



Understanding the Connector Market: How does Mackay fit with Connectors' ideal domestic holiday?

Research conducted via focus groups and an online survey with Connectors within 400km of Mackay plus a boost sample of Brisbane Connectors. For further information please contact: Research@tq.com.au

The Overlap between Connectors' holiday needs and wants and what they perceive Mackay offers:

Activities and attractions preferred by Connectors on their ideal holiday include: shopping, beaches, going on daytrips and sightseeing. Most Connectors envisage that these activities and attractions are currently available in Mackay.

Holiday experiences sought by Connectors tend to incorporate: getting there easily, safety and accessing natural water. Typically, Connectors believe that Mackay is a place where you can have these holiday experiences.

Core drivers behind Connectors' ideal holiday are the to rest and relax. Connectors regularly describe relaxing as an absence of everyday responsibilities and routine; something they think could be experienced in Mackay.

The Gap between Connectors' holiday needs and wants and what they perceive Mackay offers:

Other activities and attractions sought by Connectors include: zoos, wildlife parks, rainforest, festivals and activities for children. Currently Connectors do not strongly associate these experiences with Mackay.

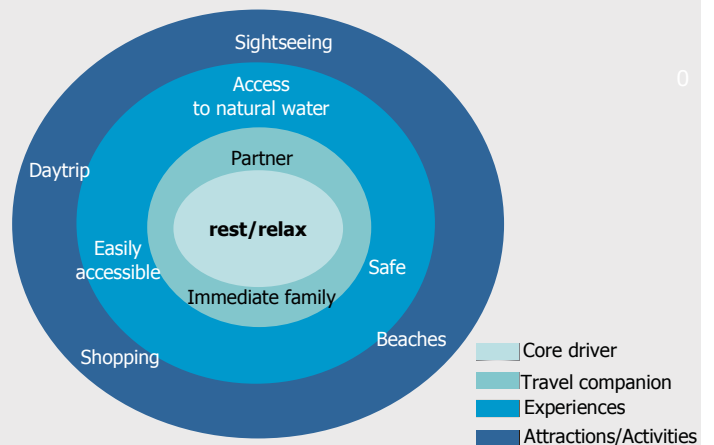
Other holiday experiences Connectors seek include: great natural attractions, a great holiday atmosphere, to escape the crowds, something for children and value for money (it is noteworthy that Connectors often associate value with an ability to exceed their expectations, opposed to just the dollar value). These experiences are not currently strongly associated with Mackay.

Other core drivers sought by Connectors include to: leave the cares of the world behind, new experiences, fun, unwind and de-stress. Having fun is defined by Connectors as 'doing something different to the norm'. These needs are not strongly linked with Mackay.

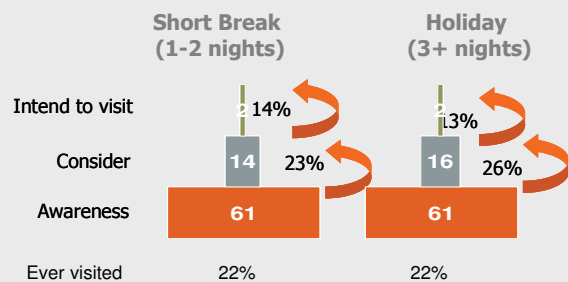
Current synopsis

Three in five Connectors are aware of Mackay as a holiday or short break destination. When asked what towns and attractions make up Mackay, Connectors are more familiar with Mackay City and Eungella National Park than the other towns and attractions in Mackay.

This diagram summarises how Connectors' ideal holiday needs and wants overlap with what they perceive Mackay offers. Highlighting these attributes can help motivate Connectors to "consider" or "intend" to take a trip to Mackay



Conversion of the model below is key to increasing visitation by Connectors to Mackay. This involves motivating Connectors who are aware of Mackay to "consider" or "intend" to take a trip there. To assist with this endeavour the research has focussed on how Mackay fits with Connector's ideal holiday.



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Considerations for the future...

Mackay is not on Connectors holiday destination 'short list' as it is not currently seen as a holiday destination due to its strong association with industry. Awareness and knowledge of Mackay is low. Further, it is not perceived as having a holiday 'ambience', for having fun, new experiences or as meeting all core holiday needs (e.g. a place to relax, unwind and leave the cares of the world behind). Connectors who have visited the region, tended to be on a stop-off on their way somewhere else, passing through as part of a touring holiday, or visiting their friends and/or relatives.

Changes to infrastructure and atmosphere are required to reshape Connectors perceptions of Mackay and make it more appealing as a holiday destination. Specifically:

- Accommodation availability could be improved (e.g. vacancy rates and options outside of Mackay City)
- Better signage to link/direct Connectors to the different activities/attractions within the region; and a more welcoming atmosphere and friendly customer service, to cater to holidaymakers. Currently it is seen as catering more to industry/business than to holidaymakers. In this regard, distinguishing Mackay City from Mackay region would also assist this.

Eungella National Park is the key drawcard for the region. However, there is little infrastructure in place to support it. Other little know drawcards for the region include, Finch Hatton Gorge, Cape Hillsborough National Park, Broken River, Pioneer Valley and Reeforest Adventure.

Leverage the diversity of natural attractions in the region. Linking the breadth of natural landscapes, national parks and attractions into key experiences (e.g. natural encounters) will help build Mackay as a place to have fun and new experiences. Promoting key experiences (daytrips) surrounding Mackay City can give Connectors reasons to return. The experiences and attractions that appeal to perspective visitors are the same that appeal to repeat visitors, so they can be promoted to both.

Connectors associate Mackay with being easy to access and having diverse natural attractions. Capitalise on this to encourage repeat visitation and short breaks.

Build consideration for longer trips to the region through repeat visitation. Connectors who have already visited the region tend to find it more appealing and therefore are more open to longer holidays in the region. Such a focus will help Mackay to deliver on other core Connector needs (i.e. Connectors feel it takes more than a short break to leave the cares of the world behind and de-stress).

Reinforce in communications where Mackay matches Connector's ideal holiday

