

# Southern Downs. Stanthorpe Workshop

## Summary Notes

### WHY WE WANT TOURISM

- It's fun energetic, puts smiles on faces, stories from people that bring back to region.
- Diversification to the economy, keep the economy going.
- Income diversification, using farm for another income stream, sharing what farmers/producers go through.
- To educate people so they can experience something new, love talking and communicating with people.
- Community pride - showing off the region, telling people about the region, economic benefits and other demographics to the region.

### WHAT DO WE LOOK LIKE? 2032 ASPIRATIONS

- Year-round visitation across four seasons, including mid-week visitation.
- Enhanced visitor experiences with an emphasis on food, wine, and culture.
- Expansion of arts and culture, with organic growth in both sectors.
- Position Stanthorpe as an arts destination featuring galleries, street art, art trails, performances and international artists.
- Integration of nature with tourism through well-managed national parks, augmented reality and signage that connects visitors to the rural lifestyle and the natural environment.
- Eco and sustainable tourism, underpinned by cultural events and the promotion of the region's four distinct seasons.
- First Nations experiences to offer a comprehensive insight into the region's heritage.
- Unified regional identity through consistent signage and wayfinding strategies, ensuring visitors recognise their presence in the Southern Downs.
- Increased collaboration among businesses to share and learn from each other, fostering a vibrant and thriving region, with more restaurants, alfresco dining options, and mid-week openings.
- Community referrals and bonds, further integrating the community with the tourism experience.
- Promotion of eco-tourism and sustainable practices alongside cultural events to drive tourism growth.
- Commitment to creating a unified and connected region, with activations across the entire area to increase visitation and experience.

### HOW DO WE WANT TO MAKE VISITORS FEEL?

- Leave feeling connected to the community, with a strong desire to explore more on their next visit.
- Inspired and carrying a piece of Stanthorpe home, anticipating their return.
- Rejuvenated and in tune with nature, finding relaxation and a sense of grounding.
- Welcomed wholeheartedly, leaving with stories to share and a sense of belonging.
- Surprised by the variety of experiences, leading to satisfaction and plans for future visits.
- Joyous and claiming Stanthorpe as their place too, feeling a unique connection.
- Educated, having learned something new, and amazed by every aspect of their visit.
- Feeling safe, included, and entertained, with every need catered to.
- Energised by a natural rebirth, motivated to spread the word about their experience.
- Embraced by locals, fostering a sense of family and community inclusion.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

### Trends

- Trends towards last-minute bookings, outdoor activities, and the need for pet-friendly options.
- Growing interest in local arts, culture, and First Nations experiences.
- Recognition of the need for improved accessibility and sustainability in tourism offerings.

### Who we want?

- **Active and Outdoor Lifestyle Enthusiasts:** Mountain biking, kayaking, and general outdoor activities.
- **Responsible and Eco-conscious:** Focused on responsible travel, regenerative farming, and eco-exploration.
- **Immersive and Educational Experience Seekers:** Farm stays, soap making, sourdough baking classes, and educational experiences for students.
- **Arts, Culture, and Music:** Lovers of cultural, artistic, and musical experiences, including First Nations culture.
- **Wellness and Well-being:** Wellbeing and cultural experiences, organic and vegan farm tours.
- **Pet-Friendly Travel:** Travelling with pets, pet-friendly accommodations and activities.
- **Visiting Family & Friends:** Engaging and educational experiences suitable for all ages.
- **Adventure and Nature Lovers:** Adventurers, nature lovers, birdwatchers, and those interested in cottage care and self-sufficiency.
- **Special Interest Groups:** Including chicken enthusiasts, photographers, and those interested in organic farming and food-based classes.
- **Corporate and Educational Groups:** Corporate visitors and conferences, educational base experiences.
- **Regional Explorers:** Visitors from neighbouring destinations interested in cycling treks and art trails.
- **Creative Minds:** Encouraging art sculptors, photographers and immersive cultural experiences.
- **Youth and Adventurous:** Engaging young adventurers and people with expendable income looking for energetic and unique experiences.

## HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THERE?

### EXPERIENCES

- Facilitation of familiarisation tours.
- Stars at night/star viewing.
- Wildflowers and sunflowers viewing.
- Quirky historical train experiences: dining and champagne rail trips.
- Personal storytelling to make a connection.
- Seasonal experiences reflecting Queensland's diverse climates:
  - **Summer:** mountains, fishing, camping, and unique flora and fauna.
  - **Spring:** apple blossom season, wildflowers emerging from the winter slumber.
  - **Winter:** potential snow experiences, fire places, and wine under the stars, wearing coats and gloves
  - **Autumn:** harvest season/apple & grape season, vineyard sunsets and autumn colours.
- Service improvement.
- Exhibition train from Brisbane to Stanthorpe with art galleries.
- Fishing adventures in summer.
- Night sky photography.
- Sponsored regional tours for business networking.
- Heritage train rides in summer.
- Immersive agricultural experiences: grape picking and trimming
- Wildflower and wildlife tours.

