



Summary

Hawker/Quorn economic and social report

Overview

This factsheet provides a summary of independent socio-economic research conducted by the University of Queensland to inform the development of the proposed National Radioactive Waste Management Facility.

and interviews with people from the potential host communities, the research focused on:

- providing social and economic information about the towns to identify current trends;
- identifying existing local community strengths and values and how these can be protected and enhanced;
- identifying the preferred and socially acceptable strategies to harness expected opportunities or to avoid and mitigate negative impacts; and
- establishing a social and economic monitoring framework (including locally meaningful indicators) to track changes over time.

Introduction

The objective of the research was to conduct a socio-economic baseline assessment that captured locally relevant and meaningful measures of benefit and impact. Drawing on government data sources



This document is part of a series of factsheets providing information on the process to site the National Radioactive Waste Management Facility.

For more information

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Socio-economic factors

Population

Quorn

The populations of Quorn and the Flinders Ranges have fallen by 2 per cent and 5 per cent respectively, in contrast with South Australia's population which grew 13 per cent over the same period (2006 to 2016). The demographic profile shows signs of an ageing population, with 33 per cent of the population aged 60 and above.

Hawker

Hawker's population has declined 31 per cent over the past 5 years. It has an ageing population, with 29 per cent of population aged over 60. Like many rural towns, Hawker has a youth deficit, with persons aged 15-19 making up only 2 per cent of the total population. Young people are said to move away for higher education and job opportunities.

Safety and well-being

Quorn

The total number of reported crimes has increased by 67 per cent over the past 5 years in Quorn. A significant increase of 135 per cent was recorded in 2016/17, with theft up 150 per cent and assaults up 43 per cent.

Hawker

In Hawker, the total number of reported offences since 2013/14 has declined and has remained that way in 2017/18, down 38 per cent.

Education

Quorn

The number of residents who have completed post-high school qualifications has increased significantly since 2006. At present, 14 per cent of the Quorn population have a diploma, bachelor's degree or postgraduate qualification and 17 per cent have completed a certificate III or IV through formal education programs.

Hawker

Most of Hawker's population, 79 per cent, do not have a formal education level higher than that obtained at high school. Presently, 10 per cent of the Hawker population have a diploma, bachelor's degree or postgraduate level qualification and 11 per cent of residents have completed a certificate III or IV through formal education programs.

Employment

Quorn

Quorn's population has remained relatively stable for the working age group (between 25-59 years of age). The unemployment rate in Quorn is currently 7.2 per cent, which is above the rate for the whole of South Australia, around 6 per cent. This unemployment rate has increased 1.4 per cent over the past five years.

Hawker

The level of unemployment in Hawker reached 6.4 per cent in 2016. The size of the labour force has also decreased, down 44 per cent from 2011 levels.

Income and business

Quorn

Personal income has experienced steady growth in recent years, with the Quorn average personal income sitting at \$52,838 in 2016, higher than the state average \$50,149.

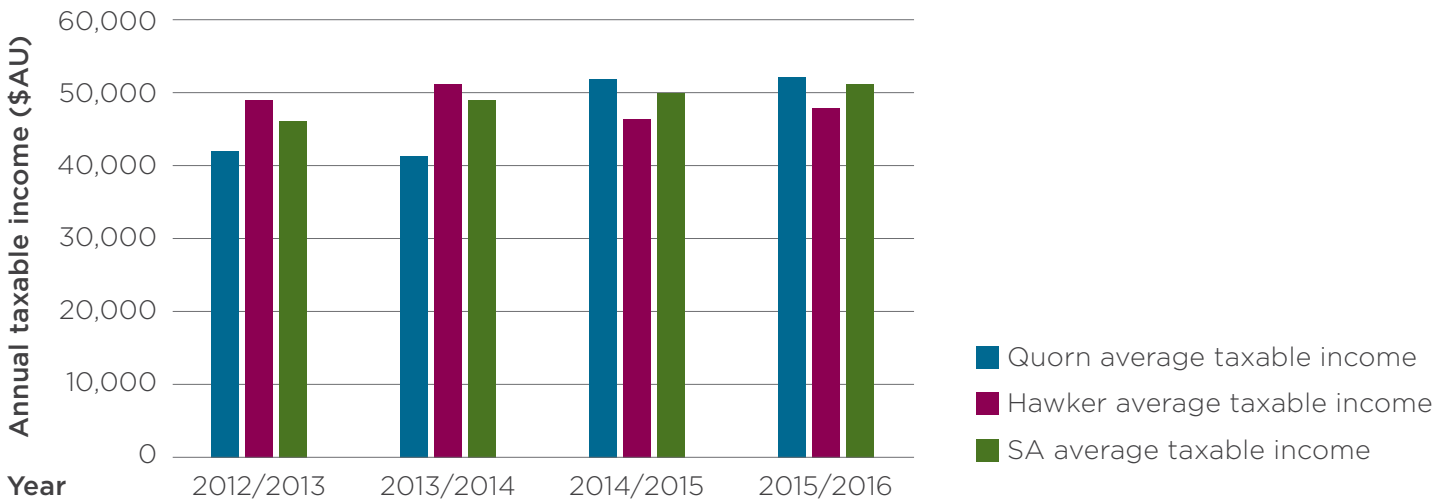
The five main industries contributing to employment within the community has remained consistent since 2006. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing; Retail Trade; Public Administration; Health; and Education contribute to 57 per cent of all roles within the community.

