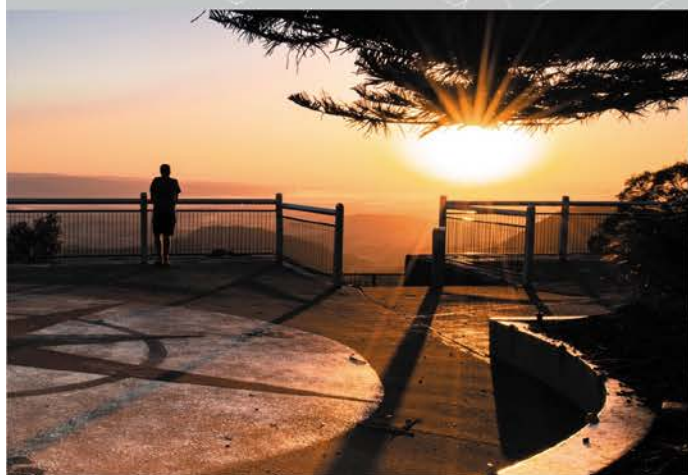


# Annual Report: Miles

Social and economic changes in Queensland's  
gasfield communities in 2017



## Research Team

Dr Katherine Witt, Simone Elias and Amy Hodson.

## Acknowledgements

This research report was prepared by the Centre for Coal Seam Gas, The University of Queensland.

The research team would like to acknowledge the assistance from Queensland regional community members who participated in research interviews as part of the research process.

## Disclosure/Disclaimer

This research was funded during Term 1 of the UQ Centre for Coal Seam Gas. During Term 1 the Centre was funded by The University of Queensland and the industry members— Arrow Energy, APLNG, Santos and Shell (QGC). Additional funding was also provided by industry members for research infrastructure costs. The Centre conducts research across Water, Geoscience, Petroleum Engineering and Social Performance themes. For more information about the Centre's activities and governance, see: <http://www.ccsq.centre.uq.edu.au/>

Researchers within or working with the UQ Centre for Coal Seam Gas are bound by the same policies and procedures as other researchers within The University of Queensland, and these are designed to ensure the integrity of research. You can view the policies at:

<http://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/4.-research-and-research-training>

The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research outlines expectations and responsibilities of researchers to further ensure independent and rigorous investigations.

This report has not been peer reviewed.

## Contact

Dr Katherine Witt

Research Fellow

The University of Queensland

Centre for Coal Seam Gas

St Lucia Qld 4072 Australia

E: [k.witt@uq.edu.au](mailto:k.witt@uq.edu.au)

W: [www.ccsq.uq.edu.au](http://www.ccsq.uq.edu.au)

W: [www.boomtown-indicators.org](http://www.boomtown-indicators.org)

Report published: 28 May 2018

CLX System ID: 149 365

ISBN: 978-1-74272-214-6

# The Miles CSG Development Story

The 'Miles CSG Development Story' was developed in consultation with key members of the Miles and district community and business organisations, including: real estate agents, motels and other local businesses, police, schools, welfare agencies, and local and state government staff.

The individuals participating in this consultation were asked to discuss and comment on statistical data on indicators of social and economic impact. These discussions provided a local point of view and insight into the Miles CSG Development Story, to be used in combination with the publicly available data. The following indicators were discussed:

1. Population
2. Unemployment
3. Income
4. Housing
5. Top offences recorded by police

Interviews were conducted in 2013 during the peak of the construction phase of CSG development, and again in 2017 and 2018.

Miles is seen by those interviewed to be a family-friendly town. Miles experienced rapid population growth first in 2008, with the arrival of non-resident workers (NRWs) in the area. In 2013, one interviewee noted that "9 out of 10 people we see on the street seem to be strangers". CSG development brought a marked increase in the apparent population, with 1 NRW for every 4 residents in Miles in 2013. Most of these CSG workers lived in camps outside town. After 2013, the number of NRWs in the town decreased as CSG activity began to wind down. In 2017 the number of NRWs increased for the first time since the 2013 peak. Also in 2017, Miles' resident population declined sharply by 12%, following a period of plateau after the CSG construction ended.

CSG development had the effect of significantly increasing average taxable personal income in the 2012/13 and 2013/14 financial years, bringing Miles' average income in line with the Queensland (QLD) average. Total business income increased six-fold from \$1M in 2012 to over \$6M in 2013/14. The number of businesses doubled from around 50 in 2009/10 to nearly 100 in 2011/12 and has remained stable at around 90 since then. Since CSG construction ended around 2013/14, both personal and business incomes have declined. Business incomes remain significantly higher than pre-CSG levels. The number of businesses was stable in 2017, however local insights suggest that many small businesses are "barely hanging on".

Interviewees expressed the view that the "boom" was not as beneficial to local businesses as expected, as local residents travelled to larger centres for spending. Businesses were also said to have lost workers to the CSG industry, with skills shortages evident between 2009 and 2013. Unemployment fell below 1% in 2013 and 2014, but has risen since. In 2017, Miles unemployment rate was 3.7%, remaining well below the Queensland average of 6.1% and in line with the town's pre-CSG trend.

House prices and rents in Miles have traditionally been lower than the median for the state or Brisbane. Increased demand from the CSG sector boosted rents above the state median in 2012/13. Some local residents were reported to take advantage of the escalating prices, and they sold or subdivided their block. There was an exceptionally high number of residential building approvals from 2012 to 2015. Departures of older, civically involved residents were said to contribute to a loss of social capital in the town. Volunteer numbers dropped. The higher rents were observed to cause residents with lower income levels to leave town. The quality of the housing stock has improved, but interviewees commented that there are now a lot

of empty houses. Since 2012/13 there has been a significant decline in sales, housing prices, and rents; results of an oversupply of housing. In 2017, residents had a general sense that Miles has “seen the worst” of its housing market crash, and expect that values and rents will begin to stabilise and increase.

The influx of mostly male CSG workers during the construction period is reported to have affected feelings of community wellbeing and to have caused a shift in town identity. Interviewees noted that women changed their socialising and exercise regimes. People drove their children to school instead of having them walk or ride, reportedly due to the presence of many strangers and increased heavy vehicle traffic.

Miles historically had a low crime rate, staying well below the state benchmark until 2010. Reported traffic, drug and good order offences spiked in the Miles Police District in 2013 and 2014, during the CSG construction phase. This upsurge may be attributed to new policing methods that were introduced in anticipation of impacts from CSG development, as police were more vigilant. A further spike in drug and traffic offences in 2016 saw Miles’ crime rate reach nearly double the QLD rate. In 2017, total crime in Miles remained at a similar level, however some noticable changes in offences occurred – drug offences halved while offences against property (including theft) increased significantly.

This booklet provides the ‘Miles CSG Story’ based on the range of priority indicators that we tracked. We would like to thank members of the Miles community for their warm welcome and the gift of their time. We hope that we have done justice to their contributions to this investigation.

*The UQ ‘Cumulative Impacts’ Research Team, May 2018.*





# Contents

<b>The Miles CSG Development Story.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>General Insights .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Indicators of Change .....</b>	<b></b>
1. Population .....	8
2. Employment .....	11
3. Income & Business .....	13
4. Housing.....	16
5. Safety & Wellbeing.....	19
 <b>List of figures</b>	
1a. Miles population and projection .....	9
1b. Resident vs. non-resident population – Miles.....	10
1c. Resident vs. non-resident population – Western Downs .....	10
2a. Unemployment rate .....	12
3a. Average taxable income .....	14
3b. Total individual earnings .....	14
3c. Total business income.....	15
4a. Median house sale price .....	17
4b. Median weekly rent.....	17
4c. New building approvals .....	18
5a. Total crime rate .....	20
5b. Traffic and related offences .....	20
5c. Other relevant offences – Miles .....	21
5d. Other relevant offences – Queensland .....	21
 <b>Appendices</b>	
A. Spatial boundary maps (SA2, UCL and postcode) .....	22
B. Miles rainfall (2002-2017) .....	23
C. Non-resident population projections – Western Downs .....	24
D. Project information .....	25

# Introduction

The University of Queensland commenced research into the social and economic impacts of coal seam gas (CSG) development in 2013. This research focused on the combined impacts of the multiple CSG developments in the Western Downs region of Queensland as an initial case study, and has now expanded to include other local government areas—Maranoa, Toowoomba, and Isaac. The research team uses publicly available statistical information regarding a number of key indicators that were selected in consultation with community members at the commencement of research. These statistics are combined with additional data gained through interviews with key community members, which provide insight into the factors that are influencing changes in the community. This information is gathered each year, and findings are reported for each town, sub-regions and the region as a whole. More information about the methodology is contained in Appendix D to this report. In this document we present the findings on the town of Miles.

The following acronyms are used throughout this report:

CSG	Coal seam gas
FTE	Full-time equivalent
LGA	Local Government Area
NRW	Non-resident worker
QLD	Queensland
SA2	Statistical Area Level 2
SA3	Statistical Area Level 3
SLA	Statistical Local Area
UCL	Urban Centre & Locality
WDRC	Western Downs Regional Council

## General insights

### 2017 summary

Presently, community spirit is reportedly deflated and social cohesion is strained. The community is still acutely aware of the impacts that have occurred since the peak CSG activity, including high stress, increased instances of behavioural issues at school, and marital and financial strain in households. Some individuals and groups within the community are working hard to identify opportunities to attract visitors and new residents to Miles to rebuild community spirit and develop new business and social initiatives.

### Community spirit:

- Presently, community spirit is reportedly deflated, and social cohesion is strained; “the town is more divided now than it was before CSG.”
- “Some people are hurting and want some sort of acknowledgement; others say to ‘just get on with it.’”
- There is high concern in the community about escalating behavioural and safety issues in schools, which reportedly include violence and drugs. “Many parents are now sending children to schools in Chinchilla.”

### Changed capability:

- Community views on changed capabilities are divided. Some feel that business and community capabilities have been either unaffected or diminished by CSG development in the area. Others suggest that some individuals and businesses have grown (e.g. negotiation skills, improved properties with CSG compensation money), but many have missed that opportunity due to dwelling on losses.
- During the construction phase, NRWs boosted volunteering capacity in the Miles community through event assistance and fundraising. The absence of these volunteers has been a loss to community groups.
- Several interviewees stated that those businesses that endured through the “bust” are now better equipped to exploit future opportunities, as they were forced to upgrade to best practice systems and processes, and have generally upskilled in interacting with large companies.

