

# 7 WEIPA TRC

The Weipa TRC consists of the towns of Weipa, Aurukun and Pormpuraaw located on the eastern coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria (Figure 7.1). These towns are generally independent and are not necessarily mutually interdependent. However, they have been included as a single TRC given their inter-town proximity and the remoteness of the region.

## BUSINESS PROFILES

### Location and Use of Ports

Table 7.1 shows the number of licence holders giving their town address as Weipa, Aurukun and Pormpuraaw and the number of survey respondents who reported these towns as their homeports. On the basis of the sample count, it is estimated that there are 16 commercial fishers using towns within this TRC as their homeport and that we can be 95% confident that the population count of commercial fishers within the TRC is between 8 and 24.

Table 7.1  
Location of Homeports

Town	Adj. Database Count	Sample Count	Estimated Count	Percent within TRC
Weipa	14	5	12	75.0
Aurukun	3	1	2	12.5
Pormpuraaw	1	1	2	12.5
Total TRC	18	7	16	100.0

95% Confidence Interval for Estimated TRC Count 8-24  
Percent of Total Active Licence Holders in QLD 0.7%

Note: Adjusted database count is based on the postal address as recorded in the licencing information, which may not be the homeport of the fishing business. The adjusted database count reduces the count for latent licence holders (8.8%)  
The estimated count adjusts the sample count by the sampling fraction of 2.444.

In addition to the use of Weipa as a homeport, several fishing businesses used Weipa as a port when travelling to or from fishing areas. Table 7.2 shows that the majority of these businesses (42%) had their homeport in Cairns.

Table 7.2  
Homeports of Businesses Using Weipa as a Port

Homeports	Sample Count	Percent
Cairns	8	42.1
Karumba	2	10.6
Innisfail	1	5.3
Mossman	1	5.3
Port Douglas	1	5.3
Sandgate	1	5.3
Redcliffe	1	5.3
NSW	1	5.3
Total Businesses	19	100.0

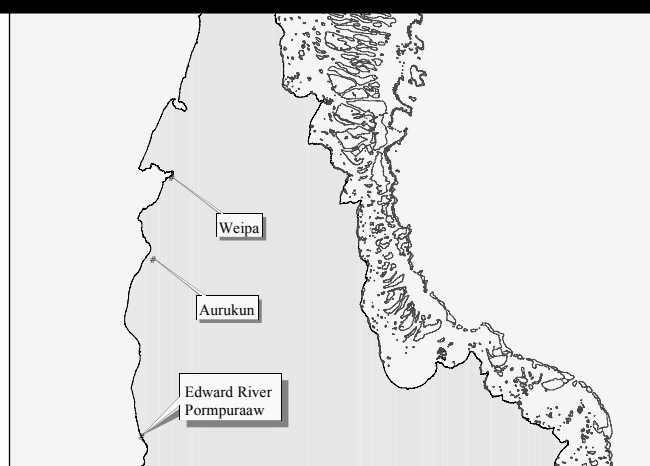


Figure 7.1 Location of the Weipa TRC

### Fishing Activity and Type

Table 7.3 shows the type of fishing activity undertaken within the last year by fishing businesses within this TRC. Netting, crabbing and line fishing are all primary activities undertaken by businesses within this TRC, with no business identified using homeports within this TRC for trawling.

Table 7.3  
Type of Fishing Activity (During the last 12 months)

Fishing Type	Sample Count	Percent within TRC
Netting	7	100.0
Crabbing	5	71.4
Line fishing	5	71.4
Trawl	0	0.0
Total Sample	12	100.0

Note: This is a multiple response table where all rows are independent.

Activities such as line fishing, crabbing and netting tend to co-occur within this TRC (Table 7.4). Of the five fishers within the sample who undertook line fishing within the last year, all of these fishers also engaged in netting and crabbing. Similarly of the seven fishers within the sample who undertook netting within the last year, five also undertook line fishing and five also undertook crabbing.

Table 7.4  
Co-occurrence of Fishing Activities

	Line Fishing	Crabbing	Netting
Line fishing	5 <i>100.0</i>	5 <i>100.0</i>	5 <i>71.4</i>
Crabbing	5 <i>100.0</i>	5 <i>100.0</i>	5 <i>71.4</i>
Netting	5 <i>100.0</i>	5 <i>100.0</i>	7 <i>100.0</i>

Note: The co-occurrence table should be read by column. Column percentages are given as italics.

