

# Western Downs. Miles Workshop Summary

## WHY WE WANT TOURISM

- Tourism is a growing industry.
- It's a way to show this area is a great place to live, bring children up.
- Income diversification, economy helping to drive overnight visitation in the area.
- Through development of unique luxury accommodation, destination pubs, we can enhance/diversify from an agricultural/resource area to a food and drink/agritourism destination.
- We are welcoming county people who like to meet interesting people, sharing of stories, making people aware of the environment, it needs a story overlay of our countryside.
- We need to change the mindset of city dwellers, many people in SE Qld don't go to the country, they just head to the beach.
- Tourism impact has positive local community and benefits, personal, social and economic benefits for the community, incorporating and sharing the benefit of tourism,
- Community pride - excitement to hear visitors presently surprised by what they find here, and they aren't expecting.

## WHAT DO WE LOOK LIKE? 2023 ASPIRATIONS

- Enhanced bespoke and authentic offerings that complement the regional village theme.
- Increased overnight stays, transitioning from a pass-through to a destination region.
- Emphasis on immersive experiences, including food, dinosaur trails, and glamping.
- Movement towards a vibrant weekend culture with extended business hours.
- Promotion of outdoor activities suitable for bike riding, canoeing, and walking.
- Development of local tours showcasing industry significance and first nation history.
- Improvement in education and renewable energy facilities to attract diverse visitors.
- Utilisation of Dogwood Reserve and investment in Western Downs by the state government.
- Enhancement of nature and eco-tourism, reducing empty shops and increasing retail growth.
- Expansion of unique accommodations, such as luxury glamping on the river.
- Creation of end destination experiences to attract more high-spend visitors.
- Fostering a thriving local business environment with unique attractions for visitors.
- Strengthening community engagement through increased access to local produce and promotion of agricultural experiences.
- Encouraging longer stays with a variety of activities, including dinosaur parks, renewable tours, and immersive land experiences.
- Emphasising First Nation history and culture as a core part of the region's identity.
- Increasing state government investment in the Western Downs to support local development.
- Encouraging businesses to adopt a weekend culture with extended opening hours for cafes and restaurants, promoting a more vibrant local scene.
- Developing and promoting trails for bikers, canoers, and walkers, catering to outdoor enthusiasts and encouraging active exploration of the region's natural beauty.
- Transitioning Miles from a "drive-through" to a "destination" area, encouraging visitors to stay longer and explore the depth of experiences offered.
- Expanding and investing in the "Back to the Bush" event, strengthening its appeal and drawing more visitors.
- Implementing infrastructure and experiences that support luxury glamping and unique accommodation options, enhancing the region's appeal to a broader range of visitors, including those seeking high-end experiences.

## HOW DO WE WANT TO MAKE VISITORS FEEL?

- Excited, surprised, and astonished, yet feeling at home.
- Welcomed warmly, prompting them to bring family and friends back.
- Engaged like a local, with a strong desire to return.
- Enlightened about the beauty and value of the region, encouraging repeat visits.
- Educated on agritourism and appreciating the land's contributions.
- Comfortable, welcome, and energised by their experiences.
- Content and keen to explore more.
- Intrigued and centred, feeling connected to the community.
- Happy and exhausted from the activities, yet eager to share their experiences.
- Feeling like a part of the local fabric, with a strong connection to the community.
- Relaxed, de-stressed, and ready to recount their adventures to family and friends.
- Motivated to return and bring others to share in the experience.
- Intrigued by agritourism, gaining an appreciation for the land and its contributions.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

### Who we want?

- High-yield visitors seeking quality experiences.
- International tourists, especially from India and China.
- Intrastate visitors, including festival goers and dinosaur enthusiasts.
- Families looking for child-friendly activities and experiences.
- Grey nomads exploring the region's offerings.
- Business travellers and corporate groups for retreats and team building.
- Visitors from South East Queensland looking for weekend getaways.
- Eco-conscious travellers interested in the EV market.
- Supporters of local businesses and agritourism.
- Return visitors and those wanting to spend more in the community.
- Active retirees and couples seeking leisure and exploration.
- Influencers and paying visitors promoting Miles through social media and word-of-mouth.

### Emerging Trends

- Increased reliance on online booking for accommodation and activities.
- Queensland's country areas becoming popular for weekend breaks, accessible without a 4WD.
- Growing trend of travelling with pets, necessitating pet-friendly accommodations and services.
- A heightened focus on sustainability and accessible tourism options.
- Lifestyle preferences influencing tourism, including walkability, gluten-free food options, and outdoor activities.
- Adjustments and considerations regarding local laws to accommodate new tourism trends.

# HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THERE?

## EXPERIENCES

- Enhancing sound trails with stories and guides for night tours.
- Offering both self-guided and guided tours, including interpretive centres and local industry insights.
- Improving accessibility at events and across tourism experiences.
- Developing fossicking tours for hands-on exploration.
- Expanding glamping options for unique accommodation experiences.
- Increasing water activities like stand-up paddleboarding and kayaking.
- Promoting nature-based activities, including eco-tours and horse trail riding.
- Leveraging air tourism through joy flights and increased airport access.
- Showcasing standout local food and coffee offerings.
- Reinvigorating interest in stars and astronomy with night light projects.
- Offering regional tours that introduce new experiences and food explorations.
- Implementing child-friendly events and activities to attract families.
- Utilising technology for engagement, including Google Ads and understanding online presence.
- Expanding educational facilities to support tourism knowledge and skills.
- Encouraging weekend trading to enhance visitor experiences.
- Focusing on unique country experiences, such as Indigenous, historical, and dinosaur tours.
- Improving transport options, including taxis and public transit, to enhance accessibility.
- Introducing movable event infrastructure like grandstands, toilets, and showers to support larger gatherings and festivals.
- Facilitating eco-friendly initiatives, like water leisure activities that respect the environment.
- Encouraging the use of portable showers and toilets to accommodate outdoor and remote events.
- Enhancing Wi-Fi and digital connectivity to improve the visitor experience.
- Offering astronomy and Indigenous experiences to deepen the cultural and educational engagement.
- Encouraging the development of a brewery or distillery to diversify local attractions.
- Emphasizing the importance of unique dining experiences, such as farm-to-table and paddock-to-plate options.
- Prioritising the development of infrastructure for air shows and aero sports to attract aviation enthusiasts.
- Advocating for better airport access to facilitate travel to and from the region.

## INFRASTRUCTURE – hard + soft

### Hard Infrastructure:

- Grandstands, toilets, showers for events.
- Portable showers and toilets.
- Night lights for evening activities and safety.
- Bike tracks for recreational and sporting activities.
- Walking trails to explore the natural beauty of the region.

### Soft Infrastructure:

- Council to supply resources and logistics support for major events, including a trained professional.
- Addressing transport challenges with solutions for the lack of cabs or Uber.
- Coordinating catering places for weekend pop-ups, taking turns to schedule one Sunday per month.
- Providing event manager support and council support for local events and infrastructure needs.
- Hiring equipment such as toilets, marquees, stages, and lighting for events.
- Developing an education facility focused on local industry and agritourism.
- Employing a logistics person by the council to assist major event committees.
- Promoting land/agri-food experiences to highlight the agricultural richness of the area.

## Enablers

- Collaboration with State Forest services to enhance access and develop tours, respecting environmental regulations.
- Development of comprehensive booking systems to support the increasing trend of online reservations.
- Enhancing pet-friendly accommodations and services to cater to travellers with pets.
- Initiatives to promote sustainability and accessibility across all tourism experiences.
- Support for local businesses to extend operating hours, particularly on weekends, encouraging a vibrant town atmosphere.
- Educational programs to enrich visitors' knowledge about agricultural practices and the significance of the land.
- Strong partnerships with local industry to offer immersive experiences that highlight the region's economic contributions.
- Development and promotion of comprehensive tourism packages that include food, adventure, and cultural experiences.
- Infrastructure upgrades to support eco-tourism and nature-based activities, ensuring safe and enjoyable experiences for bikers, canoers, and walkers.
- Leveraging digital marketing to highlight Miles' unique attractions, increasing its visibility as a destination worth staying in.
- Government and community support for major events, ensuring logistical and operational success.
- Investment in night lighting projects to extend the hours of visitor engagement and enhance safety.
- Strengthening local networks to encourage a unified approach towards tourism development and visitor satisfaction.
- Developing unique accommodation options like glamping to attract a wider range of visitors looking for luxury experiences in nature.
- Enhancing local food and beverage offerings to make Miles a destination for gourmet experiences, showcasing local produce.

## KPIs / How will we know it's working?

- Increase in both day and overnight visitation.
- New investments in tourism-related infrastructure.
- Enhanced collaboration between local tourism operators and the local tourism/event organisations.
- Higher levels of visitor satisfaction reported.
- Increased reach and engagement through digital marketing and social media efforts.

