


TAMWORTH REGIONAL COUNCIL **VISITOR ECONOMY PLAN**

2022 - 2027

SEPTEMBER 2022



A photograph of a bushfire. In the foreground, a pile of green, elongated leaves and dry twigs sits on a bed of dark, charred ground. A plume of white smoke rises from the pile, drifting towards the left. The background is a blurred expanse of smoke and fire, creating a hazy, atmospheric scene.

Tamworth Regional Council would like to acknowledge the Gamilaroi/Kamilaroi people, who are the traditional custodians of this land. We would like to pay respect to Elders past and present and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in and visiting our Region.



CONTENTS

PART A: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....4

STRUCTURE OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY PLAN.....7

ALIGNING WITH TAMWORTH TOMORROW
& OUR COMMUNITY PLAN 2023 - 2033.....8

PART B: STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS
& PRIORITY ACTIONS.....9

THE WAY FORWARD.....10

VISITOR ECONOMY PLAN FRAMEWORK.....11

TAMWORTH REGION'S ASSETS & PRECINCTS.....12

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO
DESTINATION PLANNING.....13

1. FOUNDATION PROJECTS.....14 - 17

2. ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS.....18 - 21

3. SUPPLY: QUALITY EXPERIENCES.....22 - 32

4. DEMAND: MARKETING & VISITOR SERVICES.....33 - 37

5. RESULTS: MEASURING SUCCESS.....38 - 39

PART A

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tourism is worth almost \$300 million annually to Tamworth region's economy. It is a significant industry, directly employing over 1,200 people. It contributes to the vibrancy and liveability of the region, supporting a more viable hospitality sector, retail, transport services and sporting facilities.

Critical issues to address

Despite the strengths of Tamworth region's visitor economy, it relies heavily on the success of its hero event, the Tamworth Country Music Festival (TCMF), which indicates that the visitor economy is underperforming. Two areas illustrate this:

1. The disproportionate contribution TCMF makes to the visitor economy. Tourism is worth around \$300 million annually to the local economy. The TCMF, a ten-day event, contributes \$60 million, in direct terms, to this total. In short, it's worth 20% of Tamworth region's visitor economy.

Or, to look at it from another perspective, for ten days a year the visitor economy is generating around \$6 million per day. For the remaining 355 days, it is only generating just over half a million dollars per day.

2. Length of stay. The average length of overnight stay (2.5 nights) is 25% lower than the average for regional NSW (3.3 nights).

It is also critical that regional dispersal is encouraged. This means lifting the profile of the experience offer across the Tamworth region, incorporating its towns, villages and nature-based, rural and agri-tourism experiences. This also extends beyond the Tamworth Regional Council's area to surrounding regions, including Liverpool Plains, Gunnedah and Walcha.

An imminent threat

Not only is the visitor economy underperforming, the visitor economy is also at significant risk with the ambition of the Queensland Government to make Queensland the new home of country music in Australia. This is evidenced by Queensland's investment in the Broadbeach Country Music Festival (Groundwater) and CMC Rocks Queensland.

The way forward

The appeal of regional Australia is at an all time high, including with younger generations, specifically Millennials and Gen Z. Australians are now more aware of the rich experiences on offer in our own backyard.

Innovation and creativity sit at the heart of the Tamworth region. From lighting up the streets to delivering world-class events, it has a proud history that reflects a future-focused and forward thinking region.

As a result, there has never been a more important time to capitalise on these strengths and position Tamworth region as the **capital of country Australia**.

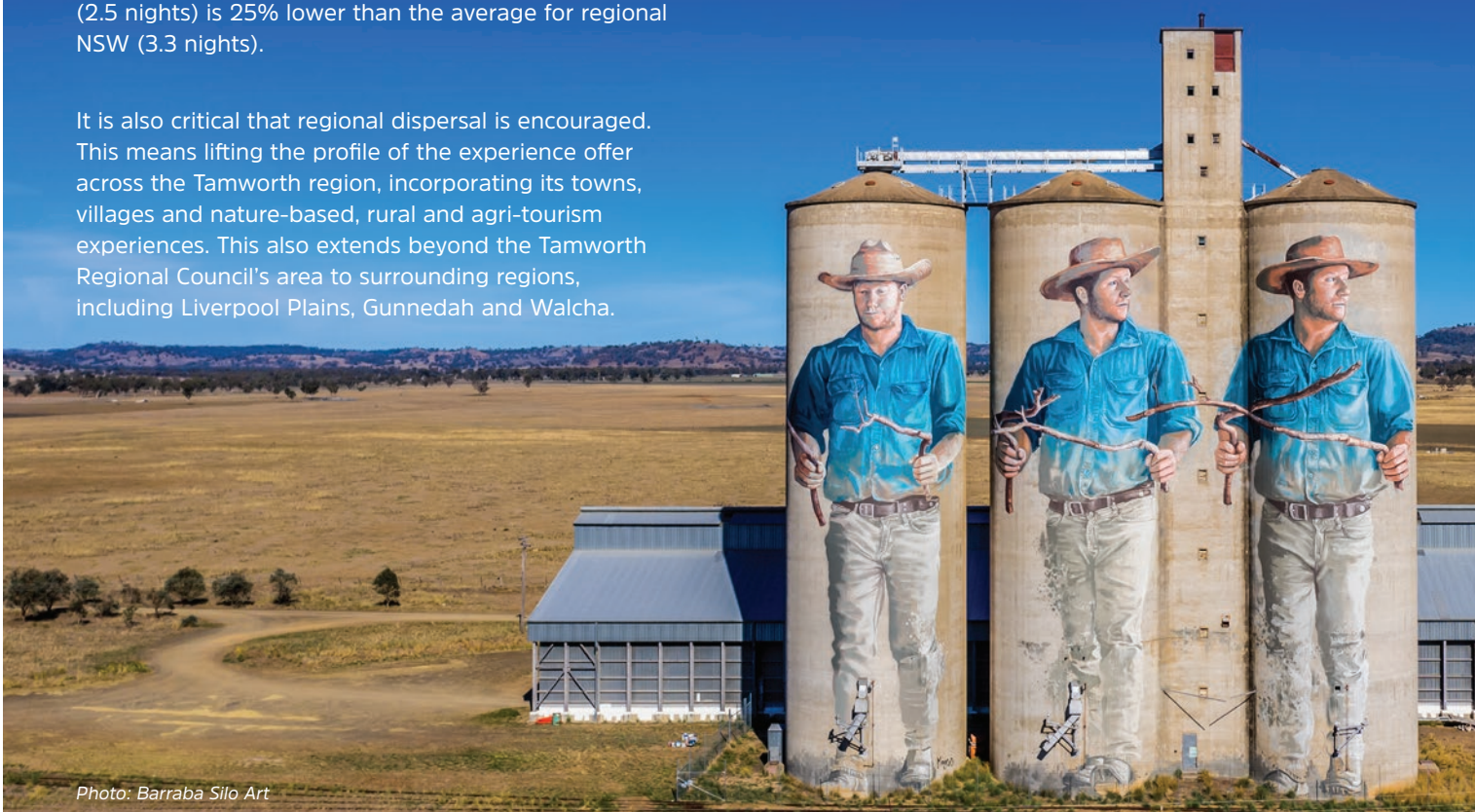


Photo: Barraba Silo Art

Inspiring visitors to stay longer, spend more and disperse further

A key to success highlighted throughout the Visitor Economy Plan is encouraging greater regional dispersal. It leverages an important trend relating to the growing importance of transformative travel – those experiences that facilitate surprise and delight, connecting visitors to the place, its history and heritage, and its people in a deeper, more meaningful way.

The Tamworth Region offers plenty of opportunities to 'tap' into this growing trend by creating a series of inspiring, experientially-led itineraries and trails that bring to life the legendary characters and remarkable stories the region has to offer.

Enjoy a *yarn about yarn*ing with Nick & Kylie at the Nundle Woollen Mill. Catch your own dinner at Arc-en-Ciel, the Sydenham family's trout farm. Relax and unwind in one of Dungowan Station's, off-grid eco-friendly sustainable Tiny Homes – Dragonfly and Bullfrog – and then pop down to the reimagined woolshed transformed into a brewery where owners Campbell and Narree McIntosh welcome you to enjoy one of their craft beers.

Drop-in for lunch at Goonoo Goonoo Station to savour some of the region's finest seasonal produce. Check out the silo art created by Fintan Magee in Barraba. Enjoy the great outdoors your own way, from mountain biking to kayaking and fishing to bird-watching, there are myriad options. Or, for a change of pace, head to the Paragliding School at Manilla and take in the breath-taking views from the air with Chief Flying Instructor Godfrey Wenness.

