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# **Dollar Values and Trends of Major Direct Uses of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park**

**S Driml**

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## **1. MAJOR FINDINGS**

The dollar value of commercial tourism, commercial fishing and recreational fishing and boating dependant on the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, in 1996 was \$912 million.

The increase in real terms of the dollar value from 1991–92 to July 1996 was probably at least 13.5%.

The data base of passenger numbers on commercial tour vessels records around 1.50 million passenger days in 1993–94, 1.43 million in 1994–95 and 1.62 million in 1995–96. The real dollar value of commercial tourism has increased over these years.

Commercial fishing effort, in terms of fishing days, in selected major fisheries has generally increased from 1992 to 1996. The real value of production is relatively constant.

The number of private boats likely to be used for recreational fishing and boating in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park has increased by 16.5% from 1990 to 1995. The real dollar value of this activity has increased over that period.

Day-to-day management funding is less than 1% of the gross financial value of the three direct uses of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

Expenditure on day-to-day management in 1996–97 was only 5.4% higher in real terms than expenditure in 1991–92. This increase did not keep pace with the probable growth in dollar value of reef uses.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

This report presents estimates of the gross financial values of major direct uses of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park: commercial tourism, commercial fishing and recreational fishing and boating. This report was prepared by Sally Driml<sup>1</sup>, Kinhill Economics' Senior Environmental Economist.

Earlier estimates of the dollar values of these uses in 1991–92 were included in the report *Protection for Profit* (Driml 1994). The current estimates are based on actual use in the calendar years 1995 or 1996 or the financial year 1995–96. All dollar values are also reported in June 1996 dollars.

The estimates published previously, and those reported here for 1996, are approximations based on data available from existing sources. In many cases, the data from existing databases are not sufficiently disaggregated, or of proven accuracy, to allow the estimates made to be anything but broad estimates. Some of the data required to make the estimates, in particular price data, are not available from established databases, and so are based on a brief survey to establish current prices. All estimates reported are therefore considered to be 'order of magnitude' only.

Unfortunately there are discontinuities in sources of data used for the estimates made for 1991–92 and the current estimates, for each of the three direct reef uses. This limits the usefulness of direct comparisons between the results for these two time periods.

This report contains a brief explanation of the methodology used to make the estimates, presents trends in use where relevant, and includes estimates of dollar values. In the last section of the report, the estimates are drawn together. Trends in the funding for day-to-day management are compared with trends in dollar values of reef uses.

The dollar values reported here are gross financial values. They are in the form of: expenditure by tourists; expenditure on recreational fishing and boating; and sales from commercial fishing. These are gross estimates because the costs of production are not subtracted. Gross financial values are useful indicators of the level of use and trends. It is this economic activity in the tourist and commercial fishing industry, and the industry servicing recreational boating, that generates flow-on effects of output and employment in the regional economies adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. It is relevant to consider whether funds for management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park are sufficient to maintain the resource which is generating these levels of gross financial value.

Gross financial values do not reflect whether the direct uses are the best use of resources in economic terms, or are ecologically sustainable. Other information, less readily available, is necessary to determine the true economic value of direct uses and indirect uses (such as conservation), and to try to optimise the economic value of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park consistent with ecological sustainability. For further discussion of these concepts, see *Protection for Profit* (Driml 1994).

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### 3. COMMERCIAL TOURISM

Commercial tourism in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park includes tourism on vessels and stays on island resorts. Tourism on aircraft is excluded, perhaps understating tourism values. The gross financial value of commercial tourism is calculated as being made up of expenditure on:

- trips on vessels in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park;
- accommodation on the mainland associated with the trip to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park; and
- holidays on island resorts (excluding on reef trips).

The number of passenger days spent on commercial vessels is collected as part of the administration by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority of the Environmental Management Charge. The first year of full data is 1993–94. There have been no studies to establish the accuracy of the visitor data. The total number of visitor days recorded for 1993–94 to 1995–96 are shown in table 1. Due to uncertainty about the accuracy of the Environmental Management Charge data, it is not certain whether the fall in the number of passenger days indicated for 1994–95 was actual or a result of incomplete data collection. The Environmental Management Charge data does give a consistent order of magnitude estimate of passenger days to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

It is important to note that the figure of 2 million passenger days used in the 1991–92 estimates in *Protection for Profit* (Driml 1994) came from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority estimates at the time. The results from the Environmental Management Charge database, which are likely to be more accurate, suggest that the estimate was too high. This discontinuity in data prevents a direct comparison of values for the two time periods.

