

Outback NSW

Tourism Development Plan 2004-2008



Walls of China, Mungo National Park



This summary document provides stakeholders and those interested in tourism in Outback NSW with an overview to the background of the detailed plan, its content and directions.

In Outback NSW, and indeed across rural and regional Australia, environmental, economic and social (population) trends continue to underscore the growing importance of tourism as a positive economic force for communities and businesses.



Desired Outcomes for the Tourism Development Plan

The implementation of this plan by the stakeholders in the region aims to foster a sustainable tourism industry in Outback NSW, through the community, industry and governments working together to:

- Increase visitors to the region, their length-of-stay and their expenditure;
- Establish a positive climate for sustainable business development, investment and growth;
- Enhance regional tourism products, experiences and infrastructure;
- Foster natural and cultural assets of the region as a feature of the marketing mix, and
- Increase marketing opportunities and resources for the region and its businesses.

Background

The New South Wales Tourism Masterplan recommended the preparation of regional tourism plans in order to establish a strong destination management approach for the State. Such an approach will enable NSW destinations to develop a consumer-driven focus and lay down clear marketing and development paths.

These plans also aim to influence and inform government agencies at all levels, to ensure that the needs of the tourism industry and travellers are considered when developing infrastructure, land-use and community plans.

Using the combined resources of the Outback Regional Tourism Organisation Inc. (ORTO) and Tourism New South Wales (TNSW), a team was formed to prepare a regional tourism development plan for Outback NSW. This is the first time that a collaborative tourism planning exercise of this type has been undertaken in New South Wales.

This plan will be the foundation for medium to longer term marketing opportunities and initiatives. It presents a strategic, consumer-based view of tourism opportunities and needs. Implementation of the plan will involve localised networks of a wide range of partners from the community, industry and governments at all levels.

Outback NSW

Outback NSW is big. It covers almost half of the State but contains only a small proportion of the State's population and tourism products. Yet the 'Outback' is not, as some may imagine, an arid, endless and featureless plain. The region offers an almost bewildering diversity of landscapes and landforms, flora and fauna, climate and weather, people and places. Its communities are tight-knit, fiercely independent and proud of their heritage and culture. In short the Outback is one region with a multitude of destinations and experiences.

However, 30% of the region has no local government to provide services and facilities that other areas take for granted (this situation is unique to Outback NSW). Nine (9) local government areas represent the remainder of the region.

The plan seeks to extend and strengthen strategic partnerships and relationships inside and outside the region, wherever they are beneficial. Indeed, travellers do not recognise local government, regional or administrative boundaries, and these have not been allowed to limit the thinking and recommendations of this tourism development plan for Outback NSW.



VISITORS TO OUTBACK NSW

Travellers and visitors today are more sophisticated, well-travelled and demanding of their destinations, and the products and experiences available in them. Domestic visitors to Outback NSW can be summarised as people who:

- Want to experience more of “Australia”
- Want to make time for themselves, may include family, friends and partners
- Want to go to “out-of-the-way” places where holidays are not guaranteed experiences
- Want to be more in touch with the values associated with the past – “mateship”, trust and mutual reliance
- Want to show the children there is a different way of life to city life
- Want historic places, arts and Aboriginal culture
- Want to enjoy outdoor activities in the outback and
- Are seeking a sense of completion.

In 2003, tourism contributed almost \$170 million to Outback NSW. There were 503,500 visitors (490,000 domestic and 13,500 international) who stayed an estimated total of 1.7 million nights. The number of overnight visitors to Outback NSW represented 2% of all domestic and 1% of all international visitor nights to NSW in 2003 (TNSW Data, subject to review).

The following is a brief summary of their travel characteristics:

- On average they stayed between 3.3 (domestic) and 3.9 (international) nights

- The top 3 domestic source markets (in order) were Regional NSW/Sydney, South Australia and Victoria
- The top 3 international source markets (in order) were Europe, UK and USA
- Over half the domestic and over 75% of international visitors were in the region for leisure/holiday purposes
- 85% of domestic and 56% of international visitors used a car while on their visit.

SEGMENTATION THE DOMESTIC MARKET

A study known as the “See Australia Segmentation”, looked at consumer attitudes, wants and needs and developed a framework that summarised the attitudes or holiday ‘mindsets’ of domestic travellers.

