

# Gladstone Region Destination Tourism Plan

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2020 - 2025





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# 1. SETTING THE SCENE

## 1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

Recognising the importance of tourism to the region’s local economy, Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Ltd (GAPDL) reviewed the region’s Destination Tourism Plan (DTP), first implemented in June 2014, to ensure that it remains up-to-date and relevant, and to ensure that the region and all stakeholders are on track to grow tourism visitation, length of stay and visitor expenditure to the Gladstone region.

As a part of this review process, GAPDL implemented an extensive consultation process with the region’s tourism sector and key stakeholders in order to determine what strategic directions within the original DTP were still valid, and which directions/outcomes required changing. The aim of the revised DTP is to provide the framework and strategic direction for industry to work together to achieve targets and goals between 2019 - 2025.

It is proposed that the Gladstone Region DTP is then reviewed annually by GAPDL in partnership with other key stakeholders to measure its progress against the identified targets and strategies, and make necessary changes if required.

## 1.2 DTP REVIEW METHODOLOGY

The DTP review process involved a thorough consultation process with industry and key stakeholders, and included the following key steps:

### MOBILISATION

- Identification of key stakeholders.
- Desktop Review and Market Assessment.

### CONSULTATION

- Development and distribution of a Gladstone DTP Discussion Paper to key stakeholders, outlining current situation in comparison to 2014, and the strategies and goals developed in 2014.
- Consultation workshops with key stakeholders and industry facilitated within the Gladstone Regional Council area.

### STRATEGY IDENTIFICATION

- Incorporating stakeholder feedback to develop a first draft of the reviewed Gladstone Region DTP 2019 - 2025.
- Second round of consultation with key stakeholders, including Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) and the Department of Innovation, Tourism Industry Development and the Commonwealth Games (DITID) to discuss, refine and prioritise identified strategies for inclusion in the Gladstone Region DTP 2019 - 2025.

### DTP DELIVERY

- Feedback received assessed and incorporated into the final Gladstone Region DTP 2019 - 2025.
- Delivery of the final plan to GAPDL for implementation.



## 1.3 THE GLADSTONE REGION'S TOURISM ATTRIBUTES

Its stunning locations including access to Heron Island and the Southern Great Barrier Reef, Australia's most northerly surf beach, Agnes Water and town of Seventeen Seventy, proximity to National Parks and laid back coastal and rural hinterland lifestyles, make the Gladstone region an attractive destination for holiday makers and sea changers.

Gladstone itself is better known as one of Australia's major industrial and business centres playing home to many industrial and liquefied natural gas giants. Despite this the Gladstone region has also become a popular destination for holiday makers and sea changers alike.

The booming regional economy is underpinned by a healthy mix of manufacturing, mining, agriculture, mineral resources and energy industries. This economic stability, coupled with the idyllic natural surrounds of the Southern Great Barrier Reef, proximity to National Parks and the laid back coastal and rural hinterland lifestyles on offer in the region makes for the ideal destination for both visitors and life-style changers. The population of the region is set to double in the next twenty years from approximately 60,000 residents to 120,000 supported by the booming regional industries.

Gladstone Region has also in recent times established itself as a key destination in cruise ship itineraries leveraging Australia's East coast. In the 2018/19 financial year alone, Gladstone received visits from 9 cruise ships, including the likes of P & O Cruises, Carnival, and Holland America.

To the south, the Discovery Coast's Agnes Water and Seventeen Seventy are pristine coastal townships blessed by kilometres of superb beach overlooking the deep blue waters of the Southern