Tamworth region should put the visitor first and celebrate the diverse experiences offered across the entire region, while remaining focused on growing the region's share of the domestic market, in particular through harnessing its reputation for delivering high-quality events.

“ Between 1999 and 2009, customer centric businesses had 233% growth versus 10% for shareholder centric businesses ”

Harvard Business School

Putting the visitor first is clearly a commercial imperative. It requires action that is informed by insights from visitor research and credible global and domestic trends in tourism and travel. The Visitor Economy Plan (VEP) involved a comprehensive review of existing research and analysis of the most relevant trends that will influence travel to the Tamworth region.

A plan that is informed and aligned

The VEP has been developed simultaneously with Council's new Economic Development and Investment Strategy, *Tamworth Tomorrow*. It also aligns directly with Councils Blueprint 100 and the Community Strategic Plan (CSP), *Our Community Plan 2023 - 2033*.

It has been informed by consultation with Council, industry, stakeholders and community representatives as well as analysis of State and regional plans, including Destination NSW's Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 and the Destination Management Plan of Destination Network Country and Outback NSW.

Key findings of the **Situation Analysis** included the opportunity to attract higher-yielding markets and encourage greater dispersal across the region. To achieve this, the region needs to elevate the promotion of its diverse experience offering and foster experience and product development that resonates with the interests and preferences of today's tourism markets.



Roadmap to success

A critical success factor will be to increase resources to strengthen the development and promotion of a sustainable visitor economy.

This is coupled with an integrated governance model within Council that unites marketing and high-quality visitor services with destination planning and management as well as industry engagement and development.

It will be critical to strategically invest in infrastructure and precincts that deliver shared benefits to the local community and visitors to the region. For example, expanding or revitalising sporting, recreational and outdoor event facilities and enhancing the performing arts, cultural and culinary offering of the region. It means adopting a commercial focus to **realise the true potential of the region's infrastructure and assets**.

Revitalising the region's event program will create interest to attract new or emerging markets. Planning beyond 2022 has already commenced to ensure the TCMF remains relevant and as enticing to future generations as those of past 50 years. Expanding the events program to reinforce the region's other strengths, from the arts and culture to sport and agriculture are essential to mitigate the threats posed by competitor destinations.

Technology and people's increasing reliance on it, continue to influence the visitor economy. The days of simply being online are over. Digital transformation is necessary to future-proof the visitor economy. This extends from helping to address key challenges (for example, staffing shortages) to attracting new markets segments such as digital nomads (refer page 46) and meeting the expectations of consumers.

Strengthening the visitor economy is not the role of Council alone. Involving the local industry through co-operative marketing campaigns and sharing insights from quality visitor research and best practice in tourism and hospitality will provide a platform for **genuine collaboration**.

Starting with **creating a world-class place brand** that consolidates Tamworth region's identity, narrative and positioning as *Capital of Country Australia* will establish a strong foundation to grow a more sustainable and resilient visitor economy.

Marketing efforts should initially focus on the Council's owned channels, creating remarkable content and continuing to elevate and deliver **high-quality visitor services**. These efforts will reinforce a world-class place brand and underpin a stand-out destination campaign to further grow the awareness and appeal of the Tamworth region. A high priority action for marketing is to start by implementing an initial campaign that focuses on **encouraging visitors to extend their stay by at least one more night** to experience all that the region has to offer, including promoting regional dispersal. This campaign, *One More*, should be prioritised as an early action to demonstrate Council is getting on with the task of promoting the region.

The future is bright

The future potential of the region's visitor economy is bright. The growth projection included in the Situation Analysis estimates that **total visitation of over 1.6 million could be achieved within five years**.

The estimates are based on an ambitious year-on-year growth of 8% to deliver an additional \$116 million to the region's economy. A more conservative estimate of 3% year-on-year growth would deliver an additional \$44 million to the region's economy. Simply lifting the length of stay from 2.5 nights to the regional NSW average of 3.3 nights would significantly contribute to the region's economy. For example, if just a quarter of the current overnight visitors to the Tamworth region stayed **one more night** it would deliver an additional **\$20 million** to the visitor economy.

The VEP provides a clear and prioritised roadmap to success. Importantly, it is a **whole-of-Council plan** with significant opportunities to engage and actively involve stakeholders, industry and the community.

Now is the time for Tamworth region to capitalise on its strengths and invest in the growth of a more sustainable and vibrant visitor economy.

The structure of the Visitor Economy Plan (VEP) is outlined on the following page. This is followed by a summary of how the VEP has been aligned with:

- **Tamworth Tomorrow – Economic Development and Investment Strategy**
- **Our Community Plan 2023 – 2033.**

TAMWORTH REGION VISITOR ECONOMY PLAN

What we aim to achieve

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Inclusive of the whole region and all communities
- Informed (evidence-based)
- Showcasing our strengths (alignment with NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030)
- Customer-centric (putting the visitor first)
- Future-focused (understanding a dynamic industry)
- Measurable in terms of both deliverables and outcomes

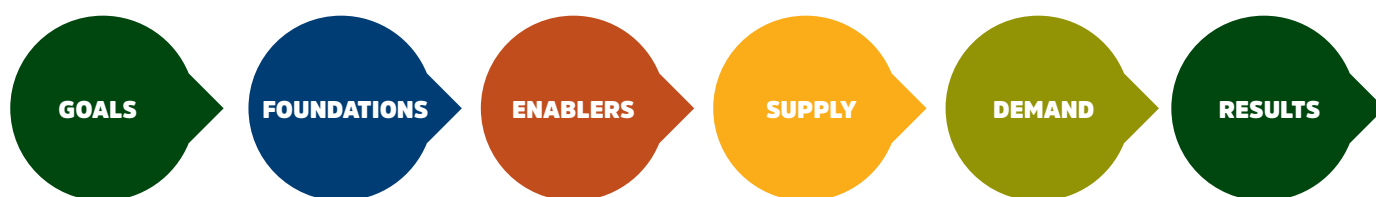
GOALS

- Sustainably grow visitation to Tamworth region year-round
- Increase yield and the contribution of the visitor economy to the region's economy
- Encourage greater regional dispersal
- Contribute to the liveability and vibrancy of the Tamworth region

OUTCOME MEASURES

- Increase average length of stay from 2.5 days to the regional NSW average of 3.3 days over the period 2022 to 2027
- Increase the average spend per visitor by 10% over the period 2022 to 2027 (taking into account inflation/increases in CPI)
- Increase of 15% in the number of experiences listed on Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW)

INFORMED BY THE SITUATION ANALYSIS – Identification of strengths, weaknesses, gaps and opportunities to sustainably grow the visitor economy



FOUNDATION PROJECTS

Most significant projects that lay the foundations for success in the visitor economy based on the goals of the VEP

ENABLERS

Support the VEP's implementation, including:

- Governance
- Visitor research
- Regulatory barriers for industry
- Capability development

SUPPLY

- Enriching the experience offer through enhancing existing or developing new experiences and events
- Infrastructure that supports the visitor economy
- Shared infrastructure that supports the visitor economy and community amenity/services

DEMAND

Activities and activations that help to grow awareness of and preference for the destination, including:

- Marketing
- Visitor services

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Outline of the priority action required and links to the associated primary tasks

PRIMARY TASKS

- Specific tasks that deliver on each priority action

PRIORITISED ACTION PLAN

Aligned with the phases of the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030

ALIGNING WITH TAMWORTH TOMORROW & OUR COMMUNITY PLAN 2023 - 2033

TAMWORTH TOMORROW

The Visitor Economy Plan (VEP) has been developed simultaneously with the Council's new *Tamworth Tomorrow, Economic Development and Investment Strategy*. This ensures that the visitor economy is considered within context of the region's broader economy. Joint consultation with key stakeholders and community representatives was undertaken to inform both the VEP and *Tamworth Tomorrow*.

A number of the strategies identified in *Tamworth Tomorrow* directly relate to strengthening the capacity of the region to grow its visitor economy, including:

- Improving water security, a core concern of many stakeholders. It would contribute to enhancing the appeal of the destination, especially given the increasing importance of sustainability to visitor markets.
- Supporting housing affordability and availability. This is critical to attract and retain talent, including by the tourism and hospitality sectors. Increased housing density will also contribute to the sense of vibrancy of Tamworth City and enliven the night-time economy.
- Enhancing education, skills and training, which integrates with the need for industry development and to incubate new businesses.
- Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to drive economic priorities, which aligns to and reinforces the importance of the VEP's Foundation Project # 1.
- Delivering infrastructure and transport connection, which is essential to ensure access by visitors and tourism operators to and throughout the region.

