



GWYDIR SHIRE

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN 2017



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GWYDIR SHIRE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Visitor Economy (Tourism) is a significant economic sector for Gwydir Shire. The Visitor Economy is a broader concept than the tourism industry, incorporating all businesses and activities that benefit, both directly and indirectly, from money spent by travellers. The Visitor Economy is recognised as major driver of economic growth, with growth in the Visitor Economy a strategic priority at both Federal and State Government levels.

Locally, the Visitor Economy contributes an estimated \$14.676 million to Gwydir Shire's output¹. Visitors consume a range of goods and services, which injects 'new' dollars into the local economy, contributing to the viability of local businesses. Expenditure by visitors generates employment across a range of industry sectors. Tourism also adds to the vibrancy of the area, and is a source of new residents for the Shire, with some visitors deciding to settle in the area, attracted by the setting (scenery), lifestyle, affordability and services available.

On-going development of the Visitor Economy is a core priority of Gwydir Shire Council, recognised in both Council's Community Strategic Plan and the Gwydir Shire Economic Development Strategy. Gwydir Shire's economy is highly dependent on, and exposed to, agriculture, with the performance of the agricultural sector impacting directly on most other sectors. This in turn impacts on employment and population. Tourism is not influenced by the performance of the agricultural sector, generating additional income for the Shire, providing cashflow year-round, and reducing exposure and risk for local businesses.

Gwydir Shire Council is a key driver of, and stakeholder in, the Visitor Economy. Council owns the Bingara, Warialda and North Star Caravan Parks, operates the Bingara and Warialda Visitor Information Centres, provides a range of tourist attractions and venues including the Roxy Theatre and The Living Classroom, has a significant investment in the infrastructure and facilities that underpin visitation, supports a range of events and activities, and markets and promotes the Shire. Council is also the regulatory authority in areas such as planning, development and food safety.

In accordance with Federal and State Government policy, Gwydir Shire Council is adopting a 'destination management' approach to developing the visitor economy.



¹ Source: REMPLAN Regional Economic Data – Tourism Sector

1.2 Destination Management

Destination management introduces a 'holistic' approach to the development, management and marketing of tourist destinations. The approach requires that all tiers of Government, the tourism industry and business and community leaders work together to develop and manage destinations to ensure that tourism adds value to the economy and social fabric of the area, is sustainable into the future, is resilient to external shocks and is responsive to changes in both the marketplace and competitive environment. It involves formulating a strong vision for the future of the destination and putting in place the framework and resources to 'deliver' this vision.

Destination Management Plans (DMPs) are one of the tools introduced by the Federal and State Government, to identify the product and infrastructure needed to support and facilitate growth in visitation and to set the directions and priorities. A DMP is a pre-requisite for accessing the Regional Tourism Fund and will assist in accessing a range of Federal and State Government grant programs.

1.3 Purpose of the Gwydir Shire Destination Management Plan (DMP)

The purpose of the Gwydir Shire DMP is to provide the direction and framework for taking Shire's visitor economy forward over the next five years. The primary goal of this Plan is to increase visitor expenditure within the Shire, with resultant economic and social benefits for the Shire community. To achieve this, the Plan focuses on:

- Identifying opportunities to strengthen and grow the Shire's market base to deliver visitation year-round.
- Understanding the needs and expectations of visitors and ensuring that the infrastructure, facilities and services are in place within the Shire to meet these.
- Encouraging and facilitating the development of tourist attractions, activities, experiences, accommodation, events and infrastructure within the Shire.
- Setting the directions for marketing and promoting the Shire.
- Identifying priorities to ensure the most effective use of limited funds and resources.

1.4 Outcomes being Sought

The main outcomes being sought from the Gwydir Shire DMP are:

- To deliver on Council's Strategic Objectives as articulated in the Gwydir Shire Community Strategic Plan and Economic Development Strategy, enhancing lifestyle and complementing and strengthening other economic sectors.
- A growing visitor economy that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.
- Increased appeal and competitiveness of Gwydir Shire as a service centre and destination – in particular to build the Shire's attraction and activity base.
- Higher profile / increased awareness of Gwydir Shire - from both a tourism and economic development perspective.
- Retention and protection of the lifestyle, heritage, cultural, landscape and environmental assets that form the basis for tourism within the Shire.
- Increased public and private sector investment in appropriate and sustainable tourism products and facilities within the Shire.
- Increased skills and professionalism within the tourism sector, including improved customer service, more packaging and value-adding, and widespread adoption of web-based and digital technology for information dissemination and sales and marketing

1.5 Implementation

The DMP is the starting point for consolidating and growing the visitor economy within Gwydir Shire over the next five years. It will however take time, resources and commitment to implement the strategies and actions incorporated in this Plan.

Given the limited resources available to Council, actions need to be prioritised. There are a number of relatively simple, cost effective actions that can be undertaken in the short-term that will result in growth in visitation. Sustaining visitation in the medium to longer term will only be achieved if the Shire's tourism product and infrastructure base continues to be improved and expanded. This will require a strong partnership between Council and the Shire communities, strategic relationships with surrounding LGAs and regional organisations, and support from tourism and business operators.

Several of projects and actions in this Plan are 'aspirational' and are well beyond Council's financial capacity to implement in their entirety at this time. These projects are however included in-case funding opportunities arise in the future. The fact that the projects have been identified and documented as important for the development of the local and/or regional visitor economy, should assist in securing funding.

To be effective, the DMP must be a living document that is constantly evolving. The recommended actions need to be implemented and the results evaluated. Periodically the DMP will need to be revised, building on what has been achieved, so that Gwydir Shire can continue to move forward.

1.6 Abbreviations Used in this Plan

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
DMP	Destination Management Plan
DNSW	Destination NSW
LGA	Local Government Area
MTB	Mountain Bike
NE-NW	New England – North West Region
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
RMS	Roads and Maritime Services
RTO	Regional Tourism Organisation
RV	Recreational Vehicle (eg motorhome, campervan)
TLC	The Living Classroom
TRA	Tourism Research Australia
VEAP	Visitor Economy Action Plan
VFR	Visiting Friends and Relatives
VIC	Visitor Information Centre



2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Gwydir Shire Tourism Destination Management Plan (DMP) was prepared within the framework set by Federal and State Government policies for the development and management of tourism destinations. It is also consistent with Regional planning and development strategies and with the directions and strategic directions of the Gwydir Shire Community Strategic Plan and the Gwydir Shire Economic Development Strategy.

2.1 Australian Government - National Long Term Tourism Strategy

The National Long Term Tourism Strategy for Australia recognised that the future of tourism is dependent on providing ‘compelling and sustainable experiences’ to consumers. It also recognised that for Australia to move up the international tourism value chain and to remain competitive, required ‘innovation, continuous improvement and renewal’ of products, experiences and infrastructure. To facilitate this, the Commonwealth Government, in conjunction with the State Tourism Agencies is advocating for integrated planning, development and management of tourism destinations, with localities encouraged to prepare and adopt Destination Management Plans (DMPs).

2.2 NSW Government – Visitor Economy Action Plan

Building the visitor economy is a key priority of the NSW Government, with the visitor economy recognised as having the potential to drive growth in the State’s economy. In 2010-11, the NSW Government set a target for the Visitor Economy to double overnight visitor expenditure to NSW by 2020. The Visitor Economy Action Plan articulates the vision and framework for achieving the growth target, with destination management being part of the approach adopted.

DNSW has recently established Destination Networks, with Gwydir Shire being part of the Country and Outback NSW Region.

Vision for the 2020 NSW Visitor Economy

By 2020, NSW will have a high-performance visitor economy that has doubled its contribution to the State’s economy as measured by overnight visitor expenditure (in nominal terms).

NSW will be established as the premier destination for visitors from key priority target markets and market segments, including holiday/leisure, business, business event, education, employment, backpacker, and ‘visiting friends and relatives’ (VFR) visitors.

The best of the State will be showcased through appealing, authentic and high-quality visitor experiences. The 2020 visitor economy will be characterised by a culture of innovation, entrepreneurship and industry leadership. Businesses in the visitor economy will contribute strongly to NSW’s economic, social and cultural strengths.

Destination Management Plans will provide clear frameworks to guide Government support at all levels and industry investment to deliver experiences that match and exceed visitor expectations and provide growth.

NSW will be a State that welcomes visitors and celebrates the NSW experience, reflecting civic pride in the State and its success.

2.3 New England North West Regional Plan – 2036 (draft)

The NSW's State Government's vision for the Ne-NW Region is:

‘A sustainable future that maximises the advantages of the region's diverse climates, landscapes and resources’.

Key elements of the vision include:

- Diversifying and maximising agricultural production
- Establishing thriving intensive agriculture, poultry and alternative energy sectors
- Building strong, diverse communities
- Job creation and a skilled and innovative workforce
- Water security
- Protection of significant agricultural land, and natural and cultural heritage

Growing tourism is part of the Regional Plan, with Strategic Direction 4.5 being to:
‘Grow tourism to support employment opportunities and urban centres’.

2.4 Gwydir Shire Community Strategic Plan

‘Growing our community’ is a priority for Gwydir Shire Council. Council is committed to working with our Shire community to grow and diversify our economic base and to continue to build our sustainability and resilience. Council's roles identified in the Community Strategic Plan include ‘Develop and promote tourism’ and ‘Coordinate and promote events and tourism’.

2.5 North West NSW - Destination Management Plan

In 2013 the Inland Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) adopted a series of DMP's for Inland NSW. Due to the size of the Inland Region, the Region was divided into ‘clusters’ of LGAs, with some of the clusters overlapping (recognising that visitors do not recognise LGA boundaries). Narrabri, Moree and Gwydir Shires were grouped together as the North West cluster, with this cluster also recognising Inverell Shire to the east, and the Northern Inland cluster (Walgett to Bourke area) to the west.



The Vision and Promise, Objectives and Key Themes are:

Our Vision and Promise

Our vision is aspirational. It articulates the future we envisage and guides our promise to the consumer.

‘Our vision is to share the patchwork of colour across our vast fertile landscape: our national parks and forests, our salt of the earth characters, stories and experiences that offer the simple sophistication of country life. Experiences so compelling they build the North West as a dynamic and resilient destination.

Our promise is to celebrate and share our artesian waters and waterways, connection to country, our way of life, and our stories with visitors so that they can reconnect with the important things in life and rejuvenate’.

Destination Priorities – Objectives

Objective 1: Collaboration - we will work together to manage and develop our destination to increase productivity, yield and visitor numbers.

Objective 2: Be compelling - we will deliver a compelling promise and value proposition to consumers.

Objective 3: Communicate clearly - we will articulate the full scope of our promise to consumers.

Objective 4: Be ahead of the game - we will use information and expertise to innovate our approaches to delivery.

Key Themes

Land – agricultural landscapes, landforms, National Parks and Forests.

Water – the healing artesian waters and the lakes and river systems that are the life-blood of the area.

Stories – the ancient culture of the Kamilaroi people, heritage, the characters that have forged the area.

Way of life - country hospitality – delivering simple sophistication, as well as the opportunity to relax, reconnect and rejuvenate.

The Regional DMP identified development of nature and outdoor experiences; food, wine and agri-tourism; heritage and Aboriginal based tourism; and events, as product development opportunities for the Region. The key directions of the Action Plan relate to:

- Working together - improving linkages, at all levels, across the region.
- Improving the presentation of towns and villages, and increasing their level of interest and appeal through outdoor dining and public art.
- Enhancing business skills and improving customer service.
- Market development – growing the touring market.
- Developing and implementing a Digital Strategy to communicate directly with the market, disseminate information and market and promote the region.

Destination NSW has recently established Destination Networks. One of the first tasks of each Network will be to revisit the regional and local DMPs, and to prepare a new DMP for the Region.



3. OUR DESTINATION

3.1 Gwydir Shire

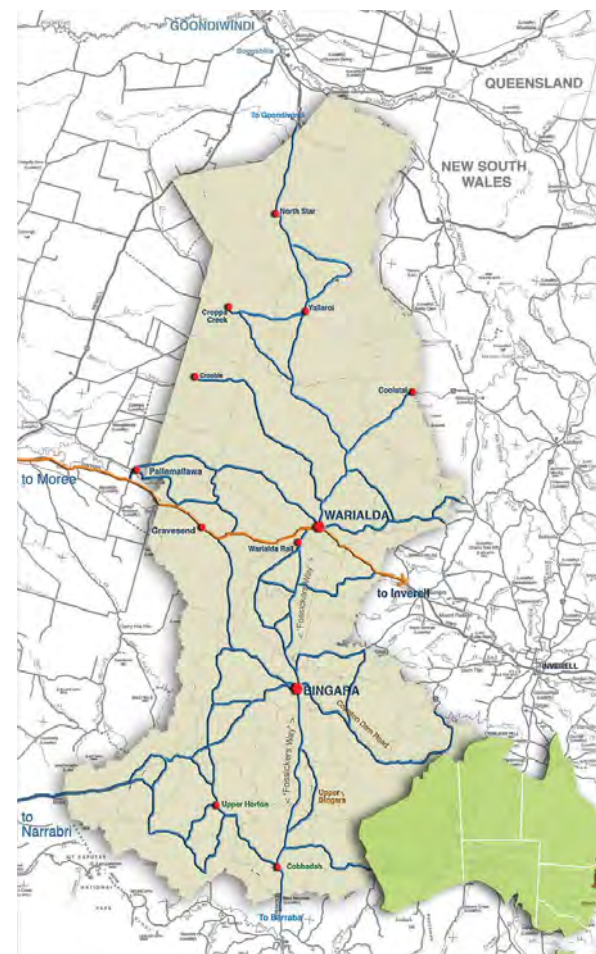
Gwydir Shire is located on the north-western slopes and plains of NSW, approximately 560 kilometres north of Sydney, 160 kilometres north of Tamworth, 430km south west of Brisbane, 75 kilometres west of Inverell and 80 kilometres east of Moree. The Shire sits at the crossroads of the Fossickers Way, a popular north-south touring route, the Gwydir Highway, a significant east-west route linking the NSW North Coast to Outback NSW, and on Nature's Way (State Touring Route 3), which links Narrabri to Inverell via Gwydir Shire. The Bruxner Highway (east-west route) traverses the northern edge of the Shire, with links into Southern Queensland.

The Shire is part of the New England – North West Region of NSW (also known as the Northern Inland Region) and is bounded by Tamworth Regional Council to the south, Narrabri Shire to the south west, Moree Plains Shire to the west, Inverell Shire to the east, and Armidale Regional Council and Uralla Shire to the south east.

Incorporating an area of 9,122 square kilometres, the Shire extends from the Nandewar Range in the south, north to close to the NSW-Queensland border. The landscapes of the Shire are diverse, and in places, breath-taking. The southern and central areas of the Shire are located within the Gwydir River catchment area with the Gwydir flowing through Bingara and Gravesend. The southern areas of the Shire are hilly with pockets of highly fertile river flats along the Gwydir River and its main tributaries. Mt Kaputar National Park forms the western edge of the Shire, with rugged volcanic peaks and ridges rising above the Gwydir Valley. The northern part of the Shire lies within the 'Golden Triangle,' one of the most productive agricultural areas in Australia.

Agriculture is the Shire's primary land use and economic activity. Livestock production dominates in the southern and central areas of the Shire, with the Shire producing prime beef, lamb and pork. The Shire has a concentration of cattle and sheep studs. Broadacre cropping is undertaken in the northern part of the Shire, with the main crops being wheat, sorghum and barley. Other crops include cotton, other grains (oats, maize, triticale), hay and pasture seed, pulses (chickpeas, field beans, mung beans, faba beans, lentils) and oilseeds (canola, soybeans and sunflowers).

At the 2016 Census, Gwydir Shire had an estimated population of 5,258². The Shire has two small towns, Bingara and Wyallda, located approximately 40km apart. Bingara (town population 1,428³) services the southern part of the Shire. Located on the Gwydir River at the intersection of the Fossickers Way and Nature's Way (State Touring Route 3), Bingara is a popular stop for travellers. Wyallda (town population 1,590⁵) is located on the Gwydir Highway, midway between Inverell and Moree. The town is a service centre for both the surrounding rural area and Highway travellers. Both towns have small, vibrant shopping centres, with an IGA supermarket, historic hotels, eateries, shops that meet the day-



² Australian Bureau of Statistics Census 2016.

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Dwellings, 2011: QuickStats Bingara and Wyallda Urban Localities.

to-day needs of the community and a few boutiques, lifestyle and ‘quirky’ retailers that are popular with visitors. Both towns are ideal to use as base for exploring the Shire and surrounds.

The Shire has 5 rural villages – North Star, Croppa Creek, Coolatai and Gravesend in the northern part of the Shire, and Upper Horton in the south, each with a hotel and/or licenced club. North Star, Croppa Creek and Gravesend also have general stores. Croppa Creek, Coolatai and North Star have several rural suppliers and service providers, while Gravesend and Coolatai each have a lifestyle-based tourism business. The Shire has 21 rural localities – Boonal, Blue Nobby, Yallaroi, Crooble, Pallamallawa (part) and Balfours Peak in the northern half of the Shire, and Warialda Rail, Gineroi, Bangheet, Riverview, Elcombe, Pallal, Rocky Creek, Back Creek, Cobbadah, Gundamulda, Dinoga, Gulf Creek, Upper Bingara, Keera and Copeton, in the southern half.

The Shire’s main attractions are the townships of Bingara and Warialda, Copeton Waters State Park, Gwydir River, Roxy Theatre, Cranky Rock Reserve, Three Creeks Gold Mine, Myall Creek Memorial Site, Ceramic Break Sculpture Park, The Living Classroom and the Rocky Creek Glacial Area. The Shire is popular for camping, fishing, fossicking, motorcycle and horse sports. The Shire hosts a diversity of events, with the higher profile events including the Warialda Off-Road, Easterfish, North Star Trail Ride, Upper Horton Valley Pony Express, Veterans Week of Golf, the Great Inland Fishing Festival, North Star Show Jumping, and the rodeos, camp drafts and team penning in Upper Horton and Gravesend.

The Shire has a small, diverse accommodation sector incorporating three motels, pub hotel rooms, group (dormitory) accommodation, boutique cottages, cabins, caravan parks and free camping areas. It also has a range of venues suitable for conferences, meetings, functions, exhibitions and events. These include the Roxy Theatre, Warialda Town Hall, The Living Classroom, licensed clubs and hotels, showgrounds, race courses, sports / recreation grounds and Copeton Dam.

Town / Village	Attractions	Activities	Larger Events	Accommodation
Rural Areas	Rocky Creek Glacial Area Myall Creek Memorial Site Copeton Waters State Park	Bushwalking Swimming Camping 4WD / Trail Bikes Copeton – boating, fishing, water sports, mountain biking, waterpark.	Copeton Dam - Swim with Attitude (Open Water Swim) Fishing Events	Copeton Dam – Caravan Park, Cabins, Camping
Bingara	Historic Town / Sound Trail Roxy Theatre – Tours / Museum Gwydir River The Living Classroom Three Creeks Gold Mine All Nations Hill / Stamper Battery Batterham Lookout Bingara Museum Fossicking Areas Wade’s Horses Geological Trails / Scenic Drives Cycle Routes Orange Trees / Olive Trees – Stories	Fishing Canoeing / Canoe Hire Swimming Fossicking Camping Cycling Horse Riding Golf Movies / Performances Dining / Shopping Bird Watching Jackaroo and Jillaroo School	Orange Festival Bingara Cup Easter Fish Bingara Show Pony Club Camp Polocrosse Carnival Long Weekend Tennis Tournament Veterans Week of Golf	Fossickers Way Motel Imperial Hotel Motel Sportsmen Hotel Riverhouse Guesthouse The Living Classroom Dormitory Peranjou Cottages Lemon Gum Cottage Bingara Caravan Park Free Camping – Gwydir River

Town / Village	Attractions	Activities	Larger Events	Accommodation
Warialda	Cranky Rock Koorilgur Nature Walk Carinda House Fossicking Areas Boutiques, lifestyle and antique shops Ceramic Break Sculpture Park	Bushwalking Swimming Fossicking Shopping / Dining Golf / Bowls / Tennis Bird Watching	Warialda Honey Festival Warialda Off Road Warialda Cup Race Day Warialda Show Pony Club Camp Camp Draft Warialda Fun Fly Model Planes	Sunflower Motel Warialda Caravan Park Cranky Rock Caravan / Camping Free Camping
Coolatai	Wallaroo Hotel Three Sisters Eco Farm	Bird Watching	Vintage Tractor Pull Hanging of the Quilts	Free Camping Three Sisters Eco Farm - Airbnb
Croppa Creek	Village Golden Triangle - Rural Scenery Historic truck and machinery display	Golf Bowls	Rugby Gala Day Classic Machinery Day + Tractor Pull Golf Events (2) Pony Cub Camp	Croppa Creek Store Cottages Camping – Recreation Reserve
North Star	Golden Triangle - Rural scenery	Golf	North Star Trail Ride Show Jumping Classic North Star Polo Tournament Bushman's Carnival Campdraft Pony Club Camps	Cleveland Hotel Motel North Star Caravan Park Sports Club - Camping + powered sites
Gravesend	Gwydir River / Ezzy's Crossing CZAA - Alternative Arts	Camping Fishing Art Workshops	Gravesend Team Penning Pony Club / Horse Sports events	Gravesend Hotel – camping Ezzy's Crossing - Camping
Upper Horton	Horton Valley Horton River Horton Falls	Commercial hunting and fishing guide Clay pigeon shooting Bike Territory – Trail Bikes and All-Terrain Vehicles	Campdraft and Rodeo Trail Ride Pony Express Yard Dog and Arena Trail Pony Club Camps Rodeo and Campdraft Schools Polocrosse Carnival Horse Sale	Camping – Powered and Unpowered sites Bike Territory - Shearers Quarters and Cottage



3.2 Living the Gwydir Good Life

Council's theme '**Living the Gwydir Good Life**' reflects the strong love and passion that residents have for Gwydir Shire. The setting of the Shire is picturesque, with fertile green river flats backed by forested hills and rugged volcanic ridges in the south and central areas, opening onto an extensive volcanic plain in the north. The greenery of the south, contrasts with the patchwork of colours in the north. Unique and impressive landforms, and abundant native animal and birdlife, further enhances the Shire's appeal.

The towns and villages are small, with friendly, welcoming communities. Locals love to stop to chat with visitors, and it does not take long for new residents and visitors to feel part of the community. The communities are strong, resilient and vibrant, coming together to celebrate through events and festivals, to fund raise and to work on projects. The rescue and restoration of the historic Roxy Theatre and the development of The Living Classroom are notable achievements.

The historic town centres are attractively landscaped and well presented. Essential services are available, as well as eateries, and a few boutiques and lifestyle shops that offer 'something different' to for visitors. Higher order services are readily available in the surrounding towns of Inverell, Moree and Goondiwindi, with the regional cities of Tamworth and Armidale being less than 2 hours away.

Creative arts are alive and thriving, with the Roxy Theatre a popular venue for touring arts productions, performing arts workshops, films and functions. Sporting facilities are good, and residents have ready access to Copeton for a range of water sports; to the Gwydir and Horton Rivers for camping, swimming, fishing, horse riding and fossicking; and to National Parks and State Forests.

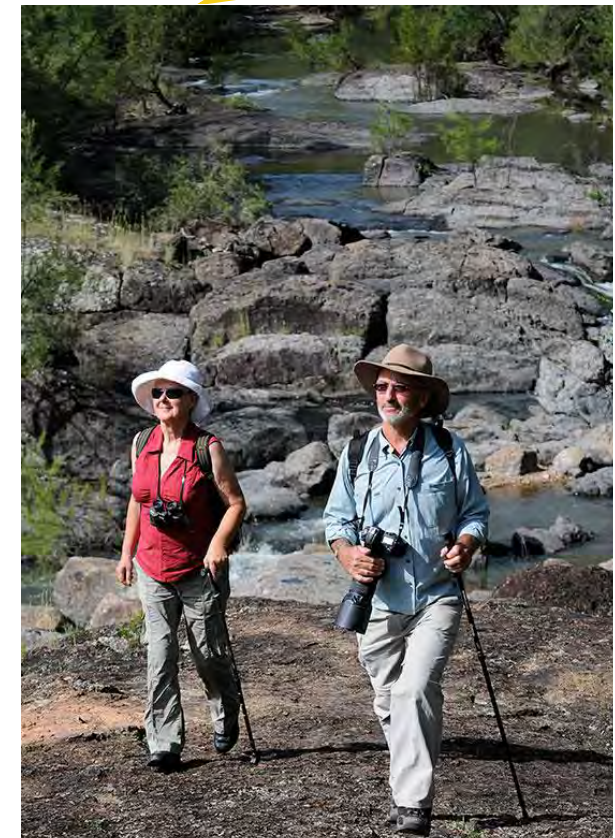
Gwydir Shire has a strong reputation for innovation. Developed by Council in conjunction with the community, the Gwydir Learning Region, has three high standard Trade Training Centres. The Shire also hosts a range of training programs, workshops and learning-based activities, accessible to both residents and visitors.

The opportunity to 'Live the Gwydir Good Life' is the value proposition that Gwydir Shire offers visitors. The Shire's 'promise to visitors is:

- Beautiful setting with stunning landscapes and unique landforms.
- The opportunity to lay-back, relax, regenerate - to get back to basics and experience the outdoors and country life at its best.
- A warm, friendly welcome – come and meet the locals, hear the stories, and get involved.
- An opportunity to learn – about the geology, history and natural environment, and to participate in a range of activities – creative, culinary, horticulture, land regeneration, fossicking etc.
- An invitation to celebrate – a diversity of events and festivals.

I like Bingara immediately when I arrive. People here stop to talk to each other and to travellers.

- Blogger – Looking for 42 – cycling the world – NSW loop. <https://looking42>



3.2 Economic Contribution of the Visitor Economy

The Visitor Economy extends across most industry sectors and is not a separate category in the industry classification standards. In providing economic data for the NE-NW Region, REMPLAN has endeavoured to identify the economic contribution of the visitor economy. REMPLAN estimates that the output and value-add for the Visitor Economy in Gwydir Shire is \$14.68 million and \$6.53 million respectively. The visitor economy within the Shire employs 70 people, with wages and salaries totalling \$3.52 million.

The Visitor Economy is a significant driver of economic growth. Tourism brings 'new' dollars into the local economy with these 'new' dollars having a multiplier effect, filtering through to most sectors of the local economy (Figure 3.1). Research undertaken by Tourism Research Australia in conjunction with the Australian Bureau of Statistics has found that the value created by tourism expenditure exceeds that of other major economic activities, with every dollar spent by the tourism sector generating an additional \$0.90 in value-add. In contrast the value-add spend for retail is \$0.70, mining \$0.60 and health care and social assistance \$0.50.