### Lessons learned:

- Communities should not expect the “boom” to endure; expectations need to be actively managed.
- Interviewees emphasised that CSG companies’ “local” procurement policies could be improved by transparently defining “local content” (so as not to unduly raise expectations) and endeavouring to include small operators in immediately local towns (such as Miles).
- Do not underestimate speculative and market influences, which triggered a property investment “boom” in many Western Downs towns.
- The link between mismanaged housing oversupply, falling rents, and increasing number of total offences needs to be investigated to address community concerns.
- The following factors were proposed as essential to good CSG corporate citizenship as the industry and community moves into a “coexistence” operation phase:
  - Being involved with schools and science education
  - Working collaboratively with communities to identify and deliver strategic activities
  - Living and procuring locally
  - Providing a go-to community liaison officer in the respective companies

# 1. Population

## 2017 summary

In 2016/17, Miles' resident population declined sharply by 12%, following a period of plateau after the CSG construction ended. The number of non-resident workers (NRWs) has increased for the first time since the construction phase. Low rents and affordable house prices may encourage population growth.

## Context

- Condabri Camp (400-bed) closed November 2017, transitioning its workforce into local communities.
- Australian Government's *Relocation Assistance* program remains active, providing financial incentive to long-term unemployed job seekers to move to regional towns with low unemployment rates.

## Trends reflected in the data

**Historical trend:** Miles has historically had a stable population, with average annual growth of 0.3% from 2001 – 2010. Prior to the Western Downs Regional Council amalgamation in 2008, Miles was previously the seat of government for Murilla Shire (which included Wandoan).

**During CSG construction period (2011 – 2014):** Miles experienced a 23% net growth in full-time equivalent (FTE) population (includes residents and non-residents) over this five-year period. From 2007/08, Miles saw an influx of NRWs in town; this was largely responsible for the town's overall growth. In 2012/13, a peak in NRW activity saw a population growth rate of 17%; well above the "boom town" threshold of 5 – 15% p.a. This equated to 1 NRW for every 4 Miles residents. In the same year, the resident population increased significantly (~8%). In 2013/14, growth had slowed back to 2.5% per annum.

**Since CSG construction period (2015 – 2017):** After an initial 8% decline when CSG construction ended, Miles' FTE population stabilised. However, 2016/17 saw a significant drop (12%) in residents; this was slightly offset by a small increase in NRWs.

## Community insights and perceptions

**During CSG construction period (2011 – 2014):** "Fluorescent work shirts". Most of the people interviewed thought the population was ~2,500 in 2013 (compared to 1,550 shown in chart 1b). One interviewee noted that at that time "9 out of 10 people on the street are strangers".

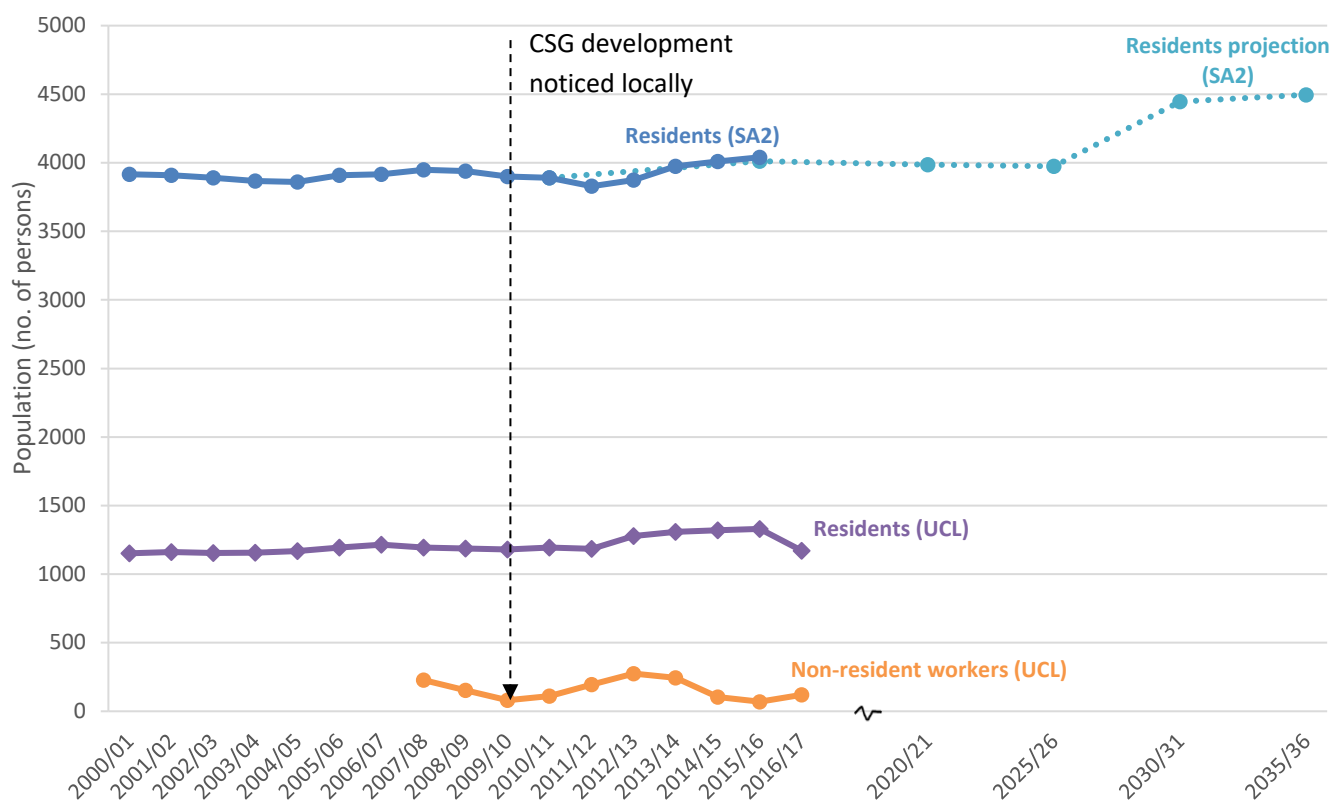
**Since CSG construction period (2015 – now):** Since construction ended, NRWs have left and there are empty houses. The rapid increases and decreases in NRWs have had a significant impact on the town's population and social dynamics. A new influx, this time low income families and individuals, have been attracted by low rents in Miles and government incentives. Some interviewees highlighted an "us vs. them" divide between long-term locals and these "transient" newcomers, who are perceived to not contribute to, or participate in, the community. It is generally perceived that people who moved to Miles for cheap rents are now starting to move away.

**Future expectations:** Some interviewees expect that majority of workers from the Condabri Camp will move to Chinchilla, not Miles. However, it is hoped that some direct and indirect benefits from the camp closure will flow into the Miles economy. Low rents and affordable house prices may encourage medium-term population growth.



