5%	2.3%	2,307	2.9%	2.9%	-180	-0.4
Total labour force	84,498	100.0%	100.0%	78,467	100.0%	100.0%	+6,031	0.0

Data basis: usual residence.