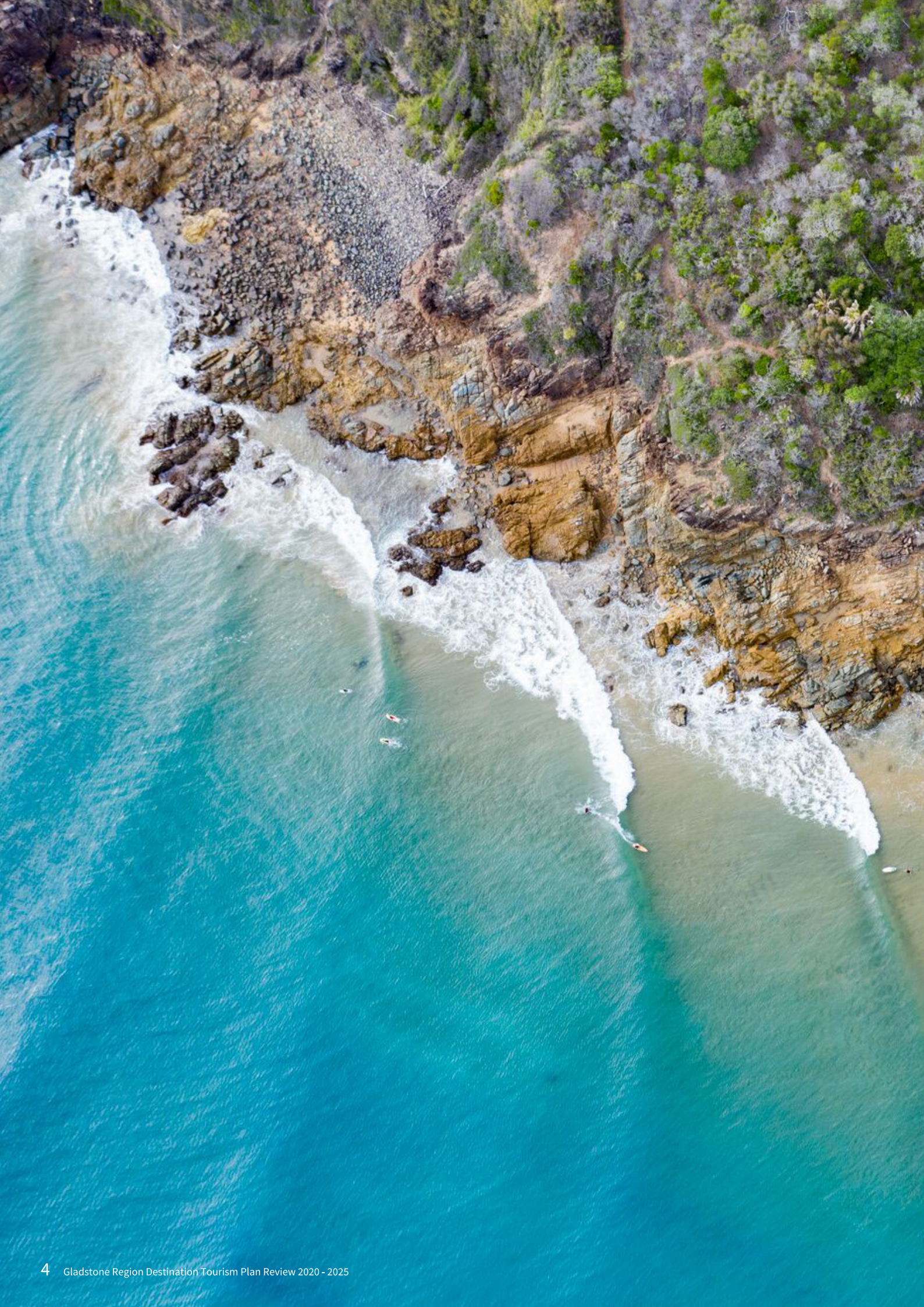
Great Barrier Reef. Famously known as the birthplace of Queensland, Seventeen Seventy was named after Lieutenant James Cook came ashore on 24 May Seventeen Seventy.

The Discovery Coast provides a key, coastal departure point for many reef trip operators and fishing charters to the Southern Great Barrier Reef. The untouched natural surroundings and the absence of commercialisation is what makes these locations so popular for residents and visitors alike. Agnes Water and Seventeen Seventy remain relatively untouched, exclusive and authentic Australian coastal communities.

As the most northern surf beach on Australia's Eastern coastline, Agnes Water continues to be a very popular destination amongst surfers who are seeking secluded, picturesque spots with unbelievable breaks - so much so that the destination has previously been voted into the 101 best beaches in Australia list. The area also offers safe swimming with beaches patrolled by lifesavers during peak seasons.

Whilst the destination offers significant natural assets, events also have the propensity to redefine Gladstone's regional identity. To reflect and celebrate its unique juxtaposition of the contrast of industry and pristine environment. In an increasingly competitive event market, Gladstone Region needs to further differentiate its events to create and reflect its unique locations and culture.

The region has good levels of access through the Gladstone airport. Gladstone Region enjoys direct flight services from Brisbane, with QantasLink and Virgin, and is also easily accessible via the Bruce Highway and via Rail.



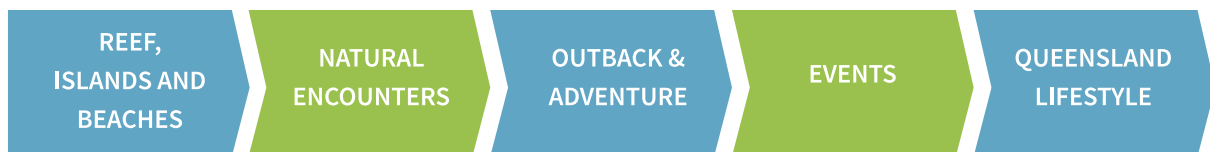


## 2. KEY TOURISM TRENDS

### 2.1 TEQ's EXPERIENCES FRAMEWORK

In 2016, Tourism & Events Queensland (TEQ) undertook comprehensive research in order to identify current consumer drivers. From this TEQ developed a consumer led, evidence based approach for a new marketing direction and refreshed brand architecture for Queensland, one which promotes Queensland as the master brand and showcases the hero experiences across the state's destinations, in order to deliver TEQ's vision to Market the Best Address on Earth.

Five experience pillars have been identified that are consumer oriented and based on categories identified by our research. They form the backbone of TEQ's creative strategy and are what TEQ is using to deliver messaging to consumers across the full breadth of channels and touchpoints. While each pillar is distinct and clearly defined, they all share a point of view that is unmistakably, quintessentially Queensland.