The framework can help businesses and destinations to think about the holiday needs of their customers, as well as opportunities to ‘bundle’ or ‘package’ products, services, experiences and places. The See Australia Segmentation has been used in this plan to promote stronger destinations and build on product development opportunities in Outback NSW.

Table 1 lists the various holiday segments and their transport and accommodation needs and preferred activities and services. It also presents suggestions for:

- Bundling of products and experiences within destinations in Outback NSW suited to each market segment, and
- Product improvements and new opportunities in the region that would appeal to the various segments.

TABLE 1: OVERVIEW OF SEE AUSTRALIA MARKET SEGMENTATION

| Mindset Segments | Accommodation | Transport | The Bundle or Package of Services and Activities |
|--|--|---|---|
| Pampadours (or Luxury Travellers) | 5-star, Suites Separate from kids | Air, Limo | Pools, retail, fine dining, views, wine choice, spas, salons, 24 hr services, FIT tours, personal guides, cocktail bar, casinos, golf, yachts, cruisers, good coffee, patisseries. |
| Compatriots (or Family Travellers) | 3-star+ Self contained cabins, cottages, burés, villas, apartments, motels | Own car Public transport | Water sports, kids clubs, supermarkets, sports equipment, hairdressers, escape space, theme parks, takeaway/fast-food, beer gardens, TV’s, videos, cinemas, games, picnic grounds, BBQ’s, group tours, outdoor activities, laundry facilities, greenery, walking trails, RSL’s. |
| True Travellers (or Adventure Travellers) | Camp Sites, Motels | Own car 4WD Mobile Home | Maps and information, trail food, backpacks, guide books, local history, bush tucker, sporting equipment, general stores. |
| Wanderers (or Touring Travellers) | 3-4 star self contained | Own car mobile homes coach, fly/drive | Information centres, maps & guide books, local markets, short walking trails with lookouts, fast photo processing, souvenirs, libraries. |
| Groupies (or Peer Group Travellers) | Stay with friends, shared apartments, camp sites, hostels | Car, train, coach, economy air | Pubs & clubs, night clubs, beaches, fast food, laundromats, big fridges, eskies, cafes. |

(Source: Colmar Brunton, Project Sturt Report, 2003 and Tourism New South Wales, 2004)

Specific consumer research will be conducted across Outback NSW that will apply this information to the needs of businesses and destinations in the region, and will also deliver an interactive way for stakeholders in the region to use the knowledge that comes from this innovative research project in regional Australia.

Preparing the Outback NSW Tourism Development Plan

From the outset, a key task of the planning team was to plan for the development of products and markets “based on customer-oriented research”.

In order to prepare a consumer driven and market focused regional development plan, the team:

- Met and consulted with communities, operators and government in the region
- Conducted a review of product in the region, with the assistance of industry and government agencies
- Prepared a Strategic Directions Paper that investigated opportunities, matched against the needs of travellers to outback areas
- Prepared a draft report, and consulted regional partners on its content
- Finalised the tourism development plan, based on stakeholder feedback and input.

Based on the knowledge gained from this work, the following challenges and opportunities for the region were identified.

Key Challenges & Opportunities for the Region

- A projected 23% drop in population by 2020 will increase the importance that visitation will play in maintaining local and community services and facilities
- Building a strong consumer focus based on timely and relevant information and research
- Establishing a strong research and information foundation for the future
- Establishing a new framework to identify and realise new business and tourism development opportunities
- Developing a fresh way to build on existing tourism opportunities; for example, aboriginal-based experiences, ‘product bundling’ that will extend length-of-stay and increase visitor spending and special niche market opportunities, etc
- Building partnerships both inside and outside the region
- Supporting and building on the existing business and community capacity
- Grow industry leadership and participation
- Breaking down the barriers (borders, distance, technology, communications, and perceptions)
- The ongoing provision and management of tourism and community services and infrastructure in the unincorporated area
- Maintaining existing levels of investment in tourism businesses, services and facilities
- Increasing the level of private and public investment in tourism activities.

What is in the Plan

The plan takes a top-line, strategic view of addressing these challenges and opportunities for the region’s tourism future. The implementation details for the directions in the plan will be developed by the partners in each action, according to local circumstances and resources at the time. In addition to the detailed plan report, there is a set of Background Papers that includes information on research, the literature review, product reviews and reports, and the feedback received during the consultation phases.

