

NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

The Barcoo Way region is based around the Barcoo River which flows north-west from Tambo in Central Queensland, before turning south towards Windorah. Tambo is 850km northwest of Brisbane, west of Bundaberg and the Carnarvon National Park, and north of Charleville. Towns along the Barcoo Way include Blackall, Isisford, Yaraka, and Windorah. A 156km-long railway line between Blackall to Yaraka was closed to trains in 2005.



PROJECT PURPOSE

Tilma Group were contracted with project partners JJ Strategic Consulting and Lucid Economics to develop a business case to determine the viability of using the defunct railway corridor as a multi-use rail trail (cycling, hiking, and horseriding) as a compelling tourism experience attracting adventure-seeking visitors to this unique part of Outback Queensland, and improving liveability for local communities.

This project was made possible by funding from the Department of Transport and Main Roads, and was a joint project of the Blackall-Tambo, Longreach, and Barcoo Councils as part of their membership in the Barcoo Way collaborative tourism initiative.

“Tilma Group were great to work with on the Barcoo Way - they have a wealth of tourism knowledge and an understanding of our remote region. The team was full of innovative ideas and suggests on how we can progress this project, and address the challenges and hurdles!”

- ALISON SHAW, ARTS & CULTURAL OFFICER, BLACKALL-TAMBO REGIONAL COUNCIL

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project established the

- feasibility of the rail trail
- stakeholder aspirations for the project
- market demand analysis
- strengths, challenges and opportunities (SWOT) of the existing infrastructure along the proposed trail to support visitor use and the trail's financial sustainability
- operational requirements for development, management and maintenance of the trail and any associated built infrastructure

The project outcomes were maximised by

- supporting product and events that will activate the new trail infrastructure and foster sustainable growth of the region
- giving voice to the locals, engaging the tourism industry, local communities and government on their aspirations for the project
- positioning the three local government areas to attract public and private sector investment to support sustainable development of the project
- The project approach was to consult with a broad range of stakeholders, review best practice case studies of similar successful rail trails, review the process of rail trail development, before synthesising learnings into a business case.

OUTCOMES

There is support for an approach of two phases, starting with product and experience development to grow visitation and demand, and then development of the rail trail, in full or in stages.

If both stages of the plan are developed, the rail trail will offer the following experience.

There is no other rail trail in the Queensland Outback, so there is an opportunity to have an experience that is not available in other destinations, but well-designed interpretation and quality product experiences alongside are critical to offer a sufficiently compelling experience. This is because the region does not have the advantage of stunning scenery (as with the Larapinta Trail in Alice Springs, for example), or easy conditions to cycle in, and closeness to source markets, as many other Australian rail trails have.



REFEREE

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