3.4 Lifecycle Status

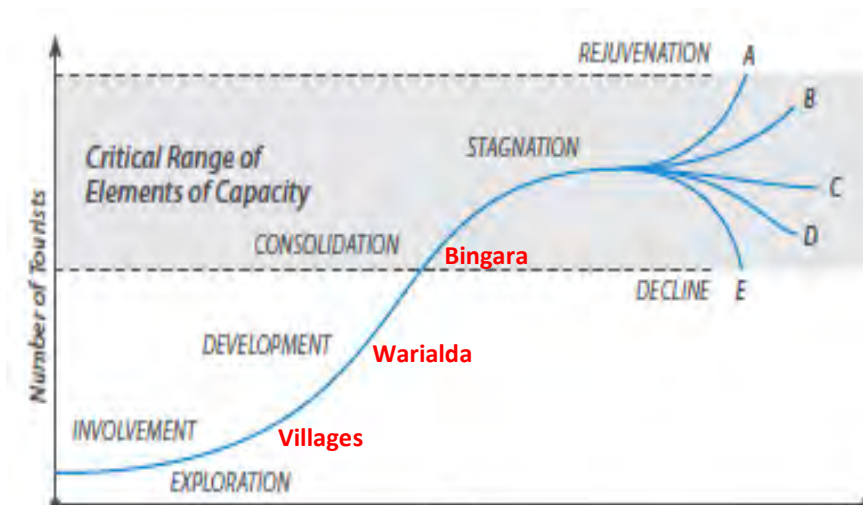
Destinations, products and infrastructure are generally discussed in terms of lifecycle – emerging, developing, consolidating, declining or rejuvenating. The stages of destination development are summarised in Figure 3.2. At the stagnation stage, the options are to re-invent and/or rejuvenate the destination (A and B) – starting the cycle again; retain the status quo (C); or allow the destination to decline (D and E).

Overall, Gwydir Shire is in the development stage, with Bingara at the start of the consolidation stage, Warialda in the development phase and the villages in the involvement / exploration stage. Some of the Shire's attractions (eg Batterman Lookout) and accommodation (eg motels in Bingara and Warialda, and the caravan park and Cleveland Hotel in North Star) are in decline.

Table 3.1 Economic Indicators – Visitor Economy by LGA, NE-NW Region

LGA	Output		Value Add		Employment		Wages and Salaries	
	\$M	% Region	\$M	% Region	Number	% Region	\$M	% Region
Armidale Regional	\$ 183.65	21.8%	\$ 94.53	31.6%	984	22.9%	\$ 60.53	26.1%
Glen Innes - Severn	\$ 42.48	5.0%	\$ 19.59	6.5%	221	5.1%	\$ 10.57	4.6%
Gunnedah	\$ 60.57	7.2%	\$ 27.56	9.2%	298	6.9%	\$ 15.18	6.5%
Gwydir	\$ 14.68	1.7%	\$ 6.53	2.2%	70	1.6%	\$ 3.52	1.5%
Inverell	\$ 63.65	7.5%	\$ 30.61	10.2%	347	8.1%	\$ 17.54	7.6%
Liverpool Plains	\$ 15.34	1.8%	\$ 7.66	2.6%	84	2.0%	\$ 4.33	1.9%
Moree Plains	\$ 58.64	7.0%	\$ 27.73	9.3%	296	6.9%	\$ 14.89	6.4%
Narrabri	\$ 59.87	7.1%	\$ 28.98	9.7%	307	7.1%	\$ 15.55	6.7%
Tamworth Regional	\$ 280.20	33.2%	\$ 130.28	43.5%	1418	33.0%	\$ 74.79	32.3%
Tenterfield	\$ 31.72	3.8%	\$ 14.38	4.8%	155	3.6%	\$ 7.36	3.2%
Uralla	\$ 19.98	2.4%	\$ 8.36	2.8%	89	2.1%	\$ 4.50	1.9%
Walcha	\$ 12.23	1.5%	\$ 5.70	1.9%	33	0.8%	\$ 2.99	1.3%

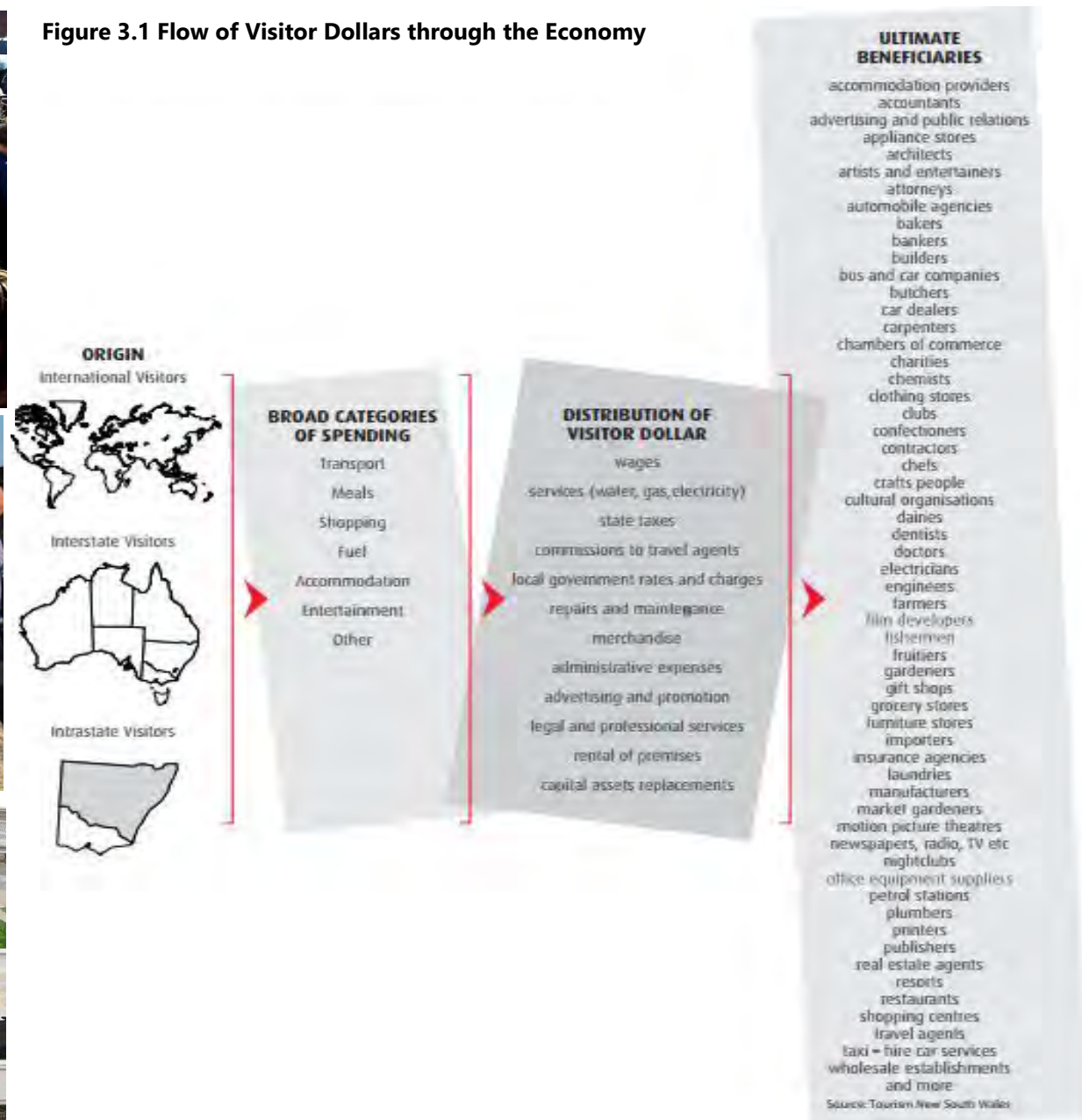
Source: REMPLAN Regional Economic Data – Tourism Sector



Source: ARTN: The Guide to Best Practice Destination Management



Figure 3.1 Flow of Visitor Dollars through the Economy



3.5 Strengths and Assets

The strengths and strategic assets that Gwydir Shire has to work with to encourage and facilitate tourism include:

Strength	Assets to Work With	Implications and Opportunities
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good access to the regional cities of Tamworth and Armidale, as well as larger rural towns – Inverell, Moree, Narrabri and Goondiwindi – over 186,000 people within 2 hours of the Shire. • Access to Darling Downs / Southern Queensland and the link with Texas. • Proximity to Copeton Dam / Copeton Waters State Park. • Travel times – Bingara is a ‘natural’ stop for many touring travellers. 	<p>Opportunities to build a number of markets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional residents - day trippers and short breaks • Regional market – conferences, functions, meetings, workshops • Regional market – event attendees • Day trips from people staying at Copeton Waters State Park
Highway / Regional Road Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong north-south route (Fossickers Way – Warialda Road) providing access to Tamworth as well as links north to Texas and Goondiwindi in Queensland. • Located between Newell and New England Highways (major interstate routes) with the Gwydir and Bruxner Highways and regional road linking these routes. • Nature’s Way (State Touring Route 3) passes through the Shire with Sawn Rocks being a high profile iconic attraction that draws visitors into and through the Shire. • Croppa Creek – Moree Road and Croppa Creek North Star Road – potential to provide a low traffic, scenic alternative to the Newell Highway. • Country roads – low volume traffic routes combined with beautiful scenery – ideal for drive-based tourism. 	<p>Capitalise on opportunities created by the road network to grow visitation to the Shire and increase visitor expenditure, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build scenic drive product and experiences – Fossickers Way and Nature’s Drive (State Touring Route 3). • Continue to develop and promote local scenic drives to encourage visitors to explore the Shire and spend money in the village communities. • Work with Councils along the Gwydir Highway corridor to position and promote the Highway as a touring route, bringing together Aboriginal experiences, significant landforms, unique attractions and activities. • Position and promote the Moree – Croppa Creek – North Star route as an alternative to the Newell Highway for touring traffic. • Strengthen the Texas - Bingara link for the touring caravans / RVs. • Explore options for signposting Tamworth from Boggabilla – via North Star, Warialda and Bingara.
Attractive towns – Bingara and Warialda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of awareness / profile of Bingara – No 1 Free Inland Camp Site. • Towns are well presented – attractively landscaped, clean and well maintained. • Attractive settings, historic buildings. • Different characters – two destinations offering different experiences. • Good services. • High profile attractions: Bingara – Roxy Theatre and Gwydir River; Warialda – Cranky Rock; and attractions within and surrounding the towns. • Range of accommodation and eateries. • Quality venues – Including Roxy Theatre, Living Classrooms, Showgrounds, Race Courses, Golf Courses. • Very safe with low rates of crime and anti-social behaviour. • Friendly communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitalise on towns to build day trips and touring markets. • Encourage visitors to explore both towns – cross promotion and referral.

Strength	Assets to Work With	Implications and Opportunities
Strong village communities and village events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong and resilient village communities. • Some innovative village businesses and licensed clubs. • Expanding program of village events – some of which are attracting significant numbers of visitors to the Shire. • Infrastructure and facilities for events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate development of accommodation and agri-businesses within the villages to support / capitalise on the agricultural sector. • Grow visitation to the villages and to village events. • Continue to improve village facilities, camping areas and event venues. • Support / value-add to events held in the villages. • Strengthen the link between Warialda and Bingara and the events held in the northern part of the Shire – many event attendees are staying in Goondiwindi and Moree rather than staying in the Shire.
Unique Landforms and Landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique landforms – Cranky Rock and Rocky Creek Glacial area within the Shire • Changing landscapes – Gwydir and Horton River corridors, Golden Triangle • Sawn Rocks, Waa Gorge, Horton Falls and Kaputar National Park on the edge of the Shire. • Sawn Rocks as the anchor for Nature's Way touring route. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position and promote Cranky Rock as an iconic landform (similar to the profile that has been developed for Sawn Rocks). • Establish a strong link between Warialda and Cranky Rock. • Capitalise on surrounding landforms to raise the profile of the Shire. • Segue into fossicking and geological tours.
Quality tourism attractions and assets and unique selling points.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copeton Dam / Copeton Waters State Park • Gwydir and Horton Rivers – riverside camping, fishing, canoeing, fossicking • Myall Creek Memorial Site • Wades Horses and Jackaroo and Jillaroo School • Three Creek Gold Mine and fossicking areas. • Roxy Theatre – Art Deco building, Greek Museum and Tours, Trade Training Kitchen, conference and entertainment facilities • Diverse program of events. • Showgrounds, sports grounds, horse sports facilities • Visitor Information Centres – Bingara and Warialda <p>Supporting local attractions include: Bingara Museum, Carinda Cottage, Croppa Creek historic machinery display, Ceramic Break Sculpture Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong basis for growing the tourism sector and building visitation to the Shire's towns and villages. • Capitalise more effectively on points of difference and quirky / unusual. • Opportunities to showcase the Shire and its lifestyle, producers etc. • Product ideally suited to the touring RV and caravan market and also to the regional family market. • Engaging with visitors – a 'touch point' for attracting the tree-change and retirement markets.
Highly productive agricultural sector + rural landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stunning rural landscapes • Northern areas of Shire - highly productive basaltic soils and access to water. Southern areas of Shire – good pastures suitable for livestock production. • Resilient, innovative farmers – adoption of new technology, business models and land management practices. • Reputation for producing quality livestock – concentration of cattle and sheep studs, quality pork and a growing recognition of producer 'brands'. • Living Classroom – training programs and activities, demonstration site. • Some local produce available for sale. • Promotional information on crops. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued diversification and innovation – crops, fruit and nut production and livestock. • Capitalising on the reputation for quality livestock through further branding and promotion. • Potential for small scale or niche production / cottage industry – eg figs, olives, native foods, medicinal herbs etc • Scenery and interest created by cropping – basis for agri and drive tourism • Opportunities for developing culinary tourism. • Opportunities for specialised farm industry tours – eg international farmers' groups.
The Living Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality training and meeting facilities, state of the art equipment. • Group (dormitory) accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement the master-plan for the site, with the development of the Interpretative Centre a priority.

Strength	Assets to Work With	Implications and Opportunities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Size and diversity of the site – bushland and cultivated areas. Diversity of habitats, world themed gardens etc. Educational themes and capacity to offer a diverse range of programs – including ecological and land management. Story boards of agricultural systems. Carbon Farm – community project showcasing options for soil carbon sequestration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop walking and potentially mountain-bike trails. Provide interpretative material and promotion of TLC as a tourist attraction – encouraging visitors to explore the gardens and become involved in activities. Diversify the range of programs and activities on offer. Promote TLC as a hire venue, for activity based workshops (eg quilting, photography), weddings and functions, small groups, meetings and training seminars. Develop cottage industries – eg drying and packaging of native foods, plant propagation and sales, seed collection and sales. Value add to the fruit that will be produced on site – farm gate outlet, olive picking and harvest event / festival, picking – pickling – preserving workshops utilising the Trade Training Kitchen at the Roxy Theatre. Use of the Classroom and its programs to generate publicity and raise awareness of Bingara / Gwydir Shire. Medicinal garden – support and strengthen developing natural therapies business cluster. Propagation of native plants and rare plants.
Diverse program of events and activities, and good venues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High quality venues for functions, conferences and meetings – Roxy Theatre and The Living Classroom. Good outdoor venues, particularly for horse sports and activities Copeton Dam, Gwydir and Horton Rivers - fishing, boating and canoeing. Concentration of horse sports and events – Show Jumping, Polo, Polocrosse, Rodeos, Campdrafts, Team Penning and Pony Club events, Upper Horton Horse Sales Cluster of motor sports events – Warialda Off Road, North Star and Upper Horton Trail rides, Upper Horton Pony Express. Growing number of historic machinery and tractor pull events. Gwydir Learning Region Training Facilities – Roxy Hospitality Kitchen, The Living Classroom Facilities, Warialda Trade Training Centre. Road network suitable for a range of cycling, running and other events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grow events through value-adding and effective marketing and promotion. Expand the facilities and capacity for the Shire to host horse sport events – eg – developing an eventing course at North Star. Build capacity in the villages to host events. Promote the Shire's venues and facilities. Capitalise on publicity opportunities to raise awareness of the Shire and help to position the Shire as a vibrant and interesting place to visit and live.
Bingara and Warialda Visitor Information Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well located and professionally run centres. Centres have become attractions in their own right. Showcasing and sale of local products. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build the visitor experience. Improve information and promotional collateral – both print and on-line.
Strategic relationships in place	Gwydir Shire is working cooperatively with surrounding LGAs to build visitation (NE-NW Tourism, Fossickers Way, Nature's Way)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a range of cost-effective product and market development and marketing and promotional opportunities for Gwydir Shire.

3.6 Issues and Challenges to Address

Addressing challenges and removing barriers is fundamental to delivering sustained growth.

Issue	Challenges for Gwydir Shire Council and the Shire Community
Funding and resource constraints within Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resourcing service delivery. • Accessing the funds needed to maintain and augment facilities and infrastructure (eg roads) to support visitation. • Providing the funds and resources to effectively market and promote the Shire to attract investment, workers, new residents and visitors. • Very limited funds available to access tourism grants (\$ for \$) and cooperative marketing campaigns.
Inter-town rivalry and parochialism - with the towns competing rather than working effectively together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcoming the competition and parochialism between Bingara and Wyallda. • Educating tourism and business operators and residents about what the Shire has to offer. • Building a culture of referral and cross promotion – aiming to keep visitors in the Shire longer and encouraging them to explore and spend in all towns and villages.
Aging facilities and infrastructure / Under-attractions and capitalised facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the accommodation properties and attractions are tired and dated. • Attractions in place but need further investment to realise their full potential – eg fossicking areas, The Living Classroom • Very limited investment in village infrastructure and facilities – dependent of village communities to raise funds to maintain and improve sports / recreation grounds, halls etc.
Competition from surrounding centres – Inverell, Goondiwindi, Tamworth, Moree, Barraba.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positioning the Shire to take advantage of its proximity to larger towns – build the regional market. • Encouraging event attendees to stay in the Shire rather than in surrounding towns. • Breaking down boundaries to building regional / sub-regional visitation and disperse visitors throughout the area.
Accommodation capacity constraints / Dated accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited number of beds in the Shire – limits the markets, events and other activities that could potentially be developed. • Tired and dated accommodation – Bingara, Wyallda and North Star. • Ineffective marketing and promotion of accommodation, including a very limited on-line presence and no direct booking facilities.
Scale of the businesses and dependence on volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentration of micro and small businesses – generally do not have the funds, resources and often skills, to develop quality promotional materials and market and promote effectively. • Dependence on volunteers to run events, activities and some attractions – issues of volunteer burnout, limited funds and resources, not able to capitalise effectively on value add and marketing opportunities, reluctance to change etc. • Very limited / no funds to ‘buy into’ local or regional cooperative marketing campaigns
Increasing vulnerability of businesses (including licensed clubs) in the rural villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retaining village businesses – as both service providers and social hubs. • Strengthening village communities and facilitating growth. • Building visitation to the villages, to help underpin the viability of village businesses. • Recognising the special needs of small, remote businesses in developing and applying planning policies and regulations. • Ensuring that the villages present well and are effectively signposted, with this being fundamental to encouraging passing traffic to stop. • Developing / maintaining infrastructure (eg halls, sports grounds, parks, camping areas etc) that will enable village communities to run events and activities – building community cohesion and spirit, attracting visitors and generating additional revenue.

Issue	Challenges for Gwydir Shire Council and the Shire Community
<p>Poor telecommunications in parts of the Shire - slow internet speeds and cost of internet access; no or limited mobile coverage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts on the Shire's capacity to capitalise effectively on mobile / digital opportunities to communicate with travellers. • Access to WiFi is a key consideration on where travellers stay. • Travellers need access to both print and on-line information, particularly maps. • Communication challenge for event organisers, particularly in areas with no / poor coverage, eg Upper Horton.
<p>Limited promotional material – with no Shire-wide promotional material and an ad hoc range of attraction and activity brochures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producing a Shire-wide tourism website or visitor guide. • Re-designing and producing attraction and activity brochures with standardised branding and presentation in a format that is both appealing and informative. • Providing information on each of the villages. • Building an image library of quality images and video clips.
<p>Limited on-line presence – for Gwydir Shire as well as for individual tourism and business operators, event organisers and local organisations and groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulating and implementing a digital media strategy (integrated Shire-wide website, apps and social media). • Encouraging businesses and organisations to develop / update websites, with these sites being mobile optimised and semantic search responsive, and using quality images and where possible, video clips. • Improving connectivity and links between key websites. • Increasing, enhancing and maintaining content on third party websites.
<p>Ineffective signage – out of date / poorly presented signs, limited directional signage, lack of route/trail markers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removing / replacing out of date and /or poorly presented signage. • Seeking approval from the RMS / TASAC to improve Highway signage. • Improving directional and facility signage.





MARKETS and MARKET

4. VISITATION

Tourism Research Australia (TRA) and Destination NSW (DNSW) publish a range of visitation statistics for the NE-NW Region and selected LGAs. Statistics for the NE-NW Region are available for the YE December 2016, with the statistics for selected LGAs available for the YE September 2014. The most recent data for Gwydir Shire is 2007. While 2014 data is not available for Gwydir Shire, it is available for the LGAs surrounding the Shire, with a proportion of visitors to each of these areas likely to have travelled through Gwydir Shire. As such, the visitor profiles for the adjoining areas are likely to be indicative of characteristics of the visitors to Gwydir Shire. Information is available on visitation to the Shire's VICs. Observations were also provided by VIC staff and retail operators.

4.1 Visitation to the NE-NW Region⁴

The NE-NW Region attracts a range of destination-based and touring visitors, as well as long-haul travellers, moving through the Region enroute to other destinations. Travel within the Region is concentrated north-south along the New England Highway in the east and Newell Highway in the west. The main routes linking the New England and Newell Highways are the Kamilaroi, Oxley and Gwydir Highways and Nature's Way (State Touring Route 3).

The Region's primary attractions include the towns and villages, the large dams (eg Copeton, Keepit), food and wine experiences, National Parks and iconic landforms (eg Sawn Rocks). Events are a major driver of visitation with Tamworth Country Music Festival and AgQuip being the two largest events within the Region.

As regional cities, Tamworth and Armidale attract significant visitation, with both cities having strong business, sporting, and visiting friends and relatives (VFR) markets. Moree is the third most visited town within the Region, with the hot artesian baths being the main attraction.

In the YE December 2016, the NE-NW Tourism Region attracted 1.488 million domestic and 35,200 international visitors who stayed one or more nights in the Region and 1.6 million day trippers. Domestic overnight visitors stayed on average 2.68 nights in the Region and spent on average \$119 per night, with domestic day visitors spending \$137 per visit, and international overnight visitors, \$58 per night.

Domestic Overnight Visitors

- The main reasons for visiting the NE-NW Region were to visit friends and relatives (34.4%), followed by holiday (34.1%), business (20.1%) and other (10.7%). From 2015 to 2016, the number of holiday-makers increased by 27.9%, while the number of VFR travellers grew by 11.4%. Business travellers declined by 9.7%.
- Holiday travellers stayed the longest in the Region (average stay of 3.03 nights) followed by VFR visitors (2.79 nights) and other travellers (2.68 nights), with business travellers stayed on average 2.19 nights.

⁴ The NE-NW Region corresponds to the New England – North West Tourism Region, which is part of the larger Country NSW marketing region.

- 67.5% of visitors to the Region were from NSW, with 21.1% from Queensland and 6.3% from Victoria. 52.0% of visitors were from Regional NSW, with this market increasing by 11.1% from 2015 to 2016. Sydney accounted for 15.5% of visitors with this market declining 1.4% from 2015 to 2016. Visitors from Queensland grew by 31.9% while those from Victoria increased by 14.9%.
- Visitors from Regional NSW (47.7% of total nights) spent the most nights in the Region, followed by visitors from Queensland (23.0%), Sydney (17.5%) and Victoria (7.0%). From 2015 to 2016, the number of nights spent by visitors from Regional NSW, Sydney and Victoria increased by 2.5%, 5.8% and 11.4%, respectively. Nights spent by visitors from Queensland declined by 31.9%.
- Sydney-siders had the longest average length of stay in the Region (3.03 nights), followed by Victorians (2.98 nights) and Queenslanders (2.93 nights). Travellers from Regional NSW had the shortest length of stay (2.46 nights).
- The main activities undertaken while in the Region were dining out (52.4%), visiting friends and relatives (42.2%), going to pubs and clubs (20.1%), and sight-seeing (18.6%). According to the NE-NW Regional Profile, published by Tourism Research Australia for 2015, the most popular experiences were food and wine (59.2% of visitors), culture and heritage (24%) and nature-based (23.4%).
- The main age groups of visitors to the Region were 15-29 years (19.1%), 60-69 years (18.9% of visitors) and 50-59 years (16.7%).
- The majority of visitors were travelling as adult couples (31.5%), alone (29.7%), or with friends and relatives (20.7%). Families with children accounted for only 12.2% of visitors.
- Visitor nights were primarily spent in the home of friends and relatives (38.5% of nights), standard hotels and motels (19.6%), and camping / caravanning staying in non-commercial areas (14.9%).

Domestic Day Visitors

- In 2016, the NE-NW Region attracted 1.6 million day visitors, up 23% on December 2015.
- 41.9% of day trips were for leisure purposes, 24.4% to visit friends and relatives (VFR), and 10.6% for business. From 2015 to 2016 the number of leisure and VFR travellers increased by 22.7% and 62.9% respectively, while the number business travellers declined by 9.6%.
- The main activities undertaken in Region were dining out (44.7%), visiting friends and relatives (33.8%), shopping for pleasure (23.4%), sight-seeing (7.8%) and going to pubs and clubs (6.1%).



International Overnight Visitors

In YE December 2016, the NE-NW Region attracted 35,200 international visitors. 58.7% of visitors were holiday and leisure travellers, with 28.4% visiting friends and relatives. The main source markets were the United States (14.1%), United Kingdom (14.1%) and Germany (10.1%). International visitors were primarily 15-29 years of age (35.5%), 60-69 years (17.1%) and 30-39 years (16.0%).

Implications and Opportunities for Gwydir Shire

- Regional NSW followed by Queensland are the main source of visitors to the Region. This indicates the importance of the road links between Gwydir Shire and Queensland.
- The Region has a large VFR market, providing the opportunity to put in place local and regional promotions to encourage residents to show their visitors around the Region.
- The VFR market tends to rely on word of mouth recommendations from their host rather than seek out VICs. The challenge lies in educating and motivating the host community.
- Food and wine, culture and heritage and nature-based experiences are popular activities for overnight visitors, with shopping for pleasure popular with the day trip market. These opportunities need to be further developed and promoted in Gwydir Shire
- There is an increasing number of travellers 'free' camping within the Region, which is a natural 'fit' with Gwydir Shire and Bingara's rating as the No 1 Free Inland Camp Site in Australia.