THE STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The Overall Strategic Directions of the Outback NSW Tourism Development Plan are to establish:

- A new conceptual framework (product zones, key themes and supporting experiences)
- A new management structure that establishes the regional body as a learning organisation that focuses on the fundamentals of managing a successful tourism destination/s
- A sustainable, consumer focused, destination management and marketing framework
- An integrated approach to the identification of and planning for the delivery of transportation services and infrastructure
- A comprehensive ‘Outback Region Visitor Information Delivery Network’
- Enhanced tourism industry sustainability, skills, knowledge and professionalism
- Strong regional / local leadership, and
- Strong and effective partnership networks between communities, industry and governments, both inside and outside the region.

These overall directions are then broken down in more detail in the following five (5) Key Focus Areas, along with their associated actions:

- Market Development (including research and industry information needs)
- Industry Development (management, leadership, partnerships and professional development)
- Access and Transport Development (including visitor information needs, and the road and wider transport networks)
- Product Development and/or Enhancement (including partnerships and new market opportunities)
- Building / Enhancing Business Capacity and Community Understanding of Tourism.



THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

This provides the foundation for the implementation of the plan and is designed to meet the needs and circumstances of the tourism industry, the community and the visitor. It is about recognising the region’s diversity and breaking it down both physically, into Product Zones, and conceptually by Key Themes and Supporting Experiences.

The Four Product Zones

The key role for the regional body will be to lead the destination development and marketing of Outback NSW. Its focus will be to build consensus for the regional approach and secure the tangible support necessary for its development and execution.

Outback NSW is actually an amalgam of tourism products and services, plus a wide range of public goods branded together under the Outback name. By taking a ‘product zone’ approach, the region’s destinations and places can be:

- More easily presented and communicated to consumers, and
- Packaged as manageable, holiday-sized bites and accessible experiences for the traveller.

The aim is to facilitate a stronger working relationship between the regional organisation, communities and businesses. The zones will also form part of the proposed management structure for the region.

As the implementation of the plan evolves, so too will the concept of the product zones and the role they will play into the future. Strong networks and partnerships will be developed that support the aspirations of the stakeholders in each of the zones, with communities, operators and governments working together towards realising the objectives and outcomes of this regional plan. The outline of the product zones is represented in the map below.

Four Key Themes and their Supporting Experiences

The Key Themes and the Supporting Experiences identified for the development, marketing and communication of Outback NSW are set out in Table 2. The product zones will provide the mechanism to evolve these themes and experiences and specific opportunities will be identified during the implementation of the plan’s strategic directions.