**Table 1.** Passenger days from the Environmental Management Charge database

	1993–94	1994–95	1995–96
Number of passenger days	1 505 915	1 434 803	1 620 659

Expenditure on trips on vessels was calculated from the Environmental Management Charge database, supplemented by an internal Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority report on vessel and trip types and points of departure, and by prices collected by the author. The internal Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority report was available for 1996 only. As this information was critical to allocating prices to types of trips, the exercise of estimating expenditure was undertaken for 1995–96 Environmental Management Charge data only. A table with the data used for the estimate is included in attachment 1.

It is assumed that people who make reef trips stay in accommodation on the mainland before and after their trip. It was assumed that two days accommodation is associated with each trip, day or longer, to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The number of trips taken needed to be estimated as this is not reported on the Environmental Management Charge database. The internal Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority report referred to above was used to determine trip duration, but this data item was missing for a large proportion of vessels. A conservative approach was taken by assuming that the average duration of trips was two days, to take into account the likelihood that day trips and also extended fishing charters are included in this ‘unknown’ group.

Where possible, trips were identified as departing from points in one of the four statistical divisions on the mainland adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Data from the Queensland Visitor Survey (Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation 1996) were used to

provide information on expenditure on mainland accommodation. These data were available for the four statistical divisions. Where it was not known from which statistical division a trip departed, an average of expenditure in the four statistical divisions was used. See attachment 1 for the data used.

There are two potential sources of data for visitor nights spent on Great Barrier Reef island resorts and expenditure by resort visitors. Both the Australian Bureau of Statistics (Australian Bureau of Statistics, various years) and Queensland Visitor Survey (Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation, various years) report visitor-nights. The Queensland Visitor Survey (QVS) data collection method changed in 1993–94 and so data reported in earlier years is said to be not directly comparable. Both sets of data are shown in table 2. It is evident that a decline in visitor nights is recorded for 1995–96 but the size of the decline is much greater in the Queensland Visitor Survey data. There is no apparent explanation for this difference in results.

**Table 2.** Visitor nights, Great Barrier Reef resorts

	Australian Bureau of Statistics	QVS
1990–91	763 752	
1991–92	852 958	1 041 000*
1992–93	961 234	
1993–94	1 190 310	
1994–95	1 353 920	1 183 000
1995–96	1 238 282	662 000

\* Data for 1991 calendar year, used in *Protection for Profit* (Driml 1994)

Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics, various years; Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation, various years

While the Australian Bureau of Statistics reports takings from accommodation, the Queensland Visitor Survey records all expenditure by visitors, and so is likely to be a better measure of expenditure. Average expenditure per visitor day reported in the Queensland Visitor Survey for 1995–96 was \$212.50. Excluding expenditure on transport and fares (to avoid double counting of expenditure on reef trips), the average expenditure was \$194.32. Using the Queensland Visitor Survey visitor-night estimate, the total expenditure is estimated at \$128 640 000. If the Australian Bureau of Statistics visitor-night figure is used the expenditure estimate becomes \$240 623 000. The higher figure is adopted in this report as the Australian Bureau of Statistics data seems more consistent.

The figure derived for 1995–96 cannot be directly compared with that reported for 1991–92 in *Protection for Profit* (Driml 1994) because there is a discontinuity in the Queensland Visitor Survey data set.

Expenditure on the three items making up commercial tourism, and total expenditure for 1995–96, and converted to June 1996 dollars is shown in table 3.

**Table 3.** Gross financial value of commercial tourism

Expenditure on:	1995–96 data (\$)	June 1996 dollars (\$)
Reef trips	165 585 000	167 402 000
Mainland accommodation	233 743 000	236 307 000
Island resorts	240 623 000	243 263 000
<b>Total</b>	<b>639 951 000</b>	<b>646 972 000</b>

#### 4. COMMERCIAL FISHING

Information on the effort and catch of commercial fisheries operating in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is recorded in the Log Book program run by the Queensland Fisheries Management Authority. However, information for selected major commercial species of fish and prawns only was made available for this study, so total effort and catch data was not examined. This information is not published here due to confidentiality of the Log Book data.