## Desired Outcomes

- Visitors become advocates for Miles, sharing their experiences widely.
- Development of Miles as a renowned destination for its unique country experiences and agritourism.
- Introduction of innovative tourism offerings that highlight the region's agricultural heritage and natural beauty.
- Strengthened relationships within the local community and between tourism businesses, fostering a unified approach to tourism development.
- Expansion of the local events calendar, including marquee events that draw visitors from across the state and beyond.
- Increased visitor engagement with First Nation history and culture, enhancing the educational aspect of tourism.
- Improvement in the variety and quality of accommodation options, encouraging longer stays.
- Greater accessibility and mobility around Miles for tourists, with enhanced transport and infrastructure.
- Establishment of Miles as a key destination on the dinosaur trail, leveraging local history and paleontological assets.
- Effective use of digital tools and platforms to promote Miles' tourism offerings and facilitate easy access to information for potential visitors.

## INTO THE FUTURE

### Vision / Aspiration

- Miles transforms into a distinctive destination known for its bespoke and authentic experiences that celebrate its rural and agricultural heritage.
- The region becomes renowned for its immersive agritourism opportunities, dinosaur trails, and unique accommodation options, drawing visitors for longer stays.
- Leveraging its natural beauty and historical significance, Miles offers a vibrant mix of outdoor activities, local tours, and educational facilities that appeal to families, eco-tourists, and adventure seekers.
- Through strategic development and investment, Miles cultivates a weekend culture with thriving local businesses, enhanced accessibility, and a strong focus on First Nation history and culture, making it a compelling destination for both domestic and international visitors.
- The community's commitment to sustainability, education, and innovative tourism experiences positions Miles as a leader in regional tourism, where visitors leave feeling connected, enlightened, and eager to return.

### Regional Guiding Principles

- Prioritise the development and promotion of Miles' unique cultural and historical identity, ensuring visitors appreciate the region's richness.
- Advocate for sustainable and eco-friendly tourism practices that preserve the region's natural beauty and agricultural heritage.
- Encourage local engagement and capacity building to create diverse and enriching experiences for visitors.
- Foster a collaborative community spirit among businesses and residents to enhance the visitor experience and promote Miles as a vibrant destination.
- Emphasise the importance of accessibility and inclusivity in all tourism offerings to welcome a broad spectrum of visitors.
- Integrate First Nation history and stories into the tourism fabric of Miles, offering authentic and respectful cultural experiences.

### Strategic Priorities & KPIs

#### Strategic Priorities

- Develop and enhance unique accommodation and glamping sites, with a focus on utilising natural surroundings and sustainable practices.
- Promote the region's unique historical and cultural narratives, including dinosaur trails and First Nation history.
- Improve transportation and infrastructure to support easy access and mobility within Miles and to key attractions.
- Expand child-friendly activities and events to attract families and encourage longer stays.
- Invest in educational and interactive experiences related to agriculture, natural history, and astronomy to engage visitors of all ages.

#### Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Increase in overnight stays and average length of visitor stay.
- Growth in visitor numbers to newly developed attractions and events.
- Enhanced visitor satisfaction ratings, particularly regarding accessibility and family-friendly offerings.
- Increase in local business participation in tourism through extended trading hours and event involvement.
- Measurable growth in tourism-related employment opportunities, especially in guiding, hospitality, and event management.

## Now

- Strengthen partnerships between local council, tourism operators to streamline event support and logistics.
- Launch a comprehensive digital marketing campaign to promote Miles' unique attractions, including dinosaur trails and agritourism experiences.
- Initiate community engagement programs to enhance local support for tourism and educate on the benefits of increased visitation.
- Develop a strategic plan for improving transportation options within Miles, including taxi services and connectivity to major attractions.
- Organise workshops for local businesses on extending trading hours and creating family-friendly environments to cater to weekend visitors.

## How?

- Foster a cohesive tourism network connecting local businesses, Indigenous groups, and environmental initiatives to share Miles' unique story and sustainable practices.
- Implement a support structure for local events and tourism initiatives through dedicated council resources, including a logistics coordinator for major events.
- Enhance digital presence and online booking capabilities for Miles' attractions and accommodations to cater to the growing trend of online travel planning.
- Collaborate with regional and state tourism bodies to promote Miles as a key destination within Queensland, focusing on its mega-fauna heritage, natural beauty, and agricultural experiences.
- Develop educational programs and tours that highlight the region's agricultural innovation, Indigenous heritage, and natural wonders, encouraging immersive visitor experiences.
- Encourage the establishment of unique accommodation options, such as glamping sites and eco-tours, to attract a diverse range of visitors seeking authentic rural experiences.
- Improve infrastructure and accessibility for outdoor activities, including bike tracks, walking trails, and water sports, to enhance the appeal of Miles as an adventure and eco-tourism destination.
- Support local businesses in extending their operating hours and services to accommodate weekend and holiday visitors, ensuring a vibrant local scene.
- Engage in strategic partnerships to facilitate the introduction of new events and festivals that celebrate the cultural and natural assets of the region.