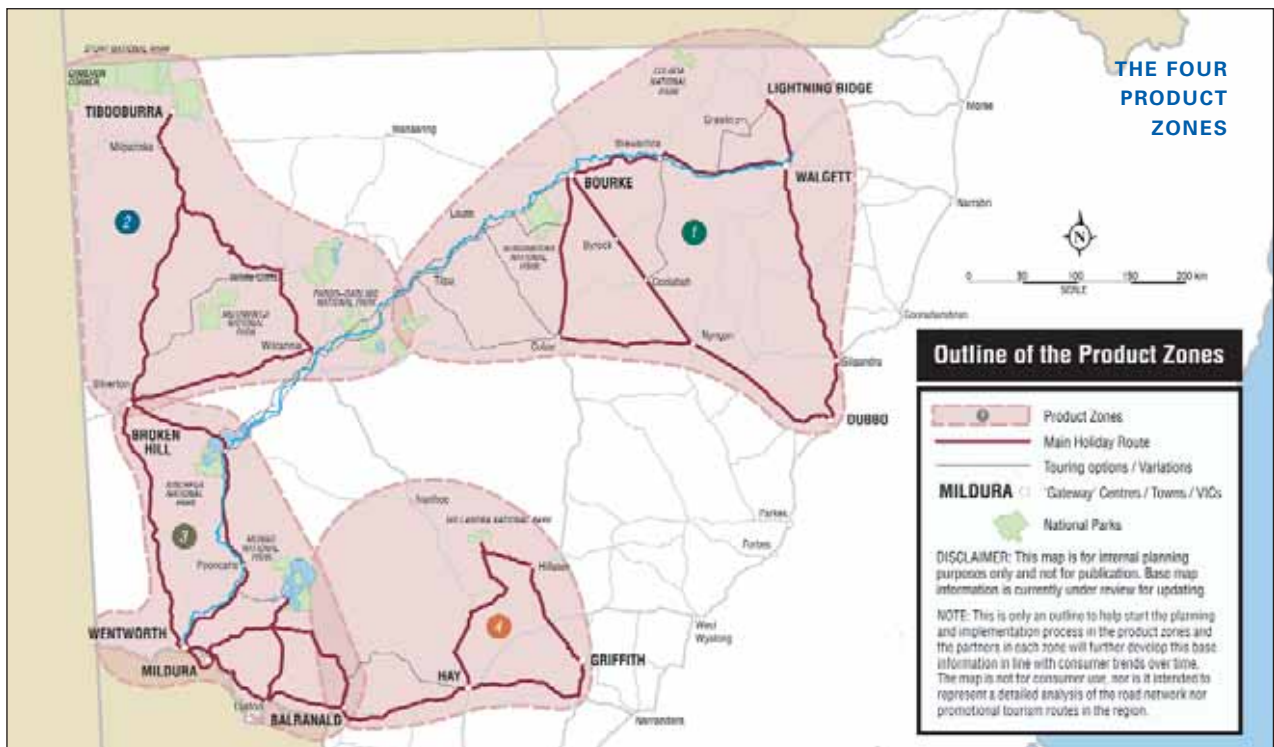


TABLE 2: KEY THEMES AND EXPERIENCES OF OUTBACK NSW

| Key Themes | Nature | Australia (Social history and identity) | Indigenous | Heritage |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Experiences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Parks • Reserves / Forests • Soft Adventure • Rivers / lakes / water / flood plains • Flora • Fauna • Climate • Landscape • Conservation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous • Shearers • Squatters • Characters • Values • Atmosphere • Matship • Pubs • Real people overcoming adversity • Outback charm • Perseverance • Romanticism • Bush poets • Artistic styles & communities • The unknown • Iconic places & names | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites • Rock Art • Dreamtime • History • Artefacts • Performance • Visual arts or artistic works • Today’s people in an ancient land • National Parks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towns & villages • Ports & River Trade • Pastoral • Pioneers • Historic sites • Mining • Explorers • Outback stations • Cemeteries and burial sites • Afghan Cameleers • National Parks |



A NEW MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

For success in destination development and marketing, structure should follow strategy. This Tourism Development Plan for Outback NSW provides the communities and industry within the region with a set of strategic directions to guide activities in the coming years. The new management structure will:

- Recognise and build on the successes to-date
- Acknowledge the under-pining role of local government, Tourism New South Wales and other government agencies in the region
- Support a more localised approach to the implementation of the strategic directions and actions contained in this plan
- Aim to build industry and wider business participation in resourcing, decision-making and marketing activities.

The plan presents a set of principles that will guide the present organization and its partners in the formation of a new “Outback Regional Tourism Advisory Group” which will be equipped to meet the challenges and opportunities facing the region in the years ahead.

THE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME

The plan takes a strategic, region-wide view of consumer-based, opportunities and needs. This will allow each of the Product Zones (and destinations) to develop more detailed action plans based on local resources and opportunities at the time.

The implementation programme groups the strategic directions and actions into the five (5) Key Focus Areas mentioned earlier and:

- Identifies a lead partner and other partners
- Sets out a time frame for implementation, and in some cases,
- Outlines ‘showcasing projects’ for consideration by the partners within the product zones.

The implementation programme is based on building strong partnerships in and outside the region and aims to help fulfil the core objectives of the NSW Government’s “Regional Strategic Management Framework”, namely:

- Achieve sustainable social, economic and environmental benefits for regional communities
- Enhance government services by co-ordinating service delivery to better meet the needs of regional communities.

Showcasing Projects for the Region

The aims of these showcasing projects are to:

- Act as a tool to show how the concept of the Product Zones can help industry, community and government partners work together and build alliances
- Test and refine the strategic directions in the plan, and
- Apply the learning and information across the region.

Table 3 provides a summary of the Showcasing Projects in the Tourism Development Plan.