## INFRASTRUCTURE – HARD + SOFT

### Hard Infrastructure

- Conference centre, music auditorium style.
- Accommodation enhancements.
- Bike paths across the region. Ideal for cycling Granite Belt, Warwick, Amiens, Killarney, Passchendaele State Forest.
- Arts centre precinct multipurpose.
- Conference centre auditorium.
- Additional signage for navigation and information.

### Soft Infrastructure

- Strengthen customer service for enhanced visitor experiences.
- Discount on accommodation/food if overnight temperature didn't drop x degrees.
- Ensure tourism plan integrates with Planning Scheme and Urban Design Frameworks.
- Revitalise Ride the Range website with Tenterfield Shire to connect a tourism route.
- Transport solutions and enhancements.
- Sharing of information and experiences to bolster community engagement and visitor satisfaction.
- Arts and crafts tours to build on the art trail, enriching cultural tourism.
- Wildlife and wildflower experiences for nature enthusiasts.
- Leverage word of mouth and digital platforms like Google maps and websites for wider reach.
- Operators on tour – famils across the region for cross-promotion and learning.
- Staff training led by example to improve service quality.
- Wallangarra Bridges as a unique attraction.

### Enablers

- Collaboration with Southern Downs Regional Council for integrated tourism and urban planning.
- Development of bike paths enhancing regional cycling accessibility.
- Revitalisation of the "Ride the Range" website with Tenterfield Shire, promoting regional tourism routes.
- Multifunctional arts centre precinct to foster cultural and artistic activities.
- Implementation of more comprehensive signage across the region for better visitor navigation.
- Encouragement of regional tours, including arts and crafts, to showcase local talent.
- Strengthening of event management skills within the local tourism sector.
- Facilitation of operator famils across the region for increased cross-business awareness.
- Promotion of wildlife and wildflower experiences to highlight natural heritage.
- Leveraging Google maps and website optimisation for enhanced online presence.
- Partnership and capacity sharing among local businesses for collective growth.
- Initiatives for staff training and service excellence as a standard practice.

### KPIs / HOW WILL WE KNOW IT'S WORKING?

- Growth in day and overnight visitation rates.
- Enhanced investment in both hard and soft infrastructure.
- Active collaboration and support within the Local Tourism Organisation (LTO).
- High levels of visitor satisfaction as indicated through surveys and feedback.
- Effective content creation and marketing efforts, with increased reach and engagement.
- Growth in local businesses and employment opportunities related to tourism.

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## DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Strengthened local economy through diversified tourism.
- Enhanced reputation of Stanthorpe as a destination for eco-tourism, arts, and culture.
- Improved community engagement and pride in showcasing the region to visitors.

## INTO THE FUTURE

### Vision / Aspiration

- Stanthorpe is envisioned as a vibrant, sustainable destination known for its unique blend of nature, culture, and community engagement.
- A commitment to preserving the environment while offering enriching experiences that connect visitors with the essence of the region.
- Strengthened industry networks and partnerships that drive innovation and growth in tourism.

### Regional Guiding Principles

- Embrace regional tours for operators to foster a comprehensive understanding of the region.
- Encourage immersive experiences such as wildflower, wildlife, and clear night photography tours.
- Support unique attractions like the exhibition train station and seasonal fishing activities.
- Promote collaboration with all levels of government for infrastructure projects e.g., Wallangarra Rail/Bridges.

### Strategic Priorities & KPIs

- Enhance operator knowledge and engagement with the region through educational tours.
- Increase visitor engagement with natural attractions through dedicated photography and star-gazing experiences.
- Expand accommodation options and services to meet diverse visitor needs.
- Develop and publicise regional connectivity projects to improve access and experience.

### Now

- Implement a coordinated approach for regional tours, focusing on operator participation.
- Initiate projects to improve regional infrastructure, such as bike paths and the Wallangarra Bridges.
- Utilise digital platforms like Google Maps for enhanced information sharing and visibility.
- Strengthen customer service across the tourism sector to elevate the visitor experience.

### How?

- Foster collaboration among tourism operators through shared experiences and regional showcases.
- Enhance online presence and accessibility through website revitalisation and effective use of digital tools.
- Focus on personal connections and storytelling to enrich the visitor experience.
- Work closely with Southern Downs Regional Council to align tourism development with planning and urban design frameworks.