4.2 Visitation within the NE-NW Region and Southern Queensland

Destination NSW publishes visitor profiles for selected LGAs in NSW, with the most recent profiles being for the YE September 2014. These profiles are based on 3-4 year rolling average figures taken from the National and International Visitor Surveys. As sample sizes are small, the data should be regarded as indicative only. Data is available for 10 of the LGAs within the NE-NW Region, with data not published for Uralla and Gwydir Shires. The information available varies between LGAs with very limited information available for smaller LGAs. Limited data is also available from Queensland Tourism and Events on visitation to Goondiwindi Regional Council area to the north of Gwydir Shire. Visitor characteristics are summarised in Table 4.1.

Within the NE-NW Region, Tamworth Regional City is the most visited destination averaging 434,000 domestic overnight visitors per year. Armidale Regional LGA ranked second (201,000 visitors), followed by Moree Plains Shire (144,000 visitors), Narrabri Shire (100,000 visitors) and Gunnedah Shire (99,000 visitors). Some of the visitors to Moree Plains, Narrabri, Inverell, Glen Innes, Goondiwindi and Tamworth Regional LGAs are likely to have travelled through Gwydir Shire. While the Regional LGA information is indicative only,

there is probably around 65,000 – 85,000 visitors per annum travelling through Gwydir Shire. These travellers are likely to live predominately in Regional NSW and Queensland, with around half the travellers likely to be aged 55+ years. Holiday and VFR visitors staying in surrounding LGAs are a potential day-trip market for Gwydir Shire.

Table 4.1 Visitation Profiles – Domestic Overnight Visitors, Selected LGAs – NE-NW Region and Goondiwindi Regional Council – 4 year average – Year Ending September 2014

	Some visitors are likely to have passed through Gwydir Shire						Visitors less likely to have passed through Gwydir Shire				
	Inverell	Moree Plains	Narrabri	Tamworth Regional	Glen Innes Severn	Goondiwindi Regional	Armidale Regional	Gunnedah	Liverpool Plains	Tenterfield	Walcha
<u>Domestic Overnight</u>											
Visits	89,000	144,000	100,000	434,000	94,000	143,000	201,000	99,000	33,000	79,000	37,000
Nights	253,000	363,000	234,000	1,185,000	283,000	322,000	471,000	244,000	68,000	183,000	90,000
Av Stay - nights	2.8	2.5	2.3	2.7	3.0	2.3	2.3	2.5	2.1	2.3	2.4
<u>Domestic Day Trips</u>											
Trips	143,000	np	np	595,000	np	82,000	234,000	111,000	np	71,000	68,000
<u>International Overnight</u>											
Visits	2,000	3,000	2,000	10,000	2,000	2,000	9,000	1,000	np	2,000	5,000
<u>Origin</u>											
Intrastate	59%	56%	58%	78%	48%		70%	83%	89%	50%	85%
Interstate	41%	44%	42%	22%	52%		30%	17%	11%	50%	15%
Regional NSW	49%	39%	48%	56%	44%		50%	65%	83%	45%	50%
Sydney	10%	22%	10%	22%	8%		20%	18%	6%	5%	35%
Queensland	36%	30%	26%	12%	34%	60%	20%	17%		43%	
Other Interstate	5%	9%	16%	10%	14%	40%	10%	-		7%	
<u>Purpose</u>											
Holiday / Leisure	52%	39%	31%	32%	42%	34.0%	31%	23%		45%	39%
VFR	33%	22%	28%	36%	35%	30.0%	40%	37%		27%	
Business		30%	33%	21%	-	23.0%	15%	31%			
Other		9%	8%	12%	-	13.0%	14%	9%			
<u>Accommodation</u>											
Motel, Hotel, Resort		32%	23%	23%	15%	19.9%	30%	27%		31%	
Caravan Park		36%	13%	14%	13%	13.0%	9%	-		-	
Friends or Relatives	46%	17%	32%	49%	44%	39.4%	47%	41%		28%	
Free Camping			9%	9%	-	-	-	-			
<u>Transport</u>											
Car	90%	85%	88%	88%	90%		86%	90%	94%	88%	91%
<u>Main Activities Undertaken</u>											
Eat Out / Restaurants	43%	43%	36%	56%	48%		52%	40%		59%	
Sightseeing	16%	17%	-	20%	21%		19%	-		21%	
Visiting Friends or Relatives	43%	22%	29%	46%	34%		48%	35%		30%	

	Some visitors are likely to have passed through Gwydir Shire						Visitors less likely to have passed through Gwydir Shire				
	Inverell	Moree Plains	Narrabri	Tamworth Regional	Glen Innes Severn	Goondiwindi Regional	Armidale Regional	Gunnedah	Liverpool Plains	Tenterfield	Walcha
Shopping for Pleasure Pubs, Clubs and Discos	- -	- 15%	- 18%	20% 23%	- 22%		16% 15%	- 19%			
<u>Age Group</u>											
15-24 years				8%							
25-34 years				17%							
35-44 years				19%			17%				
45-54 years		12%		14%			16%				
55-64 years	19%	27%	26%	20%	27%		22%	20%		19%	
65+ years	18%	27%	27%	22%	22%		18%	20%		23%	
<u>Travel Party</u>											
Alone	-	36%	26%	28%	17%		28%	25%		-	
Adult Couple	30%	33%	33%	28%	32%		28%	25%		43%	
Family	-	17%	17%	23%	27%		29%	-		27%	
Friends / Relatives	22%	15%	15%	14%	18%		8%	17%			
Business Associates	-	-	-	6%	-		-	-			

Source: Destination NSW – Local Government Area Visitor Profiles, 2014

Figure 4.1 Origin of Visitors to the LGAs with strong road links to Gwydir Shire

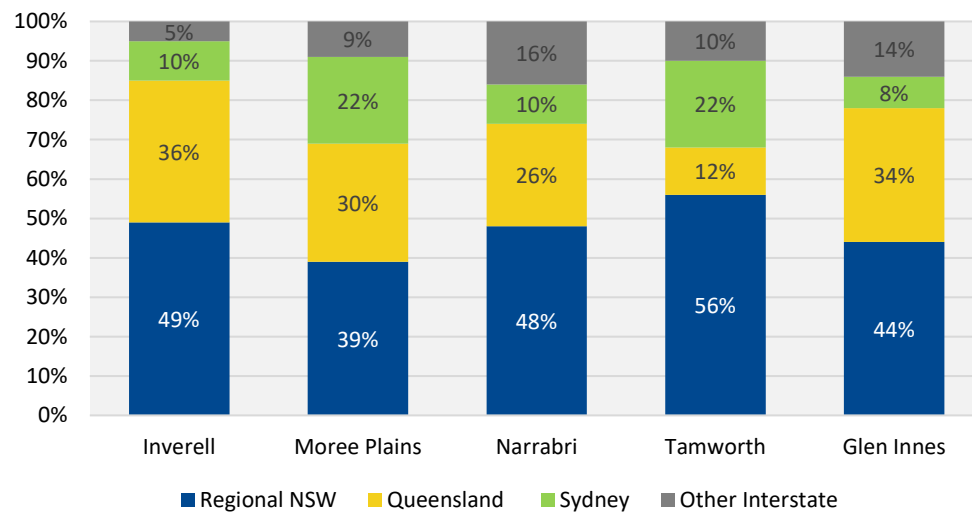
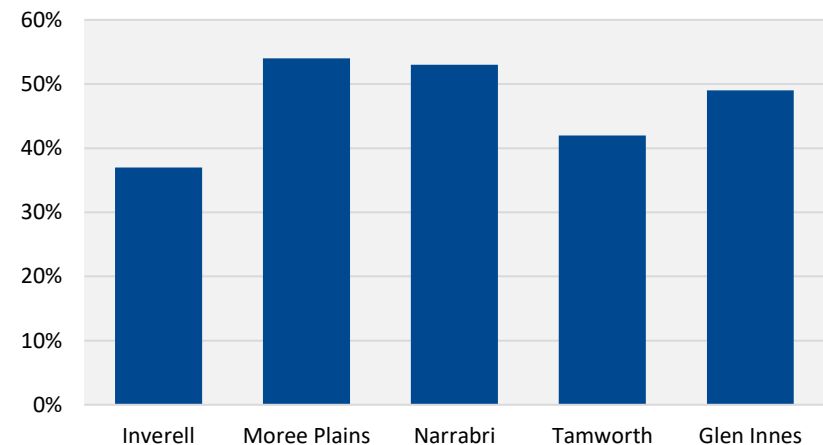


Figure 4.2 Proportion of Visitors aged 55+ years



4.3 Visitation to Gwydir Shire

The only estimate of visitation to Gwydir Shire, published by DNSW is for 2007. In 2007, Gwydir Shire attracted an estimated 38,000 domestic visitors who stayed one or more nights in the Shire, with these visitors spending 121,000 nights in the Shire⁵. Estimates are not available for the number of day visitors to the Shire. In the 10 years since 2007, the number of visitors to the Shire appears to be increasing. In 2016, there were 16,908 visitors to the Bingara (7,165 visitors) and Wyallda (9,734 visitors) Visitor Information Centres, with the majority of these visitors being caravanners and the people touring by car.

Gwydir Shire attracts a diverse range of markets including:

Primary	Secondary and Minor	Special Interest and Activities
Touring Caravaners and RVs Touring by Car Passing / Through Travellers Corporate / Business and Work Related People visiting friends and relatives (VFR) Event attendees	Regional Residents – day trippers and short breaks School groups Touring by Motorcycle / Motorcycle groups Car Clubs Back Packers (primarily international) Seasonal Agricultural Workers	Anglers 4WD Family Historians / Researchers Fossickers Bird Watchers Cyclists Horse sports

With the attractions, activities, infrastructure and resources available in the Shire, the markets that offer the best opportunities for growing the visitor economy in Gwydir Shire are:

- Drive based touring market - particularly the caravan and RV segments of this market.
- Regional market, focusing on short breaks for the family market, regional meetings and functions, school excursions, and special interest based workshops and activities.
- Groups markets – such as car and motorcycle clubs, cycling groups, lapidary clubs, fossicking groups, golfers, fishing clubs etc
- Building the event market – encouraging increased participation and attendance.



⁵ Destination NSW LGA Visitation and Visitor Profile 2007.

Table 4.2 Primary Markets - Product Analysis

Sector	Attractions		Activities	Accommodation
	Lead Products	Supporting Products		
Drive Touring Markets – Over 55, Caravans and RVs / Caravan Clubs	Bingara and Warialda Gwydir River Camping Landforms and Landscapes – Cranky Rock, Rocky Creek Glacial Area Fossicking Roxy Theatre The Living Classroom Copeton Dam	Scenic Drives and Trails Surrounding landforms – Sawn Rocks, Waa Gorge, Horton Falls. Three Creeks Gold Mine Fossicking areas Bingara Museum, Carinda House Myall Creek Memorial Site Country Pubs Koorilgur Nature Walk Ceramic Break Sculpture Park Croppa Creek Machinery Display Three Sisters Eco Farm Grass Tree Forest, Upper Bingara	Camping Fishing Boating / Canoeing Fossicking Site-seeing Golf Bushwalking Shopping / Dining Activity based workshops Volunteering – Living Classroom Dining and Socialising – Country Pubs and Clubs	Gwydir River Camping Sites Free Camping sites throughout the Shire. Bingara and Warialda Caravan Parks Cranky Rock Reserve Copeton Water Inland Park
Drive Touring – Car and Motorcycle Based	As above	As above	As Above	The River House Hotels and Motels Caravan Park Cabins
Regional Family Market	Gwydir River corridor Cranky Rock and Rocky Creek Three Creeks Gold Mine Copeton Dam Wade's Horses / Canoe Hire	Fossicking areas Myall Creek Memorial Site Roxy Theatre Living Classroom Koorilgur Nature Walk Grass Tree Forest, Upper Bingara	Camping Fishing Boating / Canoeing / Water Sports Fossicking Bushwalking Horse Riding 4WD	Gwydir River Camping Bingara and Warialda Caravan Parks Copeton Waters Inlands Park Cranky Rock Reserve Living Classroom – family groups Perenjou and Lemon Gum Cottage Guest Houses
Regional Meetings and Functions	Central / accessible location Venues: - Roxy Theatre - The Living Classroom - Imperial Hotel Meeting Room	Other Venues Golf Country Pubs	Activities tailored to the meeting. Guided tours – Roxy Theatre, Living Classroom, Murray Cod Hatchery	Motels and Hotels The Living Classroom Caravan Park Cabins The River House
School Groups	The Living Classroom Myall Creek Memorial Site Copeton Dam Three Creeks Gold Mine Roxy Theatre Trade Training Centres	Gwydir River Corridor Cranky Rock Rocky Creek Glacial Area Koorilgur Nature Walk Ceramic Break Sculpture Park	Excursions – themes - environmental, geological, historic, aboriginal Creative Arts – camps, workshops and performances at the Roxy Theatre Courses utilising the Trade Training Centre facilities. Horse riding Bushwalking	The Living Classroom Camping – Gwydir River, Copeton Dam Imperial Hotel – Groups Accommodation

5. TRENDS IN THE MARKET PLACE

Understanding, embracing and responding to changes in the marketplace is key to driving growth in the visitor economy in Gwydir Shire. The development of tourism products, activities and experiences needs to be based on an understanding of the changing expectations of consumers, while information delivery and marketing and promotions needs to respond to changes in the way that consumers are sourcing information at all stages of the 'path to purchase' and during the journey itself.

5.1 Changing Expectations

Over the past decade there has been a paradigm shift in consumer expectations, with consumers increasingly looking for a 'tourism experience'. Consumers have moved away from being 'spectators' passively consuming tourism product. Instead they are being driven by 'learning and interaction'. They want to learn, participate, and engage with local people and the places where they travel. They want to connect with people, lifestyle and environment; have stories of people and places that they can share with family and friends; and create lifelong memories.

Consumers are increasingly looking to:

- Experience something different from everyday life.
- Understand and learn about different lifestyles and cultures.
- Through participation, experience the lifestyle rather than just observe it.
- Meet and interact socially with locals and other travellers – making friends and developing personal relationships.
- Challenge themselves – physically, emotionally and/or mentally.
- Visit authentic destinations that are not necessarily part of the tourist route.
- Have exposure to unique and personally compelling experiences.
- Have personal experiences.

Gwydir Shire has the setting and many of the attributes to deliver the experiences being sought. Places such as The Living Classroom and the Roxy Theatre and the Clubs and Pubs, as well as the diversity of events, provide touch points and opportunities for social interaction and engagement with locals. Attractions such as Cranky Rock, the Gwydir River and Rocky Creek, and activities such as fossicking, fishing and horse riding, have the potential to provide soft adventure opportunities that challenge consumers at all levels.



In addition to the above expectations, different market segments also have additional motivators and drivers. Two key markets for Gwydir Shire are the drive-based touring market and the regional family market. Characteristics and drivers of these markets are summarised below.

Drive Based Touring – Over 55's market

The drive-based touring market, particularly people aged 55+ years, is a major growth market and the primary market for Gwydir Shire. In NSW in 2014, there were 8.3 million trips (involving one or more overnight stays) undertaken by domestic travellers aged 55+ years, with this age group accounting for over 30% of the market. This market (also known as baby boomers), will be the primary market for Inland NSW for the next 15-20 years.

The Over 55's market is at, or approaching, retirement age. The market is moving away from employment and family responsibilities and there is a strong sense of freedom and a desire to travel. For many, this is a time of re-evaluation, with lifestyle being the focus. This segment is leading the 'sea-change' and 'tree-change' movements, selling-up in the capital cities and downsizing and relocating to lifestyle locations. This market is being described as 'recycled back-packers'. It is healthy and active, with people involved in sport and recreation - cycling, jogging, swimming, golfing and visiting the gym. Rather than becoming 'traditional' grey nomads focused on 'seeing / observing', this market is seeking new places, different lifestyles, soft-adventure and new experiences. The most appealing experiences for this market are nature and outdoors based (56%); touring by car – sightseeing (51%); relaxation, health and indulgence (43%); and food and wine (35%) with this market seeking out local produce and patronising restaurants and contemporary eateries.

In addition to being fit and active, this market is knowledgeable, sophisticated and demanding. Travellers are generally prepared to spend to achieve what they want. They are more interested in value for money than in the lowest price and have no hesitation in paying 'top dollar' for something that they really desire. They expect quality customer service and are intolerant of poor service. They are also technologically capable and use on-line sources to research and book travel.

Trends in this market include:

- Increasing demand for soft adventure and recreational activities – seeking a variety of activities and experiences on each trip.
- Growth in the number of 'learning' visitors – wanting to come away with new knowledge and/or skills.
- Recognition that the journey is part of the experience.
- 'Slow movement' – travel slowly and immersion in the locale.
- A desire to feel like a local – to be welcomed by locals and treated like a visiting friend rather than a tourist.
- The freedom to interact - the ability to strike up a conversation and make themselves at home.

The drive touring market, particularly the touring caravan and RV segment, is a 'natural fit' for Gwydir Shire. The exposure gained by Bingara from hosting the CMCA National Rally in 2008, significantly raised the profile of the town, and stimulated growth in the RV and touring caravan market. The recent recognition as 'Best Free Camp Site in Inland Australia', has further raised Bingara's profile. The upgrading of Cranky Rock Reserve, the Bingara and Warialda Caravan Parks and the facilities at Copeton Dam, combined with the establishment and promotion of free campsites in the Shire has strengthened the appeal of the Shire as a destination. The proximity to Texas in Queensland, which has also won awards for its free camping, is also an attribute and opportunity.

The peaceful, idyllic setting of the Gwydir River corridor encourages people to stay a few days, relaxing and regenerating. The attractiveness of Bingara, diversity of landscapes, activities such as fishing, fossicking and sight-seeing, and the friendly community, combine to form an ideal location in which to slow down and spend time. Using The Living Classroom and other assets at touch points to engage with visitors, as well as providing learning opportunities will strengthen the appeal of, and emotional attachment to, the Shire.

Family Market

The family market is comprised predominately of Generation X. This generation has grown up in a period of relative prosperity, with technology and access to information. Generation X is now the main generation in the workforce, and will be for the next the twenty years. This generation differs considerably from the Baby Boomers. Their loyalty is primarily to themselves with the driving force being the work-life balance. Socially, Xers tend to have a large circle of acquaintances. They enjoy getting together and dining out. It is a generation that goes away together as informal social groups, for short breaks and long weekends.

As this generation moves into the 'family' lifestyle stage, the focus appears to be on taking short holidays with the family (eg a weekly holiday twice a year). Trips are no longer defined by the preferences of the children (as was generally the case with previous generations) with the emphasis now being on destinations that offer a range of activities that are enjoyable for every member of the family. Families have a high propensity to undertake outdoor and nature-based activities (52%) and to participate in sports and active outdoor activities (29%) and visit local attractions (27%).

Research undertaken by TNS Australian, found that domestic travel fulfils a key role in busy family lives by offering a chance for families to reconnect, recharge and have a break from normal routine. A domestic holiday is often a weekend break or a short break (2 to 4 days) providing an opportunity for families to relax and to open lines of communication between adults and children without time pressures. They are often a mix of planned and spontaneous trips, spread across the calendar to provide milestones to look forward to, and are often undertaken for social reasons such as visiting family and friends. Research has also identified 'nostalgia' as an intangible motivator of travel, with parents wanting their children to experience the holidays that they experienced as a child. Nostalgia often underlays the family 'road trip' with road trips perceived as providing a perfect opportunity for families to bond as a family unit.

The attributes of the Shire that appeal to the touring caravan and RV market also appeal to the family market, particularly those with primary school aged children. The environment offers the opportunity for families to 'reconnect'. Many families aspire to escape from everyday living, to be outdoors in a beautiful setting, get back to nature and a simpler lifestyle, and do 'fun' things together. Gwydir Shire is ideally located within the NE-NW Region to draw the family market from Tamworth and Armidale cities and the surrounding regional towns.



5.2 Researching and Selecting Destinations – the Impact of Technology

Web and digital technology has, and is continuing to change the way in which consumers access and share information, select destinations and products, and book travel. Travellers now have access to an exponentially increasing range of information sources through an expanding number of touch points. To remain competitive, destinations need to use multiple channels – traditional (off line) and online, to communicate targeted messages to consumers at each stage of the decision-making process.

Information Sources used in the Traveller's Path to Purchase and Journey



The internet is now the primary tool used to source travel information. World-wide, on-line travel bookings have outpaced all other types of internet retail sales, with travel being the most popular item purchased (74% of users).

Ways of using the internet and technology to access and disseminate tourist information are continually evolving and include:

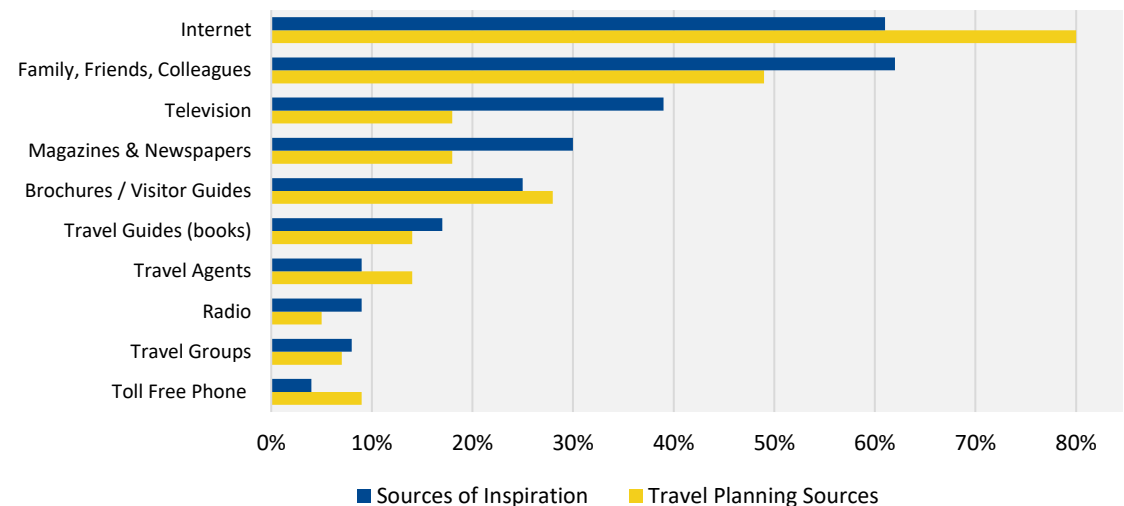
- Tourism, travel and product websites and travel directories– information and bookings.
- Google Maps and Google Earth – maps, satellite images, photographic images, routes, directions, distances and travelling times.
- Trip Itinerary planning programs.
- Pod casts and applications (eg sound trails, geo-caching) - which can be down-loaded onto MP3 players, smart phones and other hand-held digital devices
- User generated content (blogs, You Tube, Instagram) both on websites and through the networking sites,
- Social networking sites such as Facebook, Myspace, Bebo, Twitter etc.
- Travel specific networking sites – such as Trip Advisor, Google Review, Virtual Tourist, Lonely Planet Thorn Tree. These sites not only advertise destinations, accommodation, attractions, tours, events etc, they also provide forums where travellers can discuss their experiences – providing a digital word-of-mouth referral system.

The Google Travel Survey found that over 80% of people use the internet to inspire, plan and book travel, with 68% of leisure travellers using the internet as the starting point for generating ideas about where to travel to. The Survey also found that the average traveller undertakes 9.5 research sessions and visits 22 travel related sites before making a booking⁶.

In 2015, mobile devices (smart phones and tablets) replaced computers as the starting point to search for inspiration for travel. Travellers are using multiple devices (referred to as 'cross platform') to research travel, with 89% of searches started on one device (frequently a smart phone and/or tablet) and completed on another. Most of the searches undertaken on mobile devices are 'micro minute' - short searches while people are waiting around (eg at the bus stop, on the train, in a cafe etc) with searchers primarily looking for 'inspiration'. There is a very a high propensity to view images, short videos (You Tube) and deals and offers.

Videos are becoming an increasingly important promotional tool. Destination videos are primarily used during the 'Dreaming' stage when travellers are searching for ideas and destinations. 85% of travel-related

Sources of Inspiration and Travel Planning Information



Source: Google Travel Survey

⁶ Google Travel Survey

searches on YouTube focus on destinations, attractions, points of interest and general travel ideas⁷. Product videos are more likely to be viewed during the planning stage when travellers are comparing products and prices.

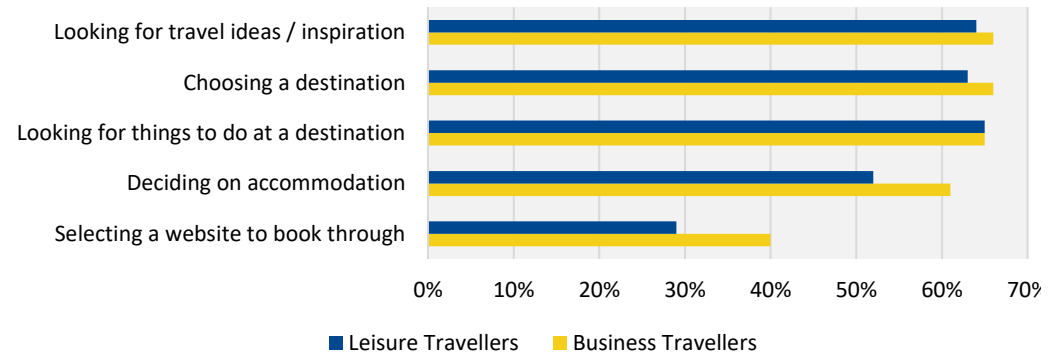
Travellers watch a mix of user generated content and professionally-made video clips. 58% of leisure travellers and 64% of business travellers advised that watching on-line videos influenced their choice of destination and/or products (eg accommodation, activities, tours) selected.

User Generated Content (USG) as a communication tool and to share travel experiences, continues to increase. User generated content is broadly defined as any content (text, images, videos) posted on the web that is not published by a brand. It includes content such as blogs, comments, posts, forums, reviews, podcasts, videos and images, posted via on-line services, social media and content sharing sites. UGC provides another source of information, from a user perspective, with potential travellers interested in what other travellers have to say about a destination.

87% of people are now travelling with one or more mobile devices (78% with smartphones, 42% with tablets and 26% with laptops/notebooks). Amongst those travelling with mobile devices, nearly three-quarters (71%) used them to navigate, source travel information, and/or to make bookings during their stay. VICs (42%) and word-of-mouth referrals were leading sources of information while in-region.