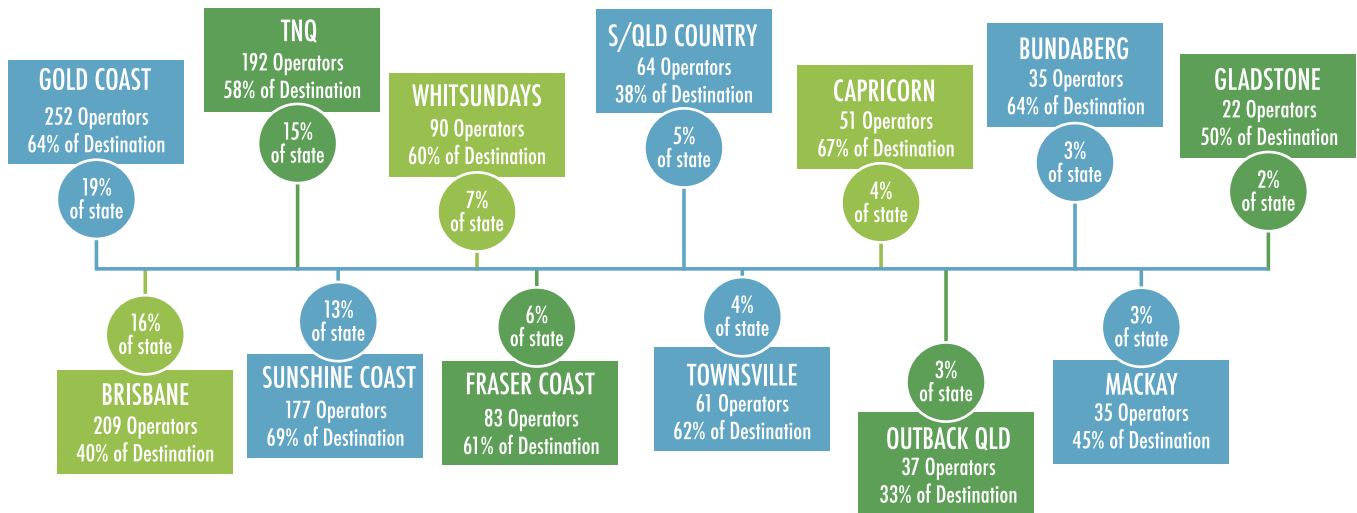


Queensland's experience pillars and hero experiences represent our competitive advantage and reflect what is unique and memorable about Queensland. Queensland tourism operators and events will bring to life the destination delivered approach by being the direct touch point with consumers, delivering the hero experiences to guests across the destinations and delivering authentic and truly memorable guest experiences.

For the first time, TEQ will be unashamedly promoting individual tourism experiences that align with these pillars, and that are high achieving, exceptional tourism products and experiences that are bookable, tangible products. To do this, TEQ has implemented the **Best of Queensland Experiences program**, to identify the best of the best tourism operators and events who will represent all that is great about Queensland. This program recognises and celebrates our leading tourism products and events who consistently deliver outstanding and world class experiences to our guests. TEQ has now commenced using these Signature Products and Events to promote Queensland, so that they are confident that we are inspiring people to experience the best address on Earth.

Despite the fact that the Gladstone Region has a lower volume of tourism product and experiences than other Queensland regions, the destination has outperformed others in that 50% of all the region's tourism products and experiences are classified by TEQ as being 'best in class' which is a positive result.

## Best of Queensland Experiences by Destination:



GAPDL will need to continue playing a key role in ensuring local tourism operators are provided with the skills, tools, and know how to work towards becoming a part of TEQ's Best of Queensland Experiences Program, with a particular focus on the Online Review, Online Booking, Social Media and Accreditation criteria, which show room for improvement for Gladstone Region operators.

## 2.2 HERO EXPERIENCES

Destination 'Hero Experiences' have been identified for each of Queensland's thirteen destinations and are considered to be the 'essence' of a destination. TEQ defines Hero Experiences as being:

- Those world class iconic experiences that provide a destination with a real competitive advantage over other destinations;
- Those experiences that focus on what is truly unique or memorable or engaging about a destination; and
- Those experiences which meet the needs of our target markets.

The Gladstone Region's 'Hero Experiences', launched in 2014 following extensive consultation with industry, include:

**THE SOUTHERN GREAT BARRIER REEF** - Walk straight from your private sanctuary on a secluded coral cay into the magical world of the Great Southern Barrier Reef where you can dive with marine locals.

**FISHING** - Treat yourself to the ultimate fishing experience, combining the quest for Barramundi in some of Queensland's top inland fishing spots and spectacular deep sea fishing in the Southern Great Barrier Reef.