# 1. Population

## 1a. Miles population and projections

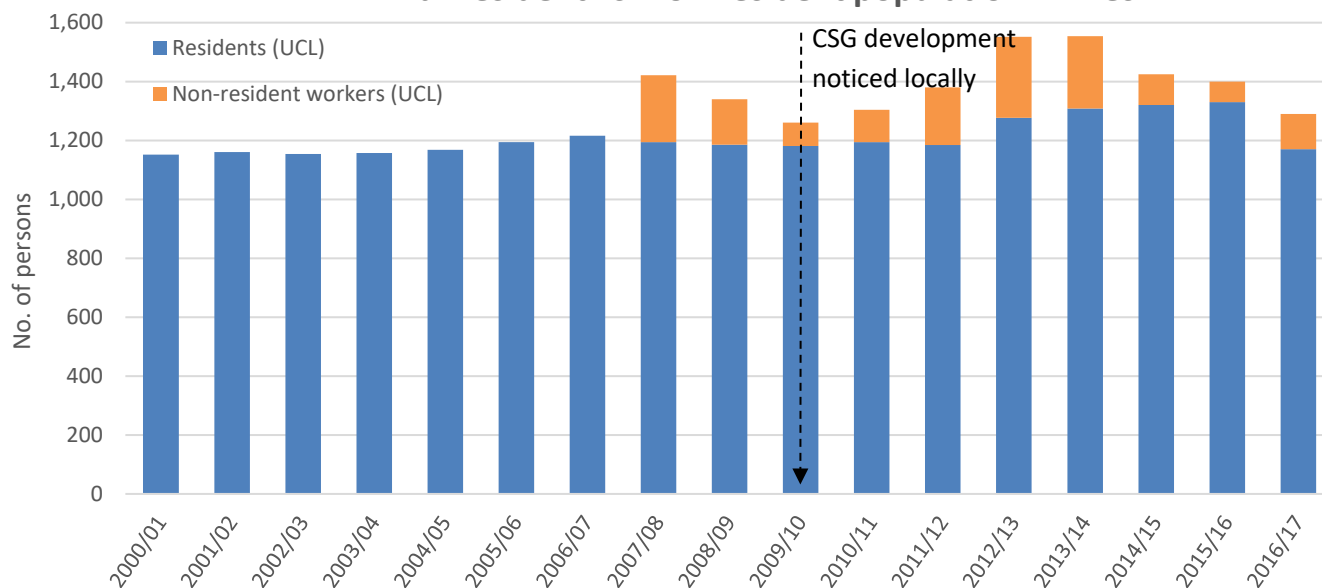


### Data notes

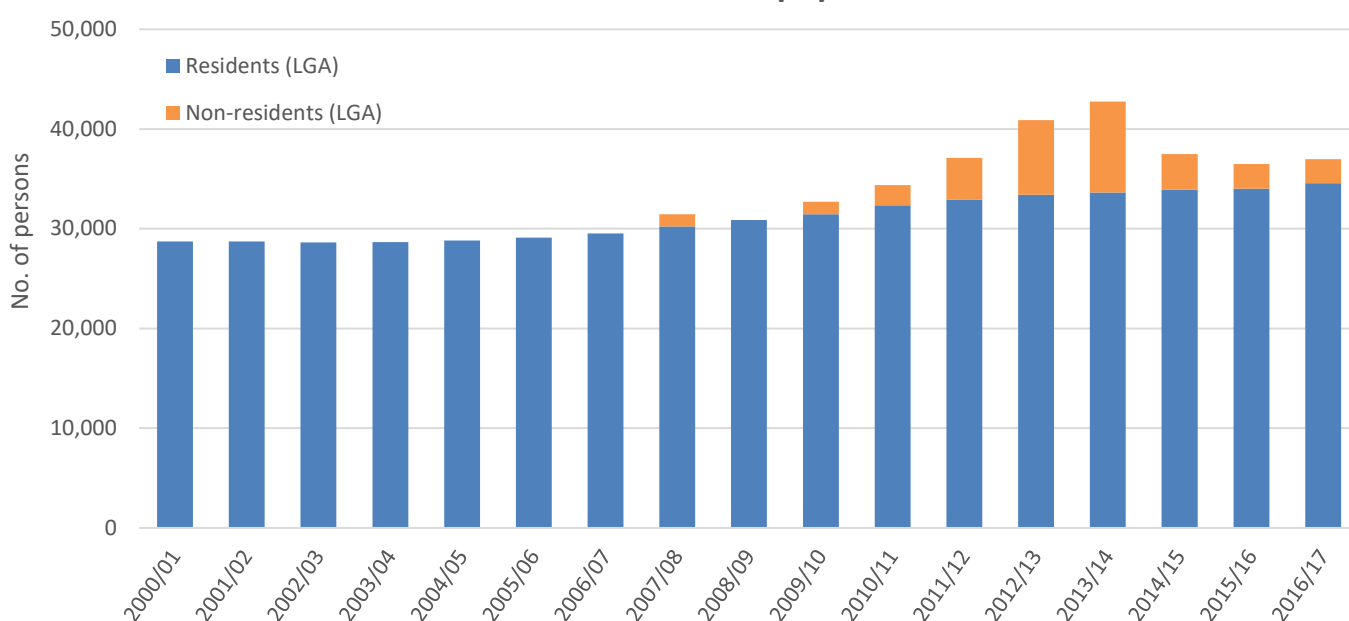
- UCL non-resident workers population estimate from QGSO 'Surat Basin Population Report' (ASGC 2016); 2017 version available here: <http://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/products/reports/surat-basin-pop-report/surat-basin-pop-report-2017.pdf>
- UCL resident population estimate from the QGSO table 'Estimated resident population (a) by urban centre and locality (b), Queensland, 2006 to 2016pr' (ASGS 2016), <http://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/products/tables/erp-ucl-qld/index.php>
- SA2 (Miles-Wandoan) population estimate from the QGSO table 'Estimated resident population by statistical area level 2 (SA2), Queensland, 2006 to 2016pr' (ASGS 2016), <http://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/subjects/demography/population-estimates/tables/erp-sa2-qld/index.php>
- Population projection (2015 edition) from QGSO table 'Projected population (medium series), by statistical area level 2 (SA2), SA3 and SA4, Queensland, 2011 to 2036' (ASGC 2001), <http://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/subjects/demography/population-projections/tables/proj-pop-medium-series-sa2-sa3-sa4-qld/index.php>
- NRW estimates do not include the many NRWs in camps outside town.

# 1. Population

## 1b. Resident vs. non-resident population - Miles



## 1c. Resident vs. non-resident population - Western Downs



### Data notes

- Source: Population and non-resident worker population estimates for UCL and Western Downs LGA from the QGSO 'Surat Basin Population Report' (ASGC 2016); 2017 version available here: <http://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/products/reports/surat-basin-pop-report/surat-basin-pop-report-2017.pdf>
- Data missing for 2008/09 non-resident worker population

## 2. Employment

### 2017 summary

Unemployment in Miles increased to 3.7% in 2017. It remains well below the Queensland average of 6.1%, in line with the historic (pre-CSG) relative trend, and falls within the 5% “full employment” threshold.

### Context

- Origin Energy is restructuring in 2018, cutting 650 jobs across Queensland (75 in Western Downs).
- Australian Government’s *Relocation Assistance* program remains active, providing financial incentive to long-term unemployed job seekers to move to regional towns with low unemployment rates.

### Trends reflected in the data

**Historical trend:** Historically, Miles has a low unemployment rate, well below the Queensland average. Miles’ economy is strongly linked to the state of its rural prosperity.

**During CSG construction period (2011 – 2014):** Unemployment fell from 3.1% in 2010 to below 1% in 2013 and 2014.

**Since CSG construction period (2015 – 2017):** Miles’ unemployment rate has steadily increased from 0.9% in 2014 to 3.7% in 2017. It remains well below the Queensland average of 6.1%, in line with the historic (pre-CSG) relative trend.

### Community insights and perceptions

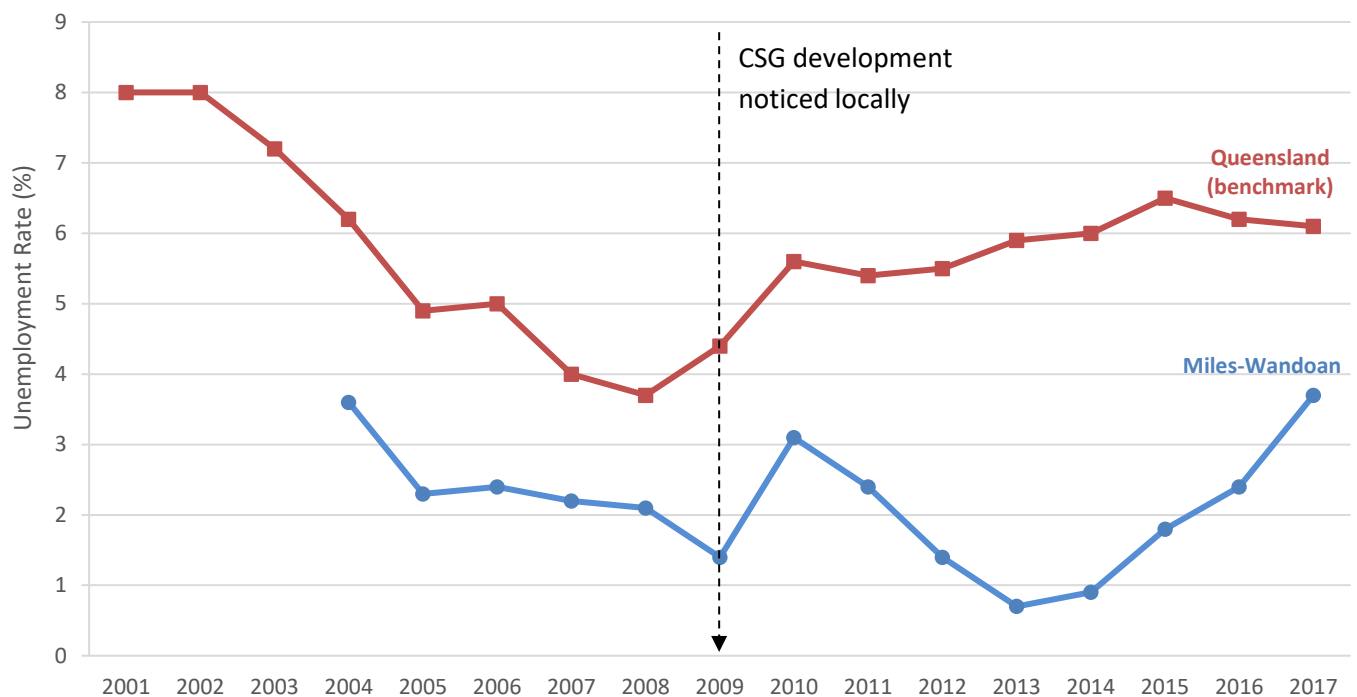
**During CSG construction period (2011 – 2014):** “Very low unemployment” made it difficult for local employers to keep staff or recruit new staff. WDRC had to undertake workforce planning and local business capability studies due to a labour and skills shortage. Those interviewed say that, during the CSG construction period, youth did not have to leave town to find work. Employment in the CSG sector may have offset unemployment in the agricultural sector due to drought.

**Since CSG construction period (2015 – now):** Most interviewees reported an influx of unemployed individuals and low income families in town, attributing this to Miles’ low rent prices and the Australian Government’s jobseeker *Relocation Assistance* program. A nationwide trend of agriculture restructuring was also said to be having an impact on unemployment in Miles. The 2018 Origin restructure is thought to have impacted 40 – 80 local workers.

**Future expectations:** A “tough growing season”, due to ongoing dry conditions, may contribute to unemployment in the near future. Some locals are hopeful that incoming renewable energy projects will provide local job opportunities.

## 2. Employment

### 2a. Unemployment rate



#### Data notes

- 2001-2008 based on SLA statistical boundary; Source: QGSO Regional Database Archived dataset 'Labour Force - Small Area (Qtr Ended 31 Dec 2002 to Qtr Ended 31 Dec 2008) [DEEWR, Small Area Labour Markets Australia] (ASGC 2001)', <http://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/products/tables/qld-regional-database/index.php>
- 2009-2010 data from DEEWR file 'Unemployment salm\_data\_files\_2008-2013'
- 2010-2017 based on SA2 (Miles-Wandoan) statistical boundary; Source: QGSO Regional Database dataset 'Labour Force - Small Area (Qtr Ended 31 Dec 2010 to Qtr Ended 31 Dec 2017) [Department of Jobs and Small Business] (ASGS 2016)', <http://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/products/tables/qld-regional-database/index.php>
- Prior to 2017, unemployment data is reported for financial years; e.g. FY2016 corresponds to July 2015 to June 2016

### 3. Income & business

#### 2017 summary

Both personal and business incomes have continued the post-CSG downwards trend in 2015/16 (most recent available data). However, both remain significantly higher than pre-CSG levels. The number of businesses is stable, however local insights suggest that many small businesses are “barely hanging on”.

#### Context

- Business and individual income lag a year behind other data due to ATO data reporting cycles.
- Since early 2016, 11 solar farms have been approved for development in the Western Downs LGA.

#### Trends reflected in the data

**Historical trend:** Personal income in Miles is consistently below the QLD average. Average incomes fell further below the state benchmark from 2004/05 to 2008/09, most likely associated with prolonged drought. Businesses (non-primary production) in the Miles postcode had a steady combined income of between \$500,000 – \$1M per annum from 2001 – 2012.

#### During CSG construction period (2011 – 2014):

Average personal income increased more rapidly from 2010/11, almost equalling the QLD average by 2012/13. Total business income for the town increased five-fold in a single year (\$1M in 2011/12 to over \$5M in 2012/13), reaching \$6M by 2013/14. The number of businesses doubled from around 50 in 2009/10 to almost 100 in 2011/12.

#### Since CSG construction period (2015 – 2017):

While Miles has seen a steady decline in number of businesses and total business income since the 2013/14 peak, the data indicates it has maintained a stepwise change. However, the noticeable change in total business income may be attributed to a small number of outlier businesses with high turnover. Average taxable income has steadily declined since 2013/14; however, it is still about 30% higher than before CSG activity was noticed in Miles.

#### Community insights and perceptions

#### During CSG construction period (2011 – 2014):

“Wages have boomed in the last five years.” Many businesses “geared up”, investing in upgrades. Some local businesses obtained CSG contracts, but while data shows that total income for local businesses did increase substantially, interviewees perceived that most “did not benefit”. “Local content” spending seen to be in Chinchilla and Toowoomba (and Brisbane) and not in Miles – community members recommended that companies clearly define “local content”, so as not to raise community expectations.