March and April were the peak months for fishing activity within the TRC (Table 7.5). These are also the peak months for fishing activity within the Kurumba TRC (also located within the Gulf) and for all fishing businesses in Queensland (Table 7.5).

Table 7.5  
Peak Fishing Months During Past 12 Months

Months	Sample Count	Percent within TRC	Percent of QLD Fishery
January	1	16.7	24.5
February	3	50.0	29.7
March	5	83.3	43.9
April	6	100.0	42.8
May	4	66.7	38.1
June	2	33.3	33.5
July	0	0.0	23.9
August	0	8.3	19.9
September	0	8.3	23.5
October	1	16.7	24.8
November	1	16.7	26.2
December	1	16.7	21.4

Table 7.6 provides a more detailed description of the seasonal variation in fishing activities by businesses. Line fishing is most common between August and November, crabbing between February and August, and netting between February and September.

Table 7.6  
Seasonal Variations in Fishing Activity

Months	Sample Count	Percent within TRC	Percent of Fishery
<b>Line Fishing</b>			
January	1	20.0	64.6
February	1	20.0	64.3
March	1	20.0	68.1
April	1	20.0	70.4
May	1	20.0	74.7
June	0	0.0	78.7
July	2	40.0	82.0
August	3	60.0	80.8
September	3	60.0	79.7
October	5	100.0	79.7
November	5	100.0	78.2
December	2	40.0	70.6
<b>Crabbing</b>			
January	2	40.0	74.7
February	4	80.0	79.0
March	4	80.0	75.1
April	4	80.0	69.4
May	4	80.0	67.2
June	4	80.0	58.5
July	4	80.0	52.0
August	4	80.0	50.2
September	2	40.0	53.3
October	1	20.0	59.9
November	1	20.0	66.4
December	1	20.0	72.1
<b>Netting</b>			
January	4	57.1	57.5
February	6	85.7	72.9
March	6	85.7	73.9
April	7	100.0	74.2
May	7	100.0	77.6
June	5	71.4	79.9
July	6	85.7	75.9
August	6	85.7	73.9
September	6	85.7	69.6
October	4	57.1	64.2
November	1	14.3	55.9
December	1	14.3	54.5

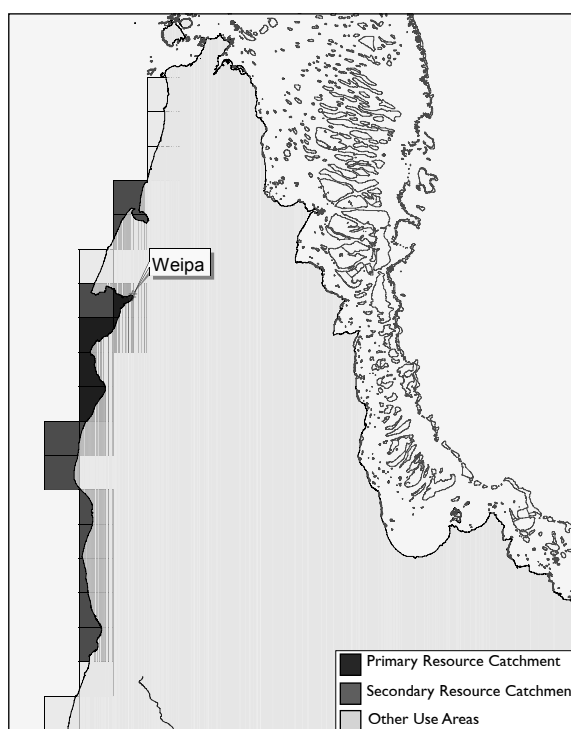


Figure 7.2 Weipa TRC: Location of Resource Use

#### Location of Resource Use

Figure 7.2 shows the location of resource use by commercial fishing operations with their homeports in the Weipa TRC. The location of resource use is restricted to the Gulf of Carpentaria and, in particular, coastal areas to the south of Weipa where netting and crabbing occur. The primary resource catchment consists of coastal areas within Albatross Bay and coastal areas south to Aurukun and the Cohen River.

