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WHY ARE WE SO HAPPY?

Fraser Coast residents are officially the happiest in Australia, according to the latest research into the personal wellbeing of Australians.

The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index report showed that the federal electorate of Wide Bay has the nation's highest level of personal wellbeing, despite having one of the nation's lowest average household income levels.

According to the index, conducted by Deakin University, people are generally happier if they feel a strong connection with their local community and feel safe.

Author of the index Professor Bob Cummins from Deakin University said the research showed that community spirit was a key to high wellbeing.

"Money certainly helps, but these findings suggest that our relationships and connections with others certainly play an equal, if not greater role in feeling satisfied with our lives," Professor Cummins said.

Maryborough Mayor Barbara Hovard said the findings were pleasing but of no great surprise because Maryborough was a wonderful place to live and had a real sense of community.

"I think our sense of community is one of our greatest strengths. People care in Maryborough. We also have an affordable, relaxed lifestyle and great people so it is no wonder people are happy living here," Cr Hovard said.

People were asked how satisfied they were in seven broad areas of their lives, including their standard of living, health, relationships, achievements in life, safety, community connection and their future security.

Wide Bay residents scored above normal satisfaction levels in six out of the seven areas.

The report was compiled using data from the results of 13 past Wellbeing surveys.

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