#### Since CSG construction period (2015 – now):

People are perceived to still be employed on the high wages that were driven by labour competition with CSG projects. Several interviewees reported that Miles businesses are struggling – many have folded, confidence is low, and there is strain as “everyone is trying to grab the available markets”, e.g. hardware store selling homewares, chemist selling gifts and jewellery, hairdresser selling clothes. Incomes of small local businesses are very low; one interviewee expects they are below 2000 levels. Some suggested that through lessons learned, there is “now a more formal way of doing business” in Miles.

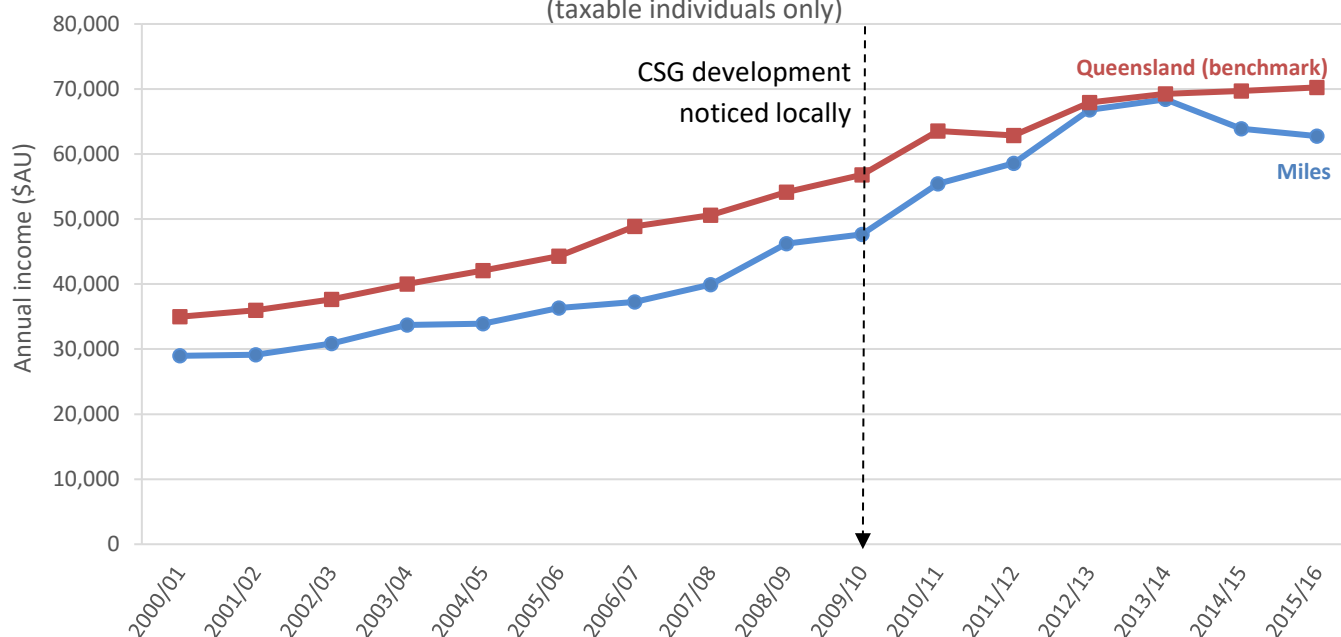
**Future expectations:** Some expect a “pick up” in activity in the next 12-18 months, with many development applications (for both conventional and renewable projects) in the works. However, there is low confidence in current CSG local procurement policies delivering significant opportunities for Miles.



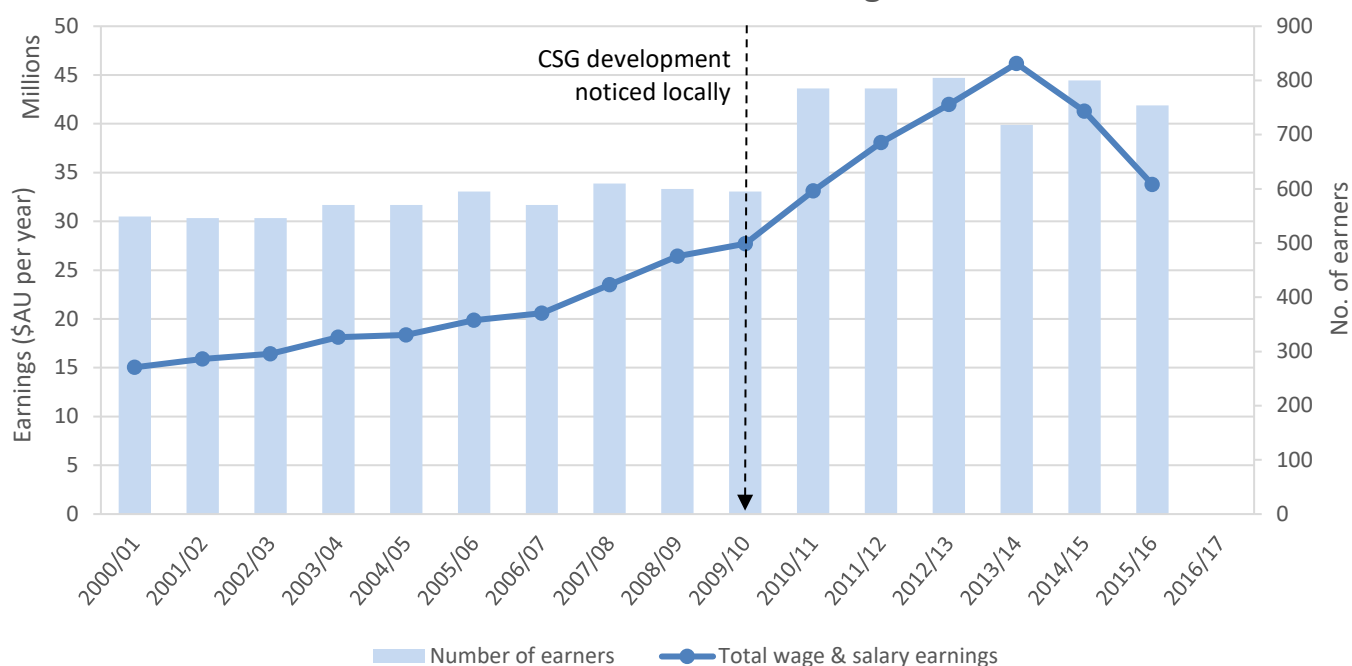
### 3. Income & business

#### 3a. Average taxable income

(taxable individuals only)



#### 3b. Total individual earnings

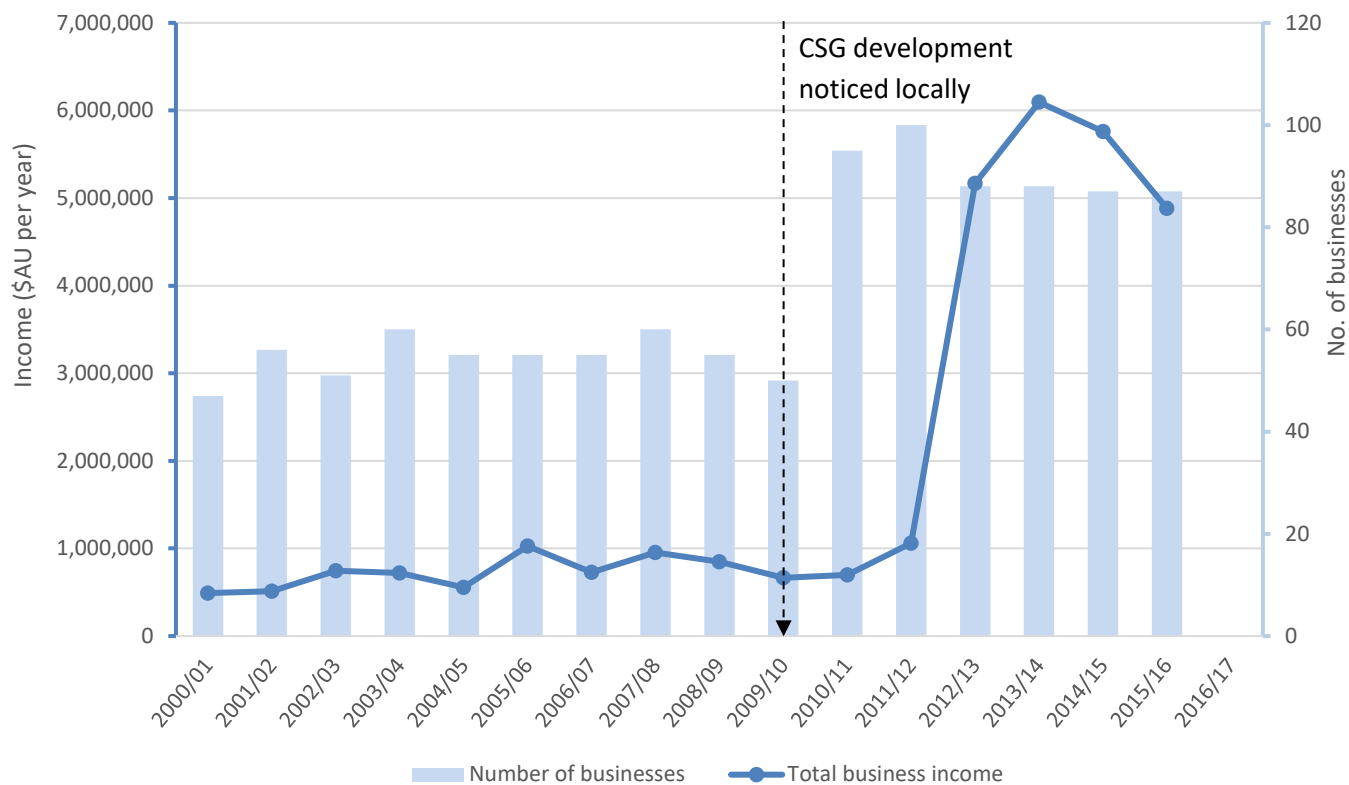


#### Data notes

- Source: Australian Taxation Office (ATO), Research and Statistics, <https://www.ato.gov.au/>
- Average taxable incomes reported by ATO until 2009 excluded losses. Averages from 2010 include all taxable incomes including incomes of zero and losses.
- Data relates to Miles postcode 4415
- Original data – no discounting applied
- Due to ATO data publishing cycles, 2016/17 data will be included in the 2018 Miles booklet

### 3. Income & Business

#### 3c. Total business income (non-primary production)



#### Data notes

- Source: Australian Taxation Office, Research and Statistics, <https://www.ato.gov.au/>
- Data relates to Miles postcode 4415
- Original data – no discounting applied
- Due to ATO data publishing cycles, 2016/17 data will be included in the 2018 Miles booklet

## 4. Housing

### 2017 summary

House and rent prices have fallen significantly; in 2017 they reached their lowest point since the record peaks of 2013 during CSG construction. Residents report that there are many houses available for purchase, and rental vacancies are filling. There is a general sense that Miles has seen the worst of its housing market crash, and that values and rents will now stabilise.