#### Fishing Industry Employees

Table 7.7 identifies the number of employees of commercial fishing businesses within this TRC for both peak and off-peak seasons. The majority of businesses within peak and off-peak seasons have between two and three full-time employees (inc. the owner or operator). There is little part-time or casual employment by these businesses. The average number of employees per business during the peak season is 3.1, while in the off-peak season it is 2.4. In total, it is estimated that during the peak season there are 50 full-time equivalent employees while in the off-peak season there are 38 full-time equivalent employees.

#### Business Ownership and Size

Table 7.8 shows the number of years the current owner or operator has owned the fishing business. On average, businesses within this TRC had been owned for an average of 8.4 years, which was significantly lower than the average of 14.6 years for all Queensland commercial fishing businesses.

Table 7.7. Number of Employees

Number of Employees	Full-Time Count	Full-Time Percent	Part-Time Count	Part-Time Percent	Casual Count	Casual Percent
<b>Peak Season</b>						
Nil	1	14.3	6	85.7	6	85.7
1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
2-3	5	71.5	0	0.0	1	14.3
4-5	1	14.3	1	14.3	0	0.0
6-7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
8-9	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total Businesses	7	100.0	7	100.0	7	100.0
Total Employees	18		4		3	
Mean Number of Employees per Business (Peak)		3.1				
Estimated Number Employed within the TRC		50				
<b>Off-Peak Season</b>						
Nil	2	28.6	6	85.7	7	100.0
1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
2-3	4	57.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
4-5	1	14.3	1	14.3	0	0.0
6-7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
8-9	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total Businesses	7	100.0	7	100.0	7	100.0
Total Employees	15		4		0	
Mean Nos Employees per Business (Off-Peak)		2.4				
Estimated Number Employed within the TRC		38				

Note: Part-time and casual employment is recorded as 0.5 when contributing to total employment.  
Total number of employees includes the owner-operator and is the number of full-time equivalent employees.  
Estimates of total employment based on an estimated 16 fishing businesses (Table 7.1)

Table 7.8  
Number of Years of Current Ownership of the Fishing Business

Number of Years	Sample Count	Percent within TRC	Cumulative Percent
1-5	3	42.9	42.9
6-10	3	42.9	85.8
11-15	0	0.0	85.8
16-20	0	0.0	85.8
21-25	1	14.3	100.0
Total	7	100.0	
Mean Number of Years owned or operated		8.4	
Difference of TRC mean to QLD mean (14.6)		-6.2	

Note: Standard errors for number of years ownership (sample = 2.8; QLD population = 0.37).

The average number of years the business had been operating was 13.6 years, which was significantly lower than that for all Queensland fishing businesses (18.2 years). Table 7.9 shows that 29% of businesses had been operating for five years or less and approximately 57% had operated for 10 years or less.

Table 7.9  
Number of Years Business has been Operating

Number of Years	Sample Count	Percent within TRC	Cumulative Percent
1-5	2	28.6	28.6
6-10	2	28.6	57.2
11-15	0	0.0	0.0
16-20	1	14.3	71.5
21-25	1	14.3	85.8
26-30	1	14.3	100.0
Total	7	100.0	
Mean Number of Years owned or operated		13.6	
Difference of TRC mean to QLD mean (18.2)		-4.6	

Note: Standard errors for number of years operated (sample = 3.4; QLD population = 0.46)

Table 7.10 shows that the majority of fishing businesses within this TRC operated either one (43%) or two (29%) boats.

Table 7.10  
Number of Boats Operated by Fishing Businesses

Number of Boats	Sample Count	Percent within TRC
1	3	42.9
2	2	28.6
3	1	14.3
4	1	14.3
Total Number of Businesses	7	100.0
Mean Number of Boats Operated		2.0
Difference of TRC mean to QLD mean (1.7)		+0.3

Note: Standard errors for number of boats operated (sample = 0.4; QLD population = 0.05)

The majority of boats (50%) operated by businesses were between 7 and 10 metres, with over 86% of all boats being 10 metres or less (Table 7.11).