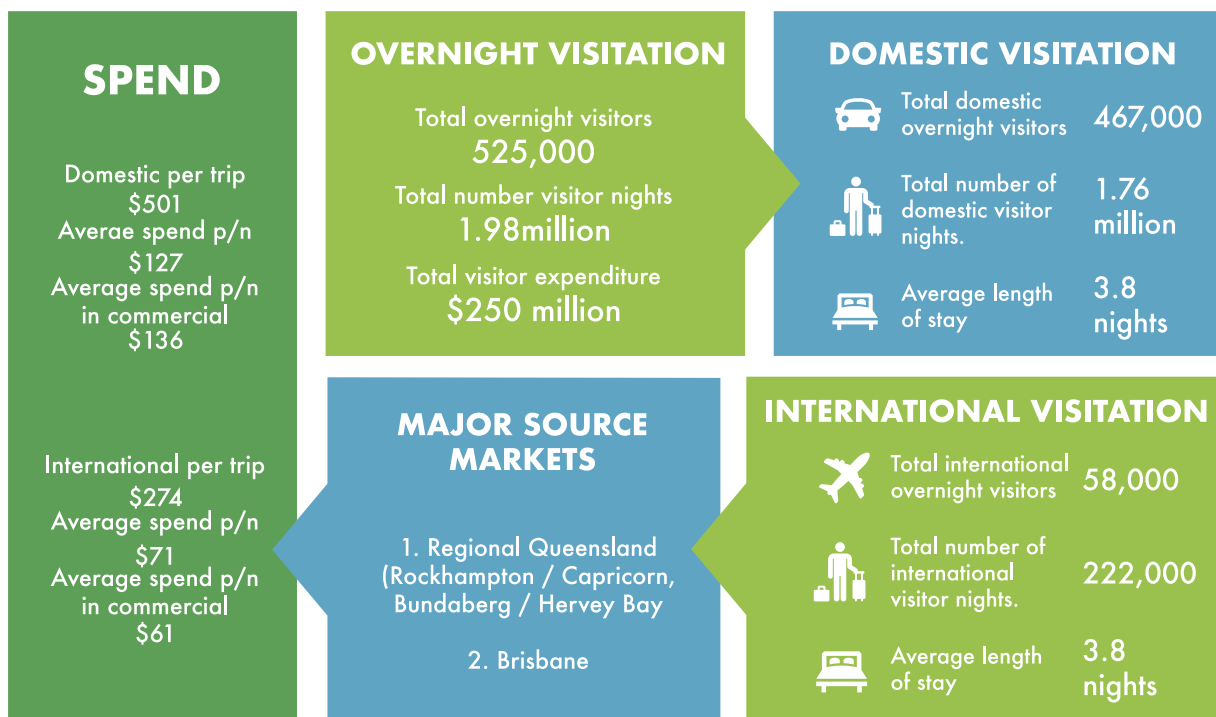
**REGIONAL CHARACTER** - Explore towns and country experiences where man, machines and Mother Nature have joined forces in this unique region to power Queensland and provide a healthy outdoor lifestyle.

**BEACH CULTURE** - Join locals as they enjoy a laid back and un-crowded beach lifestyle in coastal communities.

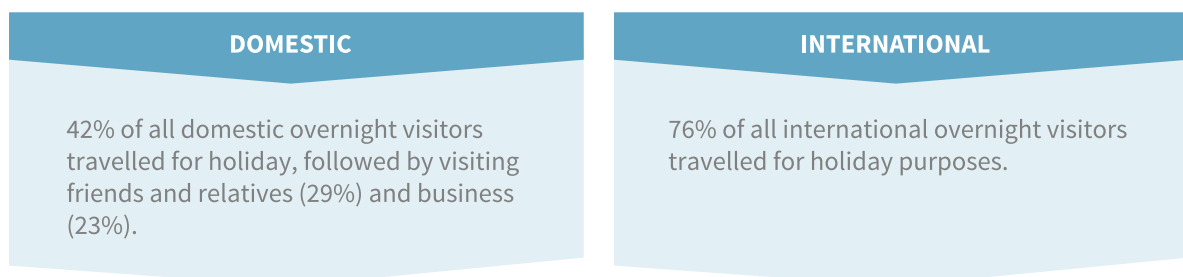


## 2.3 CURRENT VISITATION AND PERFORMANCE

The following infographic summarises the current (year ending June 2019) travel trends for the Gladstone region.



In the year ending December 2017:



SOURCE: Gladstone Region Destination Tourism Plan 2014 - 2020, TRA Local Government Area Profiles 2017, TRA Online.





## 2.4 NATIONAL TRAVEL FORECASTS

### DOMESTIC

In 2019–20, increases are forecast for domestic visitor nights, up 2.5% to 362 million nights, and day trips up 3% to 204 million trips. Domestic travel costs, particularly for accommodation in capital cities are also likely to remain high, while continued low growth in domestic air capacity could result in higher airfares in 2020–21. One positive area is the strong likelihood that petrol prices will remain at current levels. As economic growth picks up through 2020–21, and the Australian dollar remains near its long term average, domestic tourism activity should increase, with domestic visitor nights up 2.5% and day trips up 3%.

Over the 10 years to 2026–27, day trips are projected to increase at an average annual rate of 2.9%, while domestic visitor nights will grow at an average annual rate of 2.2%. ABS projections suggest that as more of Australia’s large baby boomer population (1946 - 1964) become older than 75, they will travel far less in the coming decade, which is in contrast to the previous decade, where baby boomers were a major driver of growth in domestic travel.