Hawker

As with Quorn, personal income has experienced steady growth in Hawker, sitting at \$47,448 in 2016. However, this figure remains slightly below the state average of \$50,149.

The five main industries contributing to employment across the community has remained the same since 2006, these are: Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing; Construction; Accommodation and Food Services; Health; and Education, accounting for 67 per cent of all roles in Hawker.

Quorn/Hawker and South Australian average taxable income



Housing and property values

Quorn

The median rent in Quorn was \$172 per week in 2016, which is significantly less than the state median (\$260 per week). Similarly, the median mortgage repayment of \$231 per week is also significantly less than the state median of \$344 per week.

The total number of dwellings in Quorn currently sits at 649, with an 18 per cent vacancy rate.

Hawker

The median rent is slightly less in Hawker than in Quorn, at \$123 per week, which is less than half of the state's median rent.

Low demand for housing in Hawker and low property values were a concern to some residents, particularly elderly residents who may need to move to centres with better aged care facilities.



Understanding community responses to the NRWMF

The research will help the department protect Hawker and Quorn's local community strengths and values, manage concerns and maximise opportunities, if the township is chosen to host the facility.

Community values

Interviews with residents revealed a number of community values seen as important by the people of Hawker and Quorn.

A strong community spirit where "everyone knows each other and will help each other" was identified as the main core value of both towns. Community "support" and "sticking together", particularly in adversity or if threatened from the outside, were common phrases used that highlight a strong sense of cohesion and shared local identity in the region.

The community values safety and the local environment, and has a strong culture of volunteering. Aboriginal participants considered being with family 'on Country' as a value of utmost importance.

Key factors

A prevalent concern in interviews with community members from Hawker and Quorn was a reduction in social cohesion caused by the nomination process and community consultation. The majority of interviewees were uncertain how the temporary damage to community spirit could be repaired in the future. Some social benefits were identified by those interviewed, including the injection of new people into the town and the range of opportunities this would present. The participation of newcomers to a number of community and sporting groups would be welcomed, as would families with children.

Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal interviewees expressed the need for respect for Traditional Ownership and concern about possible impacts the facility may have on Aboriginal cultural heritage. There were others (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) who were excited by the opportunities that may arise for raising awareness of and preserving local Aboriginal culture.

Interviewees were split in their concern regarding risk to the environment posed by the facility. Many who supported the facility were convinced the structure would be sound – either from visiting the ANSTO facility at Lucas Heights or through talking with someone who had, or through information supplied by the department.

Some interviewees raised concerns that the facility would damage the area's reputation and industries, especially agriculture, tourism and property values. There was a concern that the facility would significantly and negatively impact on tourism and visitor numbers.

In Hawker, the proposed facility was said to provide a stabilising "third leg" to the local economy, which is currently reliant on highly seasonal income from agriculture and tourism.

The report's literature review showed that in similar cases, property values have increased once a facility is operational. However, community concerns about property values are mirrored in a Czech study about perceived risks, and a US study about hazardous waste facilities more broadly. A UK study shows that while site selection is likely to result in the perception that property values will decline, residents can be reassured that evidence suggests the opposite. Monitoring the long term effects of low to intermediate level RWMFs in France shows that property values in the vicinities remain higher than the national median.

Some of those interviewed in Hawker and Quorn believed the facility would bring improvements to local roads. In Hawker, interviewees also looked forward to increased connectivity in terms of improved telecommunications.

Unfairness and mistrust in the site selection and community consultation process were highlighted as significant concerns for those opposed to the facility. Many opponents expressed the feeling that their concerns are not being listened to or "seriously considered" by government decision-makers.

Cases were relayed where those voicing their position (both for and against the NRWMF) have been harassed and insulted, or more often, deliberately avoided by others with a differing view. Others have withdrawn from the debate and community activities and prefer to keep their opinions private for fear of losing friends or business.

Community concerns underline the need for transparency and close community engagement. Moving forward, having a pathway which clearly maps the next steps, challenges and opportunities would help the people of Hawker and Quorn.