North Queensland

Residential Property Market Insights Half 1 2026

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Welcome to the North Queensland residential property market insight for the first half of 2026!

North Queensland's residential property markets continued to strengthen through the first half of 2026, with Mackay, Whitsunday, Townsville and Cairns all recording elevated values across detached housing, units and vacant land. While each region is influenced by different economic and lifestyle drivers, the common market themes remain constrained housing supply, high replacement costs, limited availability of quality established stock and sustained demand from owner-occupiers, investors and lifestyle purchasers.

Townsville recorded the greatest transaction depth, with 1,469 house sales and a median house price of $700,000. Growth was broad-based, with houses increasing 9.4% against the 2025 median, units rising 12.1% and vacant land recording a pronounced 37.5% uplift. Established family suburbs, northern growth corridors and inner-city lifestyle locations remain the key areas of demand.

Cairns remained the highest-priced mainstream housing market of the four regions, recording a median house price of $810,000. Houses, units and vacant land increased by 8.7%, 7.4% and 13.4% respectively against 2025 levels. Lifestyle migration, constrained new supply and the depth of the apartment and townhouse market continue to support activity across inner, beachside and southern growth locations.

Mackay maintained strong momentum, supported by local employment confidence, limited available stock and demand for well-presented family housing. The median house price reached $725,000, while units recorded a median of $450,000 and vacant land $306,000. Each segment increased by approximately 10% or more against 2025, with growth extending beyond entry-level investment stock into established suburbs, northern beaches and higher-quality family housing.

The Whitsunday market continued to trade at premium lifestyle-driven price levels, with a median house price of $700,000 and a unit median of $575,000. Units were the strongest-performing segment, increasing approximately 19.8% against 2025, reflecting continued investor and lifestyle demand across Airlie Beach, Cannonvale and surrounding coastal locations. Detached housing remained comparatively stable, while vacant land activity continued to be constrained by availability, construction feasibility and location-specific considerations.

Overall, the first half of 2026 reflects a North Queensland residential market that remains fundamentally supply-constrained rather than speculative. Buyers are increasingly selective, but competition remains strongest for established properties offering good presentation, practical accommodation and limited immediate capital expenditure. Although the rate of growth may moderate as affordability pressures increase, restricted supply, elevated construction costs and continued regional economic activity are expected to provide underlying support through the second half of 2026.

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Mackay

Dwellings

Mackay's detached housing market remains the core driver of regional residential activity. The 2026 YTD median house price of $725,000 reflects a further uplift from the 2025 annual median of $660,000 and a material step above the 2024 annual median of $550,000. That movement is important because it shows the market has continued to re-price after the major 2024-2025 uplift rather than simply holding its previous gains.

At a practical market level, demand is strongest for well-presented, established family homes that allow buyers to avoid renovation risk and construction delays. Purchasers are paying premiums for modernised dwellings, secondary living spaces, sheds, side access, pools and good outdoor areas. The buyer pool remains a mix of local upgrading owner-occupiers and investors chasing rental depth, though affordability is making investors more selective in the higher price brackets.

- The Mackay LGA recorded 858 house sales in 2026 YTD / first half, with a median of $725,000.
- The house median has increased by approximately 9.8% compared with the 2025 annual median and approximately 31.8% compared with 2024.
- The strongest suburb-level growth is evident in Sarina, South Mackay, Shoal Point, West Mackay, Glenella, Blacks Beach, East Mackay, Rural View and North Mackay.
- The highest-volume detached housing suburbs in H1 2026 include Andergrove, Beaconsfield, Bucasia, Sarina, South Mackay, North Mackay, Slade Point and West Mackay.

- The prestige and upper-family-home market is increasingly normalising at price points that were less common in earlier Mackay cycles, particularly across beachside, elevated, larger-lot and modern family-home locations.

