

VISITOR SERVICING RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

Tourism Central Australia (TCA) operates an award-winning visitor information service in Central Australia, with the Alice Springs Visitor Information Centre (VIC) as the service hub.

Technology has altered how travellers access information and make travel decisions. Visitor service providers must be proactive, adapting to engage visitors where and how visitors want to be served.

A new visitor services model was required to support convenient, relevant and innovative multi-channel access for visitors to Central Australia; maximisation of economic benefits; and collaboration amongst stakeholders.

PROJECT PURPOSE

In the context of increasing use of digital technology for travel planning, and declining funding for VICs, TCA wanted to ensure its visitor servicing model remains valued by visitors and industry stakeholders.

The purpose of the Visitor Servicing Recommendations Report was to identify the ideal visitor servicing options for TCA.

The report had to reflect the expectations of industry stakeholders, best practice in visitor servicing, the changing nature of visitor engagement, and the operating context.

Intentions that drove this work included

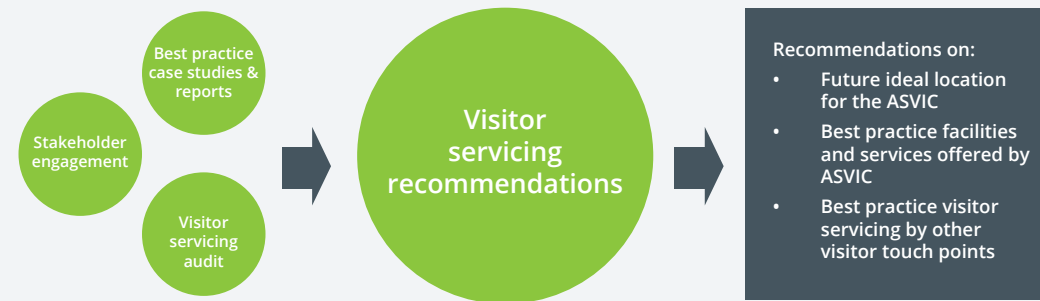
- Operating a commercially viable VIC
- Sustainably growing the visitor economy
- Maximising value for TCA members

I am very excited by this document. The consultants have gone above and beyond expectations, providing a far more detailed and region-wide report than what was in the scope, and in doing so have painted a very ambitious and exciting vision for visitor servicing across the Red Centre. This document will provide a great lobbying platform to expand our visitor servicing across the region and service the customer in the best way possible.

- STEPHEN SCHWER, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, TOURISM CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The approach to developing the report was:



Engagement was a critical element of the project to identify and prioritise visitor servicing needs, and the expectations of industry stakeholders, and to inform recommendations.

Key elements included one-one meetings with stakeholders to understand their needs and wants from visitor servicing, and the potential impacts of a new VIC location; and an online survey and use of social media to reach and gather the view of other stakeholders not otherwise engaged. Skype and phone meetings were used to deliver cost efficiencies.

The project

- identified and reviewed the visitor touch points across Central Australia
- audited the facilities and services provided by the VIC
- reviewed best practice visitor information centres and recent research reports in terms of the elements critical to contemporary visitor servicing
- built an understanding of current and future visitor markets
- reviewed the current VIC location and other potential location options in Alice Springs including co-location with the National Aboriginal Art Gallery and National Indigenous Cultural Centre
- identified gaps and opportunities for enhancement of visitor servicing in Alice Springs
- provided pragmatic recommendations to inform decision-making on the future of visitor servicing in Alice Springs
- identified important enablers for the delivery of best practice visitor servicing in Central Australia

Visitors have multiple touchpoints when travelling to and through a destination which influence the quality of the visitor experience and decision-making on what to see and do. The visitor servicing review for TCA highlighted the importance of visitor hotspots such as attractions and rest stops as key touchpoints beyond bricks and mortar visitor information centres, and the need for a consistent visitor servicing approach.



OUTCOMES

Based on a recommendation to service visitors further afield, TCA had discussions with the Northern Territory government about operating the Battery Hill Mining Centre and Tennant Creek Visitor Information Centre in Tennant Creek five hours north of Alice Springs. TCA is now managing the site under a short-term contract while long-term details are being finessed.

In Alice Springs, TCA is in the process of finding a new location for the Alice Springs Visitor Information Centre that would better meet visitor needs. A number of sites were assessed to see if they fit with the checklist provided in the report on what a best practice site for a visitor information centre would include. A couple of likely sites were identified, and TCA is now seeking funding for pre-feasibility studies that would outline the costs of using each site.

REFEREE

Stephen Schwer

CEO
Tourism Central Australia

0437 091 666
stephen.schwer@discoverca.com.au

discovercentralaustralia.com

TILMA
GROUP

www.tilmagroup.com.au