### Trends reflected in the data

**Historical trend:** Traditionally older, low cost housing available. House prices and rents historically sat well below QLD benchmarks, and were increasing in line with benchmark trends.

**During CSG construction period (2011 – 2014):** Median house prices in Miles continued a strong growth trend, increasing by 57% over this 4-year period, peaking in 2012/13. In contrast, the QLD benchmark declined by 17%. Strong demand from 2011 to 2013 prompted an historically unprecedented high number of residential building approvals – 127 in 2013 and 162 in 2014, compared to the previous record of 32 in 2007. Since 2013, however, demand fell dramatically. Median rent increased steadily until 2012 to the QLD benchmark (~\$350), then dramatically increased to \$550 the following year (2013).

**Since CSG construction period (2015 – 2017):** A sharp downwards trend in sale prices began towards the end of the construction phase in 2013/14; in 2016/17, median price is around one third of the “boom” peak. Since the 2013 rent peak, rents have fallen by 65% to pre-CSG levels, and well below the QLD average. Only 1 building approval was issued in 2017, down from the peak of 162 in 2014.

### Community insights and perceptions

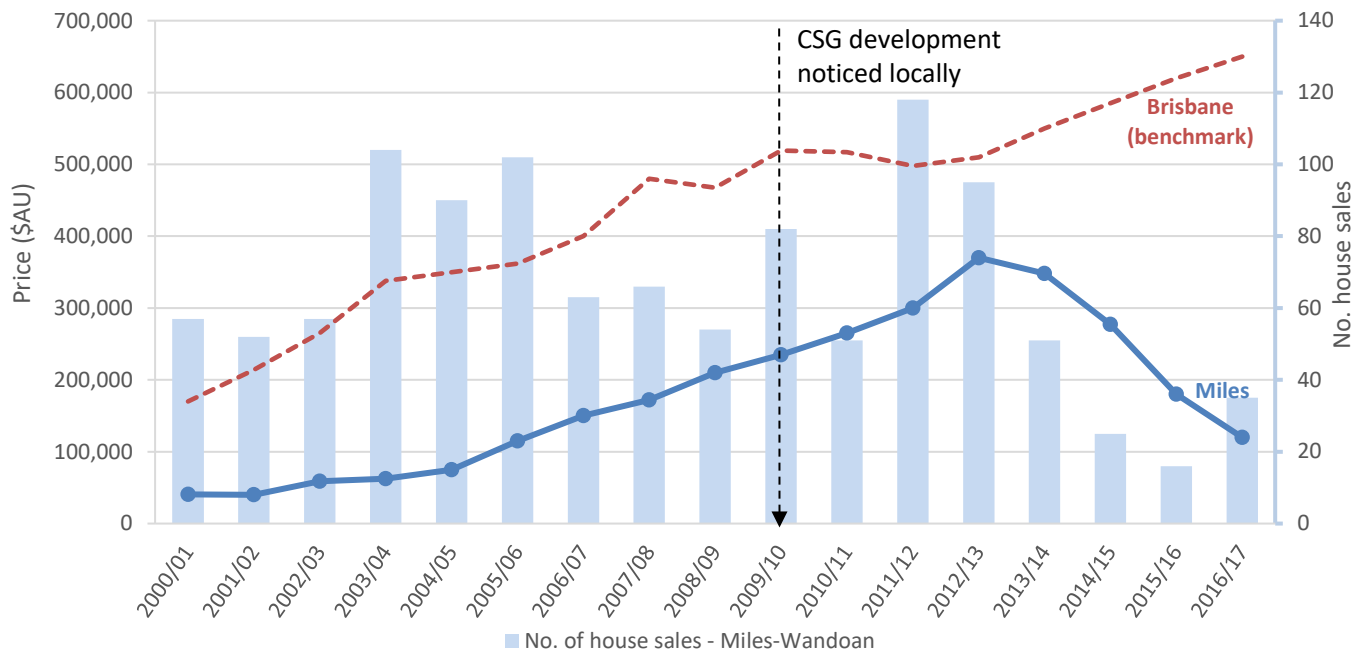
**During CSG construction period (2011 – 2014):** Some NRWs were initially living in houses in Miles, before majority were moved to camps outside town. CSG development caused prices to increase significantly, seen to be driven by “southern speculators”. “Severe lack” of affordable housing “caused lower income families to leave town”. Responses to housing impacts were too slow, with building approvals peaking near the end of the construction phase.

**Since CSG construction period (2015 – now):** The resulting oversupply of houses caused house and rent prices to drop. Consequently, there are many approved houses (including a new estate) that were never completed. “People who invested in real estate during the boom lost a lot of money”; some interviewees suggested that bank repossessions now account for a large proportion of house sales. There are reportedly many houses available at low prices, but it is difficult for young people to take advantage of this due to stringent bank lending terms for Miles (and other “blacklisted” Western Downs towns). Rental vacancies are filling. Low rent prices are perceived to be the main driver of a wave of new residents; this “transient” group has been associated by local people with other social problems.

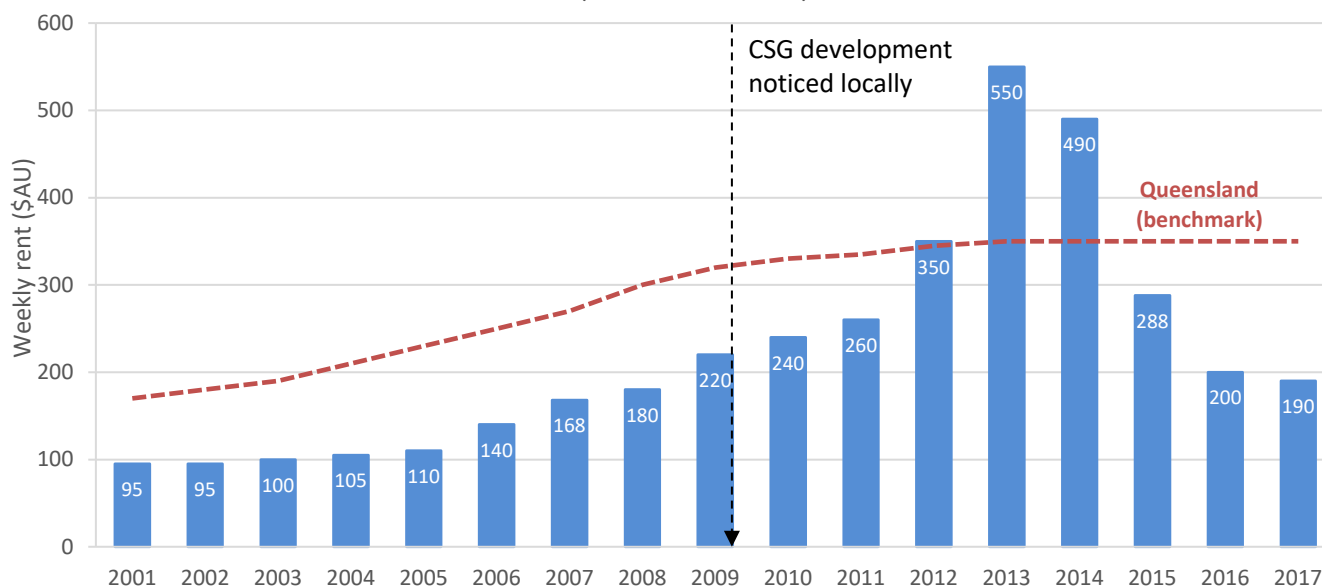
**Future expectations:** Some interviewees believe that house values have “hit rock bottom” and will now start to stabilise; bringing CSG workers out of camps and into town will help this. The low vacancy rate is expected to continue and may result in a rental shortage if some of the construction projects predicted for the region go ahead. This is expected to drive up rent prices.

## 4. Housing

### 4a. Median house sale price



### 4b. Median weekly rent (3-bedroom house)

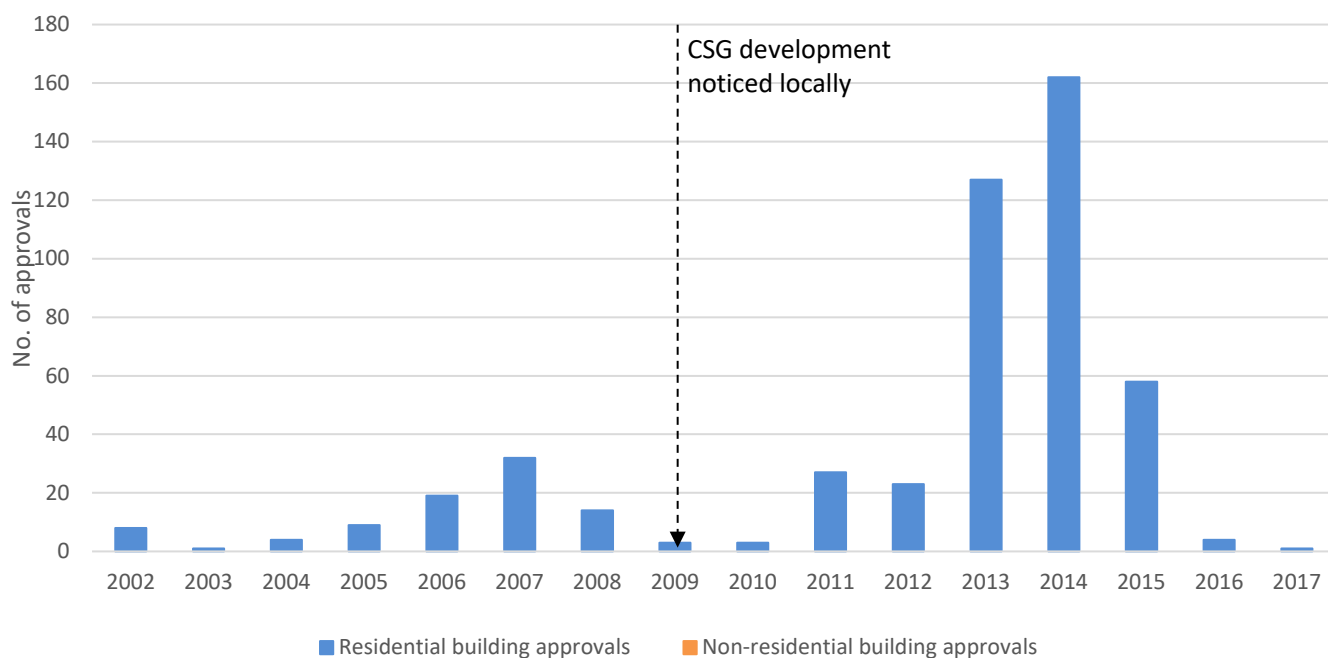


#### Data notes

- 4a source: QGSO Regional Database dataset 'Residential land and dwelling sales (Year Ended 30 Sep 2000 to Year Ended 30 Sept 2017) [DNRM] (ASGS 2016)', <http://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/products/tables/qld-regional-database/index.php>
- 4b source: QGSO Regional Database dataset 'Median rent (Year Ended 30 Sep 1990 to Year Ended 31 Dec 2017) [RTA] (ASGS 2016)', <http://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/products/tables/qld-regional-database/index.php>
- Data based on SA2 (Miles-Wandoan) statistical boundary
- Prior to 2017, rent data is reported for financial years; e.g. FY2016 corresponds to July 2015 to June 2016