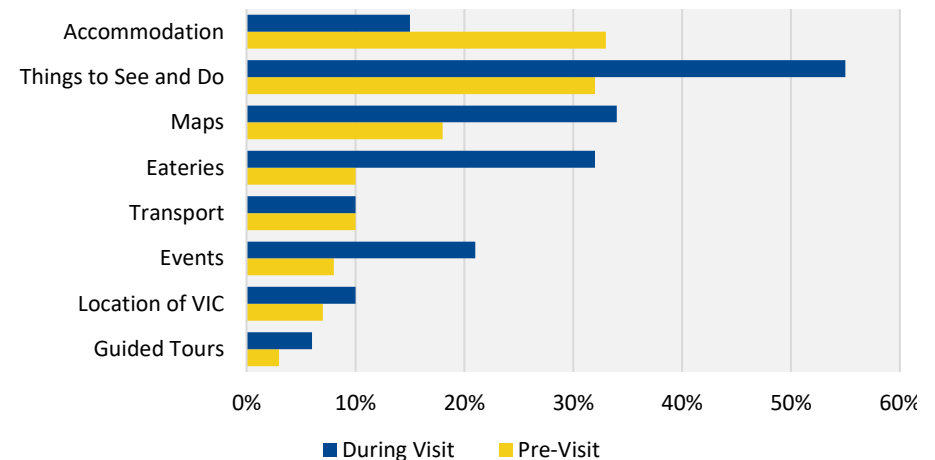


Use of On-Line Travel Videos as a Source of Information



Source: Travel Content Takes off on YouTube www.thinkwithgoogle.com.au

Type of Information Sourced – Pre and During Visit



Source: Tourism Research Australia – Visitor Information Servicing in NSW

⁷ Travel Content Takes off on YouTube www.thinkwithgoogle.com.au

To be competitive in the marketplace, Gwydir Shire Council and individual operators need to have strong on-line presence.

- **Websites need to:**
 - Be mobile optimised – for both android and apple (i platform) for both smart phones and tablets.
 - Be semantic search responsive not key word responsive – the focus has to be on **why** people are looking for something rather than what they are looking for. The content needs to provide answers and solutions to the questions being asked and each page needs to count – Google is now delivering users to the most appropriate page of the website, rather than to a home or top-level page.
 - Be supported by, and fully integrated with, social media, with social media activity now being one of the key variables driving website ranking.
 - Incorporate quality images and video footage (eg You Tube).
 - Provide opportunities to encourage and harness user generated content.
- **Accommodation websites also need to:**
 - Have on-line, real-time reservations system (book now button)
 - Provide information and images on the destination – sell the destination first.
 - Provide quality images (essential) and a video walk through (desirable) of the accommodation.
 - Be linked to key tourism and travel websites.
- **Business and Tourism Operators also need to:**
 - Claim their 'My Business Page' on Google.
 - Encourage guests to review the property / attraction / activity / event on both Trip Advisor and Google Review
 - Ensure that their property is listed, via NSWConnect, on the Australian / State Tourism Data Warehouse data base, and that this content is updated regularly.
- Gwydir Shire Council / Tourism Unit and operators needs to embrace video casting as a tool for driving awareness and engagement, and for generating interest and excitement.
- Places where travellers can access free WiFi within the Shire need to be identified and promoted.





**PRODUCT and INFRASTRUCTURE
DEVELOPMENT**

6. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

The attraction and activity base and the experiences provided, form the backbone of the visitor economy. Attractions and activities have a major influence on trip behaviour, providing a reason to visit the Shire, and/or encouraging visitors to move around within the Shire, stay longer and spend money. Improving and diversifying the product and activity base of the Shire is critical to growing visitation. To date, the approach to the development of the attractions and activities in Gwydir Shire has been relatively ad hoc, often driven by an idea or an interest group, without the rigour of a market demand or financial feasibility assessment or a business plan. Funding and/or resources have often been secured for capital works and/or for production of information and promotional collateral. Leveraging or value-adding to the initial investment has generally not occurred and over-time enthusiasm has waned with funds and resources not available to maintain the assets. As such, much of the product available in the Shire is relatively small in scale, has limited appeal, is tired and dated, and/or undercapitalised and incomplete. The Shire has very few high profile or commercially operated attractions or activities.

Market research undertaken in 2012 by the former Inland NSW Regional Tourism Organisation, focused on identifying what types of activities and experiences that travellers to Inland NSW were seeking and rating them in order of importance. The results are summarised in Table 6.1. While Gwydir Shire has some of the attributes being sought, the activity or experience available may not necessarily be of the 'standard' (amazing, great, wonderful) being sought and/or competitive with similar activities and experiences offered in other destinations within the Region. The two areas where Gwydir Shire has the product that the market is looking for, is in its landscapes and landforms, and access to water-based activities at Copeton Waters State Park and along the Gwydir and Horton Rivers. There is potential to develop these assets further, in conjunction with developing nature and adventure based activities, food / local produce experiences, some of the Shire events, and potentially more Aboriginal products and experiences.

Table 6.1 Activity and Experience Associations – Inland NSW – Importance to the Traveller

Activity and Experience Associations	Importance	Gwydir Shire			
		In Place / Available	Partly in Place	Available but not great or wonderful	Has Potential for further development
Has amazing or unusual landscapes / landforms	64%	✓			✓
A great place for nature activities	54%		✓		✓
A great place for food and wine activities	54%			✓	✓
Has wonderful pioneer history or heritage	43%			✓	
Offers great cultural activities – eg museums, art galleries, theatres	40%			✓	
Has great festivals and events (sporting, cultural etc)	39%		✓ (a few)	✓ (most)	✓
Has great adventure activities	32%				✓
I can do water-based activities there	27%	✓			✓
Offers amazing Aboriginal experiences	18%			✓	✓
Is a great place for sporting activities (eg golf) or competitions	14%		✓ (fishing, golf, horse sports)		✓



Source: Inland NSW Tourism (2012) Inland NSW Regional Tourism Dashboard

The focus for product development in Gwydir Shire will be on:

- Enhancing, strengthening and consolidating attractions and activities that are already in place, leveraging and value adding were possible.
- Attractions and activities that are potentially **catalytic** in that they can influence outcomes across a range of economic sectors and/or markets, and/or **game changing** in that they create opportunities for value-adding, market diversification and/or directional change.
- Attractions and activities that will increase the appeal of Gwydir Shire to its primary target markets.
- Attractions and activities that will stimulate visitation and help to diversify the market base.
- Attractions and activities that will provide the Shire with a unique selling point / point of difference, have the potential to raise awareness and generate publicity for the Shire.
- Attractions and activities that are consistent with the positioning. brand-values of the Shire.

6.2 Priority Projects

- **Fossicking** – With many of the visitors to the Shire expressing an interest in fossicking, there is an opportunity to improve and expand the fossicking products and experiences offered.
- **Touring Routes, Scenic Drives and Trails** – Touring routes are designed to bring travellers into and through the Shire, with the Scenic Drives and Trails providing links between attractions and activities to generate ‘scale’, and to encourage travellers to stay longer in, and explore the Shire. Touring Routes, Drives and Trails are part of a dispersal strategy, to build visitation to and potential expenditure in, all of the Shire’s towns and villages. The Trails also provide the opportunity to diversify into and build special interest and activity based markets. There are opportunities to enhance and potentially value-add to, some of the existing Trails and to use existing assets to develop new Trails that will appeal to the Shire’s target markets and strengthen the Shire’s outdoor, nature and soft-adventure based positioning.
- **Landforms and Landscapes** - Developing and positioning Cranky Rock Reserve and the Rocky Creek Glacial Areas as high profile, iconic attractions, will capitalise on the high value that travellers place on amazing and unique landscapes and landforms. Clustering with unique landforms around the periphery of the Shire (Sawn Rocks, Waa Gorge and Horton Falls), will raise the profile of and strengthen the Region and the touring routes. Landforms and Landscapes also link in with the fossicking themes, activities and experiences and the geological tours. There are a range of unique and spectacular landforms, as well as heritage sites, along the creek systems surrounding the Cranky Rock Reserve. If accessible and feasible, development of a network of walking and/or mountain-bike tracks to access these features, could potentially be a game-changer for Cranky Rock and Warialda.



- **Gwydir Producers and Provedores** – Gwydir Shire has a small but growing number of niche product producers and outlets that sell local produce. There is strong market interest across all market segments for culinary experiences, with this borne out locally, with visitors interested in and purchasing local produce. There are a range of opportunities to show-case and sell the produce available. This 'product' complements The Living Classroom (TLC), with TLC having the potential to become the unique selling point and anchor attraction as the gardens and orchards mature. This 'product' also complements the memorial orange and olive trees in Bingara, has the potential to strengthen existing events and provide the basis for new events and activities, and will enhance and strengthen the lifestyle positioning of the Shire.
- **The Living Classroom** - The Living Classroom is a unique, catalytic project that has the potential to drive growth in visitation across a range of market segments; build the profile of Bingara, the Shire and the NE-NW Region; stimulate interest and/or investment in several economic sectors; and drive 'tree change'.
- **Events** – To build visitation by growing the events sector. The focus will be on providing marketing support to grow existing events that have the potential to attract more visitors to the Shire and/or generate significant publicity for the Shire; and to endeavour to attract 'footloose' events to the Shire by bidding for these activities and marketing the Shire's venues and assets to event organisers.



7. FOSSICKING

7.1 The Opportunities

- To improve access to and the experiences at the Fossicking Reserves within the Shire, as well as open up new fossicking areas.
- Establishment of commercial fossicking parks – potentially with on-site primitive camping, cabins and/or farmstay accommodation.
- Fossicking guide / guided tours and lessons.
- Value-adding including equipment sales and hire, packaging and sale of bags of ‘gemstone gravel’, and cutting and polishing of gemstones and rocks.



7.2 Rationale

Gwydir Shire has a very interesting geological history that has produced a diversity of rocks, minerals, precious metals and gemstones. Fossicking is an activity that has a relatively low entry cost and is suitable for people of all ages and levels of physical ability. Fossicking is popular with a range of market segments, including the Shire’s primary touring (retiree) and family markets and school groups. Fossicking is also an activity that is highly ‘saleable’ to the regional market – escape to Bingara for the weekend, camp by the river and spend quality, interactive time outdoors with the family. Fossicking is a core activity and attraction for the Fossickers Way Touring Route which passes through both Bingara and Warialda. It also links with the geological drives and landforms and landscapes that form part of the product base of the Shire. Fossicking provides a reason to visit the Shire and encourages travellers to stay longer and to return to the area. It is also an attraction for some people who are looking for a place to retire to – the opportunity to spend their time fossicking and/or fishing.

7.3 Assets to Work With

- **The Peel Fault** traverses the Shire (Warialda through to Upper Bingara). In addition to being the largest serpentine fault in the world, the combination of faulting and volcanic activity has resulted in a diversity of rocks, minerals, precious metals and gemstones, with the area from Glen Innes to Bingara recognised as one of the most productive areas for gemstones in Australia. Bingara and Nundle are also recognised as historic gold mining areas, with gold panning being popular. Rocks and minerals found in Gwydir Shire include Gold, Silver, Rhodonite, Petrified Wood, Quartz Crystals, Agate, Jasper, Amethyst, Diamonds, Manganite, Calcite, Garnets, Sapphires, Serpentine, Diatomite, Tin, Antimony and Chromite.



- **Part of Fossickers Way**, which is an established touring route with a ranging of fossicking products and experiences. The branding of the route raises the profile and awareness of fossicking with travellers often wanting to 'try'. Fossickers Way follows the Peel Fault, and many fossickers experiencing the thrill of a 'find'. This in-turn creates user generated 'word of mouth' and on-line publicity. The fossicking areas in Bingara, Warialda, Upper Bingara and Copeton often feature in on-line fossicking forums and travel blogs. Fossicking products and experiences available along the Fossickers Way are summarised in Appendix 1.
- **Three Creeks Gold Mine in Upper Bingara**. This historic mine provides an anchor for the fossicking experience and an entry point for those looking to try and learn. The Mine is one of the oldest continuing mining operations in NSW. The mine has developed as a tourist attraction, catering both for groups and independent travellers. The experience offered includes information on the history of gold mining in the Upper Bingara – Bingara area and a tour of the historic workings; lessons in how to pan for gold; and panning for gold for the remainder of the day. The Mine has a covered area for group catering and a small shop selling gold nuggets, jewellery and equipment.
- **Fossicking reserves** and areas in Bingara, Upper Bingara, Warialda, Warialda Rail and along the Narrabri (Killarney Gap) and Copeton Roads. While some of the fossicking areas (eg Ruby Hill) are defined areas, other locations eg Bora Creek, are dispersed with multiple access points. These areas are generally not signposted, are somewhat difficult to find and poorly delineated in terms of where fossicking is and isn't permitted. There is no information available at the Reserves.
- **Potential fossicking areas located on private property**. There is one property in Upper Bingara, adjacent to the Three Creeks Gold Mine, that provides access for people fossicking with metal detectors. Fossickers need to register and pay (\$25/day) at Three Creeks Gold Mine. There may be opportunities to establish commercial fossicking parks as has occurred in Inverell and Glen Innes LGAs.
- **Geological drives and fossil outcrops**, as well detailed information on the geology and geological processes.
- **Gold heritage** – remains of the Gold Stamper Battery at All Nations Hill in Bingara, plus numerous sites along the Upper Bingara Road. The Upper Bingara Historic Drive included 24 sites in the Upper Bingara Area, with each of the sites marked. The Drive and sites have not been maintained. There is potential to re-instate the drive potentially as part of a sound trail.



- **Gem and Mineral displays** – Wells Gem and Mineral Collection in the Warialda VIC and the Bingara Museum collections.
- **Basic fossicking equipment** is available for purchase at Three Creeks Gold Mine and at the IGA Supermarkets in Bingara and Warialda.

7.4 Directions Forward

The focus initially needs to be on increasing the visibility and accessibility of the fossicking products and enhancing the fossicking experience. Fossicking enthusiasts are always looking for new areas and for cutting of new faces / ripping the earth at established fossicking sites. A strategic approach is needed opening up new areas and ‘refreshing’ existing areas. Priorities are:

- Improve the directional signage to the Three Creeks Gold Mine at the intersection of Fossickers Way (Barraba Road) and the Upper Bingara Road, including advanced warning signs in both directions.
- To improve the presentation of a couple of the fossicking reserves, eg Ruby Hill, with these areas being designed for beginners – the next step from the Three Creeks Gold Mine. These sites need to be well defined, effectively signposted and provide some interpretation about how and where to fossick and what to look for. These areas need to be maintained, through slashing, occasionally exposing / turning over new dirt (to make it easier to dig and increasing the chances of finding something), and possibly providing a basic picnic shelter and or shade structure.
- To delineate other fossicking reserves and sites, with these sites providing a more ‘primitive / back to nature’ experience for fossicking enthusiasts and for ‘beginners’ to move onto. These sites may need some basic signage / marker, as well as slashing / creation of a place to pull off the road and park.
- Assess the potential for fossicking in Otterley’s Creek at Coolatai and in the creeks around Cranky Rock Reserve, to add to the activity base of these areas.
- Promote ‘rock and fossil hunting’ as complementary experiences to fossicking. This requires no equipment and is a fun-based activity for children.
- To progressively release new fossicking areas with the releases strategically staged over time and accompanied by marketing and promotion on-line through fossicking forums and websites as well as through PR marketing / press releases in key fossicking, outdoors and seniors’ magazines. Progressively offering new opportunities keeps the ‘spot-light’ on the Shire and encourages repeat visitation.
- Encourage private property owners to enter the market, possibly providing primitive camping and/or farm stay accommodation, with fossicking packaged with a range of outdoor activities (eg fishing, bushwalking, 4WD, bird-watching etc).



- Investigate opportunities for value-add, for example - packaging and sale of bags of 'gemstone gravel'; cutting and polishing of gemstones and rocks; rock / gem hunting kit for children (eg display box, labels, small geological hammer etc).
- Improve / revamp the information available on fossicking – both in print format and on-line. Include a fossicking page on the Shire Tourism website. Focus on featuring 'points of difference' (eg different rocks and minerals found and attractions close by) between the areas to create individual destinations and encourage travellers to visit each of the areas and/or to return to the Shire to visit the areas that they missed last time. Include quality maps and GPS co-ordinates as well information on what to look for.
- Work with accommodation and venue operators (eg The Living Classroom) to develop activities and packages targeted to fossicking groups, lapidary clubs etc. Explore options to work with Nundle, Inverell and/or Glen Innes to develop fossicking itineraries for coach tour and social groups (eg Probus Clubs),
- Continue to work with the Fossickers Way marketing group to improve information and promotional collateral. Include fossicking information on the Fossickers Way website and consider developing an App that provides instructions on how to fossick as well as a guide to identifying rocks, gemstones, minerals etc.
- Incorporate geology and fossicking into the products and experiences along both the Gwydir Highway and Nature's Way touring routes. The Gwydir Highway links several fossicking areas and experiences – Glen Innes, Inverell, Gwydir Shire and Lightning Ridge (see Appendix 1).
- Capitalise on opportunities to gain free publicity for fossicking in the Shire – for example, features / listings in regional school holiday activity promotions, contributing to fossicking forums and blogs, coverage on travelling with children websites etc.



8. TOURING ROUTES, SCENIC DRIVES and TRAILS

8.1 The Opportunities

- To promote touring routes that draw travellers off the major interstate highways (New England and Newell) into and through Gwydir Shire.
- To develop scenic drives linking points of interest, that encourage travellers to stay longer in, and explore the Shire.
- To develop themed trails / routes, with these used to build special interest and activity based visitation to the Shire.

8.2 Rationale

The Shire's primary markets (drive touring, caravaners and RVs, family road trip, and caravan club, car and motorcycle club touring/rallies) are drive based. The development of drive product will enhance the appeal and accessibility of the Shire to these markets.

Being located between two major interstate highways, Gwydir Shire does not have high volumes of through traffic, nor the visibility of the towns and villages located along the highway corridors. Touring routes that are anchored by high profile / quality attractions and/or experiences appeal to travellers, particularly travellers who are looking 'to get off the beaten track' and for whom the journey is part of the experience. Linking destinations and activity nodes and clustering products, activities and experiences, also increases the 'scale' and diversity of the 'offer' and creates a more 'compelling' and marketable product.

Scenic drives and themed trails and routes enhances and expands the range of activities available in the Shire, encouraging travellers to explore and stay longer, and if linked into the towns and villages, should generate patronage for local businesses. Themed trails can also be used to strengthen and re-inforce the Shire's 'positioning' as well as tourism and economic development themes. They can also provide the basis for additional product development and value-adding, as well as the development of special interest and activity based markets and potentially, events.



8.3 Development Considerations

Factor that need to be taken into consideration in developing routes, drives and trails include:

- The touring routes and trails that are the most successful are those developed with similar principles to the major shopping malls – a number of high profile anchors (eg Department and Discount Department Stores / *high profile attractions with a WOW factor*) that draw visitor into the Mall / *along the route*; separated by a series of smaller offerings (specialty stores / *local attractions*); with strong support services (food courts, toilets, ATMs etc / *accommodation, eateries, town and village services, toilets, picnic facilities etc*); and effective directional signage and touch points for information.
- Information –needs to be available at all stages of the ‘path to purchase’, during the journey and at the destination. The information needs to be accurate, comprehensive, easy to understand and available on-line across all platforms (mobile devices will be the main access points) and in print format. The most important tool is an accurate map.
- Content – this needs to be designed to meet needs at a number of levels. At the trip planning stage information must be inspiring and motivating, while during the journey information needs to be factual and accessible, in a range of formats. At the destination, information needs to be layered, providing entry level information for most travellers, coupled with the opportunity for enthusiasts and travellers looking to learn and/or seeking ‘immersion, to access more detailed information. Images and video clips are far more effective at inspiring and motivating than words. Likewise, good maps and GPS coordinates / reference points, are more effective than written instructions.
- A strategic approach with an economic focus. To maximise return on investment, it is important that routes pass through towns and villages and also incorporates commercial attractions (eg Three Creek Gold Mine). Consideration also needs to be given to the purpose of the route / drive / trail (achievement objective); potential contribution to positioning and brand values; opportunities to leverage, value-add, grow and diversify; and on-going maintenance, logistics and costs.
- Geocaching – there is a strong and growing trend in both traditional geocaching and puzzle geocaching. Establishing Geocaching sites can be used to strengthen and enhance touring routes and scenic drives (see www.geocachingnsw.asn.au for more information).



8.4 Touring and Through Routes

Gwydir Shire is located between two major interstate highways, the New England Highway to the east and the Newell Highway to the west. The main travelling routes through the Shire are:

- Fossickers Way and the Wyallda Road extension linking through to Texas in Queensland.
- Gwydir Highway – connecting the NSW North Coast (Pacific Highway at Grafton) to the Castlereagh Highway in Walgett Shire, with links to Lightning Ridge (the main destination) and the NSW Outback through Brewarrina and Bourke).
- Nature's Way – connecting Narrabri and Inverell Shires through Gwydir Shire.
- The Bruxner Highway passing through the northern edge of the Shire.

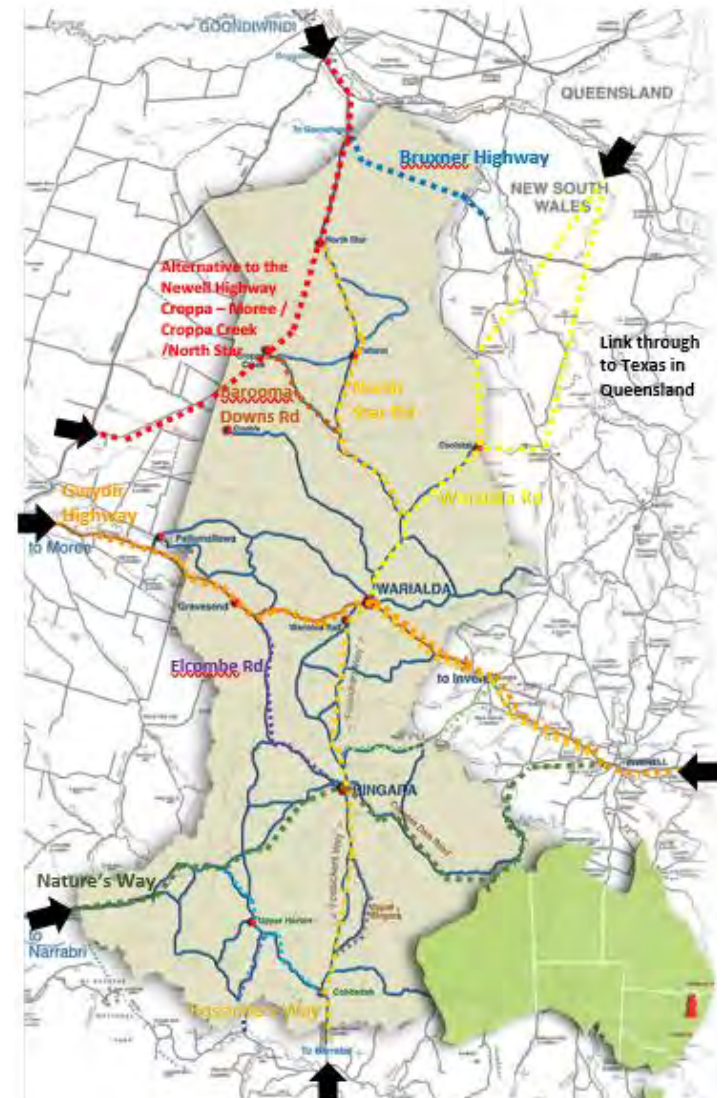
There is also potential to develop additional routes to bring travellers off the Newell Highway into Gwydir Shire.

Fossickers Way

The Fossickers Way is a looped touring route (comprising several roads) that passes through Tamworth Regional, Gwydir, Inverell, Glen Innes, Armidale Regional and Uralla LGAs. In Gwydir Shire, the Fossickers Way includes part of Regional Road B95 (which is a north-south aligned route, connecting the Oxley and New England Highway at Tamworth to the Gwydir Highway at Wyallda), and the Gwydir Highway from Wyallda to Glen Innes.

Fossickers Way has been established for more than 20 years, with the brochure organised and published by the Inverell Times. It has been funded through LGA buy-in and advertng, with content largely dictated by the advertising. While the original concept was to link historic mining areas, and fossicking and geological based activities, this has been significantly 'diluted' over the years. The publication and associated website are dated, with the website not being inspirational, comprehensive nor mobile optimised.

Fossickers Way touring route is being revamped by Gwydir, Inverell and Glen Innes Shires and Tamworth Regional Council.



Nature's Way

State Touring Route 3, has recently been branded 'Nature's Way'. It links the Gwydir Highway at Inverell to the Newell Highway at Narrabri, (with links through to Pilliga and the Warrumbungle National Park), via Copeton Dam, Bingara, Rocky Creek Glacial Area, Kaputar National Park and Sawn Rocks. Gwydir, Inverell and Narrabri Shires are working cooperatively to develop and promote this route.

Gwydir Highway

The Gwydir Highway is a State Highway (B76) linking the Pacific Highway at Grafton on the NSW North Coast through to the Castlereagh Highway near Walgett in Outback NSW with Lightning Ridge and Bourke being the 'end' destinations. The Gwydir Highway passes through the towns of Glen Innes, Inverell, Wialda, Moree and Collarenebri and the villages of Delungra and Gravesend. The Gwydir Highway is not promoted as a touring route and there is no promotional collateral available. To the east of Glen Innes the Gwydir Highway is branded 'World Heritage Way', reflecting the World Heritage listed National Parks that flank the Highway between Glen Innes and Grafton. Between Glen Innes and Wialda, the Gwydir Highway is part of the Fossickers Way touring route. Being located between the larger centres of Inverell (65km to the east) and Moree (80km to the west), encouraging through travellers to stop and explore, is a challenge for both Wialda and Gravesend. Cranky Rock Reserve has the potential to become an iconic attraction along the route and potentially change travel times and dynamics which could benefit Wialda.

Bruxner Highway

The Bruxner Highway (B76) passes through the northern part of the Shire. It is part of the route across Australia, linking the most easterly and westerly points on the Continent. The Bruxner Highway links the Pacific Highway at Ballina on the NSW North Coast, to the Newell Highway at Boggabilla, just south of Goondiwindi. It passes through the towns of Lismore, Casino and Tenterfield. For Gwydir Shire, the Bruxner Highway is part of the connection between the northern part of the Shire and towns in Southern Queensland.