Suburb	2026 sales	2026 median	Growth vs 2025	2025 median
Sarina	39	$670,000	30.9%	$512,000
South Mackay	36	$677,500	16.8%	$580,000
West Mackay	31	$700,000	13.1%	$619,000
Glenella	27	$850,000	12.8%	$753,750
Blacks Beach	29	$741,000	12.3%	$660,100
East Mackay	15	$725,000	11.5%	$650,000

Units

The unit and strata segment continues to benefit from relative affordability. The Mackay LGA median unit price reached $450,000 in 2026 YTD / first half, up from the 2025 annual median of $410,000 and materially above the $350,000 annual median recorded in 2024. The segment remains attractive to investors and first-home buyers who are priced out of detached housing, while also appealing to downsizers and buyers seeking lower-maintenance accommodation close to employment, services and coastal lifestyle areas.

The key point for this segment is that unit values are still trading at a meaningful discount to detached housing, while replacement-cost pressures continue to provide underlying support for established product. Well-located units with practical floor plans, garages, improved presentation and manageable body corporate settings remain the most marketable.

Demand is strongest where weekly rents support the purchase price and where buyers can see limited near-term capital expenditure risk.

- The Mackay LGA recorded 242 unit sales in 2026 YTD / first half, with a median of $450,000.
- The median unit price is approximately 9.8% above the 2025 annual median and approximately 28.6% above 2024.
- The Mackay CBD/suburb area remains the highest-volume unit market, recording 48 sales for 2026 YTD.
- Andergrove, Blacks Beach, Beaconsfield, East Mackay, North Mackay, West Mackay and South Mackay recorded notable value growth in the 2026 YTD data.
- The segment's affordability relative to detached housing is likely to remain its main advantage through the second half of 2026.

Suburb	2026 sales	2026 median	Growth vs 2025	2025 median
Andergrove	13	$580,000	23.4%	$470,000
Blacks Beach	12	$530,000	21.1%	$437,500
Beaconsfield	5	$531,500	20.8%	$440,000
East Mackay	11	$415,000	17.2%	$354,000
North Mackay	7	$440,000	16.9%	$376,500
Mackay	48	$421,000	16.8%	$360,500
West Mackay	12	$494,500	15.0%	$430,000

Vacant Land

Vacant land remains the most supply-sensitive segment in the Mackay market. The LGA recorded 55 vacant land sales in 2026 YTD / first half with a median of $306,000. This sits above the 2025 annual median of $265,000 and well above the $229,000 median recorded in 2024, reflecting the combined influence of limited titled supply, higher construction costs, stronger replacement-cost considerations and buyers competing for build-ready or lifestyle-oriented land opportunities.

The vacant land dataset is thinner than the house and unit segments, which means suburb-level movements need to be read carefully. A small number of transactions can shift the median materially, particularly where sales include a mix of small residential lots, infill land, larger residential allotments and rural residential/lifestyle sites. The market narrative, however, is consistent: well-located titled land is scarce, and buyers are paying more for certainty of location, title, services and build timing.

- Mackay LGA vacant land recorded 55 sales in 2026 YTD / first half at a median of $306,000.
- The 2026 YTD median is approximately 15.5% above the 2025 annual median and approximately 33.6% above 2024.
- Bucasia was the clearest suburb-level land result, recording 6 sales at a median of $265,800 and 7.0% growth against the 2025 annual median.
- Land supply remains constrained relative to demand for new family housing, with construction costs continuing to influence feasibility and buyer budgets.
- The strongest land demand is expected to remain in established residential corridors, northern beaches locations, and lifestyle/rural residential settings where supply is limited.

Whitsundays

Dwellings

The Whitsunday detached housing market remains well supported, showing a 2026 YTD Whitsunday LGA house median of $700,000. This is modestly above the 2025 benchmark of $680,000 and remains materially above the 2024 benchmark of $585,000.

The strongest activity remains concentrated in the established residential and lifestyle locations, with Bowen recording the highest suburb-level house sales count in 2026 YTD, followed by Cannonvale, Proserpine and Jubilee Pocket. Coastal and lifestyle-oriented suburbs continue to attract a premium, although limited sample sizes mean individual sales can materially influence some suburb medians.