- Leveraging technology and digital connectivity. This is a significant priority that aligns with a core enabler for success and future-proofing the visitor economy.

- Encouraging innovation and future industries, specifically relating to development of the Performing Arts and Cultural Precinct, Australian Equine and Livestock Centre (AELEC) and the (planned) sporting and tourism precinct.

Tamworth Tomorrow also provides an investment pipeline framework that will deliver shared benefits to the community and visitors to the region.

OUR COMMUNITY PLAN 2023 – 2033

Tamworth region's Community Strategic Plan (CSP), *Our Community Plan 2023 – 2033*, identifies nine focus areas. The VEP has been integrated with the CSP, aligning with two core priorities:

- Focus Area 3, *Prosperity and Innovation*: Tamworth region is Country Australia's leading and most vibrant destination with a sustainable and dynamic visitor economy.
- Focus Area 8, *A Strong and Vibrant Identity*: Broaden Tamworth's identity beyond just country music. That is, be known for country music and so much more.

The VEP and CSP also align with priorities identified in Focus Areas 4, 5, 7 and 9.

PART B STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS & PRIORITY ACTIONS



THE WAY FORWARD

The VEP is intended to integrate with and leverage:

- Council's strategic plans, including Blueprint 100, Tamworth Tomorrow and its Community Strategic Plan (CSP)
- Regional and State strategic plans, including the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 and Destination Country and Outback NSW's DMP, among others.

The VEP is underpinned by a clear ambition and a positioning statement.

- **Ambition:** *Tamworth region is country Australia's leading and most vibrant destination with a sustainable and dynamic visitor economy*
- **Positioning:** *Capital of Country Australia*

Guiding principles and goals

The **guiding principles** set the foundations for a comprehensive and informed approach to sustainably growth the visitor economy of the Tamworth region:

- Inclusive of the whole region and all communities
- Informed (evidence-based)
- Showcasing our strengths (alignment with NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030)
- Customer-centric (putting the visitor first)
- Future-focused (understanding a dynamic industry)
- Measurable in terms of both deliverables and outcomes

The high level goals, which are linked to measurable objectives are:

- Sustainably grow visitation to Tamworth region year-round
- Increase yield and the contribution of the visitor economy to the region's economy
- Encourage greater regional dispersal
- Contribute to the liveability and vibrancy of the Tamworth region

Structure of the Visitor Economy Plan (in line with best practice)

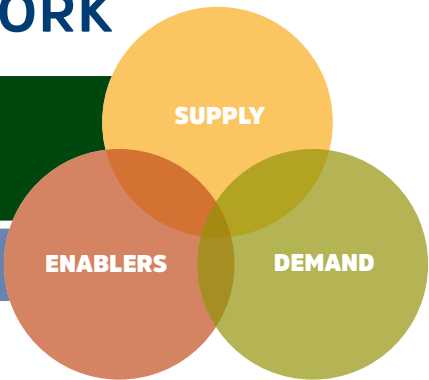
- **Foundation projects** – the highest priority to optimise the effectiveness of other actions to sustainably grow the visitor economy.
- **Enablers** – critical to implementation and ultimately success.
- **Supply** – Quality experiences – relates to the region's experience offering, including infrastructure and high-profile precincts. The core themes reinforce the strengths of the region, address gaps or offer growth opportunities. It contributes to the region's sense of vibrancy and liveability.
- **Demand** – relates to marketing the destination and providing high-quality visitor services that meet the needs and expectations of today's visitors.



VISITOR ECONOMY PLAN FRAMEWORK

AMBITION: Tamworth region is country Australia's leading and most vibrant destination with a sustainable and dynamic visitor economy

POSITIONING: Capital of Country Australia



CORE THEMES (encouraging regional dispersal)



PRIMARY ENABLERS (facilitating regional dispersal)



MAJOR PRECINCTS (activating our assets)



REGIONAL DISPERSAL:

ELEVATING THE NATURE-BASED, RURAL & AGRI-TOURISM EXPERIENCE OFFERING
LEGENDARY CHARACTERS - REMARKABLE STORIES



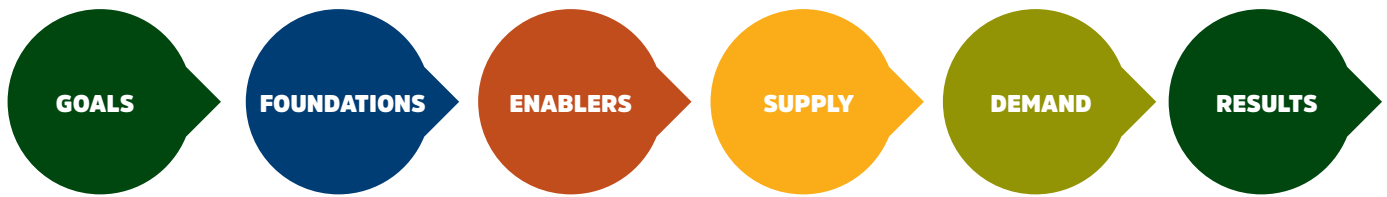
PRIORITISED ACTION PLAN

TAMWORTH REGION'S ASSETS AND PRECINCTS

The region's most significant assets and infrastructure have been organised into four major 'precinct groups'. It is based on primary linkages and alignment to specific themes. The table below highlights the primary assets or infrastructure linked to each precinct group.

PRECINCT GROUPS	PRIMARY ASSETS OR INFRASTRUCTURE
CULTURE ON COUNTRY – ACROSS THE LANDSCAPE (PROPOSED)	Cultural Precinct on Country – linking sites and cultural stories across the lands, waters and sky of the <i>Kamilaroi Nation</i> – see <i>Foundation Projects # 1</i>
MUSIC, ARTS & CULTURE	<p>Tamworth region offers a wide range of arts and cultural attractions, from multiple museums to entertainment venues as well as parks and open space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing Arts Centre & Cultural Precinct (planned) • Tamworth Regional Entertainment & Conference Centre (TRECC) • Tamworth Regional Gallery, Museums & Capitol Theatre • Country Music and Tourist Precinct (planned) • Multi-purpose Open Space
SPORTS & RECREATION	<p>Tamworth region is home to a number of significant sporting facilities in regional Australia as well as offering beautiful natural areas perfect for multiple outdoor pursuits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AELEC and old athletics track • Northern Inland Centre of Sporting Excellence • Unstructured sport – recreational facilities and trails – dams, State Forests & National Parks
MEETING PLACES, PLAY & COMMUNITY	<p>There are a large number of important community assets and infrastructure, which also offer experiences for visitors to enjoy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tamworth Regional Playground • Water Park Facility (proposed) • Skate Park & Tamworth Mountain Bike Park precincts • Victoria Park precinct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Botanic Gardens o Marsupial Park o Miniature Railway • Tamworth Regional Astronomy & Science Centre

WHY AN INTEGRATED APPROACH IS CRITICAL TO SUCCESS



It is critical to deliver a **practical and realistic Action Plan**. It means more than simply listing high-priority infrastructure projects to build. It is essential to consider the **enablers as well as the demand-driving actions** to build the appeal of and preference for the destination.

This involves:

- Planned **completion of major visitor-related infrastructure initiatives and projects**, including shared infrastructure with community-based objectives
- Enablers that are critical to **maximise the potential** of major initiatives and projects, including but not limited to:
 - » Integration of design-thinking to ensure a visitor-centric approach to development and use
 - » Experience development, including:
 - Working with accommodation and hospitality providers to improve the overall experience offering and develop partnerships for product bundling and packages
 - Identifying opportunities for linking across sectors, including the region's significant culinary, produce and agri-tourism offering as well as arts and culture and sport tourism

- **Activation** of the destination, including major infrastructure projects, which should be **guided by our brand** and involve:
 - Promotion to attract visitors year-round as well as encourage regional dispersal and repeat visitation
 - Visitor services collateral for multi-channel distribution
 - Events that showcase the region's strengths and competitive advantages
 - Design and implementation of wayfinding signage and interpretation (for multi-channel distribution)

The above outline demonstrates the inherent value of leveraging our existing and emerging strengths and investment in the visitor economy through an integrated approach to addressing supply, demand and enablers.

GOALS

FOUNDATIONS

ENABLERS

SUPPLY

DEMAND

RESULTS

1. FOUNDATION PROJECTS



1.1 WORLD-CLASS PLACE BRAND

Tamworth Regional Council has a renowned reputation for the Tamworth Country Music Festival, which has underpinned its perception as the home of country music in Australia.

This and other strengths of the region should be harnessed to create a new place brand: one that leverages innovation and creativity to showcase a future-focused region and stand-out destination. It should proudly bring the positioning, *Capital of Country Australia* to life in a meaningful way.

