

Central Highlands/Emerald Workshop Summary

WHAT DO WE LOOK LIKE? 2032 ASPIRATIONS

- Must see destination for domestic and international visitors
- So much to see and do, visitors stay for 5-days
- Support of gateways for region highlighting all towns/villages with ambassadors in each town
- Professional, accessible, future thinking
- For the Gemfields to be as well-known as Sovereign Hill
- More events, with increased visitation and regional dispersal from events
- Collaboration and referrals within industry and towns
- Vibrant towns and villages with shops, services and experiences open for visitors
- Maintained country town feel
- Grass-roots style tourism to maintain country/community feel
- Greater distribution of content/information about the region, both externally to visitors and internally to community/local industry
- Community engagement – where local communities embrace visitors and the tourism industry

HOW DO WE WANT TO MAKE VISITORS FEEL?

- Welcomed, refreshed, and looking for the next Central Highlands experience
- Feeling connected to area
- A positive and amazing experience, lasting in their memory
- Fall in love with the place and the people, feeling like friends and wanting return
- Excited, happy, knowledgeable, wanting to share their experiences
- Wanting to learn more, full of stories and encouraging other to visit “spreading the word”
- New understanding of life in the area, historically and currently, and how the area contributes to the wealth and lifestyle others enjoy in the city

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Who do we want?

- Well-travelled, well financed, sociable, open-minded
- Active photographers
- Adventurous people/adventure seekers
- Drive market
- Grey Nomads in winter, Europeans in summer
- Families
- Baby boomers and Gen X who have disposable incomes and time to explore
- Community minded, genuinely interested in being a part of the fabric of our community
- All demographics/broad range of markets to suit different areas of our region
- Backpackers that want to work/volunteer
- Repeat visitors
- Film makers (Screen Queensland)

HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THERE?

EXPERIENCES

- Agritourism – visitor experiences highlighting our agricultural offerings, heritage, including events, foodie experiences, tours and farm stays. Develop a sunflower plot.
- Geotourism experiences
- Mining and gem fossicking, Real working underground mining experience, with ‘hands on mining/fossicking’
- Experiences developed for strong education market.
- Increased activities for family market, e.g., houseboats/party pontoon on the dam, free water/splash park. Potential linking with Sunwater to develop experiences.
- Adventure experiences
- International Dark Sky for Sapphire Gemfields
- More events that bring people to the area and higher quality markets
- Pioneer Village expansion/enhancement with combined paid staff and volunteers, working with local tourism businesses and community groups
- Personalised experiences with direct conversations and interactive tours

Infrastructure: Hard + Soft

Hard Infrastructure

- Further enhance/develop Dam recreation area, including water sports, camping, toilets
- Development of existing tourism assets, refreshing, signage, maintenance
- Upgraded sport and recreation facilities
- Overflow camping opportunities, affordable camping options and actioning Central Highlands RV Strategy
- Placemaking of main streets and gateways
- Accessible infrastructure for Carnarvon Gorge, e.g., chairlift with viewing platform
- Enhanced infrastructure in National Parks throughout the region, including signage, walking trails.
- Cultural Centre
- Road network improvement across the region
- Trails - feasibility and implementation strategies for riding (e.g., Leichhardt on Horseback historical experience), walking and cycling/mountain bike trails
- Boutique and unique accommodation to attract high value travellers e.g., glamping, ‘luxury’ gem miner huts
- Increased e-charging locations
- Soft & Hard infrastructure in Comet e.g., coffee /local store, fuel depot/post office Soft & Hard infrastructure in Comet e.g., coffee /local store, fuel depot/post office
- Encourage/enable recycling/waste facilities e.g., at Gemfields, Comet

Soft Infrastructure

- Improve Wi-fi/internet
- Improved interpretation signage with QR codes throughout region
- Podcast in each town sharing stories of heritage and attractions
- Training in agritourism and hospitality. Possible partnership with QCQ, local producers and training restaurant open to public/visitors to retain talent in the region
- Attraction/recruitment/training for volunteers in tourism and events
- Digital interpretation for National Parks, app, maps
- Consistent and comprehensible online resources to help promote tourism assets and events
- Free-hold land at Gemfields

Enablers

- A collective group for Central Highlands tourism with operator collaboration to encourage referrals
- Digital connectivity across region
- Streamlining of red tape to encourage tourism industry investment/development
- Framework for overflow camping/accommodation
- Partnerships between tourism, agriculture, mining and education sectors
- Continuous gap analysis, with local government encouraging and supporting new businesses and tourism assets

KPIs / How Will We Know It's Working?

- Increased visitation/length of stay and spend.
- Increased visitor dispersal across Central Highlands.
- Growth in local business revenue from tourism.
- Increased content and reach on digital/social media.

COLLECTIVE PRIORITIES

1. Gemfields Experience Development, geo experience (e.g., Sovereign Hill)
2. Heritage Experience Development across small towns/villages
3. Fairbairn Dam Recreation Area development
4. Trails-Horse, MTB, walking
5. Agritourism, foodie experiences, events, tours, farm stays, micro-brewing
6. Placemaking
7. Reducing red tape, encouraging investment, making it easier to develop tourism
8. Pioneer village development e.g., Emerald, Capella, Springsure – enhanced museum, changing exhibition themes, working printing press, themes – mining, ag, Anzacs, local people, first nations, pioneers.