Table 7.11  
Length of Boats Operated by Fishing Businesses

Length of Boat (metres)	Sample Count	Percent within TRC
3-6	5	35.7
7-10	7	50.0
11-14	2	14.3
Total Number of Boats	14	100.0
Mean Length of Boats Operated (metres)		8.2
Difference of TRC mean to QLD mean (9.9)		-1.7
Mean Length of Largest Boat Operated (metres)		10.6
Difference of TRC mean to QLD mean (11.4)		-0.8

Note: As mean length of boats is a multiple response, standard errors cannot be computed. Standard errors for mean length of largest boat (sample = 0.48; QLD population=0.14)

## Value of Production and Location of Sales

Table 7.12 shows the wholesale value of all products sold by fishing businesses within the Weipa TRC. Seventy-one percent of businesses within this TRC had production values of between \$100,000 and \$200,000 for the previous 12 months.

Within the Weipa TRC, it is estimated that the 16 fishing businesses had a gross value of production of approximately \$2.8 million, which is approximately 0.9% of the total value of production of the Queensland commercial fishing industry.

**Table 7.12**  
Wholesale Value of Product (Annual value)

Wholesale Value (\$,000)	Sample Count	Sample Percent	Queensland Percent
Less than \$100	0	0.0	42.8
\$101 - \$200	5	71.4	21.4
\$201 - \$300	1	14.3	16.2
\$301 - \$400	1	14.3	8.5
\$401 - \$500	0	0.0	3.8
\$501 - \$600	0	0.0	1.8
\$601 - \$700	0	0.0	1.3
\$701 - \$800	0	0.0	0.4
\$801 - \$900	0	0.0	1.0
\$901 - \$1,000	0	0.0	0.3
Over \$1,000	0	0.0	2.3
Total	7	100.0	100.0

Median GVP for TRC	\$174,686
Estimated Total GVP for TRC	\$2,795,000
Median GVP for QLD Population	\$128,629
Estimated Total GVP for QLD Population	\$314,241,000
Percent of Total Queensland Production	0.9%

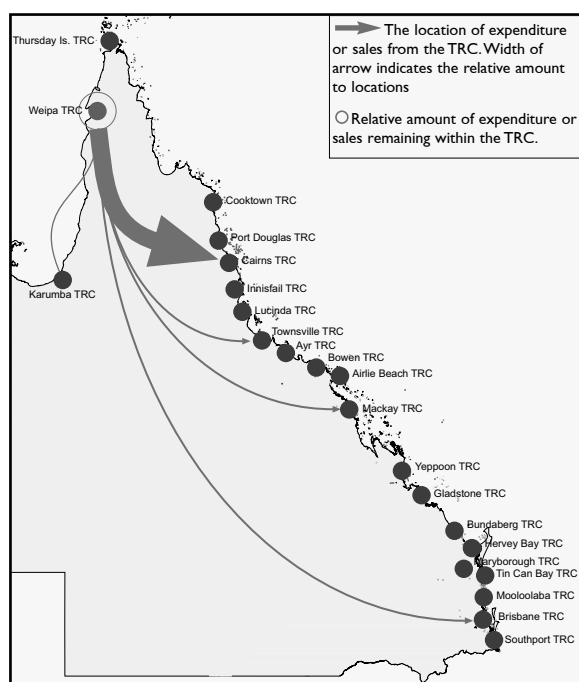
*Note:* Estimated TRC population total is based on an estimate of 16 businesses within the TRC, with a median GVP of \$174,686. Queensland total GVP based on 2,444 businesses (2,679 licenced businesses with 8.8% latency) with a median GVP of \$128,629.

Only one fisher located within this TRC had direct sales of products to overseas markets, representing 35% of their total value of production. Table 7.13 shows the value of sales to specific locations within Australia for the sample of seven businesses and the percentage of sales to each location. The sample percent of sales to each location has been used directly to estimate the total value of business sales to all locations. From Table 7.13, and as shown in Figure 7.3, 70% of sales (\$1.9 million) occurs directly to Cairns.

**Table 7.13**  
Town Location of Sales (\$'000)

Location of Sales	Sample Value of Sales	Percent of Sample	Estimated Sales
Cairns	925	70.5	1,933
Mackay	105	8.0	219
Brisbane	87	6.6	181
Townsville	87	6.6	181
Karumba	69	5.3	145
Weipa	39	3.0	82
Total Sales	1,312	100.0	2,742

*Note:* The sample value of sales is based on GVP as reported by businesses in the survey. The estimated value of all business sales is the total GVP for the TRC, excluding the percentage value of overseas exports. The estimated value of business sales (Table 7.12) is proportionally distributed to all locations on the basis of sample percentages.