The Log Book data show that effort, in terms of days fishing has increased from 1992 to 1996 in the selected fisheries examined; reef line, barramundi net, king prawn and tiger prawn.

The Queensland Fisheries Management Authority report that the annual catches of prawns in the entire Queensland East Coast trawl fishery has varied between 5800 tonnes and 7200 tonnes in the years 1988–1995 (Queensland Fisheries Management Authority 1996). Variability in prawn catches in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is evident across years and amongst species when catches in 1991–92 (reported in *Protection for Profit* (Driml 1994)) are compared with those of 1996 (Log Book data). The total volume of king prawn plus tiger prawn catch in 1996 was 1.6 times that of 1991–92. Similarly, fish catches vary for these years, with catches increasing for some species and decreasing for others. Overall, the volume of fish caught, for four major species only, in 1996 was 1.2 times the catch in 1991–92. Data from the Log Books was examined for major species of fish and prawns only, so the total volume of catch in 1991–92 and 1996 was not ascertained. Catches over the intervening years were not obtained from the Log Book data, so trends are not known.

The gross economic value of commercial fishing depends not only on volume of catch but also on price. Price data used in compiling *Protection for Profit* (Driml 1994) were compared with average price data for 1996, provided by the Queensland Department of Primary Industries. Average prices have remained relatively steady in nominal terms, meaning a decrease in real terms. Therefore, while catch in 1996 was higher in volume terms, it may not have increased as much in value terms.

In the absence of better information, a conservative approach is to estimate that the value of the commercial fishery in 1996 is similar to that in 1991–92, as reported in *Protection for Profit* (Driml 1994). The figure of \$128 million reported for 1991–92 is inflated to a June 1996 equivalent (showing no increase in real terms) for use in the rest of this report, but must be considered to be a conservative estimate only (see table 4).

**Table 4.** Gross financial value of commercial fishing

Sales of product	1991/92 data (\$)	June 1996 dollars (\$)
Commercial fishing	128 000 000	143 000 000



## 5. RECREATIONAL FISHING AND BOATING

The major source of data on the potential for recreational fishing and boating in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is the registrations of private motor boats in regions adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Data on the number of boats registered, by length class and district are reported annually by the Department of Transport. Unfortunately, the registrations reported for 1996 are classified by a different geographical area and it has not been possible to compare these directly with data for previous years. For this reason, 1996 data has not been included here.

Information on the actual number of vessels used to visit the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the number of trips per year has been sought on a number of occasions via surveys of vessel owners. The most recent comprehensive study was by Blamey and Hundloe (1993) and that study also collected information on expenditure.

The findings of Blamey and Hundloe were that around two thirds (63%) of registered private boats were used for recreational fishing in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. It is not reported how many other boats might be used for boating without fishing. The figure of 63% is used here, but might be an underestimate of total recreational fishing and boating use.

The number of boats registered for the years 1990–1995 are shown in table 5 and illustrated in figure 1.

**Table 5.** Recreational fishing and boating, numbers of boats and expenditure

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Number of boats registered adjacent to the Marine Park*	38 308	39 285	40 258	41 725	43 458	44 955
Number of boats used in the Marine Park (63%)**	24 300	24 750	25 363	26 287	27 379	28 322
Annual expenditure in current year (\$)	3700**	3826	3873	3945	4014	4195
Total expenditure in current year (\$)	89 910 000	94 702 000	98 238 000	103 714 000	109 901 000	118 798 000
Total expenditure in June 1996 (\$)	105 085 000	107 031 000	109 682 000	113 678 000	118 400 000	122 478 000