- The Whitsunday LGA house segment recorded 235 2026 YTD sales at a median of $700,000.
- The 2026 YTD house median is 2.9% above the 2025 benchmark and approximately 19.7% above 2024.
- Bowen, Cannonvale, Proserpine and Jubilee Pocket are the main recorded suburb-level house sales markets in the 2026 YTD data.
- Premium lifestyle and coastal locations remain highly variable due to low turnover and variation in dwelling quality, views, site attributes and accommodation utility.
- The market remains quality-led, with buyers placing greater weight on presentation, liveability, location and near-term capital expenditure risk.

Suburb	2026 median	2026 sales	Growth vs 2025	Median rent
Bowen	$610,000	82	5.3%	$600
Cannonvale	$899,000	33	2.2%	$780
Proserpine	$670,000	25	23.5%	$600
Collinsville	$210,000	20	n/m	$415
Jubilee Pocket	$870,500	18	11.6%	$775
Cannon Valley	$1,189,000	12	-8.2%	$912

Units

The unit and strata segment recorded the strongest broad percentage movement, with the Whitsunday LGA unit median increasing to $575,000 in 2026 YTD. This is approximately 19.8% above the 2025 benchmark and approximately 40.2% above 2024.

Unit demand is being supported by affordability relative to detached houses, tourism and accommodation exposure, and investor interest in assets with rental or holiday-letting appeal. Cannonvale and Airlie Beach remain the dominant unit markets, with Bowen and Jubilee Pocket providing additional depth at different price points.

- The Whitsunday LGA unit segment recorded 133 2026 YTD sales at a median of $575,000.
- Cannonvale is the dominant suburb-level unit market by transaction count, followed by Airlie Beach and Bowen.
- The segment benefits from a lower price point than detached housing, but body corporate, insurance and letting-management settings remain important purchasing considerations.
- Tourism-linked demand and lifestyle appeal support buyer interest, particularly for well-positioned units with clear rental utility.
- The uplift in unit values suggests investors and lifestyle buyers are continuing to compete for comparatively affordable stock.

Suburb	2026 median	2026 sales	Growth vs 2025	Median rent
Cannonvale	$550,000	66	16.6%	$600
Airlie Beach	$680,000	27	10.6%	$700
Bowen	$520,000	20	26.8%	$450
Jubilee Pocket	$487,500	9	15.4%	$550
Cannon Valley	$905,000	4	18.0%	$912

Vacant Land

Vacant land remains a thinner and more variable segment. 64 sales 2026 YTD land sales, with a weighted suburb-level median indicator of approximately $282,352. This compares with an estimated weighted suburb-level benchmark of $283,319 for 2025.

Activity is concentrated in Bowen and Cannonvale, with lower-volume sales also recorded in locations such as Hideaway Bay, Collinsville, Midge Point, Strathdickie and Riordanvale. The segment is highly sensitive to title status, lot size, views, servicing, location, development constraints and construction feasibility.

- The suburb sample records 64 vacant land sales in 2026 YTD.
- The weighted suburb-level land indicator is approximately $282,352, up around -0.3% on the 2025 sample benchmark.
- Bowen and Cannonvale are the most active land markets by transaction count in the 2026 YTD data.
- Construction costs and feasibility remain key constraints, particularly where lots require substantial site works or are in lower affordability markets.
- Limited availability in well-located coastal and lifestyle areas should continue to support pricing for appropriately positioned lots.

Suburb	2026 median	2026 sales
Bowen	$255,000	21
Cannonvale	$307,000	15
Hideaway Bay	$270,000	8
Collinsville	$58,000	5
Midge Point	$242,500	4
Strathdickie	$330,000	3
Riordanvale	$413,500	3
Airlie Beach	$622,500	2

Townsville

Dwellings

Townsville's detached housing market remains the main driver of residential market depth. The 2026 YTD median house price of $700,000 reflects a further uplift from the 2025 annual median of $640,000 and is materially above the $528,000 median recorded in 2024.