## 4. Housing

### 4c. New building approvals



#### Data notes

- Source: QGSO Regional Database dataset 'Building Approvals (Jul 2001 to Dec 2017) [ABS 8731.0] (ASGS 2016)', <http://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/products/tables/qld-regional-database/index.php>
- Data based on SA2 (Miles-Wandoan) statistical boundary
- Approvals shown for private buildings only; public developments are excluded
- Private non-residential building approvals remained at zero between 2002 and 2017
- Prior to 2017, building approvals are reported for financial years; e.g. FY2016 corresponds to July 2015 to June 2016



## 5. Safety & Wellbeing

### 2017 summary

In 2017, total crime in Miles remains at nearly double the QLD rate, and approximately three times more than before CSG activity was noticed locally. Despite a significant decline in reported drug offences, this issue remains the primary crime-related concern for residents.

### Context

- Drug offences are perceived to be on the rise in all rural QLD towns.
- Crime statistics can be subject to significant variation based on factors such as police resourcing, enforcement and prevention strategies, and community awareness and reporting.

### Trends reflected in the data

**Historical trend:** Miles historically had a low crime rate, fluctuating between 46 to 87 offences per 1,000 people. This stayed well below the state benchmark until 2010.

**During CSG construction period (2011 – 2014):** In 2010, total offences spiked, with significant increases in traffic and drug offences. This settled to historic levels the following year, but continued to rise steadily from 2011 (59 offences per 1,000 people) to 2014 (130 offences per 1,000 people). Drug and traffic offences appear to be the main factors behind this upward trend, increasing over this period by 580% and 250%, respectively. Good order offences also increased. Total crime rate in Miles surpassed the QLD rate in 2013, and has remained above since.

**Since CSG construction period (2015 – 2017):** A further spike in drug and traffic offences in 2016 saw Miles' crime rate reach nearly double the QLD rate. In 2017, total crime in Miles remained at a similar level, however some noticable changes in offences occurred – drug offences halved while offences against property (including theft) increased significantly. Traffic offences declined by 38% between 2016 and 2017, yet remain high at double the state rate.

### Community insights and perceptions

#### During CSG construction period (2011 – 2014):

During the height of “excitement”, people “flooded in from other towns, treating it like a football trip and caring less because they don’t know people”. Sub-contractors were perceived as the “main offenders”. Increased good order crimes were said to be related to social activities (e.g. “drinking at the pub”). Women reported feeling less safe, and more roadside litter was noticed. More vigilant policing methods were driven by “expectations of CSG impacts”.

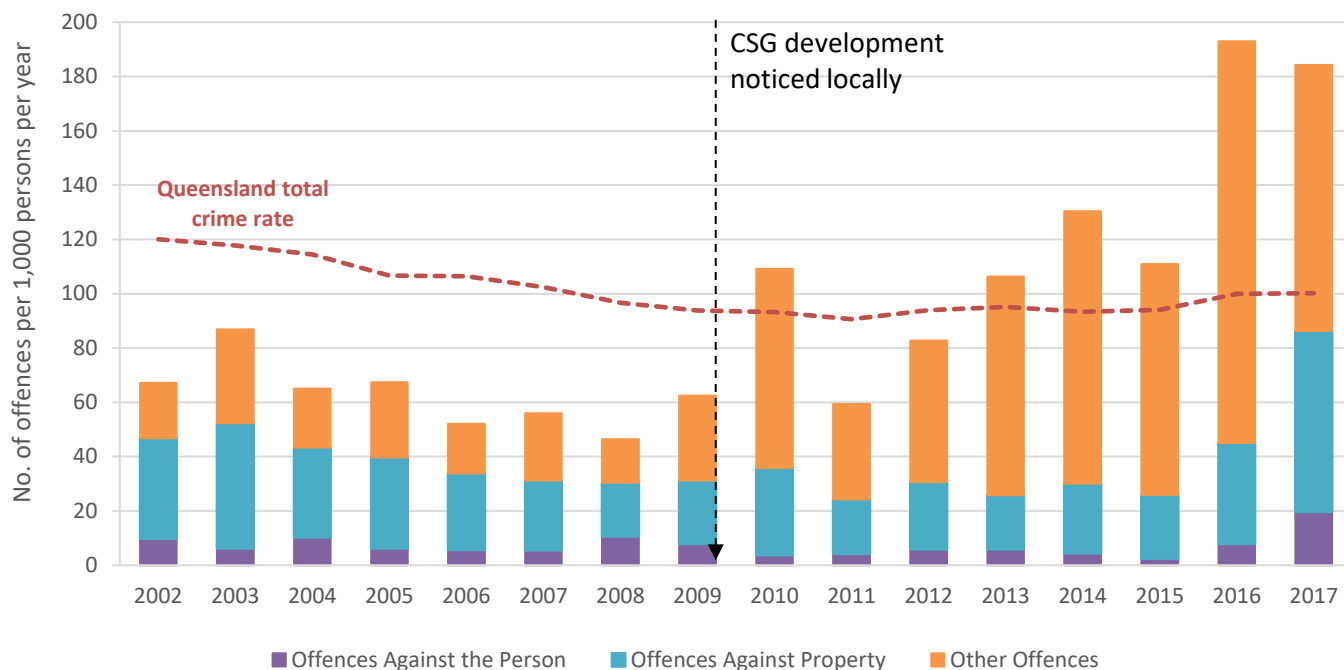
#### Since CSG construction period (2015 – now):

Residents expressed concerns about very low rents attracting “outsiders”, who are seen to be causing disruptions in schools and contributing to increased overall crime rates. Drugs issues are perceived to have increased, and are the primary crime-related concern for residents. Interviewees also reported domestic violence, property damage and theft as prevalent issues. A large 2016/17 police operation targetting drugs in Western Downs may explain the recent decrease in Miles drug offences. The 2017 decline in traffic offences was partially attributed to reduced traffic volumes.

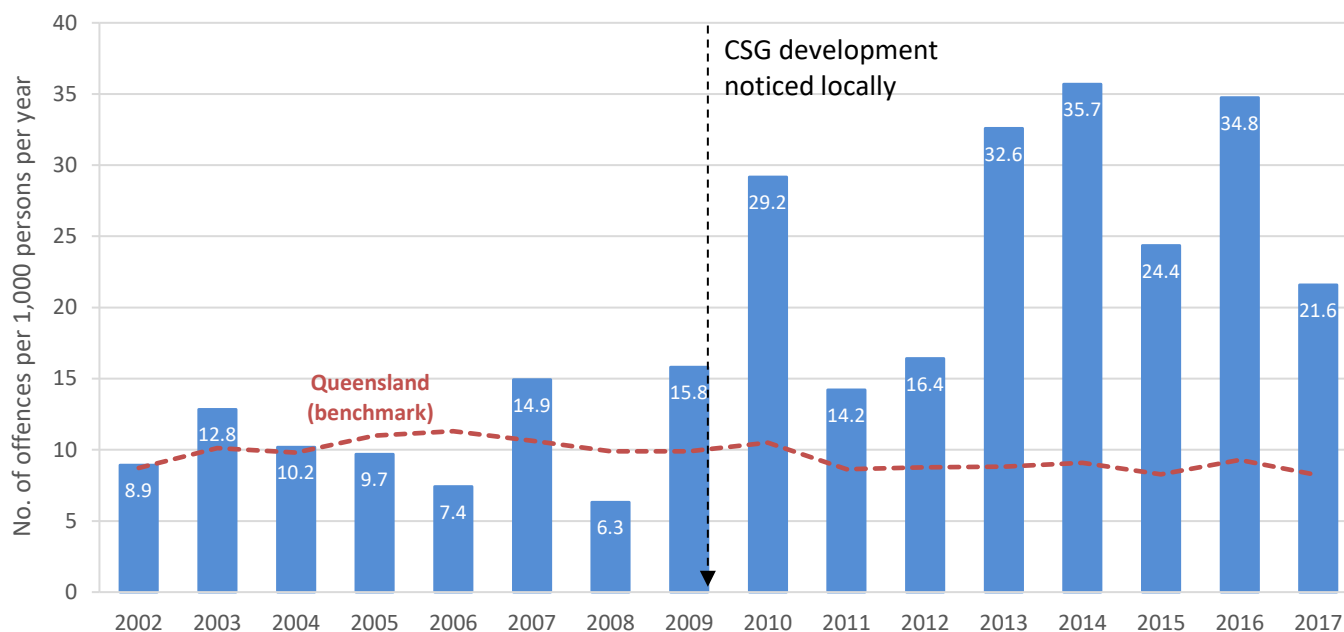
**Future expectations:** Drugs are perceived to be a growing problem, in Miles and QLD in general.

