

ANTICIPATING FUTURE SKILLS

Cairns Region

Health care and social assistance is projected to be the fastest-growing and largest-employing industry in Cairns by 2027-28. The retail trade and accommodation and food services industries continue to be major employers, employing one in five workers in the region.

By 2027-28, it is projected* that there will be:

149,082 people employed in this region
+6,368 additional workers since 2023-24



Cairns is projected to experience the tenth-fastest increase in employment in Queensland. It is projected to comprise 4.9% of the state's workforce.

Region	Growth (%) between 2023-24 and 2027-28	People employed in 2027-28
Sunshine Coast	7.3%	216,818
Logan - Beaudesert	6.6%	151,192
Moreton Bay - North	6.4%	95,923
Gold Coast	6.2%	376,740
Brisbane	6.1%	1,074,452
Ipswich	5.9%	170,959
Moreton Bay - South	5.5%	80,034
Toowoomba	4.7%	86,785
Townsville	4.6%	137,989
Cairns	4.5%	149,082
Central Queensland	3.8%	135,361
Wide Bay	3.5%	137,460
Mackay - Isaac - Whitsunday	3.4%	119,334
Far North	1.1%	14,268
Outback - North	0.2%	24,998
Darling Downs - Maranoa	-0.7%	68,429
Outback - South	-2.4%	10,093

* Projections are based on the 2024-25 State Budget and are not directly comparable to subsequent Budget Update forecasts for aggregate employment growth. As these projections are high level, indicative and subject to change, it is recommended that the focus be on employment trends rather than the numbers in isolation. The regions used in this project are based on Statistical Area Level (SA4) regions, as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. There are 19 SA4s in Queensland; the five Brisbane SA4s have been combined in this report to take into account the larger natural labour market. Queensland - Outback SA4 has been disaggregated into its SA3 components. Data is based on Place of Work.

By 2027-28, it is projected that the Cairns workforce will be employed within:

Industry	People employed	% of regional workforce	% change since 2023-24	Largest occupational groupings
 Health care and social assistance	30,369	20.4	↑12.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered Nurses Aged and Disabled Carers Child Carers Receptionists
 Retail trade	16,053	10.8	↑0.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sales Assistants (General) Retail Managers Checkout Operators and Office Cashiers Shelf Fillers
 Construction	13,468	9.0	↓0.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electricians Carpenters and Joiners Construction Managers Plumbers
 Accommodation and food services	13,340	8.9	↑2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bar Attendants and Baristas Waiters Kitchenhands Chefs
 Education and training	12,752	8.6	↑3.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary School Teachers Secondary School Teachers Education Aides Child Carers
 Public administration and safety	10,570	7.1	↑4.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Clerks Police Contract, Program and Project Administrators Inspectors and Regulatory Officers
 Transport, postal and warehousing	10,074	6.8	↑6.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Truck Drivers Storepersons Automobile Drivers Delivery Drivers
 Professional, scientific and technical services	9,417	6.3	↑8.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solicitors Accountants Civil Engineering Professionals Software and Applications Programmers
 Administrative and support services	7,024	4.7	↑7.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Cleaners Domestic Cleaners Human Resource Professionals Gardeners
 Manufacturing	5,807	3.9	↑0.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structural Steel and Welding Trades Workers Metal Fitters and Machinists Production Managers Food and Drink Factory Workers
 Other services	5,207	3.5	↑0.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motor Mechanics Hairdressers Beauty Therapists Metal Fitters and Machinists
 Agriculture, forestry and fishing	3,417	2.3	↓7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crop Farmers Crop Farm Workers Livestock Farmers Garden and Nursery Labourers
 Wholesale trade	2,846	1.9	↑3.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Storepersons Advertising, Public Relations and Sales Managers Importers, Exporters and Wholesalers Sales Assistants (General)
 Rental, hiring and real estate services	2,340	1.6	↑3.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Real Estate Sales Agents Other Hospitality, Retail and Service Managers Land Economists and Valuers General Clerks
 Arts and recreation services	1,752	1.2	↓0.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual Arts and Crafts Professionals Music Professionals Sports Coaches, Instructors and Officials Gaming Workers
 Electricity, gas, water and waste services	1,455	1.0	0.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electrical Distribution Trades Workers Truck Drivers Electricians Electrical Engineers
 Mining	1,126	0.8	↑1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drillers, Miners and Shot Firers Metal Fitters and Machinists Other Building and Engineering Technicians Truck Drivers
 Financial and insurance services	1,114	0.7	↓9.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Brokers Bank Workers Financial Investment Advisers and Managers Credit and Loans Officers
 Information media and telecommunications	949	0.6	↓2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Film, Television, Radio and Stage Directors Telecommunications Trades Workers Journalists and Other Writers Library Assistants

