



# Western Downs Region Visitor Profile and Satisfaction Report: Summary of results

The following Visitor Profile and Satisfaction Report is based on a sample of 421 people who visited the Western Downs region in Queensland during July and August 2008.

## What was the visitor's profile?

For the purposes of this study, visitors to the Western Downs region were split into Mature nomads and Other travellers. Mature nomads were defined as visitors who were:

- over 45 years
- away from home for more than 14 days
- travelling in their own/a private vehicle

Over half (55%) of the visitors to the region were Mature nomads. Visitors from this group were predominantly from New South Wales or Victoria, and most were on a long haul driving holiday. Consequently, the Western Downs region was not their main destination.

Visitors who did not fit into this definition were classified as Other travellers. This group consisted of a broader mix of people in terms of age and main destination. However, they were generally repeat visitors from Queensland, who were travelling with family, friends or relatives.

- The majority of visitors were travelling to other locations; only 10% of Mature nomads and 34% of Other travellers cited the Western Downs region as their main holiday destination.
- Overall, the main reason for travelling to the Western Downs region was for a holiday (83%), followed by visiting friends or relatives (10%).
- For those staying for at least one night in the region, the largest proportion of expenditure was on fuel (33%), followed by accommodation (22%) and groceries (14%). While in the Western Downs, overnight visitors spent an average of \$307 in total or \$78 per day.

## Why choose the Western Downs?

The top two reasons for visiting the Western Downs region were:

- An authentic, rural, country experience (38%)
- A convenient stop over point (36%)

Reflective of the Mature nomad travel style, when asked what reason was most important in choosing the Western Downs region, the following responses were most commonly cited: it was a convenient stopover (18%); to visit a specific attraction (14%); it is an important part of a Queensland/Australian touring holiday (12%); and it is a great place for an authentic, rural, country experience (12%).

## What did visitors to the destination expect?

Visitors to Western Downs expected:

- to be able to tour around and explore (76%)
- to learn about the history of the towns (71%)
- to relax and rejuvenate (67%)
- a chance to discover or learn something new (65%)
- scenic drives (64%)

Significantly more visitors from Queensland (66%) expected a country experience than visitors from Victoria (49%) and New South Wales (48%).

The expectations of visitors from Queensland were seemingly more aligned with the reality of the Western Downs region than those from other States/Territories. This is possibly due to the fact they were: more likely to have visited the Western Downs previously; stated the Western Downs region was their main destination; and lived within relatively close proximity to the Western Downs region.

Two thirds (64%) of visitors expected an Australian outback experience and over half (57%) expected an authentic, rural, country experience. In total, half (50%) of all visitors expected both experiences, therefore there may be confusion over the difference between a country and an outback experience, or about the experiences on offer in the Western Downs region.

## What were visitors experiencing in the Western Downs region?

- General sightseeing (80%)
- Visit historical sites (64%)
- Eat out (55%)
- Go shopping (52%)
- Visit museums or art galleries (50%)

Mature nomads were more likely than Other travellers to:

- Go general sightseeing (85% vs 73%)
- Visit historical sites (69% vs 57%)
- Go shopping (61% vs 42%)
- Visit museums or art galleries (55% vs 44%)
- Visit botanical gardens (38% vs 26%)
- Go to the markets (28% vs 18%)
- Go bird watching (21% vs 10%)
- Go on a designated tourist drive (21% vs 10%)
- Go fishing (20% vs 9%)

## Were they satisfied with their experience?

Overall, 88% of visitors were satisfied with their visit to the Western Downs region; 41% were very satisfied with their visit. Actual experiences which rated 'somewhat better than expected' or 'much better than expected' included:

- Learn about the history of the towns (59%)
- Friendly local characters with interesting stories (58%)
- Experience our nation's/Australia's history (57%)
- Chance to discover or learn something new (56%)
- An adventure (55%)
- An authentic, rural, country experience (54%)
- Australian outback experience (53%)
- Food and wine experiences (53%)

Although visitors to Western Downs expected to tour around and explore, less than half (49%) thought the actual experience was somewhat better or much better than expected.