When considering travelers of all ages, increases for both day trips and overnight travel are still expected.

### INTERNATIONAL

**Tourism Research Australia** - Australia’s peak body for national tourism research, produces an annual **Tourism Forecast Report** through the expertise of a Tourism Forecasting Reference Panel. The Tourism Forecasts 2017 report states that over the next two years, international visitor numbers to Australia are expected to increase from 10.3 million in 2019 - 20 to 20.8 million in 2020 - 21 and 11.4 million in 2021 - 22. **Asia** will continue to outperform other overseas markets over this period. The total number of Asian visitors is expected to increase from 4.2 million in 2019 - 20 to 4.5 million in 2020 - 21 and 4.9 million in 2021 - 2022. Countries making the largest contributions to growth from Asia will be:

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	% change
China	1,778,000	1,993,000	2,232,000	25.4%
Japan	512,000	529,000	546,000	6.6%
Singapore	469,000	514,000	531,000	13.2%
South Korea	332,000	342,000	353,000	6.3%
Malaysia	475,000	499,000	525,000	10.5%
India	368,000	400,000	433,000	17.6%
Hong Kong	299,000	310,000	322,000	7.7%

Asia will account for close to 55% of all international visitors to Australia during 2021 - 22, compared with 52.6% in 2019 - 20.

Growth prospects for Australia's largest traditional markets are mixed. Visitor numbers from the United States (US) are expected to continue growing strongly – up 10.9% from 912,000 in 2019 - 20 to 1.01 million in 2021 - 22. Visitation from the United Kingdom (UK) in 2020 - 22 is forecast to grow 6.7% to 849,000, and New Zealand (NZ) will experience below-average visitor growth relative to most other markets, increasing from 1.49 million in 2019 - 20 to 1.58 million in 2021 - 22, growth of 5.7% over the two years.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	% change
New Zealand	1,498,000	1,540,000	1,583,000	5.7%
USA	912,000	961,000	1,011,000	10.9%
United Kingdom	796,000	823,000	849,000	6.7%
Germany	240,000	248,000	256,000	6.7%
France	140,000	146,000	151,000	7.9%
Canada	187,000	193,000	199,000	6.4%
Other Europe	598,000	613,000	628,000	5%

Over the longer term, Australia will continue to have a high proportion of its visitors from the top five inbound markets – China, NZ, the US, the UK and Singapore. Collectively, these five countries are forecast to provide almost two-thirds (62%) of the additional 6.5 million arrivals expected in 2026 - 27. Around 2.6 million, or a 40% share of these additional arrivals, will be from China.





## 2.5 GLADSTONE REGION TRAVEL FORECASTS

**Growing at approximately 3.4% per annum**, the Gladstone Region is predicted to reach approximately 548,000 overnight visitors in 2022, with a total overnight tourism expenditure of \$326 million.

This continued growth is expected to generate 585,000 overnight visitors by 2025, with total overnight expenditure of \$348 million.

These estimates are based on the latest visitor growth rates for overnight domestic and international tourism by Tourism Research Australia's 2017 Tourism Forecast Report. These estimates are also based on national and state growth (due to Gladstone Region specific forecast data being unavailable), and therefore we can assume that the Gladstone Region will follow these estimated growth rates. As a result, these forecast figures should be treated as 'natural growth' in the context of national averages.

Reaching these forecast projections would mean that in 2022, the Gladstone Region would see:

- An additional 69,000 overnight visitors;
- An additional 333,000 nights;
- An additional \$41 million in overnight visitor expenditure.





### 3. THE VISION

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The vision for the Gladstone Region is:

*Develop its leisure and business experiences to their full potential to enhance the liveability and tourism appeal of the destination.*

#### GOALS AND DESTINATION PRIORITIES

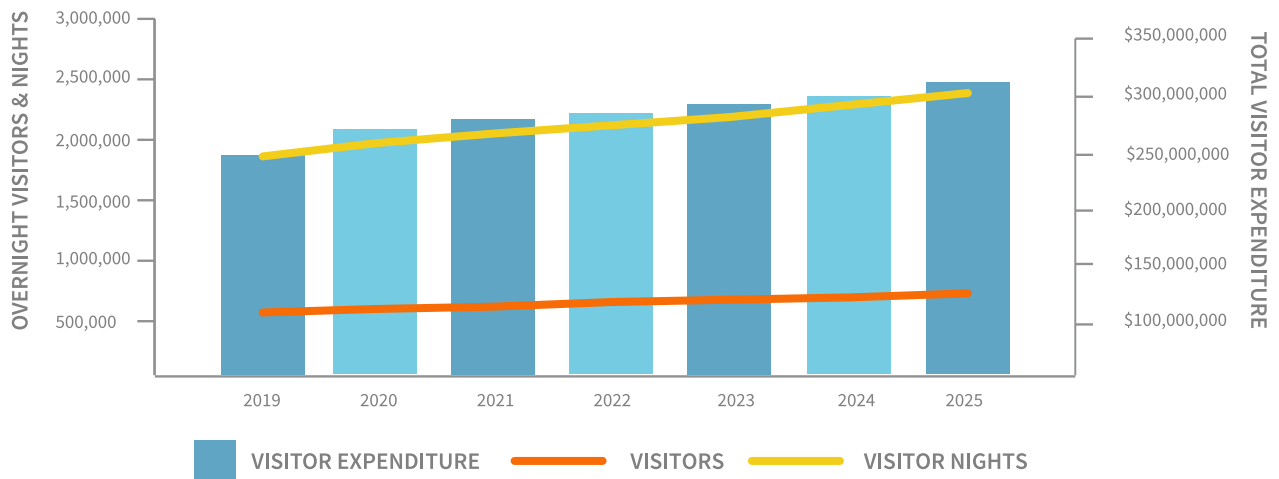
To work towards achieving the above vision, there are several goals that will be worked towards to achieve the targets as listed below. These goals include:

