

# 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

**3 April 2026**

### Included sections

1 selected topic will be included in this report.

**01** Proficiency in English

### 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.

# Proficiency in English

Cairns (R) | Regional Qld comparison | Persons

Community report section 1 of 1

## Key takeaway

In 2021, English only was the most common English–proficiency response among residents in Cairns (R), accounting for 76.8% (128,138 people). This share was lower than Regional Qld (83.7%). Since 2016, the biggest change was in English only, which increased by 6,306 people, while its share fell by 0.8 percentage points.

## About this topic

Proficiency in English records how well people say they speak English, with the question mainly relevant for people who use a language other than English at home. It is a self-assessed measure of spoken English rather than a formal test.

This topic helps identify where interpreting, translated information, and targeted service communication may be needed. It is most informative when read alongside language used at home, birthplace, and year of arrival.

## Interpretation notes

– ABS treats this as a self-assessed indicator of spoken English, not a formal test, so results should be interpreted with care.

– The detailed English–proficiency categories mainly relate to people who use another language at home; people who speak English only are included as a separate category.

## Proficiency in English

Cairns (R) – Total persons (Usual residence)

Category	2021			2016			Change	
	Count	%	Regional Qld %	Count	%	Regional Qld %	Count	pp
Total Speaks English Only	128,138	76.8%	83.7%	121,832	77.6%	84.3%	+6,306	-0.8
Total Speaks Other Language And Speaks English Very Well Or Well	21,544	12.9%	8.1%	17,896	11.4%	7.0%	+3,648	+1.5
Total Speaks Other Language And Speaks English Not Well Or Not At All	3,012	1.8%	1.1%	3,210	2.0%	1.1%	-198	-0.2
Total Not Stated	14,246	8.5%	7.1%	13,963	8.9%	7.6%	+283	-0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>166,943</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>156,901</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>+10,042</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Data basis: usual residence.