Potential Routes

There are three routes that have the potential to increase the number of travellers coming into and through Gwydir Shire:

- The Wialda Road (B95) – continuing the Fossickers Way at Wialda along the north-eastern edge of the Shire to the Bruxner Highway and onto Texas in Southern Queensland. This route links award-winning free camp sites in Bingara and Texas, via Coolatai and Wialda.
- North Star Road – linking Wialda to North Star with links to the Newell Highway at Boggabilla, through to Goondiwindi. The North Star Road – Fossickers Way (south of Wialda) is the quickest link between Tamworth and Goondiwindi – with the potential to promote this as a route for through and touring traffic. Ideally, travellers between North Star and Wialda should be encouraged to visit Croppa Creek (Croppa Creek and Baroma Downs Roads)
- Croppa – Moree / Croppa Creek Road / North Star Road via Croppa Creek and North Star. This route has the potential to be signposted and promoted as a scenic alternative to the Newel Highway between Moree and Boggabilla.

Example of a tourist drive sign that could be erected at Boggabilla to encourage south-bound travellers to visit North Star and Croppa Creek



Table 8.1 Product Development and Marketing and Promotional Collateral Needed to Support these Routes

Route	Product and Infrastructure Development	Marketing and Promotion
Fossickers Way <i>(information on fossicking activities along the route is provided in Appendix 1)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying / defining and improving the 'iconic' attractions and 'hero' experiences along the route. Revamping of the fossicking products and experiences in Gwydir Shire, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrading and signposting the fossicking reserves – advanced warning and directional signage, upgrading access roads, clearly defining boundaries, providing interpretative material explaining how and where to fossick, and slashing the grass and turning the soil as needed. Significantly improving signage to the Three Creeks Gold Mine. Defining and signposting attraction 'loops' and 'side visits' (eg Upper Horton Falls, Upper Bingara Drive, Upper Horton – Rocky Creek – Bingara triangle) off the trunk route. Developing sub-themes and activities along the route – eg fishing, golf, bird hotspots. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photo shoot to update images / video clips. New website – mobile optimised with quality images, video clips and inspiring content. New print material – brochure and/or map. Fossicking App – showing fossicking experiences as well as information on where and how to fossick and how to recognise gemstones, petrified wood etc.
Nature's Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positioning Rocky Creek as one of the iconic attractions / anchors for route – to bring travellers over the Nandewar Range from Sawn Rocks. Further upgrading of the area and providing advanced warning and directional signage is needed. Positioning The Living Classroom as a 'must see' attraction and the Gwydir River corridor as a premier campsite. Signposting the route / attractions from key strategic locations eg - on the Killarney Gap Road where travellers exit the Sawn Rocks Car Park. Information boards / directories at key locations (eg Sawn Rocks, Copeton Waters State Park). Once the trunk route is established, add loops and side visits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photo shoot / video clips Development of a brand / logo for use on signage, information and promotional collateral Billboard advertising on the Newell Highway. Route website with links to local and regional tourism websites. Map and print collateral.
Gwydir Highway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a route development / marketing group to define and develop the route and supporting information and promotional collateral. Product audit and collation of information on the route (see Appendix 2). Positioning Cranky Rock as one of the anchor attractions for the route (see Section 9.4). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photo shoot / video clips Route website with links to local and regional tourism websites. Map and print collateral.
Warialda Road – Texas – Bingara Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good directional signage between the Texas and Bingara, encouraging travellers to move south via Gwydir Shire rather than Inverell Shire. Use of international symbols to identify camping sites and caravan parks along the route – Coolatai, Warialda and Bingara. Improving the camping area at Coolatai, including providing access to the creek from the camping area and providing visitor information on the village, the route and the Shire on the noticeboard at the camping area. Improving the free camping offer in Warialda. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shire-wide map showing the main routes; campsites, caravan parks and other accommodation; and key attractions. Include route on a Shire-wide website. Explore options for cross promotion of Texas and Bingara from the VICs in each town.
North Star Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directional signage to Tamworth from Boggabilla, Bruxner Highway and at North Star. Determine the future of the North Star Caravan Park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shire-wide map + updated content on third-party websites. Explore options for billboard advertising targeted to southbound traffic at Boggabilla.

Route	Product and Infrastructure Development	Marketing and Promotion
Scenic Alternative to the Newell Highway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourist Drive / alternative route signage on the Newell Highway at Moree and Boggabilla. Directional signage along the route (as required). <p><u>Croppa Creek</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourist icon signs for toilets, food and beverage, camping, petrol etc at Croppa Creek. Develop the Croppa Creek historic truck and machinery display into a quirky attraction. Resolve management issues (establish a single Trust / Management Group) at the Recreation Reserve and improve toilet and other visitor facilities. Assess the need for and explore options for providing a caravan dump point. Explore options for providing a few powered caravan sites adjacent to the Club. <p><u>North Star</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the future of the North Star Caravan Park Improve signage to the caravan park / camping areas and the Sporting Club. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shire-wide map + updated content on third-party websites. Explore options for billboard advertising targeted to southbound traffic at Boggabilla. Include the Croppa Creek Store cottages on the accommodation list for the Shire, and encourage owner to advertise, including potentially listing on AirBnB and/or Stayz. Produce a 'quirky' map / brochure with this available through VICs, accommodation properties and other outlets in Moree, Goondiwindi and Boggabilla.

8.5 Scenic Drives and Link Roads

Developing scenic drives and improving / signposting link roads will encourage travellers to explore the Shire, which has the potential to increase the length of stay. Drives and routes include:

- Upper Bingara Road – scenic drive linking historic mining sites, Three Creek Gold Mine and the Grass Tree Forest.
- Bingara – Delungra – Warialda triangle – linking the 3 towns, plus the Myall Creek Memorial Site and Cranky Rock.
- Horton Road – linking Fossickers Way at Cobbadah to Nature's Way via Upper Horton. From Upper Horton, Bareen Road provides access to the Horton Falls National Park.
- Elcombe Road linking Bingara to the Gwydir Highway at Gravesend. This route is being progressively sealed and provides a link from Moree to Tamworth via Gravesend and Bingara.

Product, infrastructure and signage audits need to be undertaken along these routes (as well other routes identified in the northern part of the Shire). Directional signage and, if needed route markers, need to be put in place and promotional collateral (eg a Shire-wide Map showing the routes and points of interest) developed. The routes also need to be included on a Shire-wide website as well as the town websites.



8.6 Trails and Self-Guided Tours

Gwydir Shire has in place a number of self-guided themed trails relating to the history and geology of the area, as well as bird and cycling routes. The trails have been progressively developed over time, with a range of formats adopted for the brochures and print information. There is no consistent format. Most of the self-guided tour brochures do not contain maps, with visitors required to follow written directions. With the capacity to deliver information in print and online formats and to use GPS to navigate and locate points of interest, it is timely to review the self-guided tour product.

Consideration needs to be given to the demand / level of interest shown by visitors in the tour themes; the level of information needed; and how the information can be layered to provide entry-level information that will appeal to most visitors as well as detailed information for those seeking more. Presentation and formatting need to be standardised across the tour brochures and between the localities.

With the strong growth in bushwalking, mountain-biking, canoeing / kayaking, and off-road touring (4WD and trailbikes) there is potential to develop and promote trails for these activities.

Trail Type	Product / Experience / Promotional Material	Possible Opportunities
Existing Trails		
Sound Trails – Bingara, Warialda and Myall Creek	The Sound Trails provide a self-guided tour with stories and memories from local residents. The Sound Trails are presented as a free, downloadable App.	<p>If the Sound Trails have proved popular, there may be opportunity to develop additional trails and/or capture additional stories.</p> <p>Improving the download speed could help to increase the take-up rate.</p>
Town Tours	Self-guided tour brochures have been prepared for Bingara (Around town in Bingara) and Warialda (Warialda Historical Walking Town Tour). The brochures are in different formats, with the Bingara brochure being primarily columns of text with no images. Neither brochure incorporates a map showing the walking routes and the location of the points of interest. A considerable proportion of the content (text) is taken up with providing written directions. The presentation of the brochures is not 'eye-catching' nor stimulating.	<p>In their current form, the town tour brochures have limited value. If there is interest in town walking tours from visitors, the brochures need to be revamped. This would provide the opportunity to integrate the self-guided tours and sound trails to provide a more compelling experience. Ideally the brochures should have the same branding and presentation format, and should include an easily readable map and quality images. The information provided needs to be stimulating / captivating – a mix of pertinent facts and interesting stories. If well integrated, the Sound Trails will help to bring the tour 'alive'.</p> <p>The presentation of the Soundtrails information card is functional, rather than inspiring and does not provide 'lead-in grabs' that stimulate interest – for example – 'How did Charlie's bones end up in the Shed?' / 'The House that was built in 7 days' / 'The Orange Police'.</p>
Bird Routes	Gwydir Shire is rich in birdlife, with the Shire promoted as an area 'where the birds of the East meet the birds of the West'. 18 bird routes have been identified and are promoted as the 'Bird Routes of Warialda District'. A 'Warialda and District Bird List' is also available. The brochure and bird list are available on line (downloadable from the Bingara website) and in print format.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To include a link to the brochure from the Warialda website. • To list the trails and provide a link to the brochure and bird list on sites such as Bird Life Australia. • To include a birdlife display, at The Living Classroom (TLC), possibly as part of the proposed Interpretative Centre, or as an outdoor, free-standing exhibition. • Promoting TLC to bird-watching clubs and enthusiasts as a place to stay and as a base for bird watching in the area.

Trail Type	Product / Experience / Promotional Material	Possible Opportunities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering workshops - Bingara has a specialist bird photographer and there may be opportunities to host bird photography workshops and tours, utilising TLC as a venue. • There are a number of Bird Call Apps available for Australian birds. Reference to these apps could be included in future bird brochures and/or publicised in the VICs. • The bird egg collection at the Bingara Museum is a point of difference and may also be of interest to some visitors, groups and enthusiasts.
Geological Trails	<p>Gwydir Shire has an interesting geological history, with a range of different features located in close proximity to each other, that are readily accessible. The geological theme links with fossicking, the Fossickers Way and the unique landforms of the Shire and surrounding region. Geology can also be incorporated into school excursions.</p> <p>Several geological self-drive tour brochures are available for Bingara and surrounding areas, including: 'Geological Tour of the Bingara – Barraba District', 'Geological Drive Across the Nandewar Volcano' and 'Let's Explore Bingara – Out in the Countryside'. While these brochures contain detailed information about the geology of the area, they lack maps showing the location of the sites as well as diagrams explaining the formation process. For most visitors, the information is too detailed.</p>	<p>In addition to the brochures, detailed geological notes and maps are available for the area, and there is also a Power Point presentation (Romancing the Rocks) available. The geological information needs to be consolidated and re-vamped. It needs to be presented at a number of levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry level – providing an introduction to the formation processes and the resultant features. The entry level information should be suitable for inclusion in touring route and scenic drive notes / brochures and in the information developed for fossicking and landforms. • Detailed notes – for enthusiasts and people wanting to learn and/or seeking an 'immersion' experience. <p>Ideally, the entry level information could be presented by way of a You Tube video and an App, supported by printed material. Links could be available to a webpage and/or a downloadable set of maps and notes providing more detailed information. The information needs to be presented in a format that is easily readable and absorbed, remembering that many of the visitors to the Shire are retirees who may not have 20:20 vision.</p> <p>Print material needs consistent branding and presentation. It should contain a map, with GPS coordinates provided for each of the sites. In the field, a 'marker' (probably a sign) is needed to identify the location. For major sites, interpretative signage may be warranted.</p> <p>Preparation of suggested curriculum-based itineraries, teacher notes and student worksheets would assist in attracting the education market.</p>
Cycle the Bingara Region	<p>Five cycling routes, varying in length from 5.3 to 49km, have been identified for the Bingara area. The routes are designed for hybrid and mountain bikes and include some unsealed sections of road.</p> <p>Additional information that would strengthen these routes includes highlighting points of interest, and information on support services such as accommodation options and bicycle repair outlets.</p>	<p>Cycle tourism is growth sector. The market is segmented and includes families who are generally looking for off-road cycle routes, recreational cyclists – will generally ride loops of up to 20km, and hard-core fitness and/or competitive cyclists who generally look for loops ranging from 40 to 200km in length.</p> <p>Development is needed to take cycle tourism from an activity that is undertaken while visiting the area, to a product / activity that is marketable and can attract cycle clubs and enthusiasts into the Shire. The Australian Rail Trails provide good examples of trail development and trail information (www.railtrails.org).</p>

Trail Type	Product / Experience / Promotional Material	Possible Opportunities
		<p>When further developed, the Shire's cycle routes should be uploaded onto cycle route websites such as www.mapmyride.com/au, www.cycletravelleraustralia.com and www.bicyclensw.org.au. RMS is also developing an interactive cycleway map.</p> <p>Consideration also needs to be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategic approach to development, using examples from cycle tourism destinations in Victoria. • Defining a signature route – one that has a strong 'WOW' factor, to provide an anchor. • Cycling loops that radiate from Warialda. • Longer on-road routes for both cycle travellers and cycling clubs and enthusiasts. • Cycle touring routes – possibly linking the railway stations at Narrabri and either Tamworth or Armidale via Gwydir Shire. • Growing and capitalising on cycle events within the surrounding region and potentially developing a cycle event for Gwydir Shire.
Cunningham's Track	<p>The route taken through Gwydir Shire by the explorer Allan Cunningham in 1827 has been identified and signposted and a basic brochure produced which identifies where Cunningham camped and some of the descriptions he wrote about the locality. The content and presentation of this brochure is poor and does not provide visitors with information on how to access or experience the trail. Additional information is available on the Bingara.com websites, however is not formatted in a way that is consumable or marketable.</p>	<p>The route in its current form has very limited tourism potential. Possible opportunities for leveraging the investment that has been put in place, should be explored.</p>
Potential Trails		
Mountain Bike Trails	<p>The Vision 2030 consultation identified demand from the Shire community for mountain bike (MTB) trails. Mountain-biking is a growth sector and is a facet of cycle tourism.</p>	<p>There are a number of National Parks, State Forests and Crown Reserves in the Shire, as well as bushland trails at The Living Classroom and trails around Copeton Dam that could potentially be developed / promoted for mountain-biking. A strategic approach is required to the development and promotion of the routes.</p> <p>There may also be opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link localities within the Shire for mountain biking (eg Cranky Rock to Warialda). • Work with adjoining Councils / Tourism Units to develop longer distance MTB touring routes. • Utilise some of the trails / routes used for events such as the North Star and Upper Horton Trail Bike Rides, for MTB events. • Approach commercial MTB event organisers to host an event in the Shire, possibly working in conjunction with the Keepit Real 100 (Tamworth Regional LGA) organised by Switchback Events.

Trail Type	Product / Experience / Promotional Material	Possible Opportunities
Canoe Trails	Develop and promote a series of Canoe Trails incorporating Copeton Dam, the Gwydir and Horton Rivers and possibly the creek systems around Cranky Rock.	Crown Lands NSW and NPWS have established a number of canoe trails in NSW that are proving popular, and are providing the basis for the development of supporting businesses such as guided canoe tours, canoe and kayak hire, and transfers (drop off and pick up). Examples of canoe routes can be found on: www.crownland.nsw.gov.au/about_recreation/canoe_and_kayak_trails www.trailmaze.com/kayaking-canoeing/locations-trails/ www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do/canoe-paddling-experiences/murray--river-canoe-trails
Walking Trails	While there are a number of walking tracks within the Shire, promotional material is very limited. A brochure is available for walks in the Koorilgur Nature Reserve at Warialda.	Bushwalking is an activity that appeals to a range of market segments including the over 55's market and the family markets. There are a number of existing and potential walks within the Shire that could be developed and promoted. A strategic approach is needed to identify a range of walks, of different lengths and degrees of difficulty. Ideally, the Shire needs at least one high-profile signature walk that has a 'WOW' factor, with this anchoring the other bushwalking experiences. As discussed in Section 8.4, there may be opportunity to progressively develop the Cranky Rock Reserve and surrounds as a walking destination.
4WD and Registered Trailbike Trails	4WD product includes the Barraba (located just south of the Shire) and Terreegee (Rocky Creek Glacial Area to Waa Gorge) Tracks as well as fire trails in the State Forests and possibly some of the National Parks. The Shire has several Off-road and Trail-bike Events including the Warialda Off Road, North Star and Upper Horton Trail Rides, and the Upper Horton Pony Express	Gwydir Shire has some good opportunities for 4WD and touring by trail bike. NPWS is considering opening the Barraba Track to 2-way traffic. This opens up opportunities to attract vehicles travelling east on the Track (from Narrabri) through the Horton Valley (possibly camping at Upper Horton) and onto Bingara and/or Copeton Waters State Park.



9. LANDFORMS and LANDSCAPES

9.1 The Opportunities

- To position and promote Cranky Rock as an iconic attraction for Gwydir Shire and the NE-NW Region – using it to raise the profile of Warialda and as an anchor attraction for the Gwydir Highway and Fossickers Way. As part of this, capitalising on the landforms and heritage in the area surrounding the Cranky Rock Reserve by developing a series of walking and possibly mountain bike trails.
- To position Rocky Creek as an anchor attraction for the Nature's Way Touring Route, complementing and strengthening Sawn Rocks, and drawing visitors across the Range.
- To use the landforms and landscapes as 'motivators' to encourage travellers to come into and explore the Shire.

9.2 Rationale

64% of visitors to the NE-NW Region are attracted by amazing or unusual landscapes⁷ with these being a primary driver of visitation. Gwydir Shire has both unique landforms and stunning landscapes. These can be used to significantly raise the profile of the Shire, anchor the touring routes, and encourage travellers to explore the Shire and potentially spend additional time and money in the area. The landforms also link with the geological / fossicking themes.

One of the most effective ways of raising the profile of these landforms and building the association with the Shire, is to repeatedly use one or two spectacular 'hero' images, and location branding (eg Cranky Rock, Warialda). Sawn Rocks provides an example of this approach, with Sawn Rocks now one of the most recognised icons of the NE-NW Region.



9.3 Assets to Work With

Within the Shire

Cranky Rock Nature Reserve and surrounding area – Reedy, Warialda and Spring Creeks, Sandstone Cliffs, Basaltic Dyke, Bubbling Springs, Chinaman’s Leap, Fishponds heritage precinct, heritage mining area / tunnel, and the largest Moreton Bay fig in the Region.

Rocky Creek Glacial Area

Gwydir River – Bingara
Cropping Landscapes of the Golden Triangle

Within adjoining LGAs

Sawn Rocks / Kaputar National Park
Horton Falls / Upper Falls
Waa Gorge

If developing walking and/or mountain bike trails around Cranky Rock Reserve to significant landform features and historic sites is feasible, then there is potential for this project to become a ‘game-changer’, transitioning Cranky Rock from an overnight stop / short stay into a walking / soft adventure destination. It also has the potential to change travel patterns within the surrounding area and increase visitation to, and the profile of, Warialda.



9.4 Directions Forward

The **immediate** priorities are:

- To secure iconic images of Cranky Rock, Rocky Creek Glacial Area, Gwydir River and the agricultural scenery in the north of the Shire, and select the hero shots for use in all promotions. With Cranky Rock, the scale of the Gorge needs to be emphasised as there are several 'balancing rocks' (eg Stonehenge) that are promoted in the Region, none of which are anywhere near the size of, or as spectacular as, the Cranky Rock area. Once selected, progressively update the content and images in all print and on-line promotional material.
- Updating the signage to Cranky Rock from the Gwydir Highway.
- Continuing to improve the presentation of, and signage to, the Rocky Creek Glacial Area.

Grants are currently available through Destination NSW for product development and could be applied for to develop cabin and/or tent accommodation at Cranky Rock Reserve.



Attraction and Facilities	The Opportunities	Improvements / Changes Required
Cranky Rock Nature Reserve		
<p>Cranky Rock is a spectacular gorge on Reedy Creek, with massive granite boulders and cliffs, with Cranky Rock being a large granite tor, balanced on the cliff above the gorge. The gorge floor has deep swimming holes with sandy beaches.</p> <p>The area surrounding the Reserve has a number of spectacular landforms and heritage sites</p> <p>Access is via a sealed road from the Gwydir Highway. Facilities include an attractive bush camping area with 12 powered sites and amenities, picnic facilities, interpretation, walking tracks and small kiosk. The Reserve has an on-site caretaker.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positioning Cranky Rock as an iconic attraction for Wyallda, Gwydir Shire and the NE-NW Region; an anchor for the Fossickers Way and Gwydir Highway; and to 'pull' travellers south from Texas and Goondiwindi. • On-site accommodation – self-contained cabins or possibly permanent tents. • Establishing Cranky Rock as a walking destination, with trails linking the spectacular and unique landforms and heritage sites in the area surrounding the Reserve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective signage on the Gwydir Highway, including advanced warning signs, improved directional signs and use of international icons for caravans, picnic facilities, walking trails etc. • Explore the possibility of using billboard advertising. • Iconic images, with these on display in Wyallda and Bingara VICs, with a 'WOW' display in the Wyallda VIC. • Continue to improve the walking tracks within the Reserve. • Continue to improve interpretation, linking / adding to the 'story' of other landforms within the surrounding area and potentially including Aboriginal stories. • Ensuring that there is information available at the Reserve on other spectacular landforms in the surrounding area, and on the Shire, including suggested scenic drives and the facilities and services available in Wyallda. • If Council has the funds available, apply for grant funding under the NSW Regional Tourism Funds to purchase cabin and/or permanent tent accommodation for the Reserve. • Assess the potential / feasibility of establishing a network of walking / mountain bike tracks linking the Reserve to surrounding landforms and heritage sites, and to Wyallda. If feasible develop a masterplan / Plan of Management and progressively implement.

Attraction and Facilities	The Opportunities	Improvements / Changes Required
Rocky Creek Glacial Area		
<p>Formed by glacial erosion around 290 million years ago, the Rocky Creek Glacial Area is a series of deep waterholes and rapids separated by large boulders and rock platforms, surrounded by steep, rock-walled cliffs.</p> <p>The site is accessed via a short, unsealed road from Nature's Way touring route with basic picnic facilities available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position and promote the area as an anchor attraction for the Nature's Way Touring Route – a 'hook' to draw visitors to Sawn Rocks across the Range into Gwydir Shire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to improve the presentation of the Reserve and improve access from the car park / picnic area and the river. Endeavour to improve signage to the Reserve, including providing advanced warning signs on Nature's Way. Explore with the Narrabri Tourism Unit, opportunities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include the Rocky Creek Glacial Area in on the billboard advertising currently being erected on the approach to the Newell Highway / Nature's Way intersection. Signpost the Glacial Area from Sawn Rocks, with the signage oriented so that it is visible to travellers coming out of the carpark. Approach NPWS to erect a tourism directory at the Sawn Rocks Parking area, featuring the unique landforms of the surrounding area (Kaputar Summit, Rocky Creek, Waa Gorge, Cranky Rock, Horton Falls).
Waa Gorge, Kaputar National Park		
<p>Located in Moree Plains Shire on the northern boundary of Gwydir Shire, Waa Gorge is part of the Kaputar National Park. It can be accessed from Gwydir Shire, via Nature's Way and Bald Hill Road, or the Gravesend – Terry Hie Hie Road from Gravesend. The access roads are not sealed. There is also a 4WD track (16km long) from near the Rocky Creek Glacial Area to Waa Gorge.</p> <p>The Gorge has a series of waterfalls, swimming holes and lookouts, as well as walking trails, picnic shelter, toilets and interpretative signage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the Gorge as a day trip for visitors staying in Gwydir Shire / Copeton Waters State Park. Possible 4WD, trail bike and possibly mountain bike experience, promoted in conjunction with the Barraba Track (4WD), ATV and Trail Bike Territory (Motorbikes), and other Mountain bike trails in the Region (note: a MTB trail network is proposed in close proximity to Sawn Rocks in Narrabri Shire). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the access options from Gwydir Shire, and if suitable, assess signposting required. Produce information and Incorporate into touring routes and trails. Update on-line content and images.
Horton Falls, Horton Falls National Park		
<p>Although located in Tamworth Regional Area, the Falls can be accessed from the Gwydir Shire through the Horton Valley.</p> <p>There are two falls (83m high), with walking tracks, lookout, picnic area and bush camping.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote as a day trip for travellers staying in Gwydir Shire, with the return leg coming through the Horton Valley and the Upper Horton Village, noting that the Sports Club is only open late afternoon and evenings. Promote in conjunction with camping in Upper Horton. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the access / drive options via the Horton Valley to determine the optimal scenic drive. Work with Tamworth Regional Council and if needed NPWS, to sign post the drive. Develop information on the drive. Update on-line content and images.



10. GWYDIR PRODUCERS and PROVEDORES – FOOD and PRODUCE

10.1 The Opportunities

- To capitalise on the food products produced in the Shire and the Shire's reputation for quality meat and grain (Golden Triangle) by clustering the products available and the outlets where they can be purchased, and positioning and promoting these outlets as the 'Provedores of Gwydir Shire'.
- Workshops and short-courses – utilising local produce and the Hospitality Training Kitchen at the Roxy Theatre.
- The Living Classroom – cottage industry and/or activities built around the cultivation, harvesting, processing and packaging native foods, medicinal plants, fruit and olives.
- Longer term, the proposed Circular Economy project may offer the opportunity for guided tours, farm gate sales and other related activities.

10.2 Rationale

Food plays a significant role in the visitor economy, being both a 'driver' of visitation' and a key support service. Dining out is one of the most popular activities undertaken by visitors, with 52.4% of domestic overnight visitors and 44.7% of domestic day trippers dining out during their visit to NE-NW Region. A 'great place for food and wine activities' rated equal second (54%) in terms of the activities and experiences being sought by visitors to Inland NSW. With the plethora of cooking, gardening and food related television shows, there is also strong interest in experiencing different cuisines, trying new products and sourcing locally grown produce. Concepts such as the 'locavore' movement (eat local), 'paddock to plate' and '100 mile food' have supported the growth of farm gate outlets, food, wine and produce trails, food tours, farmers' markets, demonstration kitchens, and cooking and gardening schools and activities.

Culinary tourism is one of the core experiences promoted by Tourism Australia as part of the 'There's Nothing Like Australia' campaign. Research conducted by BDA Marketing for Tourism Australia, across 15 of Australia's key tourism markets, showed that 'great food, wine, and local cuisine' is now a major factor in holiday decision making (at 38%), ranking third ahead of world class beauty and natural environments (at 37%). Culinary tourism is also a priority at State level. It is identified in the Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan as a core product for NSW and a priority for product development. Food is also one of the seven key promotional experiences marketed by Destination NSW, both domestically and internationally.



There is a healthy obsession with produce, as 'provenance' becomes the new buzz word and food lovers demand a deeper connection to what they are eating and drinking. Seeking out real and authentic experiences, they relish the opportunity to meet winemakers, farmers, butchers and chefs, touching, tasting and testing their knowledge.

