Outback, Gulf and Western Downs Region

Destination Tourism Strategy

2012 – 2016
In 2016 the Outback, Gulf and Western Downs Region will be:
Famous for its characters, culture, history and ancient landscapes where visitors feel the genuine Aussie embrace of a vast network of welcoming communities.

Framework for Success

This Destination Tourism Strategy provides the framework to guide tourism industry development in the Outback, Gulf and Western Downs region by coordinating stakeholders in a common direction to maximise the tourism potential of the destination so as to achieve a balance of economic, social and environmental outcomes.

For the Outback, Gulf and Western Downs region to achieve its aspiration for 2016 it is critical that there is:

- a coordinated approach to destination Marketing and Promotion;
- innovative Product and Infrastructure Development across the region that delivers on the destination aspiration; and
- a tourism industry that is operating at the highest standards of service, safety and sustainability through effective Industry Development programs.
Key strategies that will drive sustainable destination growth to 2016 are outlined below.

**Target Markets**

All tourism development and promotional activity is based on consumer needs. The following target markets for the Outback, Gulf and Western Downs region include the current targets and those identified for development to achieve the region’s long term potential:

**Tier One:**
- Connectors in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Regional Queensland

**Tier Two:**
- Connectors in regional New South Wales and Victoria
- Active Explorers in Brisbane and Regional Queensland

**Tier Three:**
- New Zealand, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Netherlands and Switzerland

**Marketing and Promotion**

- Queensland’s Outback, Gulf and Western Downs region will be collectively promoted under the creative framework of Brand Queensland – a strategy that ensures Queensland’s destinations and experiences are positioned in a way that focuses on competitive advantages and connects with visitors. A cornerstone of the Brand Queensland strategy is four key experience themes: Queensland Lifestyle, Natural Encounters, Adventure; and Islands and Beaches; and the key attributes and selling points of Queensland’s Outback, Gulf and Western Downs region will be showcased via these experience themes, where applicable.

- Promote the unique Outback, Gulf and Western Downs stories within Brand Queensland marketing as key and differentiating experiences.

- Provide a co-ordinated approach to marketing key regional events for visitors to immerse themselves in the Australian Outback way of life with locals and truly experience the character of the Outback, Gulf and Western Downs.

- Grow niche markets such as fishing, camping, bird-watching, astronomy and four wheel driving to leverage the region’s natural advantage.

- Encourage all regional stakeholders to work together to develop and promote the entire region under the umbrella of Brand Queensland.

¹ Domestic target markets are based on Tourism Queensland’s Domestic Consumer Segmentation Model adopted in 2008
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Product and Infrastructure Development

- Grow destination appeal and deliver on the destination aspiration through the development of innovative tourism projects, including the Catalyst Projects identified in the Outback, Gulf and Western Downs Tourism Opportunity Plan:
  - Lawn Hill / Riversleigh Tourism Master Plan
  - Normanton Monsoon Centre
  - Karumba Barramundi Discovery Centre Extension
  - Mt Isa Lake Moondarra Master Plan
  - Julia Creek ‘At the Creek’ Stage 2
  - Bedourie Dust Storm Centre Development
  - Porcupine Gorge National Park Development
  - Qantas Founders Museum Expansion
  - Australian Stockman’s Hall of Fame Expansion
  - Lark Quarry Dinosaur Trackways Upgrade
  - Australian Age of Dinosaurs Stages 2 and 3
  - Blackall Woolscour Precinct Development
  - Cosmos Centre Expansion
  - Strategic Plan for the Burke and Wills Dig Tree
  - Outback Indigenous Story
  - Great Desert 4WD Journey
  - Birdsville Big Red Sand Dune Walk
  - Nindigully Precinct Preservation
  - Eromanga Outback Gondwana Dinosaur Attraction
  - Roma Big Rig Expansion
  - Lake Coolmunda Master Plan Implementation
  - Carnarvon Gorge Unique Accommodation

Create experience zones that differentiate the region and deliver unique moments based on the region’s natural advantage (i.e. geology, flora, fauna and culture).

Industry Development

- Build the reputation of the destination for delivering quality product and service standards through industry development programs, such as: domestic and international ready, better business practice, service delivery, digital ready, and crisis management.
- Establish the Outback, Gulf and Western Downs region as a leading ‘sustainable tourism destination’ through sustainability and climate change programs.