**Figure 7.3** Weipa TRC: Location of Business Sales

## Business Expenditure and Debt Levels

Table 7.14 shows that approximately \$1.5 million was spent by businesses in this TRC within the previous year on business goods and services (excluding salaries and wages). The majority of this expenditure (58%) or \$840,000 occurred within the town of Weipa and a further 42% or \$616,000 occurred within Cairns (Figure 7.4).

**Table 7.14**  
Town Location of Business Expenditure (All costs, excluding salaries and wages)

Location of Expenditure	Sample Value of Expenditure (\$'000)	Percent of Sample	Estimated Expenditure (\$'000)
Weipa	411	57.7	840
Cairns	301	42.3	616
Total Expenditure	712	100.0	1,456

*Note:* Business expenditure includes all non labour expenditure (ie., fuel, equipment, repairs etc). Coefficients from the QLD input-output table for 1992-1993 indicate that expenditure on local intermediate purchases and imports, accounted for 52.1% of total revenue. The amount of business expenditure occurring within specific locations is based on 52.1% of the estimated GVP for the business.

Business operators were asked what percentage of their business assets were not owned outright by their business. For the purpose of this study, this identified the level of business debt. Table 7.15 shows that 43% of businesses within the Weipa TRC had no debt. However, the overall debt level within the TRC was 40% of business assets, which is significantly higher than the 16.6% as reported across all commercial fishing businesses in Queensland.

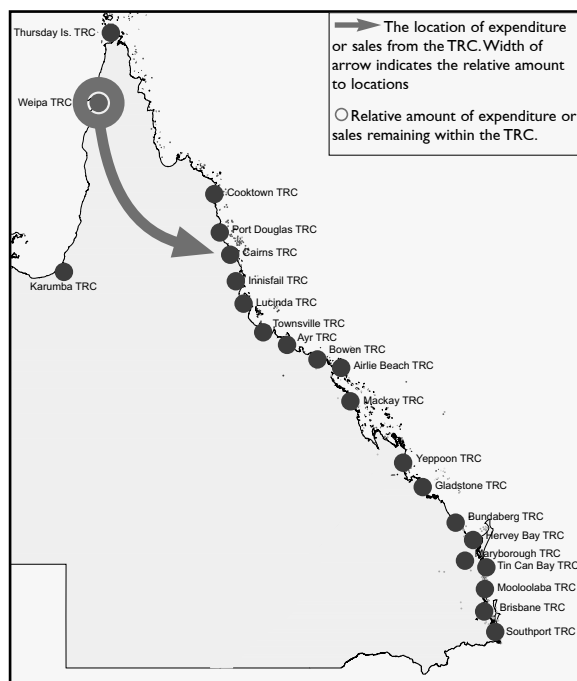


Figure 7.4 Weipa TRC: Location of Business Expenditure

Table 7.15  
Business Debt Levels

Percent of Assets Not Owned	Sample Count	Sample Percent	Queensland Percent
Nil	3	42.9	60.1
1 - 10%	0	0.0	6.4
11 - 20%	0	0.0	5.2
21 - 30%	0	0.0	6.4
31 - 40%	2	28.6	3.3
41 - 50%	0	0.0	9.6
51 - 60%	1	14.3	1.8
61 - 70%	0	0.0	1.2
71 - 80%	0	0.0	1.1
81 - 90%	0	0.0	1.6
91 - 100%	1	14.3	3.3
Total	7	100.0	100.0

Median Debt Level for TRC	40.0%
Median Debt Level for QLD Population	16.6%
Difference of TRC Mean to QLD Mean (16.6%)	-23.4%

Note: Debt level defined as the percentage of total business assets not owned outright by the business.

## EMPLOYEE PROFILES

### Town of Residence

Table 7.16 indicate the primary town of residence for employees within the fishing industry in this TRC is Weipa (83%).