- Firmly establish the Gladstone Region as part of the Southern Great Barrier Reef as a destination for easy enjoyment of reef, beach, bush and adventure experiences by continuing to work closely with neighbouring RTOs under the Southern Great Barrier Reef (SGBR) banner, and by working closely with local tourism operators to further develop their domestic and international 'readiness', and to develop industry leading visitor experiences.
- Work with/develop product to position the Gladstone Region as a leading outdoor, fishing, adventure and camping destination by working with existing product and tourism operators to upskill, empower and assist them to build world class visitor experiences, and by attracting new tourism products and experiences to the region.
- More effectively target and leverage the 400km radius drive market, and facilitate the more effective dispersal of visitors throughout the Gladstone Region and the SGBR by establishing a drive strategy which builds the case for better signage, the development of touring routes in the SGBR and Gladstone Region, and the generation of content for marketing initiatives to drive visitation, length of stay and spend.
- Establish the Gladstone Region as a key strategic port for Queensland for the Cruise Industry by continuing our positive working relationship with TEQ, with existing cruise line partners, and by targeting new airline partners and developing on the ground tourism product and experiences to add to cruise ship itinerary schedules.
- Establish the Gladstone Region as a recognised destination in the MICE market incorporating a strong events program that will assist in driving increased visitation to the destination, and also assist in raising the profile of the Gladstone Region as a leisure destination.



## 4. TARGET 2025

The Gladstone Region is predicted to grow at a rate of approximately 3.4% per annum leading to the year 2025, generating 640,000 overnight visitors by 2025, with total overnight expenditure of \$305 million (based on Tourism Forecasting Committee National Growth Estimates). **GAPDL aims to exceed the overnight expenditure amount to a total of \$400 million, in overnight visitor expenditure by the year 2025 through a number of specific strategies (outlined below).**



## TARGET MARKETS

The natural environment, particular being a key access point to the SGBR, is a key driver behind visitation to the Gladstone Region. Some of the primary activities participated in by travellers when they visit the Gladstone Region include 'Visiting National Parks', 'Bushwalking', 'Going to the Beach (and swimming)' whilst 'Visiting Friends and Relatives', and 'Eating Out at Restaurants' remain the most popular activities visitors undertake whilst in the destination.

Following stakeholder consultation, and following the extensive consumer based market research conducted by TEQ, the Gladstone Region will pursue the following target markets:

## PRIMARY MARKETS

PRIMARY MARKETS	
	400km radius Self drive/short break market within Regional Queensland (Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Mackay, Emerald, Sunshine Coast);
	Fly/drive market (Brisbane);
	Key international markets including New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Europe, and North America, targeted through the ongoing Southern Great Barrier Reef initiative.

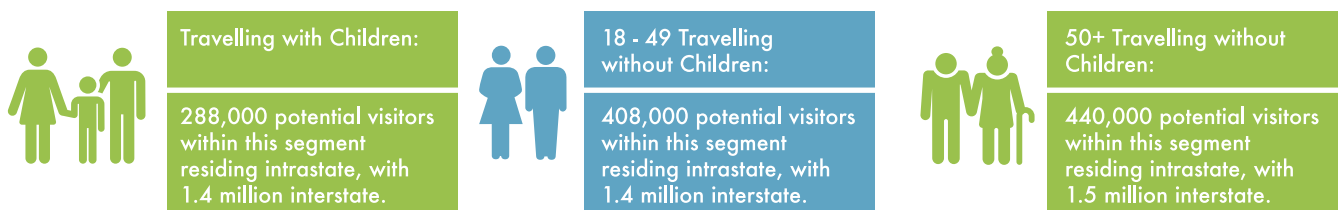
  

SECONDARY MARKETS	
	Business Events/MICE markets;
	Special Interest Markets - Fishing, boating, cruise, yachting, diving etc;
	Sporting Events - Regional and State focus.
	New and developing markets such as China, to be targeted through the Southern Great Barrier Reef initiative.