Restaurant Australia 2013

Within Gwydir Shire, both VICs report significant interest by visitors in purchasing local produce. In addition to responding to market needs, increasing the profile of local produce will help to enhance the 'clean-green' and 'sustainability' positioning of the Shire, and also contribute to 'liveability' and 'lifestyle' images, tapping into the 'grow our own food dream' of many tree-changers. It can also be readily clustered with other experiences and themes such as 'Agriculture', 'Arts and Creative' and 'Health and Wellbeing'.

10.3 Assets to Work With

Locally produced quality meat:

- Jac Wagyu – branded beef
- Horton Valley Premium Pork – with a unique selling point of the feeding of macadamia nut meal to the pigs and the smoking of the pork in pecan bark.
- Meat on Maitland, Bingara – independent specialty butcher, featuring local meats, value-add prepared meals, and showcasing of local and regional gourmet products.
- Gwydir Meats, Warialda – independent specialty butcher featuring local meats and value-added products.
- Concentration of cattle and sheep studs
- Opportunity to educate visitors about the different breeds of cattle and sheep in the Shire.
- Bingara Goat Farm and Goat Milk Products

Local Products / Producers:

- Bethel Farm Mill - Legume based food and organic wheaten products, Gluten Free Gourmet Falafel, Hummus, Veggie Burger Mixes, Gluten Free High Protein Cakes, Organic Stoneground Heritage and Ancient Grain Flours, Organic Stoneground Bread Mixes.
- Friendship Foods – North Star
- Cindy's Frozen Meals, North Star
- Ruby Creek Farm – honey and olive oil
- La Caldera – marmalades, jams, quince products and chutneys
- Apple Cider Vinegar, Bingara
- Sid Hancock Seasonal Vegetables, Warialda
- Locally made jams, condiments and cordials
- Honey Producers
- Bingara Bake House
- Bingara Fruit Market – Pies
- Talgai Olives, Coolatai

Outlets for Local Products:

- Bingara and Warialda VICs
- Meat on Maitland
- Carinda House, Warialda
- Bingara Wattle Arts and Craft
- Bingara Markets

Other:

- Warialda – 'Wild Honey'
- The Living Classroom – fruit trees, olive grove, native food garden, proposed medicinal plant garden + cultivation / land management education
- Bingara Orange Trees
- Bingara Olive Trees
- Bingara Murray Cod Hatchery
- Golden Triangle
- Eateries - Cafes, Pub Hotels and Clubs
- Roxy Theatre – Gwydir Learning Region Hospitality Kitchen
- Festivals and events, including the Bingara Orange Festival,
- 3 Sisters Eco Farm, Coolatai
- Longer term – Circular Economy Project



10.4 Directions Forward

The focus in the short-term needs to be on showcasing and promoting the range of produce available, and the outlets which sell local produce. Suggested actions include:

- Build a relationship with growers / suppliers. Use local channels to advise growers / suppliers that the VICs are looking to expand their product range and invite growers / suppliers to come forward. If not already in place, encourage producers to develop promotional material including a website, facebook page and flier.
- Build a data base / resource which includes the 'story' of the production / goods produced, images and/or videos (if possible) showing the production and produce.
- Explore with DNSW, Industry NSW, RDA Northern Inland and other organisations, the opportunities to run training programs / workshops to assist small producers – eg from hobby to business; marketing and promotion.
- Revamp and possibly expand the produce displays in the Bingara and Warialda VICs – clustering the products available, with information and potentially some 'eye-catching' images and interesting short stories. For seasonal produce (eg farm gate stalls), consider using a small blackboard to promote the stalls / products available.
- Produce information and promotional material in a format that is cost effective and able to be easily updated – for example a 'Local Producers and Provedores', 'Local Flavours', 'Cafes and Eateries'. Revamp the 'Crops Guide' and consider producing a 'Livestock Guide' to educate city-folk about the different breeds of cattle and sheep bred in the Shire. Incorporate relevant information into a Shire-wide website, as well as into the Warialda and Bingara websites.
- Explore options to showcase / feature local produce and/or include cooking and/or cultivation demonstrations and workshops at events and festivals held in the Shire and surrounding region.
- Encourage Shire eateries to use local ingredients and feature local produce.
- Register the Roxy Theatre hospitality kitchen and The Living Classroom as locations with the NSW Film and Television Office.
- As The Living Classroom gardens become productive, explore options to run cultivation and food-based activities, workshops and demonstrations, possibly in conjunction with the Roxy Theatre.
- Explore options to include Gwydir Shire produce and provedores in food and wine trails and marketing initiatives within the NE-NW Region.
- Consider opportunities for tourism in the planning and development of the Circular Economy Project.



11. THE LIVING CLASSROOM

The Living Classroom is a catalytic project that has the potential to drive growth in visitation across a range of market segments; build the profile of Bingara, the Shire and the NE-NW Region; stimulate interest and/or investment in a number of economic sectors; and drive 'tree change'. Completion of the project needs to be identified as a priority at Regional level.

The Living Classroom was established as a centre to showcase 'regenerative' agriculture, incorporating best practice in land, water and soil management. A Masterplan has been adopted for the site, with the Plan being progressively implemented. Attractions and facilities on the site include:

- The learning centre with two state-of-the-art classrooms (joins together to form one large function / conference room), amenities and kitchen – with this space opening out into the surrounding lawn and landscaped garden areas. The Centre will seat around 80 theatre style and 40 classroom style.
- Bunk house – mix of dormitory rooms and double rooms, providing 28 beds with shared facilities.
- Aussie Farm Dam, a 'make-over' site, with environmental sites and water gardens.
- Mediterranean Garden (Olive Grove) and Fruit Trees.
- Native 'bush tucker' and medicine garden.
- Walking tracks.

Future stages include the development of an interpretative centre, medicinal garden, agricultural trial plots, horticulture, orchards, renewable power generation and walking, mountain and horse trails.

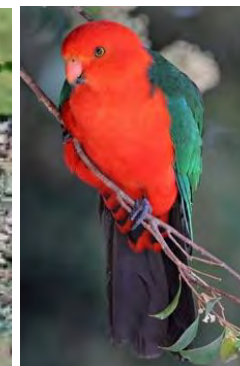
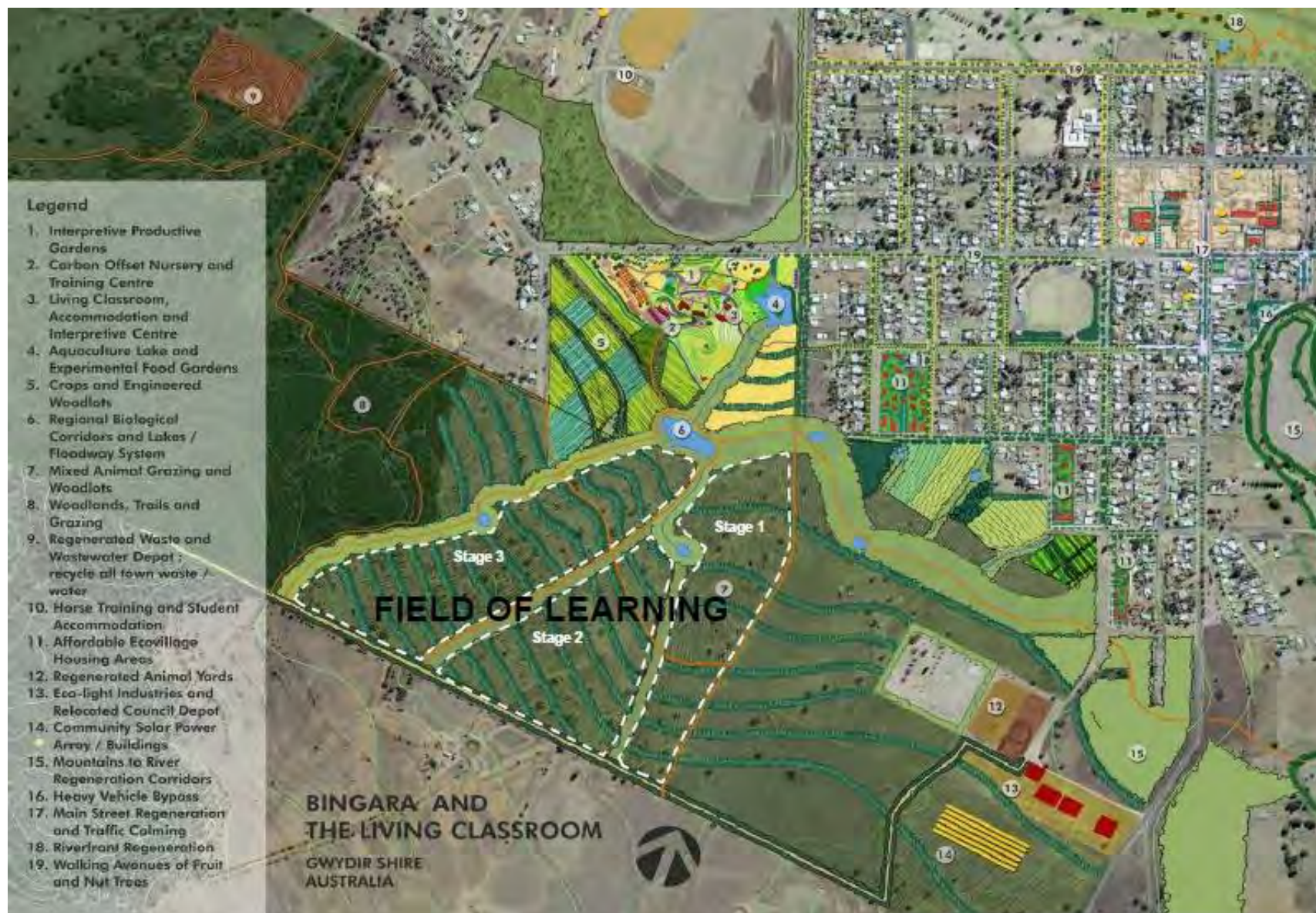
The Centre is used for school education programs and landcare and regenerative agricultural training programs and workshops. The venue is also available for hire and is ideal for small functions, meetings and workshops. The grounds are open to the public.



"This project is of National significance"

- Costa Georgiadis
Julu 2016





11.1 The Opportunities

Combining the attractive setting; showcase gardens, orchard and olive groves; bushland areas; food production, environmental and sustainability themes; and the availability of training/meeting facilities and accommodation; The Living Classroom has the potential to become a significant attraction and venue for the Shire as well as an anchor attraction for the NE – NW Region.

Opportunities include:

- Development of the interpretative centre.
- Education and training – environmental, sustainability and land management for schools, tertiary students, land holders, hobbyists etc.
- Scaling up of the native food garden and medicinal plants gardens to support a cottage industry to harvest, process, package and distribute.
- When the fruit and olive trees become productive, develop a range of activities / events around the harvesting (eg pickling and bottling workshops utilising the Roxy Theatre hospitality kitchen). There may also be opportunity to include harvesting of olives street trees in Bingara as part of these activities.
- Farm Gate Outlet.
- Volunteer program – activities that visitors can help with – as a touch point to engage with the community and build a relationship with the town.
- Walking and mountain bike trails – through the showcase gardens and bushland areas.
- Hire venue – for residential workshops (eg arts, yoga, meditation), groups (eg car clubs, golf groups), meetings and training seminars, and private and corporate functions (eg weddings, family re-unions).
- Promoting the accommodation – including working with event organisers, Showground / Racecourse, Golf Club etc to develop and promote packages for small groups.



11.2 Rationale

The Living Classroom provides a unique attraction for both Bingara and the NE-NW Region, combining education, showcase gardens, a venue for indoor and outdoor conferences, meetings and functions and accommodation. It is becoming a 'destination' bringing visitors into Bingara. The Classroom also has the potential to complement other attractions, activities and facilities in Bingara; support the agricultural sector; and contribute to growing agri, eco and culinary tourism. Through volunteer programs and workshops there is also potential to engage with visitors providing

the opportunity to establish an emotional connection with Bingara and local lifestyle. This engagement will also encourage some visitors to stay longer in the Shire and to become repeat visitors and possibly 'tree changers', deciding to relocate to and/or invest in the Shire.

11.3 Directions Forward

- Seek recognition, at a regional level, of The Living Classroom as a priority project for tourism, economic development and agriculture.
- Continue to advocate and seek grant funding and sponsorship for the development of the Interpretative Centre.
- Explore options for the development of a program that encourages visitors to the Shire to volunteer and engage with the Living Classroom.
- Review the promotional material for The Living Classroom, ensuring that the content is designed to encourage visitation. Obtain and incorporate quality images and if possible, video clips.
- Develop a self-guided tour, with information available in print-form and potentially as an App.
- Further develop the venue hire information, including the layout, dimensions, seating capacity by mode (theatre, classroom, boardroom etc) and equipment available and ensure that this is available on-line. Include supporting information such as catering options, equipment hire, other accommodation in Bingara etc.



12. EVENTS

12.1 The Opportunities

- Grow visitation to existing events.
- Build the business events market – targeting regional meetings and functions and bidding for small conferences.
- Market the Shire’s venues to event organisers and potential user groups.
- Target ‘footloose events’.

12.2 Rationale

Events have a core role to play in growing the visitor economy, strengthening key themes, showcasing and celebrating the Shire and its communities, and enhancing lifestyle. Locally, events are part of the cultural and social fabric of the area, providing an opportunity to bring visitors and residents together, ‘tell the stories’, and create memorable experiences. For visitors, events provide a reason to visit – they are essentially a ‘call to action’, encouraging consumers to ‘visit now’. Events also generate publicity and focus attention on the area. They can be a key driver in the economic, social and cultural development and play a role in the ‘tree change’ process. Benefits generated by events typically include:

- Economic – money coming into the community with event organizers and visitors spending money in the area (eg venue and equipment hire fees, accommodation, food and beverage, transport and fuel, local services etc). Through the multiplier effect, this money works its way through the community.
- Social – opportunity for the local community to interact with other community members and visitors to the area, participate in activities and be exposed to new ideas and concepts. Events can strengthen the community spirit and build pride.
- Cultural – adds another dimension to the lifestyle of the area, provides opportunities for creative and cultural expression as well as the opportunity to show-case the area, its people and its skills.
- Environmental – places a value on environmental assets and increases the utilization of these assets.
- Publicity – generates increased awareness of the area both directly (ie to the participant) and more broadly through media coverage (regional, national, international), digital mediums (eg internet, social networking) and word-of-mouth. The dollar value of the publicity generated can be far more than the LGA’s annual marketing and promotional budget.

Within Gwydir Shire, many of the events are organised by community groups primarily to raise funds to maintain infrastructure, facilities and services (eg community halls, recreation and sporting grounds). Expenditure in the local community by event patrons, also helps to under-pin the viability of local businesses and licensed clubs.



On the downside, events are demanding and resource intensive to organize and host. Most events are generally looking for some form of sponsorship from the local community. Many events rely on volunteers, with volunteer burnout being a significant issue in small communities. Volunteers often do not have the skills and resources to 'grow' the event, nor to effectively market and promote. The localities that have been the most successful in growing their events sector are those where the event organisers work very closely with the Tourism Unit, with the Tourism Unit providing specialist skills, eg planning advice, business planning, marketing and promotion, and having in place the information and processes (eg manuals, planning templates etc), that help event organisers navigate the planning and approval process.

There are three broad types of events, each of which has different implications in terms of the demands on Council and the Community, and the funds and resources required.

- **Multi-faceted events** (range of activities) that are organised locally by Council and/or an Event Committee, generally relying on volunteers – eg Bingara Orange Festival, Warialda Honey Festival. These events are generally the most resource and funding intensive, requiring coordination of a range of venues, facilities, activities and organisations/ people.
- **Sporting and sports related events** – eg horse sports, trail rides, golf tournaments, fishing tournaments. While these events are often organised or hosted by local volunteers, the organisational process is generally not as complicated as multi-faceted events (although still demanding), with these events using purpose-built venues, having relatively set formats and procedures, and generally not requiring planning approval. The majority of events held in Gwydir Shire fall into this category.
- **Events organised by external parties that use the Shire as a venue** – eg. Car, caravan and motorcycle rallies, cycling and mountain biking events. These events generally come with their own event organiser / organising committee. They have minimal impact on local resources with the main demands being on the venue manager to ensure that the venue is adequately prepared in accordance with the event specifications.

Events organised by external parties are usually the most cost and resource effective events for the Shire to host.

12.3 Directions Forward

- Undertake a venue audit, build a venue data base and produce a venue guide. Include venue information in a Shire-wide tourism website, with venue guide downloadable.
- Work with village communities / venue trusts to identify improvements required with village venue and prepare the documentation needed to access funding programs. Provide assistance with funding applications.
- Continue to develop a Shire-wide events calendar.
- List relevant events on NSW Connect / STDW data base and other relevant event and 'what's on' website, focusing on regional websites.
- Identify the events that have the potential to grow and work with event organisers to develop and implement a business / action plan.
- Identify and target footloose events that could potentially be held in the Shire.



13. INFRASTRUCTURE, FACILITIES and SERVICES TO SUPPORT THE VISITOR ECONOMY

Gwydir Shire needs to progressively improve its infrastructure, facilities and services to facilitate and support a growing visitor economy.

Current Status / Assessment		Actions Required
Accommodation		
Supply / Capacity	<p>The capacity of the accommodation in Gwydir Shire is limited. Most of the motel accommodation is tired and dated, with pub hotel accommodation being basic. Dormitory accommodation is available in Bingara and Copeton Dam.</p> <p>The caravan parks in Bingara and Warialda and at Copeton Waters State Park present well, provide cabins and offer a range of facilities. The caravan facilities at Cranky Rock also present well. The Reserve however needs cabin and/or permanent tent accommodation.</p> <p>The caravan park at North Star is very basic and presents poorly. Caravan and camping sites are available at the adjoining Sporting Club, with these sites being more popular with travellers. There is a need for accommodation in Croppa Creek to service touring travellers as well as the agricultural sector and infrastructure workers and tradespeople. There is also a need to upgrade facilities at the Croppa Creek Recreation Reserve to encourage the touring caravan and RV markets to overnight in the village, and to cater for seasonal workers.</p> <p>There are a range of free camping sites throughout the Shire, with the sites along the Gwydir River corridor at Bingara being very popular.</p>	<p><u>Immediate priorities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to information on free camping sites and caravan parks in the Shire, with the information presented at a Shire level to encourage travellers to explore (dispersal strategy). • Signpost the free camping sites, using international symbols. • Explore options to provide cabin and/or permanent tent accommodation at Cranky Rock, possibly applying for funding under the DNSW regional product development funds. • Improve facilities at the Croppa Creek Recreation Ground and promote as a free camping site. • Explore options to provide additional accommodation at Croppa Creek. • Resolve the future of the North Star Caravan Park, possibly transferring the Park management to the Sporting Club. • Advocate for the upgrading of the existing motels and development of additional accommodation, including farm stays, and listing residential properties on sites such as AirBnB and Stayz.
On-line presence	<p>The Shire's accommodation properties have a very limited on-line presence. Copeton Waters Inland Park is the only property in the Shire with real-time on-line bookings. Of the other accommodation properties, Fossickers Way Motel, Imperial Hotel and River House have their own website, however these sites do not appear to be optimised for mobile platforms. These sites offer email enquiries rather than direct booking facilities. The Sunflower Motel has no website, but is listed on booking.com and appears to be the only accommodation property in the Shire listed on an accommodation booking website. Fossickers Way Motel is the only property in the Shire listed on the visitnsw website. Bingara and Warialda Caravan Parks each have a page on the Turu Parks website.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage accommodation properties to develop / update their website, with the site needing to be semantic search responsive and mobile optimised. The sites need to include quality images, information on the destination and on-line direct booking facilities. • List all accommodation properties on the STDW via NSWconnect. • Encourage accommodation properties to list with booking.com and/or other on-line booking sites. • Ensure that all of the caravan and camping sites in the Shire are listed on relevant caravan and camping site directories. • Encourage accommodation that is pet friendly to list on pet friendly accommodation booking websites.

Current Status / Assessment		Actions Required
Venues – venues form part of the infrastructure that supports the events (business, social, sporting and entertainment) sector. Gwydir Shire as a range of venues suitable for meetings and small functions and conferences as well as the Roxy Theatre and a range of showgrounds, recreation grounds, race tracks, sporting facilities and outdoor areas suitable for entertainment, community and sporting events.		
Venue Condition	<p>The venues in Warialda and Bingara present well.</p> <p>There is a need to improve facilities and infrastructure at the Croppa Creek Recreation Ground, including new toilets and showers, to enable the Ground to be used for free camping and to expand its capacity to host events.</p> <p>There is opportunity to expand the equestrian sports facilities at North Star, including the establishment of a Cross Country Eventing Course.</p> <p>The Upper Horton Sports Ground infrastructure is at capacity with the adjoining Hall being in poor condition.</p> <p>There is a need for new toilet facilities at the Pony Club grounds in Gravesend (private property).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of the current condition of facilities and infrastructure of the village venues, and identification of opportunities and the capital works required to realise the opportunities. • Inclusion of relevant projects in Council's Delivery, Operational and Asset Management Plans. • Assistance with identifying possible grants and preparing grant applications, including taking projects to 'shovel ready' stage.
Venue Marketing	<p>Limited marketing of the Roxy Theatre and The Living Classroom as event venues.</p> <p>No venue data base or venue guide.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake an audit of event venues and facilities in the Shire and develop a venue data-base. As part of the audit process, identify activities that could be hosted at the venue with existing facilities and potential users. In addition, identify the improvements required as well as additions / changes that would enable the venue to host additional and/or larger activities • Prepare a venue guide, documenting the venues available, with this available in print form and downloadable from the Shire-wide website. • Direct marketing of the venues to potential users.
Visitor Information Services – Information services are integral in supporting visitation. Information services provide the communication link between the locality, the tourist trade and the visitor. These services support the area's marketing and promotion, provide a direct service to both the tourism trade and visitors and, most importantly, make a visitor feel welcome in the area and ensure that they are aware of the area's products and services. Information needs to be available at all stages in the path to purchase, during the journey and at the destination. Information needs to be available both in digital and hard-copy and readily accessible from a range of touch points and devices. Information services extend well beyond the visitor, with services provided to tourism and business operators, the travel trade, government agencies and tourism agencies, and local residents and organisations.		
Visitors Information Centres (VICs)	<p>The VICs in both Bingara and Warialda are ideally located, with the Centres being well presented.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is opportunity to continue to improve in-centre displays, particularly in the Warialda VIC which has more space available and significant wall area. The focus should be on large eye-catching hero images of key attractions (eg Cranky Rock, Rocky Creek, Roxy Theatre, Gwydir River), local produce display with images of some of the producers, and, for Warialda, possibly images of a native bee hive in-line with the meaning of Warialda.
On-line information	<p>The Shire does not have a Shire-wide tourism website. Town websites are available for Bingara and Warialda. While the Bingara site is well presented with good</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Shire needs a comprehensive, Shire-wide website that is semantic search responsive and mobile optimised. As the majority of travellers search by locality,

Current Status / Assessment	Actions Required
<p>content, it relates primarily to the Bingara area with some references to Upper Horton. There is no information on Warialda or the northern part of the Shire. The Warialda website is limited in content, with the information relating only to Warialda. The current websites do not facilitate cross-promotion nor encourage travellers to explore all of the Shire's towns and villages. The sites do not include suggested itineraries or drive touring information that would encourage travellers to stay longer and undertake day trips throughout the Shire and surrounding area.</p> <p>Bingara, Warialda, North Star and the Roxy Theatre have facebook pages, with regular posting occurring.</p> <p>There is limited content on the Shire on third party websites.</p>	<p>if Council does not own the domain names for Bingara.com and warialdansw, it may be desirable to acquire locality based domain names (eg visitbingara, visitwarialda) with these providing entry (touch points) for the Shire-wide website. The website needs quality images and links to video sites. The content needs to be inclusive and comprehensive, reflect the Shire's core themes, and encourage 'dispersal' throughout the Shire.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media needs to form part of the communication strategy and should be used to 'drive' business to the website. • All relevant products, activities and experiences need to be listed on the STDW. • Continue to work with the Fossickers Way and Nature's Way promotional groups to provide comprehensive, quality websites. • Post and maintain content on the Shire on relevant third-party websites, taking advantage of free-listing opportunities. • Ensure that information on the Shire is current on directory sites such as Wiki Camps, Travelling with Pets, toilet and dump point sites etc. • Going forward, Apps will be increasingly used to convey information, such as bird and plant identification, how to fossick and gemstone identification etc.
<p>Print Information – brochures, maps etc.</p> <p>The Shire does not have a Shire-wide Visitor Guide, with Bingara and Warialda both having town guides. The brochures are different sizes, with different formats and no Shire branding. The Bingara brochure relates almost solely to Bingara. The Warialda brochure is a tourism brochure for Warialda and the villages in the northern part of the Shire.</p> <p>There are a number of themed trail brochures available for both towns, each with different presentation styles and formats and no branding. Some of the brochures contain relatively detailed information, but no map and few or no images. There are very few brochures with the entry-level information that most visitors are seeking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of a Shire-wide Visitors Guide designed to motivate travellers to visit the Shire. The Guide needs to be distributed externally, including through the AVIC network in NSW and Southern Queensland, and at consumer shows. The Guide also needs to be able to be downloaded from the Shire-wide websites. • Continue to provide 'tear-off' maps – maps are the most requested information / promotional collateral. • Revamp the product and trail brochures available for the Shire a – taking into consideration the main promotional themes as well as the type of information that visitors seek. Ensure that there is consistency in branding and presentation. • Revamp the detailed information available on the history, geology and birdlife of the Shire with these 'notes' targeted to people seeking more detailed information. • Produce print material (including maps) to promote and support the Shire's trails, cycling routes and drives.