A clear, credible, competitive and compelling place brand influences the way in which the region shows up in the world; across all its customer touch points. It will resonate with various audiences, from economic development to destination marketing and community engagement and provide a blueprint to guide everything a destination does. It should be informed by comprehensive visitor research and analysis.

PRIORITY ACTIONS	PRIMARY TASKS
<p>1. Develop and activate a world-class place brand for Tamworth region, which is informed by credible visitor research and sentiment analysis and adopts the positioning of Capital of Country Australia</p> <p><i>Aligns with Our Community Plan 2023 – 2033, Focus Area 9, A Strong and Vibrant Identity</i></p>	<p>i. Undertake comprehensive visitor research (qualitative and quantitative) and sentiment analysis to inform the brand identity framework</p>
	<p>ii. Develop a brand identity framework and guidelines. It should integrate and reinforce the region's vision, values and emotional essence; giving the destination meaning beyond its functional benefits and attributes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand Guidelines are the creative execution of the brand identity and its emotional essence. This includes the logo, fonts, typeface, colour palette and photographic style, among other things • Review the existing Destination Tamworth brand guidelines and update as required to fit with the new place brand identity
	<p>iii. Launch and activate the new place brand – This should include targeted PR programs and initial 12- month content program to support and build awareness of the new place brand</p>
	<p>iv. Implement a Brand Champions program – Invite influencers and decision makers (within the industry and community) to share, communicate and build support for the brand identity and rationale</p>
	<p>v. Implement a brand-tracker research program to measure the change in destination awareness and preference for Tamworth region from launch of new brand to 2027 and beyond</p>

1.2 GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

FOUNDATIONS

Good governance, collaboration and partnerships are critical success factors. It is essential to enable a unified and more powerful voice for the destination.

It requires:

- Increase in resources to create, drive and promote new opportunities while defending the region from competitors, especially those chasing its place as the home of country music and events
- Staged approach to build trust between all parties and achieve a sustainable, long- term outcome to the benefit of the visitor economy

An integrated governance model for tourism and events is a high priority. It should unite functions including marketing, communication, industry engagement and development, visitor servicing, events and destination management and planning.

This approach would clearly signal our commitment to sustainable growth of the visitor economy. It would also provide a consistent and clear point of engagement for the industry and key stakeholders. Over time, this would enable greater opportunities for increasing the involvement and contribution of industry through initiatives such as co-opt marketing campaigns as well as to attract investment.

PRIORITY ACTIONS	PRIMARY TASKS
1. Establish an integrated model or single unit within TRC to represent tourism and events in Tamworth Region . It would lead all visitor-economy related functions, from marketing to industry engagement and development, visitor servicing, events and destination management and planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Develop and implement a business plan to demonstrate transparency to industry and enable a strategic approach to addressing core resourcing needs, gaps and opportunities, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revenue generation through e- commerce, retail opportunities and online booking systems• Core requirements to reinforce, promote and defend the positioning of the region as <i>Capital of Country Australia</i>ii. Develop a partnership prospectus, which strengthens the focus on collaboration and identifies new opportunities for industry and other partners to play an active role at a destination- level, including co-opt marketing campaigns and to support eventsiii. Activate broader industry engagement (for example, through the Brand Champions program) and continue to implement regular communication – refer <i>Enablers for Success, Priority Action 1</i>



1.3 FIRST NATIONS: PROSPERITY, CULTURAL IDENTITY & WELL-BEING

Addressing economic, social and cultural prosperity for the First Nation's people of the Tamworth region is a clear priority. Aboriginal communities represent around 10% of the region's population. However, they are significantly under-represented on many of the region's other important economic and social measures.

It is imperative that a holistic and future-focused approach that genuinely involves the local Aboriginal community be developed through a co-design process. A number of barriers were identified to initiating or creating Aboriginal owned and operated enterprises to deliver Aboriginal cultural experiences or other commercially viable initiatives or businesses. An understanding of their ambition, needs, interests and capabilities is essential.

The barriers extended well beyond training and capability development and include regulatory barriers for accessing Country (in particular, to deliver commercial activities) as well as the need to provide appropriate resources to enable and support Aboriginal owned and operated enterprises and initiatives.

There is a significant opportunity to leverage cultural activities and interests by creating meaningful employment pathways, from delivering Aboriginal cultural experiences on Country through to land management, cultural cool-burning and native plant produce and products, among many others.

However, it should be the Aboriginal community who determine the scope, scale and strategies that will best contribute to their prosperity, cultural identity and well-being.

PRIORITY ACTIONS	PRIMARY TASKS
1. Develop and implement a co-designed strategy and action plan to support and enhance Aboriginal prosperity, cultural identity and the well-being of local Aboriginal communities in the Tamworth region. This should be led by the local Aboriginal community and enterprises with the support of Council.	
2. In collaboration with the local Aboriginal community and Traditional Custodians, investigate the opportunity to create a truly distinctive and unique precinct across and embedded within the landscape (lands, waters and sky) that celebrates and builds respect and understanding of connection to Country and enriches the perception of the region	Co-design a concept plan , including identifying opportunities for interpretation of connection to Country
3. Continue to provide support for the development of Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences delivered by the local Aboriginal community, including improved access to Country as well as training, mentoring and business support programs	<i>Priority Projects – Core Themes # 3, Enriching the Experience, Action 6</i>

GOALS

FOUNDATIONS

ENABLERS

SUPPLY

DEMAND

RESULTS

2. ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS



2 ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS

ENABLERS

Underpinning the success of the VEP is remaining informed, visitor-centric and future- focused. However, collaboration and ensuring that the visitor economy is viewed as a significant and important contributor to a vibrant economy and liveability are also critical. The actions below bring focus to these core principles while recognising that sometimes the little things make the biggest difference.

As highlighted in the VEP Framework, the enablers, while inter-related, have been broadly grouped into three primary areas:

1. Collaboration, Industry Leadership and Capability (including visitor research)
2. Digital Transformation and Connectivity
3. Attracting investment and talent

PRIORITY ACTIONS	PRIMARY TASKS
<p>1. Collaboration, Industry Leadership and Capability</p> <p>A. Continue to strengthen collaboration across LGA boundaries as well as with important stakeholders</p>	<p>i. Facilitate ongoing engagement with Destination NSW (DNSW), Destination Country & Outback NSW (DNCO), Department of Regional NSW, Namoi Unlimited (Joint Organisation of Councils), NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Forestry Corporation NSW (FCNSW) and other local and regional tourism organisations.</p> <p>ii. Identify opportunities to work with other organisations or LGAs to achieve outcomes relating to investment attraction, experience development, industry capability and destination marketing. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive tourism and touring routes • Experiences that extend across the landscape and connect LGAs in a more experiential way, such as the Tamworth Taste Trails and DNCO's <i>Wonder of Gondwana & Night Skies</i> concepts
<p>1. Collaboration, Industry Leadership and Capability</p> <p>B. Launch and implement an Industry Leadership Program</p>	<p>i. Strengthen industry engagement and networking, including through hosting forums and creating blogs (or newsletter articles) that enhance awareness of the latest trends and best practices in the visitor economy</p> <p>ii. Implement a Product and experience development program focused on enhancing existing and developing new experiences, products and events, incorporating a business mentoring program tailored to suit the needs of each business</p> <p>iii. Continue to support the Business Chamber and the Sustainable Business Incubator as well as expand the current business grants program targeting local SMEs involved in the visitor economy, Aboriginal owned enterprises and the events and creative industries</p> <p>iv. Implement a program to connect major industry players with local tourism and hospitality providers in the region</p>

2 ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS

ENABLERS

PRIORITY ACTIONS	PRIMARY TASKS
<p>1. Collaboration, Industry Leadership and Capability</p> <p>C. Implement a visitor research and sentiment analysis program to provide meaningful insights into the region's visitor economy and the dynamic and evolving nature of consumer behaviour in tourism and travel, including for events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Confirm the key visitor segments – utilise existing research and data from the Situation Analysis along with any new data from Tourism Research Australia, Destination NSW and Tourism Australia, to confirm key visitor segments such as: active boomers, young families, and sports enthusiasts as well as events and special-interest markets. ii. Undertake a visitor experience and sentiment analysis, which examines reviews (eg TripAdvisor and Google) of visitors to the region across a variety of products and experiences over a ten-year timeframe. Benchmark this against similar competitor destinations iii. Undertake qualitative research – for example, involving an online forum with participants selected based on a set of criteria. It allows a 'deep-dive' to explore the perceptions, motivations and barriers of segments identified in stages outlined above iv. Develop aspirational audience personas and cross reference priority visitor segments with the Roy Morgan 'Helix Persona' profiles to identify the most effective media activity and communication channels to connect the destination brand with its priority audiences
<p>2. Facilitate digital transformation and connectivity to future-proof the region's visitor economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Implement a multichannel approach to visitor servicing (see: Priority Action 4.5) ii. Increase industry awareness of consumer behavior and expectations relating to online and digital services (for example, e-commerce), including online booking and flexibility (convenience) iii. Identify opportunities to expand facilities and services for 'digital nomads' or remote working as well as to support and enhance visitor experiences – consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively pursue partnerships or strengthen collaboration with national or global co-working and/or proptech businesses, universities and/or telco providers re mobile connectivity • Increase awareness of local accommodation providers about the current and emerging expectations and needs of digital nomads and remote working iv. Promote more rapid adoption of new technology into more traditional tourism and hospitality business practices to reduce pressures created by staffing shortages, including automation, such as keyless entry