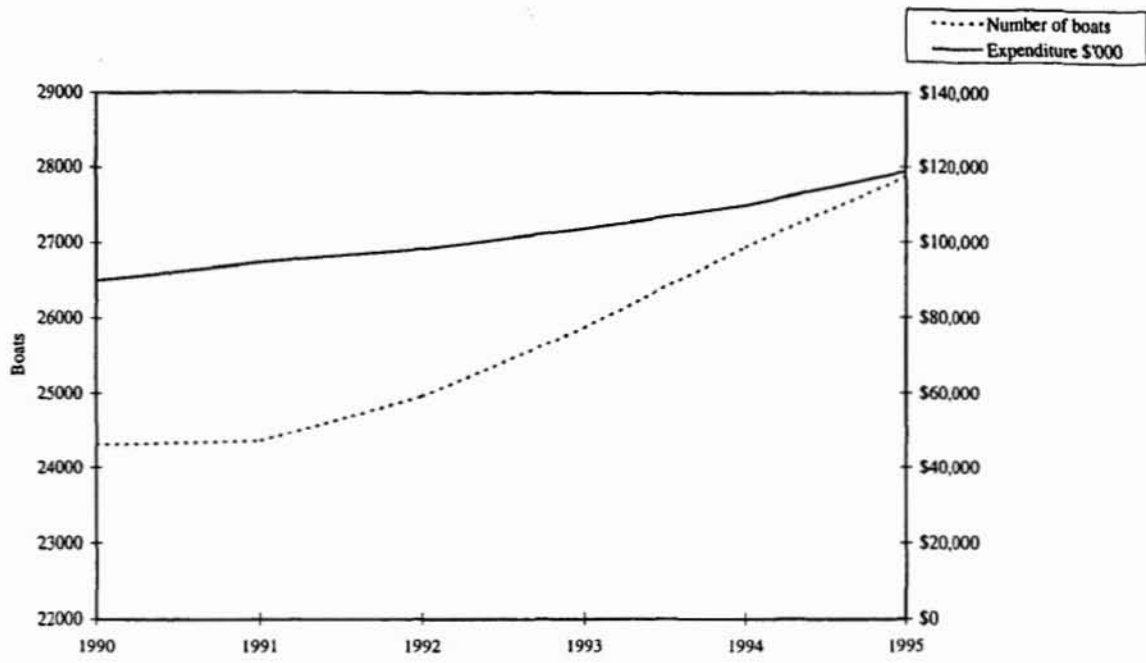
\* Department of Transport, various years

\*\* Blamey and Hundloe 1993

Blamey and Hundloe reported that in 1990, the average expenditure per year on recreational fishing and boating was \$3700 including boat and trip costs. This expenditure has been inflated to current year dollars for each year from 1991 to 1995 using the Consumer Price Index. Expenditure in each year is shown in current year dollars in table 5 and figure 1. Also shown in table 5 is expenditure in June 1996 dollars. There is a real increase in expenditure over the period. The results for 1995–96 and in June 1996 dollars are highlighted in table 6.

**Table 6.** Gross financial value of recreational fishing and boating

Expenditure on:	1995 data (\$)	June 1996 (\$)
Recreational fishing and boating	118 798 000	122 478 000



**Figure 1.** Recreational fishing and boating

## 6. COMBINED VALUE

The combined value of the three direct uses is shown on table 7 below, at a total gross financial value of \$912 million.

**Table 7.** Gross financial value of the three direct uses of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>June 1996 (\$)</b>
Commercial tourism	646 972 000
Commercial fishing	143 000 000
Recreational fishing and boating	122 478 000
<b>Total</b>	<b>912 450 000</b>

## 7. COMPARISON BETWEEN 1991-92 AND 1996

The result reported in *Protection for Profit* (Driml 1994) for 1991-92 for these three direct uses was \$904 million. Inflated to June 1996 dollars, this value is \$1,006 million, see table 8.

The observations made on trends in value from 1991-92 to 1996 are as follows:

- The value of commercial fishing has remained the same in real terms.
- Effort in recreational fishing and boating, as indicated by boats registered, has increased and the dollar value has increased in real terms.
- Commercial tourism passenger days have increased since 1993-94.

The reason for the seeming decrease in real terms of the dollar value of reef use is that the commercial tourism estimate of 2 million passenger days in 1991-92 was probably too high.

It is relevant to make a comparison based on a smaller number of passenger days on commercial vessels. A figure of 1.4 million passenger days is used, and actual use may have been less. If passenger days were around 1.4 million in 1991-92, on a pro rata basis, the result for 1991-92 would be \$723 million, which is \$803 million in June 1996 dollars, see table 8.

When the figure of \$803 million is compared with \$912 million, the real increase in value is around 13.5%. This is a realistic estimate of the increase in gross financial value of the three uses over this period.