Current Status / Assessment		Actions Required
Information on Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shire-wide event calendar in place on the Gwydir Shire Council website, however as it is relatively new it is not comprehensive nor widely known amongst event organisers, nor amongst the local community. Many of the events have no or very limited on-line presence and/or promotional material. There are virtually no on-line links between events and accommodation, to encourage attendees to stay in the Shire rather than in surrounding towns. Event organisers often do not advise the VICs of their events, nor access the assistance available from Council's Tourism Unit to market and promote events, and access the AVIC network in the surrounding region for promotion. There is no event signage in strategic locations within the Shire, promoting forthcoming events. Very few of the Shire's events are listed on the visitnsw and third party websites. Most event organisers are working in 'isolation' rather than with similar events held in the Shire and in adjoining LGAs to grow visitation and market and promote co-operatively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build the Shire-wide events calendar – encouraging event organisers to contact the VICs and list their events. Promote the event calendar to both event organisers and to the Shire community, promoting it as the 'place to go' to find information on events held in the Shire. Encourage event organisers to include a link to the Shire-wide tourism website on their event website and/or facebook page. Encourage accommodation operators to include a link on their website / facebook page to the event calendar. Continue to list relevant events on NSW Connect / STDW data base and other relevant event and 'what's on' websites, focusing on regional websites. Explore options to provide event signage promoting forthcoming events at key strategic locations within and on the approaches to the Shire. Identifying opportunities to build attendee data bases and market and promote co-operatively – locally and regionally.
Signage - Signage plays a very significant role in how an area presents. It also forms part of the visitor information services infrastructure and is a significant marketing and promotional tool. To be effective, the signage needs to be comprehensive and integrated at all levels. Within the Shire, Council is responsible for signage on Council controlled roads and in the public domain, while Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) is responsible for signage on the Gwydir, Bruxner and Newell Highways and the regional roads.		
Town and Village Signs / Signs in entry corridors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council is in the process of installing new gateway entry signs for each of the villages. The new signage is effective with travellers stopping to take photographs. Some of the event and advertising signs in the entry corridors to the towns and villages are out-of-date and/or present poorly, detracting from the first impressions of the town / village. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to install the new signs and ensure that the areas around the signs are regularly mowed and maintained. Out of date and/or poorly presented signs need to be removed or revamped.
Way-finding and Visitor Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directional signage, particularly to tourist attractions and the villages is poor, with no / minimal advanced warning signs and the directional signs often being in poor condition and/or not able to be read at speed. While Council is endeavouring to up-date the signage, it is experiencing difficulties in gaining approval from the RMS / TASAC. There is minimal / no signage at the fossicking areas. Trails and drives are not well signposted, often with route markers missing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a signage audit to identify the signage needed, taking into consideration that many of the visitors to the Shire are towing caravans, boats, trailers and horse floats etc and require advanced warning. Progressively replace the fingerboard facility signs with international symbols, and use international symbols to signpost free camping sites. Provide comprehensive signage at the fossicking areas including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced warning and directional signage on the access road.

Current Status / Assessment		Actions Required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited use of international facility signs, including the 'tent' sign for free camping areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entry / orientation signage –including the name of the area; a map showing boundaries; any rules, regulations and/or warnings; interpretative information on how to fossick and what to look for (gemstones / rocks). Boundary markers. Consider providing information boards / directories in key strategic locations (eg at popular free camp sites, Cranky Rock Reserve etc.
Event Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities to promote forth-coming events is very limited. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options to provide event signage promoting forth-coming events at key strategic locations within and on the approaches to the Shire.

13.2 Roads

Roads are critical infrastructure. Their role in economic development, in particular their influence on freight costs, productivity and competitiveness, and their implications for community safety and connectedness, are key factors in determining road-work priorities and allocating funds and resources. Roads are also a significant part of the tourism infrastructure both as a driver of visitation to Gwydir Shire, and as part of the attraction (scenic drives) and activity (eg cycle tourism) base. The role that the road network plays in tourism needs to be taken into consideration in Council and RMS decision-making. Within the Shire, roads that are significant for tourism include:

Long-Haul Touring Routes	Scenic Drives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fossickers Way – Warialda Road (B95) – linking from Tamworth through to Texas in Queensland via Bingara, Warialda and Coolatai. Nature's Way (State Touring Route 3) – linking the Warrumbungle National Park and Pilliga Forest through Narrabri and Bingara to Copeton Dam and Inverell. Gwydir Highway – through Warialda and Gravesend. Delungra Road North Star Road. <p>There is significant potential to establish the Croppa – Moree / Croppa Road, through Croppa Creek and North Star, as an alternative route to the Newell Highway. There is also potential to promote the North Star Road – Fossickers Way as a connecting route between the Newell Highway at Boggabilla and the New England Highway at Tamworth with south-bound links to the Hunter and Sydney.</p>	<p>Within the Shire, there are a number of local roads that are promoted as scenic drives, and/or have the potential to be promoted as scenic drives. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature's and Fossicker's Ways. Delungra Road – Bingara, Delungra, Warialda Triangle – linking the towns, Myall Creek Memorial Site and Cranky Rock Reserve. Upper Bingara Road – linking to Three Creeks Gold Mine, gold fossicking area, historic sites and the grass tree forest. Horton and Bereen Roads – drives through the Horton Valley with links to Horton Falls National Park. Baroma Downs – Croppa Creek Road – scenic route from Warialda to Croppa Creek and onto North Star. <p>There is opportunity to develop more touring routes, particularly in the northern areas of the Shire. Promotional and directional signage needs to be improved to support visitation and encourage travellers to explore the Shire.</p>



MARKETING and PROMOTION

14. MARKETING and PROMOTION

14.1 Marketing undertaken by Gwydir Shire

The marketing and promotion of Gwydir Shire is coordinated by Gwydir Shire Council through the Marketing and Promotions Team Leader and the VIC staff. The marketing budget is very limited. Marketing and promotional activities include:

- Working cooperatively with other LGAs and tourism and organisations – NE-NW Tourism, Fossickers Way, Nature's Way, Arts North West.
- Maintaining the Warialda website.
- Social media – posting information on the Council, Bingara and Warialda Facebook sites, input into blogs and forums, and monitoring and where relevant responding to sites such as Trip Advisor.
- Distributing the Warialda and Bingara Visitor Guides and other information through the AVIC network.
- Public relations marketing - endeavouring to generate media and industry exposure for the Shire – press releases and media interviews, capitalising on events and activities, etc.
- Advertising locally and regionally generally as part of media features.
- Showcasing Gwydir Shire at trade and consumer shows, including exhibiting at caravan and camping shows.
- Building an 'on-line' community to enable direct communication with consumers.
- Progressively updating the promotional and display material.
- VFR promotional activities.

14.2 Strategic Alliances

In product development and marketing and promoting the Shire, Council works with:

- Destination NSW
- Country and Outback Destination Network (replacing Inland NSW RTO)
- New England – North West Tourism Marketing Group
- Fossickers Way Marketing Group
- Nature's Way Marketing Group
- Arts North West
- Regional Development Australia (RDA) Northern Inland
- Local community and business organisations and event organisers.



14.3 Marketing Directions

Target Markets

Over the next 5 years Gwydir Shire will concentrate on building market segments that are a natural fit with the products, activities and experiences that are available in the Shire and surrounding region, can be accommodated with the infrastructure and services available, and are cost and resource efficient to target.

The focus for market development will be on:

- Touring caravans and motorhomes.
- Regional leisure markets – day trippers and short breaks (family and couples)
- Regional small conferences, meetings, workshops and functions.
- Working with event organisers to build patronage.
- Groups – schools, Probus and social clubs, coach tours, car and motor cycle clubs.
- Special interest and activity based markets – visitors coming into Gwydir Shire to undertake specific activities and/or pursue hobbies – eg fossicking, fishing.

Marketing Activities

With the limited resources available, Gwydir Shire's current marketing approach is basically sound, with Council seeking to maximise exposure through cooperative activities, public relations marketing, use of social media and distribution of information. With the current budget, the Shire will focus on:

- Improving information, marketing and promotional collateral, including expanding the image library; producing a Shire-wide visitor guide and tourism website; revamping product and activity brochures; producing a venue guide; and continued development of the events calendar.
- Building the Shire's on-line presence and engaging and communicating on-line with potential consumers. This will include:
 - Developing and maintaining a comprehensive Shire-wide tourism website – with this being the main communication and promotional tool.
 - Continuing to build the on-line community and using social media to communicate and 'drive' consumers to the tourism website.
 - Encouraging operators, community organisations and event organisers to develop / update their websites and to link to the tourism website, and to list on relevant free directories and third party websites.
 - Listing Gwydir Shire products, experiences, services and events on the State Tourism Data Warehouse through NSW connect.
 - Capitalising on the opportunities afforded by the multitude of third party websites, such as Total Travel and TripAdvisor
 - Continue to expand and improve content of Gwydir Shire on relevant third party websites and APPs.

- Continuing to work co-operatively with the regional tourism, economic development and arts agencies; Fossickers Way and Nature's Way Marketing Groups, surrounding LGAs, and participate in marketing and promotional initiatives, including hosting famils and cooperative advertising.
- Providing marketing support and assistance to event organisers.
- Attending and/or having representation at trade and consumer shows, with the focus being on caravan and camping and long haul touring.
- Formulating and implementing a local and regional VFR campaign.
- Public Relations (PR) marketing – capitalising on opportunities locally and regionally, and also working through DNSW, Destination Network and the touring route marketing groups. PR marketing will include the famils and the production of in-depth feature stories, niche product stories, unusual / unique experiences and personal tales of people's experiences.
- Direct marketing (primarily on-line) – targeted activities to special interest and activity based markets, including schools, clubs and organisations (eg caravan, car, motorcycle, cycling, canoeing, bird watching, fishing, lapidary, bushwalking etc), coach companies and social groups (eg Probus).
- Marketing and promoting the Shire's venues to potential users, concentrating on the Regional market.





15. DIRECTIONS and PRIORITIES

15.1 Vision

Gwydir Shire will have a strong, diversified and sustainable visitor economy, which enhances our lifestyle, respects our environment, and generates significant social and economic benefits for our community. Our Shire will be known for its picturesque setting, unique and impressive landforms, riverside camping and vibrant events. Visitors will be warmly welcomed and encouraged to 'Live the Gwydir Good Life'.

15.2 Our Value Proposition and Promise

The opportunity to 'Live the Gwydir Good Life' is the value proposition that Gwydir Shire offers visitors. Our Shire's promise to visitors is:

- A beautiful setting with stunning landscapes and unique landforms.
- The opportunity to lay-back, relax, regenerate - to get back to basics and experience the outdoors and country life at its best.
- A warm, friendly welcome – meet the locals, hear the stories, and get involved.
- An opportunity to learn – about the geology, history and natural environment and to participate in a range of activities – creative, culinary, horticulture, land regeneration, fossicking etc.
- An invitation to celebrate – a diversity of events and festivals.



Market Development

Gwydir Shire will concentrate on building market segments that are a natural fit with the products, activities and experiences that are available in the Shire and surrounding region; can be accommodated with the infrastructure and services available; and are cost and resource efficient to target.

The focus for market development will be on:

- Touring caravans and motorhomes.
- Regional leisure markets – day trippers and short breaks (family and couples).
- Regional small conferences, meetings, workshops and functions.
- Working with event organisers to build patronage.
- Groups – schools, Probus and social clubs, coach tours, car and motor cycle clubs.
- Special interest and activity based markets – visitors coming into Gwydir Shire to undertake specific activities and/or pursue hobbies – eg fossicking, fishing.

Infrastructure, Facilities and Services to Support the Visitor Economy

Gwydir Shire will progressively improve its infrastructure, facilities and services to facilitate and support growth in the visitor economy. Priorities are:

Accommodation

- Increase the number of beds available in the Shire – hotel, motel, farm stay, cabins, B&B.
- Continue to improve the caravan parks and free camping areas.
- To raise the on-line profile of accommodation properties and provide real-time booking facilities.

Venues

- Continue to improve venue facilities and infrastructure to support growth and diversification of the events sector.
- Coordination and marketing of venues to potential users.



Visitor Information Services

- Continue to improve the displays in the Bingara and Warialda VICs, focusing on showcasing the Gwydir lifestyle, landforms and landscapes, and local produce.
- Expand the image library – quality images and video clips.
- Ensure that comprehensive, up-to-date information, both digital and print, on the Shire is available and readily accessible at all stages of the 'path to purchase' and throughout the 'journey'.
- Produce Shire-wide promotional material, with the priorities being a Shire-wide website and visitor guide.
- Revamp product and activity brochures and supporting information, with consistent branding and presentation.
- Increase access to information available on events.



Signage

- Provide comprehensive way-finding, facility and event signage throughout the Shire.

Roads

- Recognise the roads that are significant for tourism in determining capital works programs and allocating funds and resources.

Marketing and Promotion

Council will seek to capitalise on opportunities to cost-effectively market and promote the Shire, with the focus being to:

- Improve information, marketing and promotional collateral.
- Build the Shire's on-line presence to engage and communicate on-line with potential consumers.
- Continue to market co-operatively with regional tourism, economic development and arts agencies; Fossickers Way and Nature's Way marketing groups; and surrounding LGAs.
- Provide marketing support and assistance to event organisers.
- Showcase the Shire at trade and consumer shows.
- Implement a local and regional VFR campaign.
- Continue to undertake Public Relations (PR) marketing.
- Direct marketing (primarily on-line) – targeted activities to groups, special interest and activity based markets.
- Marketing the Shire's venues to potential users.



16. STRATEGIES and ACTIONS

Strategy 1: Enhance, consolidate and strengthen the attraction, experience and activity base of the Shire.

Actions		Key Tasks	
Fossicking – improve and expand the range of fossicking activities and experiences in the Shire.			
1.1	Raise awareness of the Three Creeks Gold Mine	1.1.1	Improve the signage to Three Creeks Gold Mine from Fossickers Way. Explore options for billboard promotion, advanced warning signs and improved directional signs at the intersection of Fossickers Way and Upper Bingara Road.
		1.1.2	Position Three Creeks Mine as an anchor attraction for Fossickers Way.
		1.1.3	Endeavour to include a video clip / You Tube clip of the Mine on the Shire-wide tourism and Fossickers Way websites.
1.2	Increase access to and enhance the experience offered by the public Fossicking Reserves.	1.2.1	Formulate and implement a development strategy for the Fossicking Reserves with consideration given to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Establishing a few ‘beginners’ areas which are well defined, effectively signposted, have interpretative information about where and how to fossick and what to look for, and possibly basic facilities such as a picnic or shade structure. Ensure that these areas are maintained (eg grass slashed) and the soil occasionally turned.Delineating other existing fossicking areas, and where needed provide signage and improve access and/or visibility.Investigating the potential to provide fossicking areas close to camping areas – eg at Coolatai, Warialda, Cranky Rock.Differentiating each of the fossicking areas to position each area as an attraction, offering something different to encourage travellers to visit each area and/or encourage repeat visitation. As part of the marketing, challenge fossickers to find samples of all off the gemstones, minerals and precious metals found in the Shire.Progressively releasing new fossicking areas with the releases being strategically timed and staged (one every few years) and supported by marketing and promotion.
1.3	Promote ‘rock and fossil hunting’ as complementary experiences to fossicking.	1.3.1	Produce information on rocks and fossils – including locations, types and basic information on how they were formed.
		1.3.2	Explore the feasibility of producing / selling a rock-gem hunting kit designed for children.
		1.3.3	Assess the potential to include rock and fossil hunting into school education programs.
1.4	Encourage the development of commercial fossicking activities and services.	1.4.1	Explore the legal framework for fossicking on private property.
		1.4.2	Visit / case study the commercial fossicking parks and farm stays in Inverell and Glen Innes LGAs and possibly Nundle, as examples of what could be achieved in Gwydir Shire.
		1.4.3	Encourage rural property owners to offer fossicking opportunities – farm stays and /or access for day trippers.
		1.4.4	Investigate opportunities for value-add – for example the packaging and sale of gemstone gravel, fossicking tours and tuition, cutting and polishing gemstones.
1.5	Improve and expand the information available on fossicking.	1.5.1	Include a fossicking page as part of the attraction / activity base in the Shire-wide tourism website and visitor guide.
		1.5.2	Explore with the Fossickers Way marketing group, the opportunity to develop an App that provides instructions on how to fossick and a guide to identifying rocks, gemstones and minerals.
		1.5.3	Explore options to link to ‘how to fossick’ You Tube clips and/or develop local You Tube videos.
		1.5.3	Continue to improve the information on fossicking in the Fossickers Way brochure and website.
		1.5.4	Include fossicking in information and promotional collateral produced for Nature’s Way and the Gwydir Highway.

Actions		Key Tasks	
1.6	Package, market and promote fossicking	1.5.3	Produce a Shire-wide fossicking map / brochure which provides detailed locational information for each fossicking site (map and GPS coordinates); the gems, minerals, rocks etc likely to be found; how to / tips for fossicking; the services available (eg equipment hire and/or purchase) and the gem and rock collections in Bingara and Warialda.
		1.5.4	Revamp the detailed information available on the geology of the Shire as information sheets to cater for the information needs of enthusiasts and people seeking comprehensive information. If there are still significant supplies of geological brochures available, consider producing a map (A4 photocopy) with GPS coordinates, that could be attached to / folded into the existing brochures to identify the locations and sites being discussed
		1.6.1	Develop and promote activities and packages targeted to fossicking and lapidary clubs.
		1.6.2	In conjunction with Inverell and Glen Innes Tourism Units, explore the opportunity to developing fossicking tours / itineraries that can be marketed to coach tour companies, Probus Clubs, Car and Caravan Clubs and other social groups.
		1.6.3	Explore options to include geology, fossicking and rock and fossil hunting in schools’ programs offered by The Living Classroom.
		1.6.4	Explore options for Gwydir Shire / Fossickers Way and possibly Natures Way, to leverage off fossicking events held within the Region (eg Go for Gold in Nundle and Minerama in Glen Innes).
		1.6.5	Capitalise on opportunities to gain free publicity for fossicking in the Shire – contribute to fossicking forums and blogs, list on the STDW, include in features / listings for school holiday activities etc, and list activities on third party websites, eg Travelling with Kids.
Touring Routes – continue to develop and promote the touring routes that feed into and traverse Gwydir Shire and the strategic alliances needed to support these routes.			
1.7	Fossickers Way – continue to develop and market the Fossickers Way	1.7.1	Continue to be actively involved in the Fossickers Way Marketing Group.
		1.7.2	Work with the LGAs along the route, to further develop and strengthen the route’s attraction and activity base with key themes being fossicking, unique and unusual landforms, rivers and waterways and camping / caravanning. Include ‘loops’ and side trips. Once the core ‘product’ is developed look to cluster and promote supporting experiences (eg bird routes, fishing and canoeing locations etc)
		1.7.3	Position Cranky Rock and the Three Creeks Gold Mine as anchor attractions for the route.
		1.7.4	Continue to revamp the information and promotional collateral for the route, including developing a new website and potentially producing a fossicking App (see 1.5.2) and You Tube clips.
		1.7.5	Undertake an audit of signage along Fossickers Way and update / augment as needed.
		1.7.6	Once the product, signage and promotional material is up-dated, endeavour to have Fossickers Way listed and featured in the Drives and Road Trips section of the DNSW VisitNSW website.
1.8	Nature’s Way – continue to develop and market Nature’s Way	1.8.1	Continue to be actively involved in the Nature’s Way Marketing Group.
		1.8.2	Position Rocky Creek Glacial Area, The Living Classroom and the riverside camping at Bingara as anchor attractions for the route.
		1.8.3	Produce information and promotional collateral (print format and on-line).
		1.8.4	Ensure that the route and the attractions along the route are effectively signposted, including exploring options for information directories and directional signage at strategic locations (eg Sawn Rocks)
		1.8.5	Progressively post route information on relevant tourism, drive touring and caravan and camping websites and link to key sites where possible.
		1.8.6	Endeavour to have Nature’s Way included on regional and touring route maps (eg Cartoscope).
1.9	Gwydir Highway – develop, position and promote as a touring route	1.9.1	Explore the potential of working with LGAs along the Gwydir Highway to develop and promote the Highway as a touring route – with the priority being to develop a Highway website and a route map.

Actions		Key Tasks	
1.10	Warialda Road – strengthen the link between Texas and Bingara via Warialda and Coolatai.	1.10.1	Strengthen the link between the towns by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with Goondiwindi Regional Council and local Texas operators explore opportunities for cross-promotion to encourage travel between the two localities. - Ensure that the route between Texas and Bingara is effectively signposted. - Include the route in the Shire-wide website, visitor guide and map. - Continue to improve the camping areas at Coolatai and Warialda.
1.11	North Star Road	1.11.1	Explore potential to signpost Tamworth via North Star from the Newell Highway at Boggabilla and from the Bruxner Highway.
1.12	Alternative route to the Newell – Croppa-Moree and Croppa Creek Roads.	1.12.1	Position and promote the Croppa-Moree and Croppa Creek Road (via Croppa Creek and North Star) as an alternative route to the Newell between Moree and Boggabilla.
		1.12.2	Endeavour to secure RMS alternative route signage on the Newell Highway.
		1.12.3	Explore options for billboard promotion of the route on the Newell Highway, particularly if RMS signage is not forthcoming.
		1.12.4	Produce a route map / information flier with this distributed through VICs in Gwydir, Moree and Goondiwindi. Also include the route on Shire and where possible, regional maps.
		1.12.5	Improve / expand directional and facility (international icons) signage along the route.
		1.12.6	For signposting and potentially road upgrades, explore options to leverage off the work being undertaken by Gwydir and Moree Plains Councils in developing the North West Freight Route Strategy.
		1.12.7	Continue to develop products, facilities and services along the route, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote the accommodation available in Croppa Creek and North Star and explore options for increasing the accommodation available. - Encourage the establishment of farm stay accommodation in the route corridor. - Upgrade, signpost and promote the Croppa Creek Recreation Area as a free or low cost camp site – including improving toilets and potentially providing power outlets and a dump point. - Work with the Croppa Creek community to develop the Croppa Creek historic truck and machinery display into a quirky attraction. - Determine the future of the North Star Caravan Park.
Scenic Drives and Trails – improving and expanding the scenic drives and trail network in the Shire will strengthen the Shire’s attraction and activity base, encourage travellers to explore the Shire and potentially stay longer in the area. Trails (eg cycling, bushwalking) also have the potential to attract special interest and activity based markets to the Shire.			
1.13	Scenic Drives – continue to improve and promote scenic drives within the Shire		Key Drives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upper Bingara Road - Bingara – Delungra – Warialda loop - Horton Road with links through the valley and to the Horton Falls National Park / Waterfalls - Elcombe Road – Bingara – Gravesend link to Moree and Bingara-Gravesend-Warialda loop. - Golden Triangle – identify and develop one or more drives in the north of the Shire incorporating Croppa Creek, North Star and Coolatai.
		1.13.1	Undertake product, infrastructure and signage audits to identify improvements required.
		1.13.2	Include the drives and suggested itineraries on the Shire-wide tourism website, town websites, visitor guide and map (see the visitnarrabri website tour page and the Narrabri Visitors Guide as an example).
1.14	Sound Trails and Town Tours	1.14.1	Evaluate the popularity of the sound trails, and if popular, explore options for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrating the sound trails for Bingara and Warialda with the town tour / heritage walks to create more compelling and stimulating experiences. As part of this, produce new promotional collateral.

Actions		Key Tasks	
			- Developing additional sound trails.
1.15	Bird Routes	1.15.1	Undertake an audit of the bird routes in the Shire and address any signage or access issues.
		1.15.2	In the next print run of the 'Birds of the Warialda District' brochure, change the name to either Gwydir Shire or to the Warialda and Bingara Districts, and include links to birdwatching and bird call Apps that will assist travellers to identify the birds seen.
		1.15.3	Include bird watching in the Shire-wide tourism website and on the Warialda town website (already listed on the Bingara town website), with a download link for the bird route brochure.
		1.15.4	Explore on-line options for birdwatchers to add to the bird list and report sightings of rare and unusual birds.
		1.15.6	List the bird trails and bird list, and where possible provide a link, on websites such as Bird Life Australia.
		1.15.7	Explore options for including a birdlife display at The Living Classroom, either as part of the Interpretative Centre or as a free standing outdoor display. Possibly include bird sculptures into the walking trails.
		1.15.8	Package and promote The Living Classroom to bird watching clubs and enthusiasts as a place to stay and a base for birdwatching in the Shire.
1.16	Geological Trails	1.16.1	Revamp the information on the geological trails and present both entry level information (designed to attract attention, stimulate interest and provide background knowledge) and comprehensive information for enthusiasts, students and people wanting to learn more and/or seeking an immersion experience. Maps and GPS coordinates need to be included in the trail information.
		1.16.2	Include the entry-level information on the Shire-wide and touring route websites, and explore the potential to utilise You Tube video clips and/or an App to explain the geology and geological history.
		1.16.3	Develop suggested curriculum-based geology modules for the school excursion market.
1.17	Cycling Routes	1.17.1	Identify and develop a network of road and off-road cycle routes throughout Gwydir Shire – radiating from Bingara and Warialda. Include a 'signature' route that has a 'wow' factor (must ride) to provide the focal point / anchor for cycle tourism.
		1.17.2	Develop and produce promotional material.
		1.17.3	Upload the cycle routes and route notes onto cycling website such as mapmyride, cycletravellaustralia and bicyclensw.
		1.17.4	Investigate opportunities to leverage cycle events held within the NE-NW Region and to attract footloose cycling events to the Shire.
1.18	Cunningham's Track	1.18.1	Explore opportunities to leverage the investment in Cunningham's Track for tourism.
1.19	New Trails - assess the feasibility of new trails	1.19.1	<u>Mountain Bike Trails</u> Investigate opportunities to establish mountain bike trails and/or attract mountain-bike events including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trails at the Living Classroom, Copeton Dam and through the National Parks, State Conservation Areas and State Forests. • Long distance off-road trails linking through to surrounding LGAs. • The feasibility of using the trails/routes used for the Upper Horton and North Star trail ride events for mountain bike events. • Approach commercial MTB event organisers to explore the possibility of holding a MTB event in the Shire.
		1.19.2	<u>Canoe Trails</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and promote canoe trails, incorporating Copeton Dam, the Gwydir and Horton Rivers and potentially the creeks around Cranky Rock.
		1.19.3	<u>Bush Walking Trails</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressively expand the network of bushwalking trails within the Shire, including establishing a signature walk. • Assess the feasibility of establishing a network of walks around Cranky Rock, and positioning Cranky Rock Reserve as a walking destination.