2 ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS

ENABLERS

PRIORITY ACTIONS	PRIMARY TASKS
3. Foster and facilitate a strategic approach to attracting investment and talent , including grant funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Ensure customer-centric design and the costs associated with attracting investment are built into all proposals for new major projects to be considered by Council. This includes robust master planning, feasibility analysis and demonstrated return on investmentii. Council to continue to monitor and provide advice and support to local businesses to apply for visitor economy or other grants that can assist them grow, revitalise or enhance their experience or offering, including for events. This involves ongoing liaison with DNCO as the key regional partner and conduit to DNSWiii. Work with industry to shift focus on to the quality of the employee and invest in their ability to grow and learn in the industry to create meaningful career pathwaysiv. Facilitate the employment of older Australians, including to strengthen customer and visitor services – consider this opportunity as a focus for a relocation campaign

GOALS

FOUNDATIONS

ENABLERS

SUPPLY

DEMAND

RESULTS

3. SUPPLY: QUALITY EXPERIENCES

Supply relates to the region's experience offering, including **infrastructure and high-profile precincts**.

Focusing in on the **core themes** reinforces the strengths of the region, helps to address gaps or contributes to growth opportunities.

Overall, addressing supply contributes directly to the region's **sense of vibrancy and liveability**.



3.1 EVENTS CAPITAL OF COUNTRY AUSTRALIA

Tamworth region has long been recognised for the Tamworth Country Music Festival (TCMF), which celebrated its 50th year in 2022. TCMF's direct annual economic contribution is over \$60 million, which equates to a staggering total contribution (direct and indirect) of around \$117 million annually to the region's economy. It attracts an estimated 50,000 visitors over ten days.

The region also delivers many other events, from large to small in scale and plays host to community, sport, commercial and business events and conferences. This includes local markets, agricultural field days, regional sporting events and myriad culinary, arts, music and cultural events.

A significant risk to the region is the increasing competition posed by other destinations pursuing ambitious event strategies, including the Queensland Government's vision to make Queensland the home of country music. This is hardly surprising given the annual economic contribution of events such as TCMF. For example, a number of destinations in Queensland, including the Sunshine Coast, are prioritising large-scale investment in facilities and funding to attract and deliver events.

Two interrelated factors are required to address this immediate challenge:

- Increase in resources to attract, produce and promote high quality events
- Contemporary facilities and suitable accommodation offering for a range of events

An important opportunity is to ensure that the events program supports a rich perception of the region; reinforcing its competitive advantage as the home of country music in Australia while showcasing its contemporary and dynamic country lifestyle. It should enable the effective activation of the region's key precincts.

Events offer the added advantage of encouraging regional dispersal to the towns and villages of the region. New event initiatives, such as the motorcycle rally, *National Thunder*, help to further raise the profile of the region and attract new markets.

PRIORITY ACTIONS	PRIMARY TASKS
1. Develop a Regional Events Strategy , which considers the full range of events to curate, manage and/or support as well as attracting new events	<p>i. Priority events should reinforce the place brand and identity of Tamworth region as well as support the activation of the region's key precincts (see 3.2 below) and regional dispersal. The strategy should specifically address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signature events, such as the TCMF, Taste Tamworth Festival and high profile equine events hosted at AELEC • Smaller-scale events, from country markets to those profiling food and drink, arts, music and culture as well as the night sky • Sporting, adventure and outdoor events • Business events and conferencing (leveraging global and domestic trends), including agri-business • Attracting and retaining new events – refer <i>Priority Action 3</i> over page

3.1 EVENTS CAPITAL OF COUNTRY AUSTRALIA

SUPPLY

PRIORITY ACTIONS	PRIMARY TASKS
2. Continue to grow opportunities for hosting agricultural events , such as field days	i. Identify opportunities to specialise in field days focused on innovation in the sector, such as sustainable agricultural practices or integrating new technologies to support agricultural production and farming
3. Proactively pursue, attract and support new event initiatives , including business events and conferences as well as leisure events	i. Develop a business plan and seek resources to actively pursue, attract and support new event initiatives , including business events and conferences as well as leisure events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope the needs and expectations of event managers or organisers • Integrate feasibility and return on investment analysis to support the case for increased resources • Consider introducing an event levy to contribute towards the costs of attracting and retaining new events • Collaborate with the NSW Government (via Department of Regional NSW and Destination NSW) to attract investment ii. Prepare a new events prospectus to highlight the benefits and reasons why Tamworth Region is the best destination to host events
4. Invest in facilities for and programming of outdoor and larger- scale events	i. Integrate design-thinking to the development of open space and pedestrian areas to support events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly involve event managers and producers in the design of best-practice infrastructure, facilities and services for events • Identify opportunities for large-scale outdoor events with capacity to service over 10,000 participants ii. Unlock opportunities for overflow or pop-up accommodation for events , especially to support access for recreational and other vehicles required by the type of event, for example agricultural field days or equine sporting events
5. Ensure marketing and visitor servicing activities support events (also refer <i>Marketing & Visitor Services</i>)	i. Providing pre-event and in-destination information and inspiration to extend the length of stay, including encouraging regional dispersal ii. Ensuring hospitality providers are aware of upcoming events to better cater to the needs and expectations of event participants . For example, consideration of seven-day service and packages to support extended length of stay (for example, long weekend stays from Thursday to Monday inclusive)

3.2 ACTIVATING OUR ASSETS AND PRECINCTS

Over many years, Tamworth region has invested in significant assets and precincts. As a result, it has a wide range of facilities and infrastructure that deliver shared benefits to both local residents and visitors to the region.

As Tamworth region looks towards the future, these assets and precincts should play a critical role in the growth of the visitor economy while continuing to deliver important community outcomes.

For these reasons, the enhancement, maintenance and activation of these assets are a core priority of the Council and sit at the heart of Council's strategic plans, including Blueprint 100, Tamworth Tomorrow, Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and the Visitor Economy Plan (this Plan).

Currently, there are a large number of projects, including master planning relating to a range of assets and infrastructure. Given limited resources, it is critical to prioritise projects for funding or to attract investment. Top priority should be afforded to those projects or programs that will return the highest positive return on investment (ROI) and/or optimise services and facilities for the local community, enhance liveability and support the delivery of events.

Critical issues to address relate to ensuring customer-centric design and funding for ongoing operations, maintenance and the revitalisation of these assets.

Adopting a staged approach to implementation of new developments is critical, commencing with robust feasibility analysis, master planning and business planning.