**Table 8.** Estimate of dollar values for 1991-92

	<i>Protection for Profit</i> 2 million passenger days in 1991-92		Estimate 1.4 million passenger days in 1991-92	
	1991-92 (\$m)	June 1996 (\$m)	1991-92 (\$m)	June 1996 (\$m)
Commercial tourism	682	759	501	557
Commercial fishing	128	143	128	142
Recreational fishing & boating	94	104	94	104
<b>Total</b>	<b>904</b>	<b>1006</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>803</b>

## 8. DAY-TO-DAY MANAGEMENT FUNDING

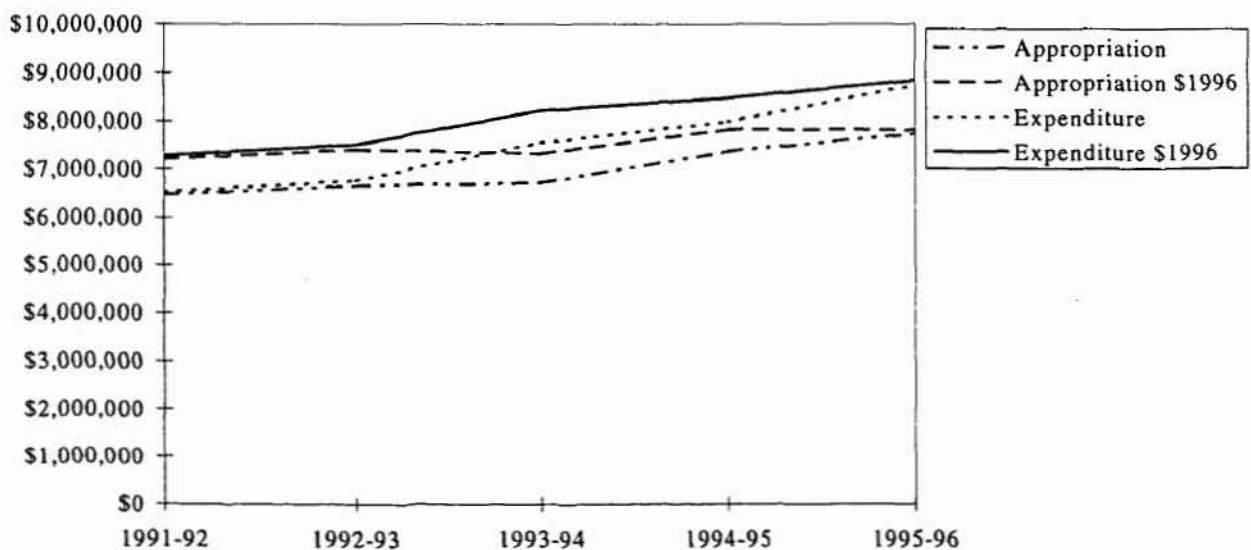
Day-to-day management funding is required to maintain the resource base which produces the gross financial values reported here, and importantly the true economic values, of all direct and indirect uses.

The allocation for day-to-day management funding is a small proportion of the gross financial value, for example, in 1996–97, appropriation was \$7 890 000 and actual expenditure was \$7 672 675, both of which were less than 1 per cent of the gross financial value of \$912 million.

Appropriation and actual expenditure for day-to-day management is shown on table 9 and illustrated in figure 2. The gap between appropriation and expenditure is made up by cash carried forward. The increase in real terms of expenditure in 1996–97 over 1991–92 was 5.4%, though expenditure has been higher in some intervening years than in 1996–97. The increase in budget appropriations was 9.4%. If the increase in the value of reef uses in real terms was about 13.5% as indicated above, expenditure and appropriations did not keep pace with this increase.

**Table 9.** Day-to-day management funding 1991–92 to 1995–96

	Appropriation (\$)	Appropriation (\$ 1996)	Expenditure (\$)	Expenditure (\$ 1996)
1991–92	6 475 114	7 209 311	6 539 337	7 280 786
1992–92	6 667 000	7 404 285	6 765 440	7 511 582
1993–94	6 727 000	7 326 315	7 550 830	8 223 540
1994–95	7 374 000	7 831 606	7 986 972	8 482 617
1995–96	7 732 000	7 816 824	8 749 426	8 845 411
1996–97	7 890 000	7 890 000	7 672 675	7 672 675
Increase in real terms 1991–92 to 1996–97		9.4%		5.4%