## HIGH VALUE TRAVELLERS (HVT)

Tourism and Events Queensland recently undertaken some segmentation research which has identified the ideal domestic visitor segment as being the High Value Travellers (HVT's) segment. High Value Travellers engage in domestic leisure (holiday or visiting friends and relatives) travel and spend more than the average traveller on leisure trips (>\$2000 per trip, or \$300 per night for shorter trips).

There are three main HVT segments which should be targeted when it comes to domestic visitors, and these segments include:



Source: TEQ Domestic High Traveller Profiles, May 2018

## 5. DESTINATION PRIORITIES

The following section highlights the destination’s priorities and their related strategies that are recommended to be implemented by key stakeholders in order to assist in achieving the destination’s 2024 visitation targets.

The importance and urgency of the strategies shown below have been placed into different ‘priorities’. These priorities include:

**M** = Must (implemented within 1 - 2 years)

**S** = Should (to be implemented between a 2 - 5 year window)

Strategies are reviewed and updated annually as part of GAPDL’s annual planning process.

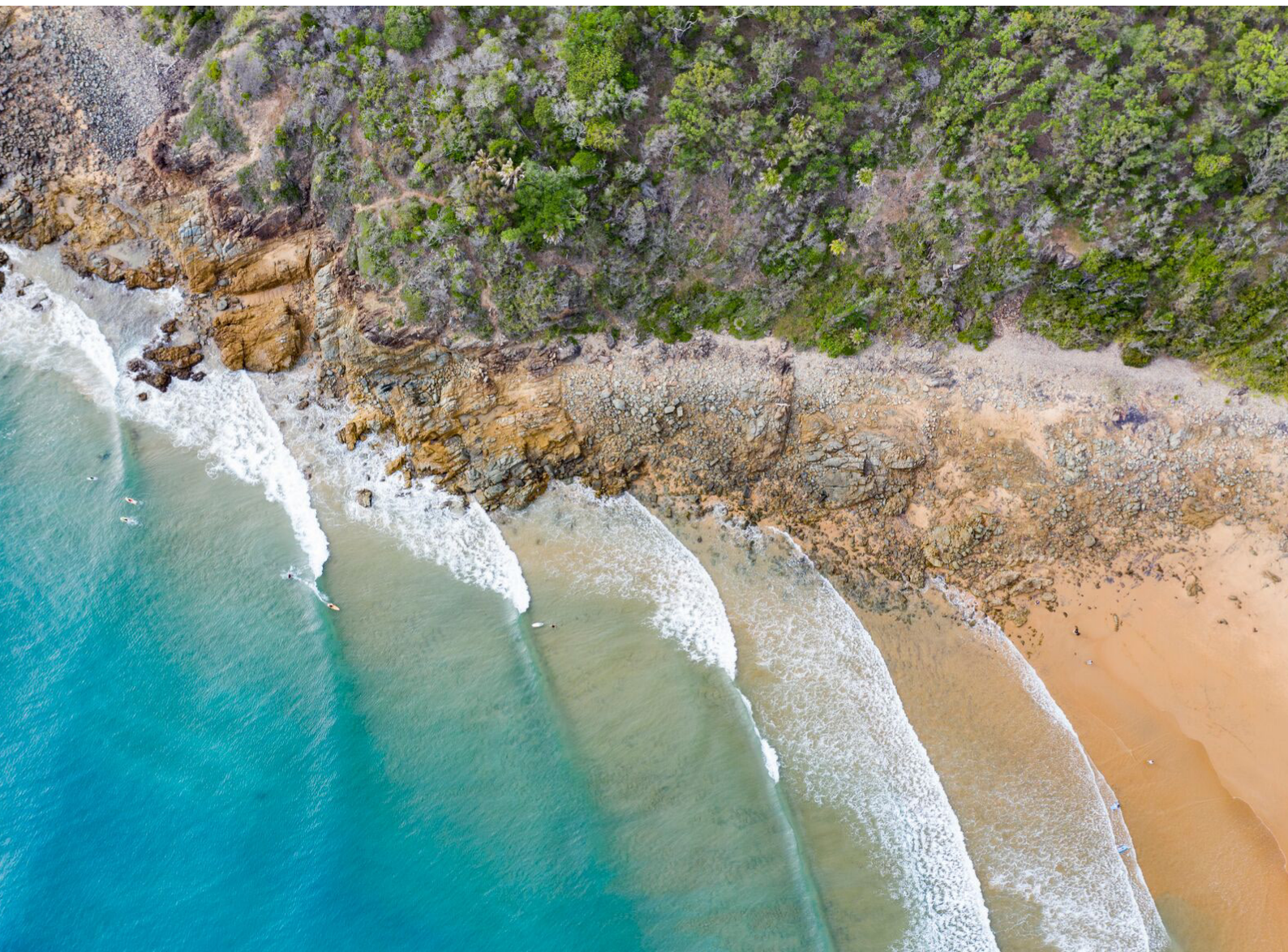
DESTINATION PRIORITY	STRATEGIES	URGENCY
1. Firmly establish the Gladstone Region as part of the Southern Great Barrier Reef as a destination for easy enjoyment of reef, beach, bush and adventure experiences.	1.1 Continue to lead, encourage, invest in and support the SGBR marketing alliance in the key domestic and international markets, ensuring the Gladstone Region experiences and gateway position are at the fore.	M
	1.2 Continue to implement a trade ready/mentoring program to further develop tourism operator’s capability and willingness to participate and leverage trade distribution through the SGBR initiative.	M
	1.3 Support investment in major tourism infrastructure projects for new and refreshing existing assets and the development of access and experiences across the region.	S
	1.4 Create and implement an annual event that showcases the Gladstone Region’s pristine natural environment with a key focus on the SGBR.	S
2. Work with/develop product to position the Gladstone Region as a leading outdoor, fishing, adventure and camping destination.	2.1 Development of a regional fishing tourism strategy, to position the region as one of Australia’s leading fishing destinations.	M
	2.2 Encourage the development of new and improved products and experiences to showcase the region’s natural attributes and increase the accessibility of natural areas.	M
	2.3 Work with QPWS to increase access to National Park areas such as Kroombit Tops, through the development of walking trails, 4WD tracks, bird watching opportunities, campgrounds and interpretive signage.	S
	2.4 Develop a clear marketing proposition for target markets, in collaboration with LTOs and industry.	M