Table 7.16  
Town of Residence

Town of Residence	Sample Count	Percent of Sample
Weipa	5	83.3
Aurukun	1	16.7
Total	6	100.0

## Months Employed in the Fishing Industry

Table 7.17 shows that during the past 12 months the majority of owner-operators within this TRC were employed in the fishing industry between February and September.

Table 7.17  
Months Employed in the Fishing Industry During the Past 12 Months

Months	Owner/ Operators	Employee	Total Within TRC	All QLD Employees
January	60.0	nd	60.0	80.7
February	100.0	nd	100.0	82.3
March	100.0	nd	100.0	86.1
April	100.0	nd	100.0	86.8
May	100.0	nd	100.0	87.3
June	100.0	nd	100.0	87.8
July	100.0	nd	100.0	86.7
August	100.0	nd	100.0	86.3
September	100.0	nd	100.0	86.8
October	80.0	nd	80.0	85.4
November	60.0	nd	60.0	84.4
December	60.0	nd	60.0	82.3

Note: Owner/operator sample of 10, nd = no data or low sample count

## Location of Household Expenditure

Table 7.18 and Figure 7.5 shows the location of household expenditure related to individual income derived from employment in the fishing industry. As might be expected, the majority (80%) of industry related household expenditure occurs in Weipa (\$0.6 million) with a further 20% or \$0.2 million occurring within Cairns.

Table 7.18  
Town Location of Household Expenditure (all commodities and services)

Location of	Sample Expenditure (\$'000)	Percent of Sample	Estimated Expenditure (\$'000)
Weipa	76	80.0	633
Cairns	19	20.0	158
Total	95	100.0	791

Note: The gross individual annual income of fishers within this TRC was estimated as \$26,000 (Table 7.20). The Household Expenditure Survey for Queensland: 1993-1994 (ABS, 1996) indicates that for households in non-metropolitan areas 79% of gross weekly income was related to commodity and service purchases. Furthermore, of the total expenditure on commodities and services purchased by households, Queensland Input-Output tables indicate that 77% of expenditure occurs within Queensland, with the balance contributing to taxes and imports from outside Queensland. Applying these percentages to the gross individual annual income of employees indicates that direct employee expenditure on household commodities and services to be \$15,815, with total household expenditure across all 50 (Table 7.7) employees to be \$0.8 million (Table 7.18)

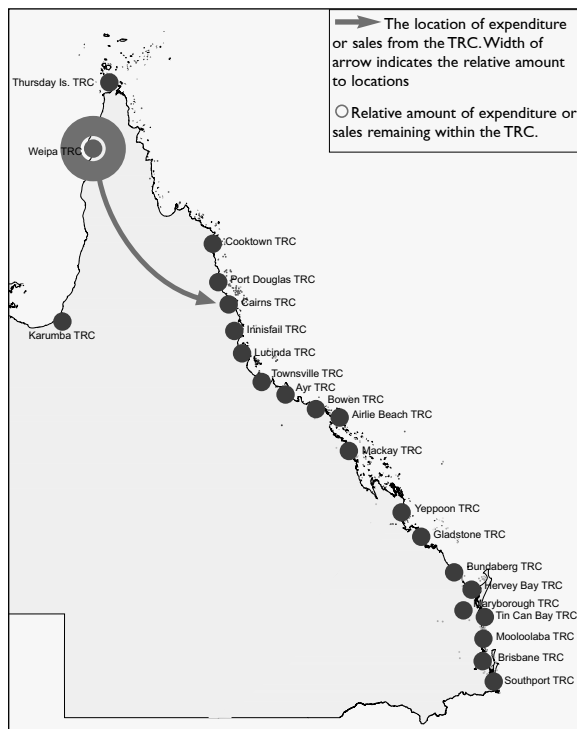


Figure 7.5 Weipa TRC: Location of Household Expenditure School and Employment Locations of Family Members  
The towns in which family members attend school and are employed are shown in Table 7.19. As might be expected, Weipa is the primary location for school and employment (88%).

Table 7.19  
School and Employment Locations of Family Members

Location of Employment or School	Sample Count	Percent of Sample
Weipa	15	88.2
Aurukun	1	5.9
Cairns	1	5.9
Total Family Members	17	100.0

Note: Counts and percentages based on all family members.