The following aspects of the Western Downs were the region's key strengths: friendliness of the locals; local atmosphere; personal safety/security; public toilets; variety to see and do; natural environment; and signage. Visitors rated these aspects as important and indicated they were satisfied with their experience.

In contrast, driver rest areas and the roads contributed to dissatisfaction with the region.

## How did the visitors travel in and around the Western Downs region?

- When in the region, Mature nomads were inclined to visit smaller towns and travel across the region, which correlates with their expectation to tour around and explore (81%). Nearly three quarters (74%) of visitors travelled to Roma, 50% to St George, 48% to Miles and 44% to Goondiwindi.
- Other travellers had a tendency to stay on the Warrego Highway, with 65% travelling to Roma, 58% to Miles and 55% to Chinchilla.
- Reflective of their respective origins, Mature nomads were more likely to travel through the region from South to North (31%), while Other travellers generally entered from the East (41%).

## Where did they stay in the region?

- For most visitors, the Western Downs region was a small part of a much longer journey with an average of 5.6 nights spent in the region out of a total 44.9 nights away from home. This was especially so for Mature nomads who spent 7.1 nights in the region of their total 63.1 nights away from home.
- The most popular places to stop overnight were Roma, Goondiwindi and St George, with approximately two thirds of visitors to these towns opting to stay for at least one night.

## How did the visitors decide to visit?

- The majority of visitors (71%) did not consider an alternate destination when planning their trip to the Western Downs region.
- Of those visitors who did consider an alternative destination, the most popular choices were the Queensland coast (7%), Far North Queensland (5%), Outback Queensland (5%), and New South Wales (5%).
- Of all visitors, 61% had travelled to the Western Downs region before.

- Of all visitors, 21% made the decision to visit the Western Downs region one to three months before the trip, 15% decided three to six months before the trip, and 18% decided six to twelve months before the trip.
- Of those visitors whose main destination was somewhere other than the Western Downs region, 17% made their decision to visit while on the road.
- Just under half (47%) of visitors used a travel guide/brochure to help plan their trip, while 35% used their own knowledge from prior trips, and 31% used the internet.
- Over two thirds (67%) of Mature nomads and 40% of Other travellers did not make any bookings prior to their trip to the Western Downs region. Of those who did, 16% of Mature nomads and 29% of Other travellers made a booking with an accommodation provider.

### Will they visit again?

- Of all visitors to the Western Downs region, 45% indicated they were likely to revisit within the next twelve months, while 45% indicated they were likely to revisit within the next three years.
- The majority of visitors (83%) were likely to recommend the Western Downs region to others as a destination to visit.

For a copy of the full Visitor Profile and Satisfaction Report, please email [tra@tourism.australia.com](mailto:tra@tourism.australia.com)

Tourism Research Australia  
Level 3 11-17 Swanson Plaza  
PO Box 1110  
Belconnen ACT 2617

Telephone: + 61 2 6228 6100  
Facsimile: + 61 2 6228 6180  
Email: [tra@tourism.australia.com](mailto:tra@tourism.australia.com)

Image courtesy of Toowoomba and Golden West Tourism

Publication date: December 2008

ABN 99 657 548 712

[www.tra.australia.com](http://www.tra.australia.com)

© Copyright Tourism Australia 2008. Tourism Australia and Tourism Research Australia permits copies to be made of this Research data for the purpose of promoting Australian tourism, provided that Tourism Research Australia is recognised on any copies as the author, and the material is reproduced in its current form. However, copies may not be made for a commercial purpose, that is, for sale without the permission of Tourism Research Australia. This information is presented in good faith and on the basis that neither Tourism Australia or Tourism Research Australia, nor their agents or employees, are liable (whether by reason of error, omission, negligence, lack of care or otherwise) to any person for any damage or loss whatsoever which has occurred or may occur in relation to that person taking or not taking (as the case may be) action in respect of any statement, information or advice given in this publication. Data derived from Tourism Research Australia surveys are subject to sample error. Users of the data are advised to consult the sample error tables contained in Tourism Research Australia publications or otherwise available from Tourism Research Australia before drawing any conclusions or inferences, or taking any action, based on the data.

**Tourism Australia**  
Tourism Research Australia 