

TOURISM ACTIVATION PLAN

This region in Queensland's Central Outback has fewer than 5,000 residents but hosts more than 110,000 visitors annually, concentrated within five months to avoid the hot Outback summer. \$100 million-worth of tourism assets include the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame, Australian Age of Dinosaurs, Qantas Founders Museum and the Waltzing Matilda Centre, as well as award-winning experiences such as Outback Pioneers and Outback Aussie Tours.

PROJECT PURPOSE

Longreach Regional Council and Winton Shire Council wanted to ensure their existing tourism infrastructure would be optimised and new market and investment opportunities embraced to more evenly distribute visitation across the year. Establishing and maintaining a year-round visitor economy is fundamental for Longreach and Winton to attract future investment and grow business and community vibrancy.

The purpose of the Tourism Activation Plan is to

- ensure the region is ready for the growth being driven by their four major tourism attractions
- identify opportunities and target markets to grow visitation outside of the peak season to support year-round employment and the viability of local tourism businesses.



As a first for Outback Queensland, Longreach and Winton Councils collaborated to create an outcomes-based tourism strategy focused directly on the needs of their small rural communities.

Tilma Group used their extensive industry and stakeholder consultation experience to connect with and bring together the relevant stakeholders of the two councils to specifically focus on realistic results-driven projects whilst remaining pragmatic, friendly and engaging.

Throughout the project Tilma Group always ensured that the key stakeholders were engaged and kept fully informed at each identified reporting milestone.

Tilma Group have extensive regional and remote tourism experience and this was invaluable to creating a workable strategy with defined implementable projects that will benefit the tourism in Western Queensland in the years to come.

- RUSSELL LOWRY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM MANAGER, LONGREACH REGIONAL COUNCIL

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The development of a tourism activation plan for the region was a joint project between Tilma Group, JJ Strategic Consulting and Alphacrane Intercultural Specialists.

A project reference group of ten diverse stakeholders helped develop a comprehensive list of further stakeholders, and a gaps and opportunities paper based on a tourism and events audit of the region was shared with them to encourage their commentary.

The audit's findings and opportunities were discussed in one-on-one meetings with stakeholders in person and by phone. A workshop was held in Longreach which twenty stakeholders attended to discuss findings and aspirations, a potential vision for the region, and strategies required to activate the existing tourism infrastructure.

The resulting tourism activation plan outlines strategic priorities and required catalyst and enabler projects to deliver results immediately and in the medium to long term, with a framework and pragmatic approach to activating projects based on priority and consumer demand.

Catalyst projects were identified as those critical to the sub-region to reduce seasonality, attract high spend visitors and grow the visitor economy. Further enabler projects were recommended to deliver specific outcomes needed to ensure the success of the catalyst projects.

Working across local government borders presented some concern initially, however this innovative approach proved to be extremely successful. However changing staff throughout the life of the project presented a challenge, with CEOs replaced at both Councils and the resignation of the project leader at the end of the project.

OUTCOMES

This collaborative cross border plan has provided the Councils and industry with a clear roadmap on the priority projects to focus on. The plan was a catalyst for bringing industry together and supporting opportunities to undertake collaborative projects.

REFEREE

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