DESTINATION PRIORITY	STRATEGIES	URGENCY
<p>3. More effectively target and leverage the 400km radius drive market, and facilitate the more effective dispersal of visitors throughout the Gladstone Region and the SGBR.</p>	<p>3.1 Develop a Gladstone Region focused drive strategy to increase visitor dispersal, length of stay and expenditure.</p>	<p>M</p>
	<p>3.2 Support and work collectively to implement the Gladstone Region Visitor Economy Strategy which incorporates an RV Strategy.</p>	<p>M</p>
	<p>3.3 Develop a series of packages and drive itineraries to more effectively target and attract the 400km radius drive market.</p>	<p>M</p>
	<p>3.4 Identify and develop new and existing experiences that encapsulate our history, culture and unique points of difference.</p>	<p>S</p>
<p>4. Establish the Gladstone Region Region as a key strategic port for Queensland for the Cruise Industry.</p>	<p>4.1 Educate local business on leveraging opportunities from the cruise ships visitation and establishing Gladstone Region as a vibrant tourism destination.</p>	<p>S</p>
	<p>4.2 Work with local operators and key stakeholders to revitalise and develop new and existing onshore excursions available for cruise companies, e.g. Day trip to SGBR.</p>	<p>M</p>
	<p>4.3 Key stakeholders to work closely to attract new cruise companies to Gladstone Region and strengthen existing cruise line partnerships with a focus on growth in volume and market share.</p>	<p>M</p>





DESTINATION PRIORITY	STRATEGIES	URGENCY
<p>5. Establish the Gladstone Region Region as a recognised destination in the MICE market incorporating a strong events program.</p>	<p>5.1 Leverage the region’s strong business and corporate sector to grow national business events and conventions targeting PCOs and associations with head offices in Brisbane, by contributing content and advice, developing experiences and supporting/attending MICE focused trade shows and expos.</p>	<p>M</p>
	<p>5.2 Strategically raise awareness of the Gladstone Region Region as a MICE destination through establishing unique local itineraries and leveraging the Discovery Coast’s unique profile.</p>	<p>M</p>
	<p>5.3 Support and work collectively to implement the Gladstone Region Region Events Strategy 2019 – 2024 to grow and attract events to create a more compelling year round calendar.</p>	<p>M</p>



## 6. APPENDIX

### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

A large number of stakeholders were consulted with throughout this project, including:

NAME	ORGANISATION
Darryl Branthwaite	GAPDL
Dominique Gleixner	GAPDL
Racheal Klitscher	Tourism and Events Queensland
Kim Roberts	Gladstone Regional Council
Desley O’Grady	Gladstone Regional Council (Councillor)
Dave Orgill	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
Colin McDonald	Department of State Development
Cindy Hogarth	SeaLink
Adam Balkin	Curtis Ferry Services
Leanne Patrick	Boyne Island McDonalds
Candice Di Bartolo	Chanel College
Richie Hyne	Avis Gladstone
Magda Klimczak	The Dock
Helen McGregor	GAPDL Board Member
Maxine Brushe	GAPDL Life Member
Darren Barlow	Gladstone Area Water Board
Andrew Davis	Gladstone Ports Corporation
Julie Gelder	Gladstone Engineering Alliance
Craig Conley	Mercure Gladstone
Michael Cromley	Budget
Margaret Pengelly	Boyne Valley Community Discovery Centre
Fabienne Wintle	Discovery Coast Tourism and Commerce
Amber Rodgers	Discovery Coast Tourism and Commerce
Glenda Farrar	Gladstone Regional Council
Kirsty Anderson	Gladstone Entertainment and Convention Centre
Jeff Weekes	Discovery Coast Tourism and Commerce
Janina Speck	Discovery Coast Tourism and Commerce
Jessica Cooke	Discovery Coast Tourism and Commerce