At a practical market level, demand is strongest for established family homes with good functionality, limited immediate capital expenditure and access to employment, schools and lifestyle amenity. Family housing corridors such as Kirwan, Burdell, Kelso, Douglas and Mount Louisa are providing the majority of volume, while inner and lifestyle locations such as Castle Hill, North Ward, Belgian Gardens, Mysterton and Alice River are demonstrating the upper end of buyer capacity.

- The Townsville City LGA recorded 1,469 house sales in 2026 YTD / first half, with a median of $700,000.
- The house median is approximately 9.4% above the 2025 annual median and approximately 32.6% above 2024.
- The monthly median was relatively stable around the $700,000 level from January to May 2026, peaking at $714,000 in March.
- The highest-volume detached housing suburbs include Kirwan, Burdell, Kelso, Douglas, Mount Louisa, Bohle Plains, Bushland Beach and Annandale.

- The stronger growth results include Mysterton, Richmond Hill, Currajong, Mundingburra, Alice River, Rosslea and Shaw, noting some of these remain lower-volume markets.

Suburb	2026 median	2026 sales	Growth vs 2025
Kirwan	$681,000	110	11.6%
Burdell	$750,000	72	12.1%
Kelso	$625,000	71	13.6%
Douglas	$710,000	61	6.0%
Mount Louisa	$720,000	54	8.6%

Units

The unit and strata segment continues to benefit from relative affordability. The Townsville City LGA median unit price reached $471,000 in 2026 YTD / first half, up from the 2025 annual median of $420,000 and significantly above the $339,500 median recorded in 2024.

The key point for this segment is that unit values are still trading at a discount to detached housing, while replacement-cost pressures and rental demand provide support for established stock. Demand remains most evident in central, coastal and amenity-rich locations where rental prospects, lifestyle appeal and walkability are strongest.

- The Townsville City LGA recorded 424 unit sales in 2026 YTD / first half, with a median of $471,000.
- The unit median is approximately 12.1% above the 2025 annual median and approximately 38.7% above 2024.
- North Ward and Townsville CBD are the highest-volume unit markets followed by West End, Douglas and South Townsville.
- Selected unit suburbs showing strong growth include Railway Estate, Cranbrook, Condon, Hermit Park, Rosslea, Pimlico, Thuringowa Central and North Ward, although some samples are modest.
- Affordability relative to detached houses is expected to remain a core demand driver through the second half of 2026.

Suburb	2026 median	2026 sales	Growth vs 2025
North Ward	$560,000	63	18.6%
Townsville CBD	$530,000	43	7.1%
West End	$442,000	25	12.8%
Douglas	$465,000	17	13.4%
South Townsville	$450,000	17	-2.2%
Rosslea	$452,000	17	23.5%

Vacant Land

Vacant land remains the most supply-sensitive and sample-size-sensitive segment in the Townsville market. The LGA recorded 100 vacant land sales in 2026 YTD / first half with a median of $345,000. This is a sharp uplift from the 2025 annual median of $250,900 and the 2024 median of $217,900.

The land dataset is materially thinner than the house and unit segments, which means suburb-level medians should be read carefully. A small number of transactions can shift the median where lot size, title timing, development stage and location vary. Nevertheless, the broader direction is clear: buyers are paying materially more for titled or readily developable residential land than they were two years ago.

- Townsville City vacant land recorded 100 sales in 2026 YTD / first half at a median of $345,000.
- The 2026 YTD median is approximately 37.5% above the 2025 annual median and approximately 58.3% above 2024.
- Active land sales include Burdell, Shaw, Bohle Plains, Bushland Beach and Julago.
- Construction costs and feasibility remain key constraints, but limited land availability continues to support pricing where buyer demand is established.
- The strongest land demand is expected to remain in growth-corridor and lifestyle/fringe locations where buyers can secure new-build or larger-lot outcomes.

Cairns

Dwellings

The Cairns detached hou sing market remains the premium mainstream segment, with the 2026 YTD median house price reaching $810,000. This reflects a further uplift from the 2025 annual median of $745,000 and is materially above the $655,500 median recorded in 2024.