## 5. Safety & Wellbeing

### 5a. Total offences



### 5b. Traffic and related offences

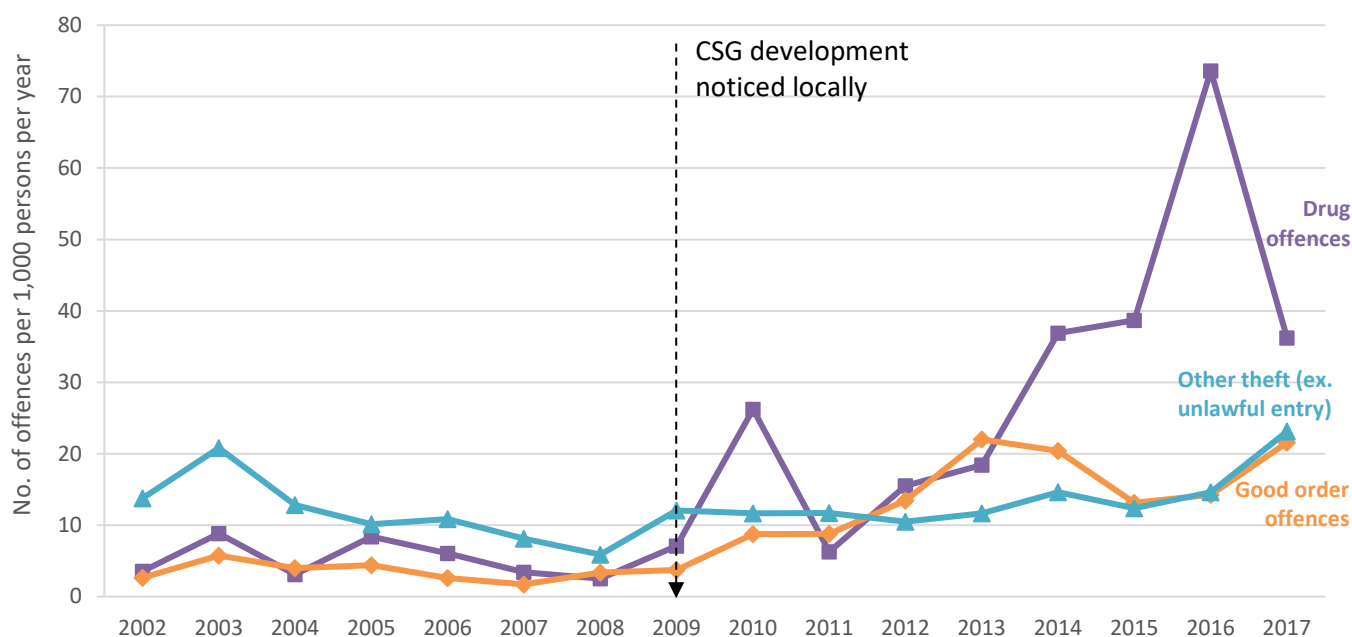


#### Data notes

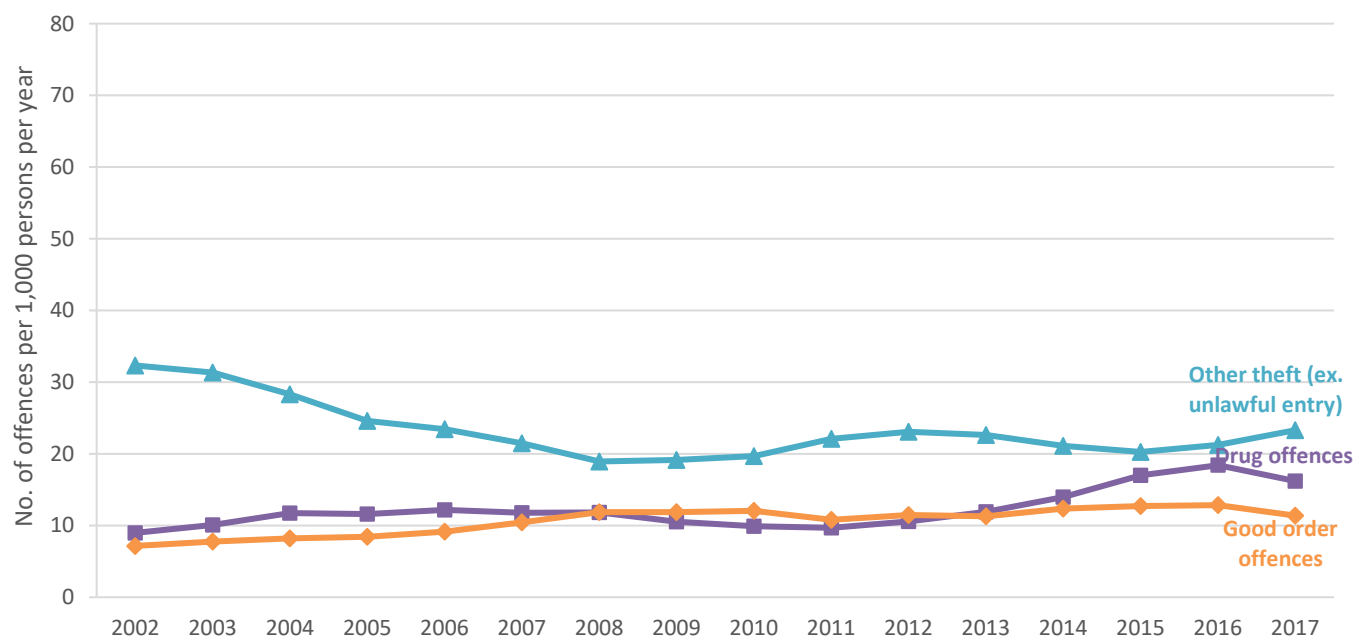
- Source: Queensland Police Service (QPS), <https://www.police.qld.gov.au/online/data/>
- Crime rate data (per 100,000 people) obtained by QPS Division and Queensland State; data was adjusted to be presented as number of offences per 1,000 people per year

## 5. Safety & Wellbeing

### 5c. Other relevant offences - Miles



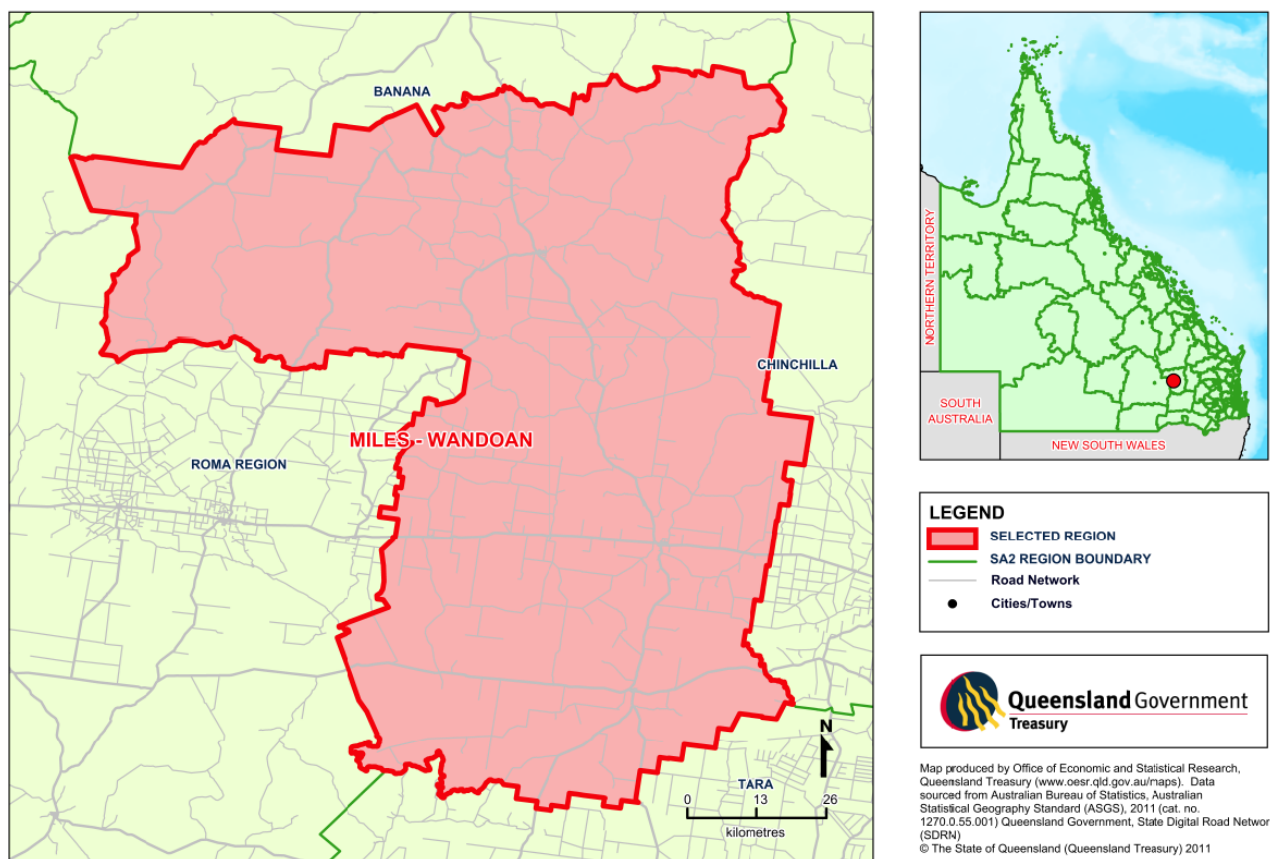
### 5d. Other relevant offences - Queensland



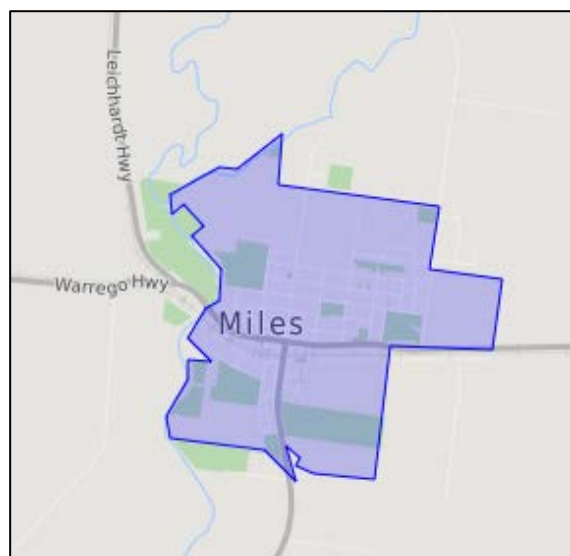
#### Data notes

- Source: Queensland Police Service (QPS), <https://www.police.qld.gov.au/online/data/>
- Crime rate data (per 100,000 people) obtained by QPS Division and Queensland State; data was adjusted to be presented as number of offences per 1,000 people per year

## Appendix A: Spatial boundary maps (SA2, UCL and postcode)



Miles – Wandoan statistical area 2 (SA2) boundary (2011, ASGS Code 307011175)