PRIORITY ACTIONS	PRIMARY TASKS
1. Prioritise investment and funding of Tier 1 precincts , based on the likelihood of achieving a positive return on investment faster	<p>i. Australian Equine & Livestock Events Centre (AELEC) – in line with the new five-year Strategic Plan and associated Business Plan;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AELEC is a highly significant asset of the region and contributes to its perception as a leading destination in country Australia. The current configuration, design and capacity of the facility has limitations. The new five-year Strategic Plan and associated <p>Business Plan addresses many of the current issues and investment should be secured as a priority to provide opportunities to expand its events program and commercial activities to attract new audiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AELEC should include opportunities to provide immerse experiences or behind-the- scenes tours for visitors to the region who are not involved in equine sports or industry, including to elevate its appeal as an outstanding host of business events and conferences

3.2 ACTIVATING OUR ASSETS AND PRECINCTS

SUPPLY

PRIORITY ACTIONS	PRIMARY TASKS
1. Prioritise investment and funding of Tier 1 precincts , based on the likelihood of achieving a positive return on investment faster (continued)	<p>ii. Tamworth Performing Arts Centres & Cultural Precinct – detailed planning has been undertaken;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The precinct's aim is to position Tamworth 'to be a leader in business tourism, cultural tourism and a regional centre of arts excellence' This precinct would provide high quality facilities to support a dynamic and diverse arts, music and cultural program. Its connection to the Tamworth Regional Gallery will contribute furthering its positioning as a premier performing arts and cultural precinct in country Australia while supporting the destination's focus on delivering world class leisure and business events. It would support local artists and artisans and the future development of this sector through youth programs Continue to pursue opportunities to attract major or global exhibitions to the region, especially those that permit them to be hosted exclusively in Australia (ie won't travel to other destinations) <p>iii. Country Music and Tourist Precinct – detailed planning has been undertaken and opportunities for attracting investment commenced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal for the development of this precinct provides an outstanding footprint and design to profile the region as country Australia's most vibrant destination. The integration of a new, high-quality (and easily accessible) visitor centre and hub for the home of Country Music is a game-changer project that would provide a high-profile gateway to the Tamworth region, including the Golden Guitar as a centrepiece Enable public-private partnerships (PPP) and/or commercial offsets (eg accommodation and conference facilities)
2. Develop a prospectus of Tier 2 project opportunities	Tier 2 projects should be prioritised based on feasibility, and return on investment analysis, including optimising benefits of shared infrastructure and facilities for the community
3. Continue to expand and enhance the Northern Inland Centre of Sporting Excellence (NICSE) as well as the region's high-quality family-friendly facilities and playgrounds	<p>i. NICSE - Detailed planning has been undertaken and opportunities for attracting investment commenced for new facilities that expand on previous stages. Ultimately, it positions Tamworth as a leading regional centre for sport in Australia and increases its ability to host and profile larger-scale sporting events</p> <p>ii. Continue to promote and proactively enhance the region's high-quality family-friendly facilities and playgrounds, including the Skate Park, Mountain Bike Park and Tamworth Regional Playground</p>

3.2 ACTIVATING OUR ASSETS AND PRECINCTS

PRIORITY ACTIONS	PRIMARY TASKS
4. Promote the revitalisation and enhancement of the region's accommodation offering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Enhancing the quality of existing accommodation, including upgrades to the motel offering (refresh and renew) and responding to the evolving needs and expectations of the digital nomad or remote working market ii. Fostering and enabling best practice in sustainability and design, including encouraging new accommodation developments that respond to the increasing desire of travellers to reduce the impact of their stay or that offer a nature-based or cultural setting iii. Expanding overflow or pop-up accommodation options for events (see 3.1, Priority Action 4(ii))
5. Capitalise on the increased and growing demand for private air charters for both leisure and business travel <i>Offers significant potential to grow international market share and yield as well as attract higher-yielding visitors to hero events, such as TCMF</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Foster and promote Tamworth region as an active air charter and recreation destination (fixed wing, helicopter and for recreational/sporting pursuits such as hang-gliding), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenic flights and other services for leisure and business travel markets with access to both public and private airstrips • Operators providing recreational air pursuits such as hang-gliding ii. Consider the opportunity for TRC's visitor servicing team to lead a specialised program to coordinate and package the on-ground experience offer for promotion through air charter service providers in key source markets such as Sydney and Melbourne <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showcase the potential of local tourism providers, accommodation suppliers and on-ground transport operators to deliver end-to-end itineraries that respond to the needs and expectations of this market
Victoria Park Precinct	<p><i>A masterplan for the Victoria Park precinct was approved by Council on 25 May 2021. At this stage, no funding has been allocated to its implementation. The following actions (Strategies 6 – 9 inclusive) primarily relate to this Precinct.</i></p>
6. In collaboration with the Tamworth Regional Astronomy Club, activate the business case for the Tamworth Regional Astronomy & Science Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Develop a business plan to address, among other things: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial opportunities, including events, behind-the-scenes or 'subject matter expert' tours and education-tourism activities as well as providing support for Aboriginal cultural activities and viewing of the night sky • Education and community initiatives as well as self-guided tours, interactive and immersive interpretation and signage • Providing an economic return to support the ongoing maintenance and operations of the Centre

3.2 ACTIVATING OUR ASSETS AND PRECINCTS

SUPPLY

PRIORITY ACTIONS	PRIMARY TASKS
7. Identify a new, signature family market attraction	<p>i. Scope opportunities for a potential public-private partnership with an outdoor adventure organisation for a new, signature attraction within the Victoria Park precinct or another suitable location. Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a facility that has a point of difference to the tree top adventure circuits that have become popular Value-add to the experience offering for active families, drive tourism markets and the visiting friends and relatives (VFR) market Opportunities for redevelopment of either the Marsupial Park or Botanic Gardens utilising a commercial model or one that transitions/ devolves management from Council and volunteers
8. Encourage community or volunteer-run attractions to operate more frequently	<p>i. Collaborate with attractions such as the Miniature Railway to operate more frequently and/or to align opening times with school holidays and when family-friendly events are being hosted by the region. This would enhance the appeal of the region as a family-friendly destination.</p> <p>ii. Consider an entry fee to support ongoing maintenance and operational costs of the attraction</p>
9. Lower-order priorities: Tamworth Botanic Gardens and Marsupial Park	<p>i. Both attractions require significant investment to upgrade and maintain facilities and services, including animal enclosures, pathways and key features, such as ponds. <i>Refer Strategy 6(i) above.</i></p> <p>ii. Visitor safety considerations need to be addressed. The approved masterplan for Victoria Park includes improvements to these attractions and incorporates a new conference facility. However, it is recommended that this is not progressed at this time given higher-order infrastructure priorities and subject to customer-centric design as well as robust feasibility assessment and ROI analysis</p>

3.3 ENRICHING THE EXPERIENCE

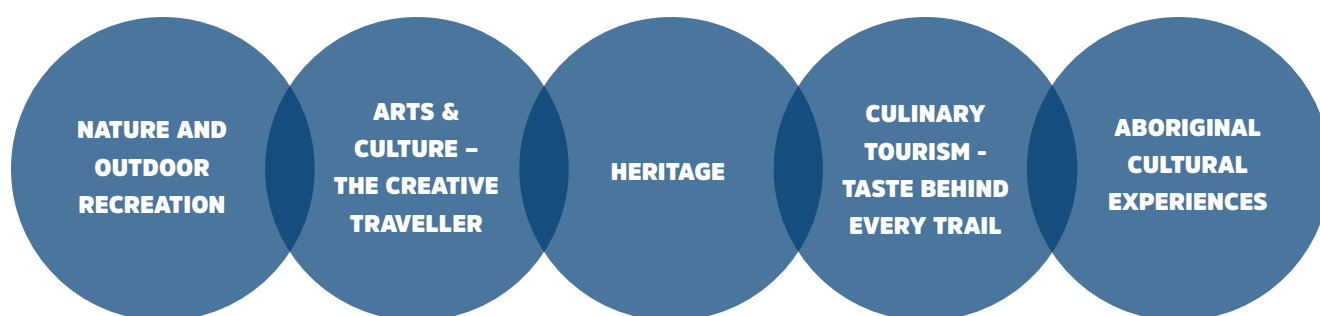
As a study by Harvard Business School found, being customer centric is a commercial imperative: *“Between 1999 and 2009, customer centric businesses had 233% growth versus 10% for shareholder centric businesses.”* This approach should be applied to all aspects of the visitor economy, including creating experiences as well as the design of open space for public, private or industry-specific events and leisure pursuits.

A broad experience offering that appeals to a range of target markets would enable Tamworth region to realise an even greater potential from its visitor economy. This involves, among other things:

- Reinforcing the destination positioning of *Capital of Country Australia*
- Consider the influence of contemporary consumer behaviour on travel, including the motivations, expectations and barriers to travel as well as for events and other leisure activities
- Balance between hero and supporting experiences

A detailed review of global and domestic trends in travel, which is included in the Situation Analysis, highlights the growing importance of nature-based and outdoor activities (including special interests), cultural tourism, health and well-being, sustainability, quality food and drink and more immersive, small group experiences. Initiatives such as new visitor-centric trails and itineraries that respond to these interests, expectations and motivations of the domestic market (in particular) are of value to the Tamworth region along with the promotion and/or development of existing or new products and experiences.

