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## NEWS RELEASE

Official figures gathered by the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the year ended December 2006 have confirmed what Mackay's tourism leaders suspected; last year was a boom year for visitation to our city and region.

Data just published reveals that Mackay region experienced the highest percentage growth of any Queensland region in the number of hotels, motels and serviced apartment room nights occupied, and second highest after Brisbane, in percentage growth of occupancy rates (up to 74.4% overall). Average daily room rates grew by 14.2% and average takings per room night available grew by 26.8% - both being the highest in Queensland.

These statistics, along with the continuing growth in passenger numbers through Mackay Airport, are evidence of our region's buoyant visitor activity, and justification for the addition of further overnight accommodation in the view of Mackay Tourism.

MTL general manager David Phillips said 'While these figures demonstrate the very healthy demand being experienced in the accommodation sector, it should be remembered that this is largely being driven by business visitation to the region, particularly relating to the mining and engineering sector and the flow-on effects. The economic value of this growth is surging throughout, and far beyond, our front line visitor industry. Low air fares are helping boost our inbound visiting friends and relatives market, too', he said.

'To some extent, our traditional leisure visitor market is being displaced accommodation-wise, and local tourism operators dependent upon holiday makers are faring less well. The city, and our hinterland towns will need more rooms to meet the needs of future business travellers, but also to accommodate our leisure market opportunities, and in support of the conventions and events opportunities for our destination now emerging for the future.'

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