**Figure 2.** Day-to-day management

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**ATTACHMENT 1**

<i>1995-96 passenger days</i>											
<i>Trip types and regions</i>	<i>Passenger days</i>	<i>Fares per day (\$)</i>	<i>Total fares (\$)</i>	<i>Days per trip</i>	<i>Number of trips</i>	<i>Accom. days/trip</i>	<i>Accom. days</i>	<i>\$ per accom. day</i>	<i>Adjust for VFR (\$)</i>	<i>Accom. Expenditure (\$)</i>	<i>Accom. Expenditure (\$)</i>
Bareboats Whitsundays	46 653	90	4 198 770	7	6665	1	6665	119	79	524 194	524 194
Weekly cruise	15 765	220	3 468 300	4	3941	2	7883	124	82	645 104	645 104
Weekly fishing	1027	100	102 700	5	205	1	205	124	82	16 810	16 810
Twice weekly	34 529	200	6 905 800	3	11 510	2	23 019	124	82	1 883 902	1 883 902
Daily dive	77 956	120	9 354 720	1	77 956	2	155 912	124	82	12 759 838	12 759 838
Daily cruise	69 141	70	4 839 870	1	69 141	2	138 282	124	82	11 316 999	11 316 999
Capricorn 100+pax day trips	27 138	120	3 256 560	1	27 138	2	54 276	100	66	3 577 559	3 577 559
Mackay/Whitsundays 100+pax day trips	137 579	120	16 509 480	1	137 579	2	275 158	119	79	21 641 782	21 641 782
Townsville 100+ pax day trips	59 705	120	7 164 600	1	59 705	2	119 410	111	73	8 742 460	8 742 460
Cairns 100+pax day trips	574 127	120	68 895 240	1	574 127	2	1 148 254	166	109	125 499 569	125 499 569
Cruise ship	1983	320	634 560	3	661	1	661	166	110	72 419	72 419
unknown	575 056	70	40 253 920	2	287 528	2	575 056	124	82	47 062 583	47 062 583
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1 620 659</b>		<b>165 584 520</b>								<b>233 743 220</b>

**Assume 1 400 000 passenger days, 1991-92**

<i>Assume 1 400 000 passenger days, 1991-92</i>											
<i>Trip types and regions</i>	<i>Passenger days</i>	<i>Fares per day (\$)</i>	<i>Total fares (\$)</i>	<i>Days per trip</i>	<i>Number of trips</i>	<i>Accom. days/trip</i>	<i>Accom. days</i>	<i>\$ per accom. day</i>	<i>Adjust for VFR (\$)</i>	<i>Accom. Expenditure (\$)</i>	<i>Accom. Expenditure (\$)</i>
Bareboats Whitsundays	40 308	90	3 627 737	7	5758	1	5758	119	\$79	452 904	452 904
Weekly cruise	13 621	220	2 996 611	4	3405	2	6810	124	\$82	557 370	557 370
Weekly fishing	887	100	88 733	5	177	1	177	124	\$82	14 524	14 524
Twice weekly	29 833	200	5 966 611	3	9944	2	19 889	124	\$82	1 627 692	1 627 692
Daily dive	67 354	120	8 082 478	1	67 354	2	134 708	124	\$82	11 024 500	11 024 500
Daily cruise	59 738	70	4 181 648	1	59 738	2	119 476	124	\$82	9 777 887	9 777 887
Capricorn 100+pax day trips	23 447	120	2 813 668	1	23 447	2	46 894	100	\$66	3 091 011	3 091 011
Mackay/ Whitsundays 100+pax day trips	118 868	120	14 264 191	1	118 868	2	237 737	119	\$79	18 698 500	18 698 500
Townsville 100+ pax day trips	51 585	120	6 190 214	1	51 585	2	103 170	111	\$73	7 553 485	7 553 485
Cairns 100+pax day trips	496 046	120	59 525 487	1	496 046	2	992 091	166	\$109	108 431 628	108 431 628
Cruise ship	1713	320	548 260	3	571	1	571	166	\$110	62 570	62 570
unknown	496 848	70	34 779 387	2	248 424	2	496 848.3	124	\$82	40 662 072	40 662 072
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1 400 249</b>		<b>\$143 065 025</b>								<b>201 954 142</b>
			<i>Convert to</i>								<i>Convert to</i>
			\$91-92								\$91-92
			0.908016878								0.908016878
			<b>129 905 458</b>								<b>183 377 769</b>