For Tamworth region, enriching the experience primarily focuses on the following areas:



3.3 ENRICHING THE EXPERIENCE

SUPPLY

PRIORITY ACTIONS	PRIMARY TASKS
1. Revitalise and enhance the region's popular outdoor, nature-based sites, facilities and activities	<p>i. Undertake an audit of the region's outdoor, nature- based sites, facilities and activities across tenure and regardless of the respective land management agency or community-based organisations involved</p> <p>ii. Identify priorities for upgrades to site facilities, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camping and day-use/ picnicing To support specific activities such as birdwatching or fishing <p>Utilise the audit to identify:</p> <p>iii. Outdoor, nature-based and adventure tourism operators and activity providers, from fishing to hang-gliding, kayaking and mountain biking as well as Aboriginal cultural experiences delivered on Country and community or club-based activities such as birdwatching</p> <p>iv. Opportunities to elevate the promotion and packaging of the region's nature-based offering, including developing nature and adventure trails and to encourage greater regional dispersal – this includes integrating existing sites identified on trail maps such as the Tamworth Bird Routes into new, visitor-centric trails and itineraries for the region</p> <p>v. Hero or signature sites, for example: Sites of significance to the Kamilaroi/ Gomeroi Aboriginal communities (where appropriate permission for access has been provided – either guided access or for self-guided experiences), Split Rock Dam, Chaffey Dam, Sheba Dams and Hanging Rock, Horton Falls and Oxley Scenic Lookout, among others</p> <p>vi. Opportunities for collaboration with Forestry Corporation NSW (FCNSW) and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) to enhance promotion of nature-based experiences across the region as well as to prioritise opportunities for cross- tenure connectivity between sites and trails and to coordinate upgrade priorities for facilities</p>
2. Enhance facilities that support access to outdoor recreation activities	<p>i. Involve local enthusiasts or representatives of special-interest clubs, such as the Tamworth Birdwatches Inc, Tamworth Mountain Bikers (TAMMTB) or the numerous local fishing clubs to identify priority projects and facilitate user-centric design of new facilities or upgrades to existing ones, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solar power options for lights at BBQ and picnic facilities Activity-based facilities such as bird hides, walking trails or fish-cleaning facilities End of trip or trip stop-over facilities, including tire repair and air pumps as well as e-bike charging stations where appropriate Simple directional signage to link experience hubs across the landscape and support the trails network

3.3 ENRICHING THE EXPERIENCE

SUPPLY

PRIORITY ACTIONS	PRIMARY TASKS
3. Create a series of Taste Tamworth Trails that feature the culinary and produce of the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Design the trails to further encourage regional dispersal ii. Prepare a partnership program involving local restaurants, cafes and chefs as well as drink and produce suppliers to support local businesses and further lift the perception of the region's culinary (food, drink and produce) experiences iii. Leverage and link the Taste Tamworth Festival as the signature event underpinning the Taste Tamworth Trails and to profile participating businesses and produce suppliers as well as to anchor a year-round culinary content program for multichannel distribution
4. Continue to expand the public art program across the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identify opportunities for installations in towns and villages beyond Tamworth city as well as at gateways into the region
5. Revitalise the Tamworth museums and interpretation <i>Tamworth region has an extensive number of museums. However, the quality of the visitor experience and interpretation varies significantly. They are in various stages of being upgraded.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Create an overarching narrative that links the individual sites (museums) to bring a more compelling story of Tamworth's history and heritage to life. It should focus on stories of innovation and creativity (that align with and reinforce a new place brand) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise this narrative to underpin development and positioning of heritage trails incorporating the museums that extend into and around the region ii. Both the Tamworth Regional Gallery and the Golden Guitar Museum provide a high-quality visitor experience - utilise insights to enhance the collective museums' offering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the opportunity of the proposed <i>Country Music and Tourist Precinct</i> to provide more interactive and immersive interpretation and experiences within the Golden Guitar Museum iii. Proactively strengthen opportunities for best practice interactive and immersive interpretation of the region's museums and heritage sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate more opportunities to enhance active participation • Utilise new and emerging technology, such as AI to further enhance signature interpretation sites or displays iv. Identify new experiences such as 'behind-the-scenes' tours, workshops or master-classes or 'meet-the-expert' sessions/ functions (eg lunches and dinners)

3.3 ENRICHING THE EXPERIENCE

SUPPLY

PRIORITY ACTIONS	PRIMARY TASKS
6. Foster the development of Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences that are delivered by the Kamilaroi/ Gomeroi Aboriginal community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Collaborate with the Tamworth Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC), NPWS and other organisations to facilitate improved access to Country ii. Engage with the NSW Aboriginal Tourism Operators Council (NATOC) to support Aboriginal owned and operated businesses, including to facilitate access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant funding for the start-up of any such initiatives • Mentoring and business support programs iii. Involve Aboriginal tourism businesses and operators in events iv. Create opportunities to profile and exhibit the work of local Aboriginal artists and artisans in public spaces across the region, including in towns, villages and open space outside of Tamworth city. Where possible, use the exhibitions to highlight stories of connection to Country and facilitate sales for the artists and artisans v. Commence building interest in the opportunities of delivering Aboriginal cultural tours and experiences through offering a training program for local Aboriginal youth and young adults, which may involve an exchange program and mentoring

GOALS

FOUNDATIONS

ENABLERS

SUPPLY

DEMAND

RESULTS

4. DEMAND: MARKETING & VISITOR SERVICES

Sustainable demand relates to marketing the destination and providing high-quality visitor services that meet the needs and expectations of today's visitors.



4 MARKETING AND VISITOR SERVICES

DEMAND

Marketing competes in the 'attention economy', a place where people ignore the ordinary. Job number one is getting noticed. To do this, marketing needs to tell a story. A story that makes a destination out-standing at standing-out.

In 2022, Tamworth was named as the third most popular destination in Australia in WOTIF's annual destination awards. While it leverages the region's reputation as the the home of country music in Australia, it is the result of efforts by the Council and local tourism industry to strengthen the appeal of the region as a tourism destination.

However, the average overnight visitor stay in Tamworth is only 2.5 nights while the average overnight stay across regional NSW is 3.3 nights. Lifting the region's average to the regional NSW average would be worth a significant amount to Tamworth's economy.

Opportunities identified for Tamworth region in the research include attracting higher- yield markets, increasing the visiting friends and relatives' market as well as extending the stay and spend of visitors, including through greater regional dispersal.

Adopting a long-term approach to sustainably and consistently growing demand is critical. It should be informed by visitor research and commence with developing a new place brand (see *Foundation Project 1.3 and Enablers for Success 2.1.C*).

In the more immediate term, Council should focus on:

- Further strengthening Council's owned channels, such as the Destination Tamworth website, eDM (newsletter) and customer database, printed collateral and social platforms, among others
- Creating more remarkable content, including short videos, images and inspiring itineraries, including for distribution through third-party channels such as Destination NSW and to support public relations (PR)
- Activating the Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) market through a local community campaign and inspiring VFR to become advocates of the region, extending the reach of marketing efforts through word of mouth

A more strategic approach for marketing and visitor servicing is to address touchpoints along the visitor or customer journey (see diagram below).

A significant opportunity for visitor servicing is to focus on the gap in the customer journey between when visitors initially plan or book their travel and when they arrive in-destination. Addressing this gap is beneficial for multiple reasons, including improved customer satisfaction through to regional dispersal and increasing length of stay. It also provides an opportunity for further collaboration between Destination Tamworth and local businesses, including tourism operators, event organisers and hospitality providers.



4 MARKETING AND VISITOR SERVICES

DEMAND

PRIORITY ACTIONS	PRIMARY TASKS
MARKETING	
1. Implement an initial marketing campaign, <i>One More</i>	Implement an initial campaign that focuses on encouraging visitors to extend their stay by at least one more night , including promoting regional dispersal. This campaign, One More , should be prioritised as an early action
2. Create a three-year destination marketing plan and a rolling 18-month action plan to guide all marketing and marketing-communication activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and focus on priority target markets, including special-interest markets Identify a balance between owned, earned and bought channels and adopt the VEP's positioning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage third party channels through cross- referencing and sharing content Integrate a proactive PR program Guide a program of 'always on' content Integrate opportunities for collaboration with surrounding regions and experiences, such as road trip itineraries Align with the evolving experience offering of the region, including celebrating the opening of new visitor-related infrastructure or the revitalisation of existing attractions. These should also be a focus for public relations (PR)
3. Develop an integrated Content Strategy for multichannel distribution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a content calendar for year-round distribution with content that is relevant to the season, events program and other date or season-specific events and activities Identify content themes and associated gaps in existing content across all customer journey touchpoints Create a content matrix or framework to prioritise the creation of new content and curate existing content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce the new brand identity, narrative and positioning (once finalised) Support 'always on' content demand, core themes and seasonal storylines as well as marketing campaign activities, visitor servicing and PR Encourage increased length of stay by providing pre-arrival inspiration and information, especially for event participants Continuously update the content calendar three to six months in advance to enable sufficient time for preparing content in line with storylines while also enabling flexibility to address emerging news or information