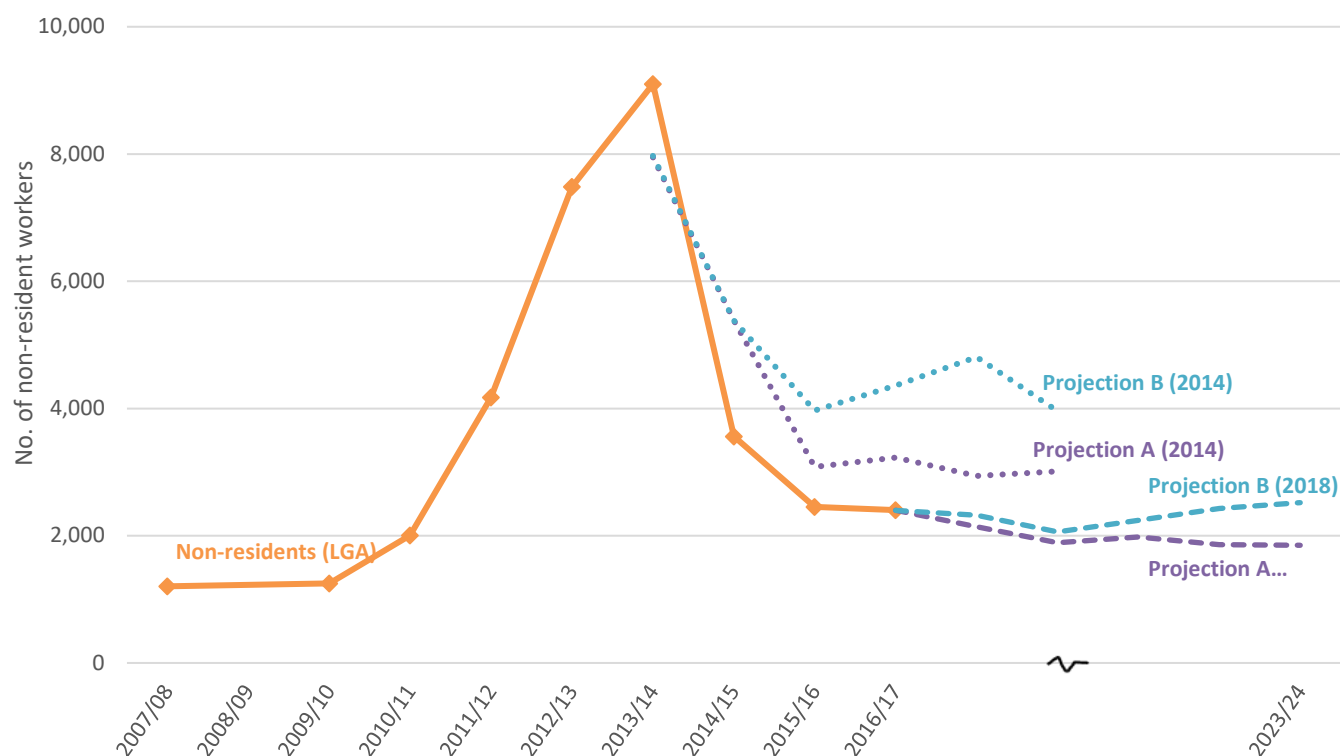


Miles UCL boundary



Miles postcode boundary 4415

## Appendix B: Non-resident population projections - Western Downs

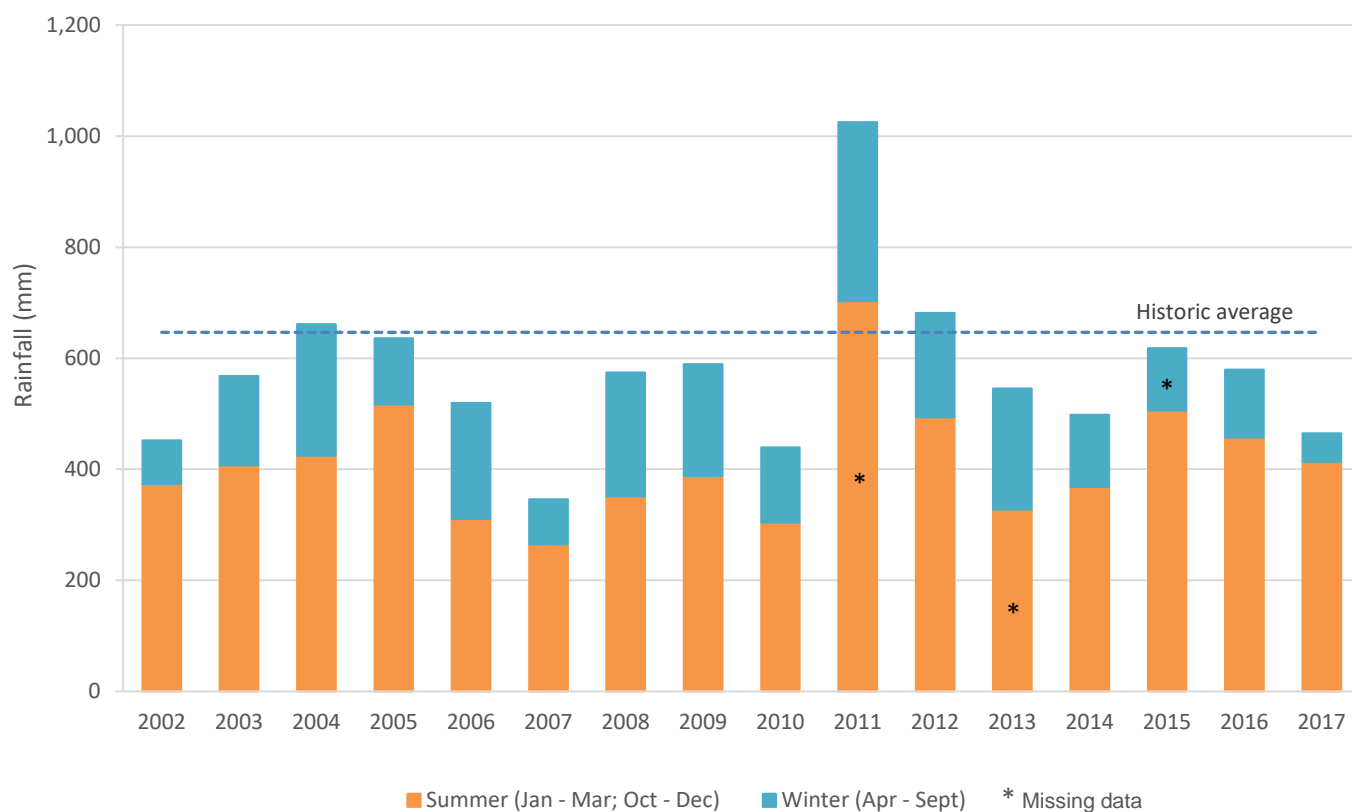


### Data notes

- Non-resident worker estimates by LGA from the QGSO 'Surat Basin Population Report' (ASGC 2016); 2017 version available here: <http://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/products/reports/surat-basin-pop-report/surat-basin-pop-report-2017.pdf>
- Non-resident worker projections (2018) by LGA from QGSO table 'Surat Basin: Non-resident population projections, by local government area (LGA), 2018 to 2024' (ASGS 2016), <http://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/subjects/demography/population-projections/tables/surat-basin-non-resident-pop-proj-lga/index.php>
- Non-resident workers projections (2014) by LGA from QGSO report 'Surat Basin non-resident population projections: 2014 to 2020', <http://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/products/reports/surat-basin-non-resident-pop-proj/surat-basin-non-resident-pop-proj-2014-2020.pdf>
- Series A projection is based on the number of non-resident workers on-shift who were engaged in existing resource operations and associated infrastructure activities in the area at June 2014. The projection takes into account future changes to those operational workforces as advised by resource company sources, as well as the estimated construction and operational workforces of Category A projects (i.e. those that are approved and have reached a financial close).
- Series B projection includes the Series A projection plus projected growth in the non-resident population arising from Category B projects (those that are approved but have yet to reach a financial close).



## Appendix C: Miles rainfall (2002 – 2017)



### Data notes

- Source: Bureau of Meteorology Climate Data online, <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/data/>
- Rainfall observations reported for Miles Post Office Rainfall Station
- Where missing data is indicated, gaps exist in daily rainfall observations

## Appendix D: Project Information

The University of Queensland is conducting research into the social and economic impacts of coal seam gas (CSG) development. The project has focused on the combined impacts of the multiple CSG developments in the Western Downs region of Queensland as an initial case study. That focus has now expanded to include other local government areas – Maranoa, Toowoomba, and Isaac.

### Research project history

- **Engagement:** People from the community, government and industry worked with researchers to identify the most important ‘indicators’ to monitor. This consultation process helped to develop a shared understanding of social and economic development in the community and created a framework for reporting and discussion.
- **Indicator monitoring:** The team identified ways to calculate and report the impact of multiple CSG projects against the agreed set of indicators.

### The research team

Dr Kathy Witt, Centre for Coal Seam Gas, The University of Queensland has led this research since May 2017 and joined the original project team in 2014.

A large team of researchers has contributed to this project since 2013, including:

- Assoc. Prof. Will Rifkin, University of Newcastle (previously led this project while working at The University of Queensland from April 2012 – April 2017)
- Dr Jo-Anne Everingham, Senior Research Scientist, Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining, The University of Queensland (CSRM).
- Ms Sarah Choudhury, Research Assistant, CSRM (2017) and Bec Colvin, (2016).
- Ms Sherylee Johnson, Research Technician, CCSG (2013-2016).
- Professor David Brereton, Associate Director, Sustainable Minerals Institute (2012-2016).
- Dr Vikki Uhlmann, Research Manager, CSRM (2013 -2014).
- Ms Kylie May, Research Analyst, CSRM (2013 – 2014).

**Reporting timeframes:** The data collection for the project has been occurring annually since 2013. Project outcomes, recommendations, and reports have been released periodically. The timeframe for some datasets, such as those from the Australian Taxation Office, lags behind the main data used in this report—this is due to unique data collection and reporting requirements of this agency.

**Ethics approvals:** This study has been cleared by the human research ethics committee of The University of Queensland in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's guidelines (Research Ethics clearance approval no. 2013000587).

**Questions:** Contact the lead researcher, Dr Katherine Witt  
Centre for Coal Seam Gas, Faculty of Engineering, Architecture and Information Technology,  
The University of Queensland, Brisbane, QLD, 4072  
M: 0418 619 341 | E: [k.witt@uq.edu.au](mailto:k.witt@uq.edu.au) | W: [www.ccsq.uq.edu.au](http://www.ccsq.uq.edu.au)

If you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact the Ethics Officer on 07 3365 3924.