The market is being driven by established family housing demand, lifestyle and coastal appeal, and the difficulty of replacing quality established homes at current construction costs. Activity is particularly evident through southern family-home corridors, beachside and northern beaches locations, and established inner suburbs where land supply is naturally constrained.

- The Cairns Regional LGA recorded 873 house sales in 2026 YTD / first half, with a median of $810,000.
- The house median is approximately 8.7% above the 2025 annual median and approximately 23.6% above 2024.
- The monthly house median remained close to or above $800,000 from December 2025 through May 2026, peaking at $837,500 in April.
- The highest-volume detached housing suburbs include Mount Sheridan, Edmonton, Kewarra Beach, Redlynch, Bentley Park, Gordonvale, Mooroobool and Trinity Beach.
- Selected strong-growth house results include Manoora, Whitfield, Westcourt, Machans Beach, Redlynch and Brinsmead, noting suburb-level results should be treated carefully where sample sizes are modest.

Suburb	2026 median	2026 sales	Growth vs 2025
Mount Sheridan	$760,000	61	10.9%
Edmonton	$748,000	54	11.1%
Kewarra Beach	$920,000	45	11.1%
Redlynch	$982,000	44	19.0%
Bentley Park	$755,000	39	11.9%
Gordanvale	$720,000	35	6.2%

Units

The unit and strata segment is a major component of the Cairns residential market and remains comparatively affordable against detached housing. Cairns Regional recorded 652 unit sales in 2026 YTD / first half, with a median of $465,000. This is above the 2025 annual median of $433,000 and significantly above the $370,000 median recorded in 2024.

Demand for units is being supported by affordability, investor interest, tourism-linked accommodation fundamentals and buyer demand for lower-maintenance property. Established units in inner, coastal and amenity-rich locations continue to appeal to investors, downsizers, first-home buyers and lifestyle purchasers.

- The Cairns Regional LGA recorded 652 unit sales in 2026 YTD / first half, with a median of $465,000.
- The unit median is approximately 7.4% above the 2025 annual median and approximately 25.7% above 2024.
- The highest-volume unit markets include Cairns North, Manoora, Woree, Cairns City, Westcourt, Trinity Beach, Parramatta Park and Edge Hill.
- Selected unit suburbs showing stronger growth include Mooroobool, Edge Hill, Parramatta Park, Cairns North, Earlville, Whitfield and Manoora.
- Affordability relative to detached housing should remain a key demand driver, although body corporate, insurance and short-stay/letting settings remain important considerations.

Suburb	2026 median	2026 sales	Growth vs 2025
Cairns North	$460,000	63	10.8%
Manoora	$394,000	44	9.1%
Woree	$314,000	40	4.7%
Cairns City	$650,000	37	4.5%
Westcourt	$405,000	35	7.4%
Trinity Beach	$535,000	31	0.9%

Vacant Land

Vacant land remains the thinnest of the three major residential segments, but values have continued to move upward. Cairns Regional recorded 98 vacant land sales in 2026 YTD / first half, with a median of $418,500. This is above the 2025 annual median of $369,000 and materially above the $290,000 median recorded in 2024.

Land supply in Cairns is structurally constrained by geography, established urban form, servicing requirements and the limited availability of larger-scale residential release areas. Where buyers can secure titled or readily buildable land in established growth or lifestyle locations, pricing remains well supported despite construction-cost and feasibility pressures.

- Cairns Regional vacant land recorded 98 sales in 2026 YTD / first half at a median of $418,500.
- The 2026 YTD median is approximately 13.4% above the 2025 annual median and approximately 44.3% above 2024.
- Active land results in the include Edmonton, Gordonvale, Mount Sheridan, Goldsborough, Bentley Park and Kewarra Beach.
- The segment remains highly sensitive to lot size, title timing, estate stage, location and individual transaction characteristics.
- Construction costs remain a constraint, but limited availability of residential land should continue to support pricing for well-located lots.