Opportunities for Growth

The following opportunities will need to be progressed for the Outback, Gulf and Western Downs to achieve its aspiration for 2016:

- Improve visitation during the shoulder periods.
- Maximize the potential flow on benefits for tourism from resources sector growth.
- Leverage off significant natural and heritage attractions and third party partnerships to expand distribution of the key visitor experience messages.
- Identify current gaps in the experience offering to provide guidance on future development priorities.
- Attract and facilitate ongoing investment in products, infrastructure and visitor experiences.
- Attract investment in unique accommodation.
- Create big events to attract media attention.
- Improve road and air infrastructure and services for access and connectivity between attractions.
- Continued State and Local Government support for strategic road infrastructure initiatives.
- Improve industry domestic and international market readiness.
- Utilise new media technology to reach target markets and provide visitor information.
- Taking an ‘experiences approach’ to tourism marketing and development.
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Current Trends

- A strong exchange rate and access to low cost air travel is making it easier for Australians to travel overseas.
- People are striving to achieve an emotional or personal achievement on their holidays; therefore, Queensland needs to differentiate their holidays by providing experiences that fulfil that desire.
- Australia is an expensive holiday destination relative to many of its key competitors and therefore needs to focus on competing on providing quality experiences and service and not on price.
- There is a trend for shorter holidays with shorter booking lead times.

Why Tourism?

Tourism is part of the broader economic structure in the Outback, Gulf and Western Downs region and makes a significant contribution to the sustainable development of the regional economy and community.

In the year ending 30 September 2011, the Outback and Western Downs region was host to:
- 815,000 domestic overnight visitors;
- 33,000 international visitors; and
- 999,000 day trip visitors

This visitation in turn makes a significant contribution to the Outback regional economy with:

- 1,600 jobs in the region directly supported by tourism, and
- tourism in the region contributing $147 million to the Queensland economy

(For more detail and current information visit tq.com.au/destinations)

The Destination Tourism Strategy will be used as the reference point for:
- encouraging stronger linkages and coordination across all levels of government to ensure tourism needs are addressed in policy, statutory plans and processes and infrastructure development;
- stimulating leadership within the private sector to foster growth, quality, innovation and sustainable tourism businesses across the Outback, Gulf and Western Downs region; and
- promoting the value of tourism and economic benefits to encourage community support for sustainable tourism growth

Implementation

The Outback, Gulf and Western Downs region Destination Tourism Strategy, in articulating the agreed tourism direction for the destination, provides the strategic platform for:

- guiding Tourism Queensland’s, Outback Queensland Tourism Association’s, Toowoomba Golden West and South Burnett Tourism’s and other stakeholders’ individual planning and activities; and
- fostering the efficient, effective and coordinated use of resources to grow sustainable tourism development in the Outback, Gulf and Western Downs region to 2016

Tourism Queensland, Outback Queensland Tourism Association and Toowoomba Golden West and South Burnett Tourism working in partnership, will be the key influencers in prioritising and advocating initiatives and actions to achieve the intent of the Outback, Gulf and Western Downs Destination Tourism Strategy. Together these organisations will work closely with Local Government, key State Government and Federal Government agencies and the tourism industry throughout the region in pursuing the direction outlined in this strategy.

Reference and Supporting Material

The Destination Tourism Strategy is available online through the Tourism Queensland, Outback Queensland Tourism Association and Toowoomba Golden West and South Burnett Tourism websites: tq.com.au, adventureoutback.com.au and westerndownsholidays.com.au

A wide range of reports, plans, data and other information used to compile this Destination Tourism Strategy and critical to its implementation is also available on Tourism Queensland’s website.

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² Source: Tourism Research Australia, International and National Visitor Surveys, year ending September 2011. (These figures refer to the Outback and Western Downs regions only as Tourism Research Australia includes the Gulf in another region.)

³ Source: Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (2010) Regional Economic Contribution of Tourism Destinations in Queensland. (This most recent 2007-08 data came out of a major research study which produced the first set of estimates of tourism’s economic contribution at the destination level. This figure refers to the Outback region only and does not include the Western Downs or Gulf regions as these were grouped in different regions at this time.)
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