TABLE 3: THE KEY FOCUS AREAS AND SHOWCASING PROJECTS FOR OUTBACK NSW

| Key Focus Area | Showcasing Projects |
|---|--|
| Market Development (includes research and industry information needs) | Region Wide Projects: In order to underpin and inform the ongoing implementation of this Tourism Development Plan, consumer research, utilising the See Australia Segmentation Study, will be conducted in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the needs and wants of travellers to Outback NSW, • Inform product enhancement and development activities across the region (who is coming and why, what are they looking for, the pattern of visitation within the region, which markets are visiting which areas and their trip characteristics). Identify a range of operators to volunteer in developing and testing a set of questions that can be incorporated into existing guest/visitor surveys. Product Zone 3: Design and install information and motivational display systems for use in Wentworth, Balranald and Mildura VICs. |
| Industry Development (includes management, leadership, partnerships and professional development) | Product Zone 3: (Building Partnerships) Balranald Shire, in conjunction with Land Care groups, would review the development of the ‘Mungo Loop Trail Brochure’ for application in other areas of the region. Product Zone 4: Community Awareness and Business Development workshop/s lead by Carrathool Shire. |

TABLE 3: CONTINUED

| Key Focus Area | Showcasing Projects |
|--|---|
| <p>Access and Transport Development (includes visitor information needs, the road and wider transport networks)</p> | <p>Product Zone 1: Establish an exchange programme within each product zone in year one and then extending to other zones in subsequent years that builds the product and destination knowledge of visitor centre staff and regional representatives.</p> <p>Review directional, town and route name signposting requirements on the Castlereagh Highway from Dubbo to the Queensland border.</p> |
| | <p>Product Zone 2: Prepare a ‘concept plan’ for road side facilities along The Silver City Hwy between Broken Hill and Tibooburra that, amongst other things, takes into account site parameters, environmental and heritage considerations and partnership opportunities.</p> <p>Support the establishment of the new NPWS visitor information centre in White Cliffs.</p> <p>Review and adapt the TASAC approved, local area signposting model, starting with the establishment of village/locality signs in the unincorporated area.</p> |
| <p>Product Enhancement / Development (includes partnerships and new market opportunities)</p> | <p>Region Wide Projects: The preparation of a Darling River Run Themed Route Master Plan (including implementation plan) from Walgett (Lightening Ridge) to Wentworth that, amongst other things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the central theme as the experience, exploration and interpretation of Outback NSW through the use of the Darling/Barwon River as a touring corridor • Is designed and constructed in sympathy with the host environment and is built around the inherent natural qualities and unique cultural heritage of the area • Is developed according to guidelines for ecological sustainability • Includes signage for both sides of the river, and • Considers the dual naming of the route, towns and places along the run, etc., to recognise Aboriginal heritage. <p>Revise and update the “Land of Vivid Contrasts” promotion as part of the preparation of a Tourism & Recreation Strategy for National Parks in the region.</p> <p>Product Zone 1: Support the ongoing work of the Bhiemie Dreaming Co-operative to integrate Aboriginal tourism opportunities into the products and experiences of the zone.</p> <p>Product Zones 2 & 3: Identify operators in the Wentworth/Mildura areas and the Broken Hill Areas, to cooperatively work together to identify, develop and market test new product concepts for the ‘pampadour’ market.</p> <p>Product Zones 3 & 4: Investigate the opportunities for 4WD routes linking Mungo and Willandra National Parks.</p> |
| <p>Building / Enhancing Business Capacity and Community Understanding of Tourism</p> | <p>Product Zone 4: Conduct community awareness and business development workshop/s under the leadership of Carrathool Shire.</p> |

The above table presents an overview of how the directions and actions in the plan will be tested and further developed through the implementation of those projects.

It also shows how the partners in each of the product zones can continue to work together to capitalise on specific opportunities and directions identified in the Tourism Development Plan.

Monitoring and Evaluation

A key role of the new Outback Regional Tourism Advisory Group will be to monitor and evaluate the implementation of this Tourism Development Plan. A framework to measure business and regional tourism success will be developed, based on a hierarchy of performance indicators for economic and tourism industry growth and development across the region.



The Benefits of a Sustainable Tourism Industry in Outback NSW

- Diversification of the regional economy
- Increased affect of visitor spending in the wider community
- Employment opportunities
- Maintain facilities for residents
- Opportunities for new business and expansion of existing businesses
- Potential to improve transport services
- Potential to create export markets for local products
- Increased educational opportunities
- Preservation of natural assets
- Conservation of heritage
- A broader social outlook



To find out more information or to obtain a copy of the detailed Outback NSW Tourism Development Plan, please contact:

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For information on other regional plans across New South Wales, please contact:

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