Suburb	2026 median	2026 sales	Growth vs 2025
Edmonton	$266,000	13	6.4%
Gordonvale	$365,000	10	25.9%
Mount Sheridan	$384,000	8	9.7%
Goldsborough	$425,000	7	23.9%
Bentley Park	$415,000	7	59.0%
Kewarra Beach	$482,000	6	3.9%
Trinity Park	$1,510,000	3	51.0%
Mooroobool	$340,000	3	19.3%

Conclusion

The first half of 2026 confirmed that North Queensland's residential markets remain firmly supported, with Mackay, Whitsunday, Townsville and Cairns all recording elevated pricing across houses, units and vacant land. Despite differences in market composition, the four regions continue to be shaped by the same underlying conditions: constrained supply, high construction and replacement costs, limited availability of well-presented established stock and sustained demand from owner-occupiers, investors and lifestyle purchasers.

Townsville and Cairns provide the greatest transaction depth, while Mackay continues to benefit from strong local economic confidence and limited available stock. The Whitsunday market remains more lifestyle- and tourism-oriented, with the unit sector emerging as a particularly strong performer. Across all regions, demand is increasingly focused on properties offering good presentation, practical accommodation, manageable holding costs and limited immediate capital expenditure.

Looking to the second half of 2026, market conditions are expected to remain positive, although the pace of value growth may become more measured as affordability constraints increase. Quality established homes are likely to remain the most competitive segment, particularly in well-located family, coastal and lifestyle suburbs. Units should continue to attract investors, first-home buyers and downsizers seeking a lower entry point than detached housing, although body corporate costs, insurance and rental returns will remain important considerations.

Vacant land is expected to remain the most variable segment. Limited titled supply may continue to support values in established growth areas; however, elevated building costs, construction timeframes and site-specific development constraints are likely to restrict buyer capacity and transaction volumes.

Overall, the second half of 2026 is expected to be characterised by continued buyer depth and limited supply rather than rapid speculative growth. While affordability and higher purchase costs may moderate the rate of price escalation, the underlying fundamentals suggest that North Queensland residential values should remain broadly stable to positive, with the strongest performance concentrated in well-positioned, functional and readily occupiable property.

The 2026–27 Federal Budget introduced the most substantial changes to residential property taxation in approximately three decades, including changes to negative gearing and capital gains tax treatment. The immediate effect has been increased investor caution, softer enquiry and longer decision-making periods, with early signs of a slowdown already evident across parts of the market. For North Queensland, the impact may be less pronounced than in highly leveraged capital-city markets due to comparatively stronger rental yields and persistent supply constraints; however, reduced investor participation is likely to moderate sales volumes and price growth, particularly for established investment-grade houses and units. While the policy may progressively redirect capital toward new housing, elevated construction costs, development feasibility constraints and limited delivery capacity mean any meaningful supply response is likely to take time.

For further property insights regarding Northern Queensland or a discussion about how Opteon can support you with our wide range of valuation and advisory services, please feel free to reach out.

Source: PriceFinder, accessed July 2026; RP Data (Cotality/CoreLogic), accessed July 2026.

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Mackay

Formal Qualifications

- Certified Practising Valuer
- Associate Member of the Australian Property Institute (API Member No. 104559)
- QLD Registered Valuer (QVRB No: 5047)
- Bachelor of Property – Central Queensland University (2019)

Industry Experience

Milly joined Opteon in 2025 and has been a registered valuer since 2019. As part of a full-service property consultancy supporting regional Queensland, she combines strong technical expertise with deep local market insight. Her valuation experience spans residential, rural, commercial, and industrial properties, with a strong focus on first mortgage security and family law matters. Milly also undertakes valuations for acquisition and disposal, insolvency, capital gains tax (CGT), and fringe benefits tax (FBT) purposes.

Based in Mackay and servicing the wider Whitsundays and Isaac regions, Milly is committed to delivering accurate, timely and practical valuation advice. She takes pride in building trusted client relationships and staying across the ever-evolving dynamics of the regional property market. Grounded in local knowledge and driven by a passion for client service, Milly provides valuation solutions that are compliant, reliable and genuinely useful.

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