4 MARKETING AND VISITOR SERVICES

DEMAND

PRIORITY ACTIONS	PRIMARY TASKS
4. Foster the growth of the visiting friends and relatives market and enhance community involvement in and understanding of the visitor economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identify opportunities to motivate and mobilise the Tamworth region's communities (residents & businesses) to grow the VFR market ii. Develop and implement a VFR activation campaign within the local community, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted media plan that involves digital and traditional channels – utilise those channels that are popular with local audiences such as radio • In-region campaign collateral • Competitions with local experience prizes to motivate participation and involvement
5. Develop a multi- year destination marketing campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Develop a multi-year campaign that utilises the positioning of <i>Capital of Country Australia</i> while addressing perceived barriers to choosing Tamworth region over competitors ii. Evolve the campaign from growing destination brand awareness to driving conversion of bookings (campaign phases) iii. Engage a media agency to develop a targeted media plan across both traditional and digital channels to market iv. Bring the campaign to life through high quality creative assets and execution that enables flexibility to evolve in line with the campaign phases v. Prepare and promote a co-opt marketing campaign prospectus that invites the local industry to be part of and contribute to the campaign while also delivering outcomes directly to their business
VISITOR SERVICING	
6. Prepare a multichannel Visitor Services Strategy (VSS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ensure the VSS meets the needs and expectations of target audiences and across all customer touchpoints from face-to-face to digital channels ii. Commence with an audit of visitor servicing touchpoints iii. Undertake a review of the recently upgraded Destination Tamworth website to identify improvements in performance as well as gaps or areas for further enhancement iv. Consider the customer journey from awareness to advocacy, the quality of the user experience (UX) as well as the opportunity to integrate mapping, new content utilising various formats and e-commerce functionality

4 MARKETING AND VISITOR SERVICES

DEMAND

PRIORITY ACTIONS	PRIMARY TASKS
7. Develop an activation roadmap for visitor services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Evolve the VIC towards a 'concept store' for the region, profiling the best of regional products and produce, making it the go-to place to start an immersive journey into and across the region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commence by reviewing and continuing to enhance the VIC's retail offering • Integrate value-added services, such as tailored itineraries, selling local produce 'packs' and profiling local artists and artisans ii. Enhance the appeal of the VIC hub to the local community as a place to meet and find out more about their own backyard, especially useful for when their out- of-town (VFR) guests arrive
8. Introduce a Tamworth Multiple Attractions (TMA) ticket <i>This initiative would deliver direct benefits to the collective institutions/ attractions and provide a simple and easy way to encourage more visitors to experience more.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Design the TMA to permit unlimited entry to any of Tamworth's museums and attractions over a seven (7) day period (or similar) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMA shouldn't prevent visitors only paying to visit one attraction at the standard entry rate ii. Agree a simple revenue-sharing system based on the relative size and/or capacity of each institution as well as providing a percentage (commission) to Tamworth's Visitor Information Centre for the implementation, sales and promotion of the single ticket iii. Offer local residents a discount on the TMA ticket or an annual subscription that that can used at any time throughout the year, including but not exclusively when they bring guests from out of town. This could feature as part of a VFR campaign
9. Create or curate inspiring, experientially-led itineraries and trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Develop stories that connect experiences and attractions to core themes as well as for special interest markets, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating existing sites identified on trail maps such as the Tamworth Bird Routes • Link attractions through Monopoly Tamworth Edition ii. Develop target market personas to enable a visitor- centric approach to the development of trails and itineraries that resonate with current and potential future target markets iii. Design new collateral for multichannel distribution to support the new trails and itineraries
10. Promote and profile facilities for digital nomads or remote working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Collaborate with local accommodation providers and co- working hubs to increase awareness of facilities and services ii. Provide a guide to mobile connectivity across the region

GOALS

FOUNDATIONS

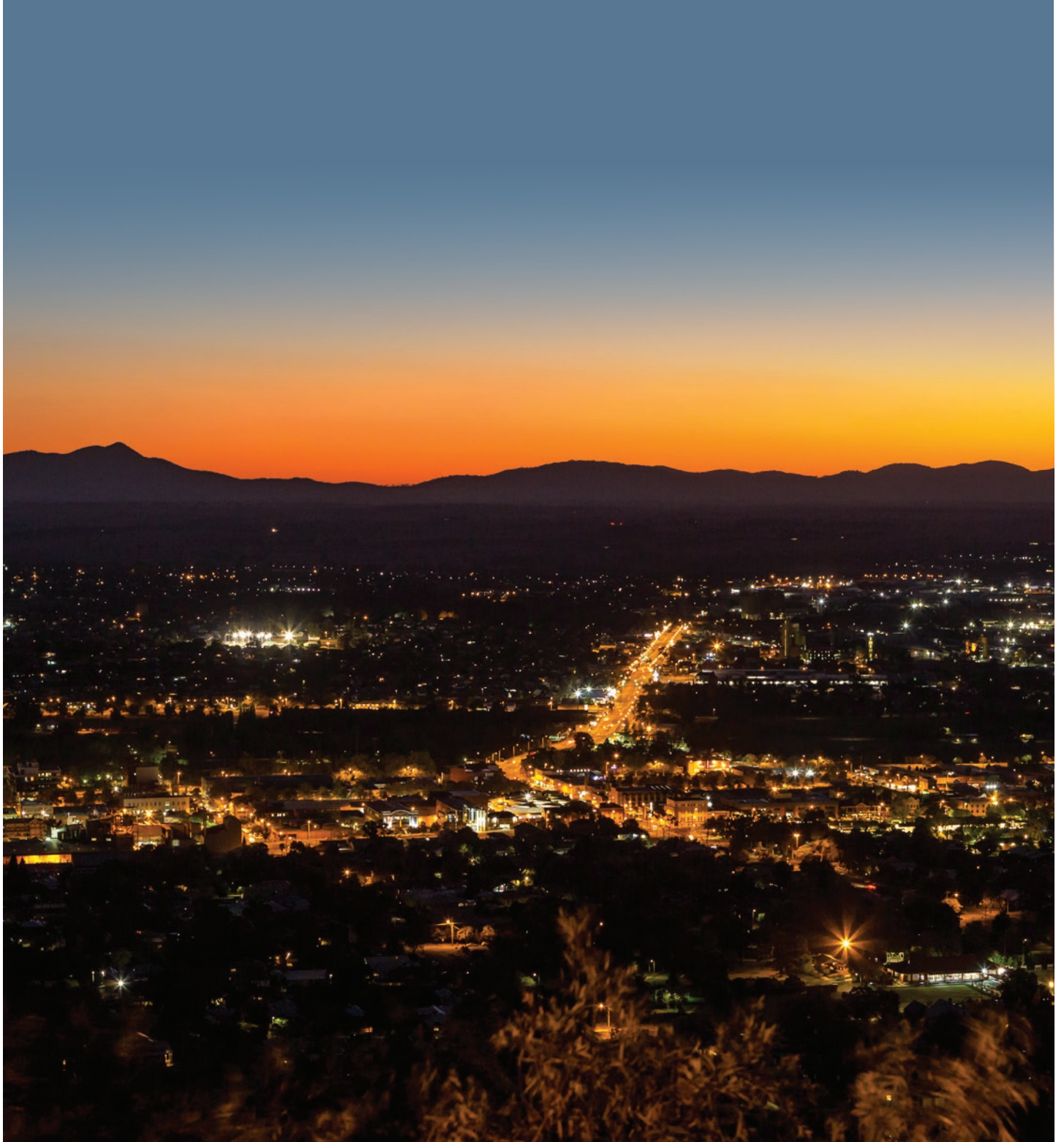
ENABLERS

SUPPLY

DEMAND

RESULTS

5. RESULTS: MEASURING SUCCESS



5 MEASURING SUCCESS



RESULTS

Measures relate to both deliverables identified within the Action Plan and outcomes achieved for Tamworth's visitor economy through implementation of the VEP.

Deliverables:

- Timeframes and responsibilities to each action
- Aligned to the phases of the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030

Measurables:

- High-level outcome measures (key performance indicators (KPIs):
 - Increase average length of stay from 2.5 days to the regional NSW average of 3.3 days over the period 2022 to 2027 (32% increase over 5 years)
 - Increase the average spend per visitor by 10% over the period 2022 to 2027 (taking into account inflation/increases in CPI)
 - Increase of 15% in the number of experiences listed on Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW)

- Implement a brand-tracker program to measure the change in destination awareness and preference for Tamworth region between launch of new brand and 2027.

Overall, achieving the goals of the VEP will be dependent on implementing the action plan and leveraging successes across the VEP's core phases.



tamworth.nsw.gov.au