### Employee Social and Demographic Profiles

Table 7.20 provides profile information about employees within the TRC. Information is provided separately for owner-operators and non owner-operator employees of businesses within the TRC. For comparative purposes, information is also provided for all employees throughout Queensland.

**Table 7.20. Owner-Operator and Employee Profiles**

Profile	Owner/ Operators <sup>a</sup>	Employee	Total Within TRC	All QLD Employees
Estimated Number of Employees <sup>b</sup>	16	34	50	7,088
Mean age of fisher	34.8	nd	34.8	37.3
Age range	27-47	nd	27-47	15-79
Percent males	90.0	nd	83.3	94.8
Mean years resident in town	17.0	nd	17.0	19.1
Mean number of years in fishing industry	10.2	nd	10.2	12.6
Median hours per week in fishing industry	89.0	nd	89.0	60.0
Percent moved town to retain employment	16.7	nd	16.7	20.5
Percent currently employed in other industry	50.0	nd	50.0	34.2
Percent previously employed in other industry	50.0	nd	50.0	69.2
<b>Housing tenure</b>				
Rent	50.0	nd	50.0	33.6
Mortgage	33.3	nd	33.3	20.1
Own home	16.7	nd	16.7	31.1
Other (eg. live with parents, on boat)	0.0	nd	0.0	15.2
<b>Educational</b>				
Year completed school				
Primary school	0.0	nd	0.0	5.2
Year 8	0.0	nd	0.0	8.0
Year 9	0.0	nd	0.0	11.9
Year 10	83.3	nd	83.3	44.4
Year 11	16.7	nd	16.7	10.1
Year 12	0.0	nd	0.0	20.2
Percent completed trade or TAFE certificate	66.7	nd	66.7	37.7
Percent completed industry or business course	33.3	nd	33.3	15.2
Percent with business plan <sup>c</sup>	0.0	nd	0.0	22.9
Percent active fishing group member	16.7	nd	16.7	25.7
<b>Marital Status</b>				
Percent married or relationship	83.3	nd	83.3	62.0
Percent with partner employed in business <sup>d</sup>	50.0	nd	50.0	56.1
Median hours per week employed in business	48.0	nd	48.0	20.0
<b>Partners Income<sup>de</sup></b>				
Full-time employment	25.0	nd	25.0	28.3
Part-time employment	25.0	nd	25.0	18.5
Casual employment	25.0	nd	25.0	11.6
Not employed	25.0	nd	25.0	41.5
<b>Family Composition</b>				
Mean family size	3.8	nd	3.8	2.6
Estimated number of total family members	61	nd	61	18,429
<b>Dependency Ratios</b>				
Age Dependency Ratio <sup>f</sup>	60.0	nd	60.0	33.4
Elderly Dependency Ratio	0.0	nd	0.0	2.3
Child Dependency Ratio	60.0	nd	60.0	31.2
Family Member Industry Dependency Ratio <sup>g</sup>	33.3	nd	33.3	23.9
<b>Gross Individual Income</b>				
Less than \$16,000	50.0	nd	50.0	34.6
\$16,000 - \$26,000	16.7	nd	16.7	19.6
\$26,000 - \$36,000	16.7	nd	16.7	22.1
\$36,000 - \$52,000	0.0	nd	0.0	11.7
\$52,000 - \$78,000	0.0	nd	0.0	6.6
Over \$78,000	16.7	nd	16.7	5.4
Average Income (\$)	26,000	nd	26,000	27,471

Note: <sup>a</sup> Owner/operator sample of 5, nd = no data or low sample count.

<sup>b</sup> Based on peak estimates derived in Table 7.7.

<sup>c</sup> Percentages for owner-operators only.

<sup>d</sup> Percentage based on those fishers with partners.

<sup>e</sup> Includes partners income from all sources.

<sup>f</sup> The age dependency ratio is the number of children (below 15 years) and elderly persons (above 65 years) to every 100 persons in the population.

<sup>g</sup> The industry dependency ratio is the number of persons in the family who are over 15 years of age and working in the fishing industry (excluding the direct industry employee) as a proportion of all family members over 15 years of age.

All Queensland employees includes all owner-operators and employees. Value is the weighted sample of owner-operators (2.43) and employees (8.68).