Actions		Key Tasks	
		1.19.4	<u>4WD and Registered Trail Bike Trails</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities to develop and promote trails / routes suitable for 4WD vehicles and registered trail bikes.
Landforms and Landscapes – leverage the Shire’s unique and unusual landforms to raise the profile of the Shire, anchor the touring routes, encourage travellers to explore the Shire and complement and strengthen the Shires geological and fossicking themes.			
1.20	Position the NE-NW Region as a destination with stunning, unique and unusual landforms.	1.20.1	Initially work with surrounding Councils / Tourism Units to raise the profile and awareness of the unique landforms within the sub-region – starting with Sawn Rocks, Cranky Rock, Rocky Creek Glacial Area, Waa Gorge and Horton Falls, and possibly including Dungeon Gorge and MacIntyre Falls in Inverell Shire.
1.21	Cranky Rock and Gorge - Position as an iconic attraction for Warialda, Gwydir Shire and the NE-NW Region and an anchor for the Fossickers Way and Gwydir Highway, and to ‘pull’ travellers south from Texas and Goondiwindi	1.21.1	Improve directional and promotional signage from the Gwydir Highway, including billboards (if feasible), directional signage from the intersections of the Fossickers Way and Warialda Roads with the Gwydir Highway and advanced warning signs on the Gwydir Highway on the approach to the Cranky Rock Reserve turnoff.
		1.21.2	Secure 1-2 ‘hero’ images of the Reserve and use repeatedly in promotional collateral and displays, including a display in the Warialda and Bingara VICs. Take the image to trade and consumer shows.
		1.21.3	In developing information and promotional collateral, include Warialda as the locational descriptor, with the objective of Cranky Rock becoming synonymous with Warialda.
		1.21.4	Progressively update and expand Cranky Rock images and content in regional and highway touring route promotional material and on third party websites.
		1.21.5	Endeavour to have Cranky Rock included in famils hosted by the NE-NW Region.
		1.21.6	Continue to develop the walking tracks within the Reserve and assess the potential / feasibility of establishing Cranky Rock as a walking destination, with trails linking the spectacular and unique landforms and heritage sites in the area surrounding the Reserve. If feasible, develop a masterplan / Plan of Management (to ensure that the project is ‘shovel-ready for grant applications) and progressively implement.
		1.21.7	Explore the potential to link Cranky Rock to Warialda via a walking and/or mountain bike trail.
		1.21.8	Continue to improve interpretation, linking / adding to the ‘story’ of other landforms within the surrounding area and potentially including Aboriginal stories.
		1.21.9	Explore the potential to provide onsite cabin and/or permanent tent accommodation within the Reserve. If Council has the funds available, apply for matching grant funding under the NSW Regional Tourism Funds to purchase cabin and/or permanent tent accommodation for the Reserve.
		1.21.10	Endeavour to have the development of the Cranky Rock Reserve identified as a priority tourism project in the proposed regional DMP and other relevant regional plans and priority lists.
1.22	Rocky Creek Glacial Area - Position and promote the area as an anchor attraction for the Nature’s Way Touring Route – a ‘hook’ to draw visitors to Sawn Rocks across the Range into Gwydir Shire.	1.22.1	Continue to improve the presentation of the Reserve and improve access from the car park / picnic area to the river.
		1.22.2	Endeavour to improve signage to the Reserve, including providing advanced warning signs on Nature’s Way (Killarney Gap Road)
		1.22.3	Explore with the Narrabri Tourism Unit, opportunities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include the Rocky Creek Glacial Area in on the billboard advertising currently being erected on the approach to the Newell Highway / Nature’s Way intersection. Signpost the Glacial Area from Sawn Rocks, with the signage oriented so that it is visible to travellers coming out of the carpark.

Actions		Key Tasks	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach NPWS to erect a tourism directory at the Sawn Rocks Parking area, featuring the unique landforms of the surrounding area (Kaputar Summit, Rocky Creek, Waa Gorge, Cranky Rock, Horton Falls).
1.23	Capitalise on spectacular landforms in the surrounding area – strengthen links between Gwydir Shire and Horton Falls and Waa Gorge.	1.23.1	<u>Horton Falls</u> Promote as a day trip for travellers staying in Gwydir Shire, with the return leg coming through the Horton Valley and the Upper Horton Village, noting that the Sports Club is only open late afternoon and evenings. Also promote in conjunction with camping in Upper Horton. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the access / drive options via the Horton Valley to determine the optimal scenic drive. Work with Tamworth Regional Council and if needed NPWS, to sign post the drive. Develop information on the drive. Update on-line content and images.
		1.23.2	<u>Waa Gorge</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the access options from Gwydir Shire, and if suitable, assess signposting required. As part of this, explore opportunities to promote off-road (4WD, registered trail bike, mountain bike) trails between the Rocky Creek Glacial Areas and the Gorge. Produce information and Incorporate into touring routes and trails. Update on-line content and images. Promote the Gorge as a day trip for visitors staying in Gwydir Shire / Copeton Waters State Park.
Gwydir Producers and Provedores – Develop culinary tourism by capitalising on the food products produced in the Shire and the Shire’s reputation for quality meat and grain.			
1.24	Define and progressively build the product	1.24.1	Identify potential producers, products and retail outlets.
		1.24.2	Build a relationship with growers / suppliers. Use local channels to advise growers / suppliers that the VICs are looking to expand their product range and invite growers / suppliers to come forward. If not already in place, encourage producers to develop promotional material including a website, facebook page and flier.
		1.24.3	Build a data base / resource which includes the ‘story’ of the production / goods produced, images and/or videos (if possible) showing the production and produce.
		1.24.4	Explore with DNSW, Industry NSW, RDA Northern Inland and other organisations, the opportunities to run training programs and workshops to assist small producers – eg from hobby to business, marketing and promotion.
		1.24.5	Register the Roxy Theatre hospitality kitchen and The Living Classroom as locations with the NSW Film and Television Office
		1.24.6	As The Living Classroom gardens become productive, explore options to run cultivation and food-based activities, workshops and demonstrations, possibly in conjunction with the Roxy Theatre.
		1.24.7	Consider opportunities for tourism (eg visitor access, guided tours, farm gate outlet) in the planning and development of the Circular Economy Project.
1.25	Produce information and promotional collateral	1.25.1	Produce information and promotional material in a format that is cost effective and able to be easily updated – for example: ‘Local Producers and Provedores’, ‘Local Flavours’, ‘Cafes and Eateries’.
		1.25.2	Revamp the ‘Crops Guide’ and consider producing a ‘Livestock Guide’ to educate city-folk about the different breeds of cattle and sheep bred in the Shire.
		1.25.3	Incorporate relevant information into a Shire-wide website and visitor guide; regional and touring route promotional collateral; and on the Warialda and Bingara websites.

Actions		Key Tasks	
1.26	Showcase local produce	1.26.1	Revamp and possibly expand the produce displays in the Bingara and Warialda VICs – clustering the products available, with information and potentially some ‘eye-catching’ images and interesting short stories. For seasonal produce (eg farm gate stalls), consider using a small blackboard to promote the stalls / products available.
		1.26.2	Explore options to showcase / feature local produce and/or include cooking and/or cultivation demonstrations and workshops at events and festivals held in the Shire and surrounding region.
		1.26.3	Encourage Shire eateries to use local ingredients and feature local produce.
		1.26.4	Explore options to include Gwydir Shire produce and provedores in food and wine trails and marketing initiatives within the NE-NW Region.
The Living Classroom - The Living Classroom is a catalytic project that has the potential to drive growth in visitation across a range of market segments; build the profile of Bingara, the Shire and the NE-NW Region; stimulate interest and/or investment in a number of economic sectors; and drive ‘tree change’.			
1.27	Position and promote The Living Classroom as a priority project	1.27.1	Seek recognition, at a regional level, of The Living Classroom as a priority project for tourism, economic development and agriculture.
1.28	Continue to implement the masterplan	1.28.1	Continue to advocate and seek grant funding and sponsorship for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Interpretative Centre.• Additional accommodation.• Expansion and further development of the gardens.• Walking and possibly mountain bike trails.• Farm gate outlet.
1.29	Leverage opportunities to engage with visitors and build visitation	1.29.1	Develop a self-guided tour, with information available in print-form and potentially as an App.
		1.29.2	When the gardens and olive grove become productive, build a program of activities / events around the harvesting and use of the produce.
		1.29.3	Explore options for scaling-up production of native foods and medicinal plants to support a cottage industry in harvesting, processing and selling.
		1.29.4	Explore options for introducing programs and activities that encourages visitors to the Shire to volunteer and engage with the Living Classroom.
		1.29.5	Review the promotional material for The Living Classroom, ensuring that the content is designed to encourage visitation. Obtain quality images and video footage.
		1.29.6	Explore options to integrate The Living Classroom with other attractions and activities (eg bird watching, culinary tourism, events).
		1.29.7	Promote The Living Classroom as a venue for business events, workshops and social functions. As part of this, further develop the venue hire information, including the layout, dimensions, seating capacity by mode (theatre, classroom, boardroom etc) and equipment, and ensure that this information is available on-line. Include supporting information such as catering options, equipment hire, other accommodation in Bingara etc.

Strategy 2: Build the Events Sector

Events form part of the attraction and activity base of the Shire and are a significant generator of weekend visitation. Locally they are also part of the cultural and social fabric of the area, providing an opportunity to bring visitors and residents together, ‘tell the stories’, and create memorable experiences. For visitors, events provide a reason to visit – they are essentially a ‘call to action’ that generates publicity and focuses attention on the area. Events can be a key driver in the economic, social and cultural development of an area and play a role in the ‘tree change’ process.

Actions		Key Tasks	
Provide a framework that facilitates and supports events.			
2.1	Formulate an events policy	2.1.1	Develop an events policy that sets the framework for Council sponsorship and support of events and sets parameters for the allocation of limited funds and resources.
2.2	Provide a positive regulatory environment	2.2.1	Ensure that the provisions of the Gwydir Shire LEP, Plans of Management and other planning instruments allow for events, particularly in recreational reserves, and permit temporary structures and event-related facilities and services.
2.3	Policies and Procedures	2.3.1	If not in place, develop policies and procedures relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development Application requirements and process.• Traffic management.• Road closures – procedures and cost arrangements.• Temporary event signage – pre-event advertising and during the event.• Temporary event parking.• Hire terms and conditions for Council venues and facilities.
2.4	Continue to develop the venue data base and Venue Guide	2.4.1	Undertake a venue audit to identify and document venue capacity and the facilities and services available. The Audit should include all venues, facilities and areas which could be hired / used for events, including the Roxy Theatre, The Living Classroom, indoor spaces, sports grounds and sporting facilities, showgrounds, race tracks, polo fields, camp draft arenas, motor sports venues, waterbodies, airstrips and parks and reserves. Information needs to be collated on the type of activities that the venue is suitable for, facilities available, capacity, power and water supply, lighting, fencing – security, any specific rules / regulations, contact details etc.
		2.4.2	Develop a comprehensive venue data base and venue guide, with a summary included on the Shire-wide tourism website and the Guide down-loadable from the tourism and potentially Council website.
		2.4.3	Improve / expand the information available for key venues (eg Roxy Theatre, The Living Classroom) owned and operated by Council, including having this information available on the Council website.
2.5	Define internal coordination and communication protocol	2.5.1	Ensure that all event enquiries are directed to a nominated Council Officer with this position supported by an internal communications protocol to ‘streamline’ the approval process.
2.6	Continue to develop and promote the Shire-wide events calendar	2.6.1	Continue to develop the calendar.
		2.6.2	Promote the calendar to the community – encouraging event organisers and sporting groups to list their event on the calendar, and for people thinking about organising an event – to check the calendar and talk to the VIC before finalising dates.
		2.6.3	Include a ‘What’s on this Week’ in the banners for the tourism and Council websites, and post on relevant Facebook Pages.
		2.6.4	Encourage town and village promotion committees and accommodation operators to include a link to the events website from the town, village and operator websites and Facebook.
2.7	Provide event signage	2.7.1	Explore options to erect signs in strategic locations to promote forthcoming events.

Actions		Key Tasks	
Event Venues			
2.8	Continue to improve event venues and infrastructure	2.8.1	Assess the condition of the venue facilities and infrastructure and identify issues that need to be addressed, as well as opportunities to diversify the events held/and or increase venue capacity.
		2.8.2	Include relevant projects in Council’s Delivery, Operational and Asset Management Plans.
		2.8.3	Assist venue managers / village communities to identify potential grants and prepare grant applications, including taking projects to ‘shovel ready’ stage.
Grow existing events - endeavouring to increase participation in and spectators at existing events			
2.9	Support existing events that have the potential to grow.	2.9.1	Identify which local events have the potential to grow and work with the event organisers to formulate and implement a growth strategy / business plan
		2.9.2	Encourage event organisers to develop attendee data bases and possibly a newsletter for direct marketing of next year’s events.
		2.9.3	Encourage event organisers to develop event websites and facebook pages as communication and marketing tools.
		2.9.4	Explore with Tourism Manager’s from surrounding LGAs / Region opportunities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop event circuits / tours (eg NW veterans’ golf tour – moving from one tournament to the next).• Build electronic data bases of event attendees to events – for example people who participated in fishing competitions, and then compiling a fishing event calendar for the region and sending it out to everyone on the data base, with a reminder email prior to each individual event.
Attract events to the Shire			
2.10	Build the business events sector.	2.10.1	Identify business events that Gwydir Shire could potentially bid for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement a Business Event development initiative by encouraging local businesses and organisations to provide information on potential leads, make introductions and act as a 'host' to bring conferences, meetings and functions to Gwydir Shire.• Undertake internet and media searches for conferences held in regional locations and explore whether they could be accommodated in Gwydir Shire.• Search existing data bases and directories including the Government and Business Association Directory - www.business.gov.au (contacts and directories link) and the Australian Agricultural Directory www.aglinks.com.au to identify leads.
		2.10.2	Target, through direct marketing and the bid process: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small association conferences that use budget-mid range venues and have a ‘connection’ with industries, activities and/or organisations in Gwydir Shire (eg land management).• Regional meetings and training seminars – Government, corporate, franchises.• Business / Industry / Sporting functions and awards.
2.11	Attract sporting events to the Shire.	2.11.1	Encourage and work with local clubs and associations to bid to host regional, state and national events.
		2.11.2	Bid to host regional school events in the Shire.
		2.11.3	Direct market venues that are available for hire, to clubs, associations and commercial event promoters.
2.12	Target footloose events	2.12.1	Identify events and target footloose events (eg car, caravan and motorcycle rallies, concerts etc) that could potentially be held in the Shire.
Encourage event attendees to stay in and spend money within the Shire			
2.13	Provide attendees with information on the Shire	2.13.1	Encourage event organisers to list accommodation available in the Shire and include a link to the Gwydir Shire tourism website on their event websites and/or facebook page as well as the website address on all their correspondence and in the event program.

Actions		Key Tasks	
		2.13.2	Provide event organisers with lists of accommodation properties and eateries, to send out / attach to their event information / entry form.
		2.13.3	For larger events, consider seting up an information display (manned or unmanned) at the event.
		2.13.4	Provide Visitor Guides / town and village information for event organisers to distribute at the event.
2.14	Provide opportunities and incentives to encourage event attendees to spend while in the Shire.	2.14.1	Consider using vouchers and value-add offers to encourage event attendees to spend money in the Shire.
Effectively market and promote events			
2.15	Market and promote events held in the Shire.	2.15.1	List relevant events on the STDW data base and relevant third party websites and regional event and ‘what’s on’ guides and directories.
		2.15.2	Send out a weekly / monthly ‘what’s on’ e.blast to local and regional media, accommodation operators, VICs in the surrounding area and other interested parties.
		2.15.3	Promote events through social media channels.
		2.15.4	Explore opportunities to encourage and harness user generated content.

Strategy 3: Continue to improve the infrastructure, facilities and services needed to facilitate and support the growth of the visitor economy.

Actions		Key Tasks	
Accommodation – Encourage and facilitate growth in the accommodation sector			
3.1	Improve and expand the accommodation base of the Shire	3.1.1	Advocate for / encourage up-grading of existing accommodation.
		3.1.2	Encourage and support the development of new accommodation in the Shire, including farm stays and the listing of suitable dwellings on sites such as AirBnB and Stayz.
		3.1.3	Explore options to address accommodation capacity constraints in Croppa Creek.
			Provide on-site accommodation at Cranky Rock Reserve (see Task 1.21.9).
			Expand accommodation options at The Living Classroom (see Task 1.28.1).
3.2	Continue to develop facilities and infrastructure for the touring caravan and motorhome market	3.2.1	Improve access to information on caravan parks, camping areas and facilities and services within the Shire, with information presented at a Shire-level to encourage travellers to explore the Shire (dispersal strategy).
		3.2.2	Signpost free camping sites, using international symbols.
		3.2.3	Improve facilities at the Croppa Creek Recreation Ground and promote as a free / low cost camping site.
		3.2.4	Resolve the future of the North Star Caravan Park.
		3.2.5	Investigate options for providing free camping in and/or around Warialda.
3.3	Increase the on-line presence of accommodation properties	3.3.1	Ensure that all accommodation properties are listed on the STDW data base via NSWconnect.
		3.3.2	List all accommodation properties and free camping sites on the Shire-wide tourism website, with links through to accommodation property websites.

Actions		Key Tasks	
		3.3.3	Ensure that caravan and camping sites are listed in relevant on-line directories and Apps (eg Wiki Camps).
		3.3.4	Encourage Accommodation operators to make more effective use of web-based and digital marketing including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a website – if not already in place. • Updating their website to be semantic search and mobile responsive and incorporate real time booking facilities, quality images and information on Gwydir Shire and forthcoming events. • Listing on the higher profile accommodation booking websites. • Claiming their 'my business' page on Google. • Encouraging guests to review their property on both Trip Advisor and Google Review. • Utilising free / low cost listings on tourism and third party websites. • Utilising web-based resource material on digital marketing available from the DNSW and Tourism Australia websites.
Visitor Information Services – continue to expand and improve visitor information services, ensuring that information on the Shire is available from multiple touch points, at all stages of the path to purchase and whilst travelling.			
3.4	Bingara and Warialda VICs	3.4.1	Continue to operate the VICs in Bingara and Warialda, furthering developing them as attractions in their own right, showcasing local industries and producers, and featuring and selling local products.
3.5	Produce Shire-wide information and promotional collateral	3.5.1	Develop a comprehensive Shire-wide tourism website that is semantic search responsive and mobile optimised, with the site having entry portals / landing pages for locality-based searches (eg Bingara, Warialda, North Star etc). Ensure that the website is linked to other 'touch points' including the Council and touring route websites.
		3.5.2	Produce a Shire-wide Visitors Guide – ensure that it is downloadable from the tourism website.
		3.5.3	Continue to provide Shire, town and village maps.
		3.5.4	Continue to use social media to communicate with potential visitors and operators.
3.6	Update / improve / expand the range of product and activity brochures	3.6.1	Progressively update and re-vamp the product and trail brochures, ensuring consistency in branding and presentation.
		3.6.2	Revamp the detailed information available on the history, geology and birdlife of the Shire, improving content and standardising branding and presentation.
		3.6.3	Produce brochures, information, maps etc to promote and support the Shire's scenic drives, trails, products and experiences.
		3.6.4	Ensure that key brochures, maps and detailed information are downloadable from the tourism website.
3.7	Continue to improve Gwydir Shire's online presence.	3.7.1	Ensure that the Shire's accommodation, attractions, activities and events are listed on the STDW data base. Regularly review and up-date.
		3.7.2	Continue to improve and expand Shire content on regional tourism and touring route websites and visitor guides / brochures.
		3.7.3	Capitalise on opportunities to list / provide content on Gwydir Shire on third party websites and through social media, ensuring that the content and images are kept up to date.
		3.7.4	Endeavour to list / feature Gwydir Shire product / experiences on special interest and activity based sites (eg, horse sports, canoeing, camping, fishing, fossicking, cycling etc).
		3.7.5	Regularly check and up-date information on the Shire in on-line directories – eg Wiki Camps, toilet and dump point sites etc.
		3.7.6	Develop and progressively build consumer data bases to be used for direct marketing, promotional offers etc.
		3.7.8	Contribute to travel forums and blogs.
3.8		3.8.1	Erect information directories in the Villages and other strategic locations (eg Cranky Rock).
		3.8.2	Encourage all accommodation and attraction operators and businesses within the Villages to display and distribute the Gwydir Visitor Guide.

Actions		Key Tasks	
	Ensure information is available within the villages and at strategic locations throughout the Shire	3.8.3	Provide ‘pop-up’ manned or unmanned information displays at events, conferences etc.
Signage - Ensure that signage is effective and contributes positively to the image of the Shire			
3.9	Provide quality gateway entry signage for the both the Shire and the towns and villages.	3.9.1	Continue to upgrade gateway entry signs and ensure that the area around the signs is well maintained.
3.10	Improve way-finding and facility signage.	3.10.1	Undertake a signage audit to assess the condition and effectiveness of existing signs and identify signs that need to be removed or replaced and additional signage needed. Formulate and implement an improvement program.
		3.10.2	Progressively replace fingerboard facility signs with international icons.
		3.10.3	Provide service availability signs (icons) on the approaches to the towns and villages.
		3.10.4	Signpost free camping areas, fossicking areas, trails and river access points etc providing track head / orientation signage and /or trail markers where needed.
		3.10.5	Remove / replace out of date signs, including advertising signs.
3.11	Use temporary signage to promote events	3.11.1	Explore options for providing event signage in strategic locations.
Roads			
3.12	Recognise the importance of the road network for tourism.	3.12.1	In determining road construction and maintenance programs and priorities, include the role and significance for tourism as part of the assessment / evaluation criteria.
Visitor Facilities			
3.13	Parks, Gardens and Reserves - ensure that the parks, gardens and reserves that are visually prominent and/or are used by visitors, are well presented and maintained	3.13.1	Continue to maintain and improve the presentation of parks, gardens and reserves, both to enhance the visual impact and appeal of the locality and to encourage travellers to stop.
		3.13.2	Explore options for upgrading the presentation of and facilities at Battenham Lookout, Bingara.
3.14	Public Toilets - Continue to provide and maintain public toilets in strategic locations.	3.14.1	Ensure that public toilets throughout the Shire are effectively cleaned and maintained, and signposted using international facility icons.
		3.14.2	Improve the public toilets at the Croppa Creek Recreation Area and signpost from Buckie Road.
Telecommunications - Travellers are travelling with a range of digital devices that require mobile network coverage. They are also increasingly seeking localities with free WiFi access. Demand for WiFi access will increase in-line with Tablet and Smart Phone ownership.			
3.15	Improve mobile and broadband services within the Shire	3.15.1	Continue to advocate for improved mobile and broadband coverage throughout the Shire
		3.15.2	Promote free WiFi locations to travellers.
		3.15.3	Encourage accommodation operators and eateries to provide free WiFi.

Strategy 4: Build and diversify the market base of Gwydir Shire

Gwydir Shire needs to continue to build visitation and diversify its market base. The focus will be on consolidating and building the Shire's primary target markets and capitalising on cost effective opportunities to build secondary markets. The produce and infrastructure development needed to facilitate and support market development has been addressed in Strategies 1-3.

Actions		Key Tasks	
Touring Market – focusing on attracting touring caravans and RVs and encouraging these travellers to explore the Shire.			
4.1	Engage with potential travellers at the trip planning stage.	4.1.1	Continue to enhance and expand Gwydir Shire’s on-line and digital presence (see Actions 3.5 and 3.7)
		4.1.2	Continue to showcase Gwydir Shire at consumer and travel shows, particularly the caravan and camping shows
		4.1.3	Participate in cooperative marketing activities that generate publicity for Gwydir Shire / Touring Routes / NE-NW Region and ‘drive’ enquiries to websites that provide information on and/or link to the Shire-wide tourism website.
		4.1.4	Undertake direct and PR marketing to caravan and motorhome clubs – endeavouring to place feature articles on Gwydir Shire in magazines, and newsletters and participate in forums.
4.2	Capitalise on the importance of Maps as trip planning and promotional tools.	4.2.1	Identify and evaluate the main maps used by travellers to the area. Where possible, improve the information on Gwydir Shire on these maps.
		4.2.2	Working with Tourism Managers / Councils located along the touring routes that feed into the Shire, explore opportunities to produce / improve the touring route maps.
		4.2.3	Use maps as the basis for information / promotional collateral to support the trails and scenic drives developed in the Shire.
		4.2.4	Design maps and brochures that can be readily used in conjunction with GPS systems.
		4.2.5	Encourage local businesses to claim their ‘my business’ page on Google and to include links to maps as part of their contact details.
4.3	Cross-referral – work with adjoining LGAs to ‘pull’ travellers into and through the sub-region	4.3.1	Continue to build strategic alliances with Tourism Managers / VICs in adjoining areas, capitalising on opportunities for cross promotion and intra-regional movement.
4.4	Target caravan and RV rallies and events.	4.4.1	Bid to host caravan and motorhome club rallies and events.
		4.4.2	Explore opportunities to leverage off caravan and RV events held in other locations, to raise the profile of Gwydir Shire.
4.5	Continue to build awareness of the Shire’s camping ‘offer’.	4.5.1	Encourage travellers to nominate / vote for Bingara / Gwydir Shire for caravan and camping awards.
Local and Regional Market - continue to build the local and regional markets – targeting leisure-based day trips and short breaks, social and sporting groups, the ‘learning’ market and business and sporting events.			
4.6	Regional Residents - Continue to grow the regional market – focusing on: - Offering the opportunity to ‘Live the Gwydir Good Life – to escape	4.6.1	Continue to raise the profile of Gwydir Shire within the surrounding region: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use PR marketing to place stories in the regional media.• Place articles about the different activities on offer in the Shire in the local and regional media. In the lead-up to school holidays local papers often have feature articles and discount coupons.• Use both the Tourism and Council social media sites to communicate with the regional media (journalists are increasingly using social media sites to generate ideas for stories).

Actions		Key Tasks	
	<p>/ to the outdoors, get back to basics, reconnect and have fun.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attracting residents to sporting and other events. - Positioning Gwydir Shire as a day out destination for social groups. - Bringing residents into the Shire for special interest activities. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities to advertise in television and print media (funds permitting). • Ensure that Gwydir Shire events and activities are listed in regional 'what's on' directories and programs and seek media coverage in the lead-up to and during the events. • Explore opportunities to capitalise on the school excursion market, providing visiting school children with information and/or vouchers that encourage the family to visit. • Explore 'quirky' opportunities to raise the profile of Gwydir Shire and generate interest and media coverage. For example – a 'Try Camping Weekend' competition – which 20 locals with camping equipment paired with 20 families who have never tried camping and camps are set up along the River and visitors shown how to camp, cook on an open fire, fish, fossick etc.
		4.6.2	<p>Target and direct market Gwydir Shire to social groups within the surrounding region – those that organise day and short trips including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retirement homes – often have their own mini buses. • Disability groups and service providers – excursions and day trips. • Walking clubs and groups. • Probus / View Clubs and organisations. • Social clubs and groups within Licensed Clubs. • Church groups. • Cycling groups. • Social golf groups. • Car and motorcycle clubs.
		4.6.3	<p>Target and direct market venues (eg The Living Classroom) to people / organisations that run classes, workshops etc inviting them to organise a live-in workshop / retreat etc for their clients.</p>
		4.6.4	<p>Leverage opportunities to offer, package and promote activities in the Shire to the regional market. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packaging accommodation, meals and a show at the Roxy Theatre • Workshops held at The Living Classroom and/or Roxy Theatre – visual and performing arts, yoga / meditation retreats, organic gardening, landcare, cooking etc.
4.7	Regional business, school, sporting and other events – capitalise on the Shire's central location.	4.7.1	Encourage businesses and organisations to hold conferences, meetings, training workshops and functions in Bingara – promoting the facilities at The Living Classroom, Roxy Theatre and Imperial Hotel for these activities.
		4.7.2	Explore opportunities to attract / bid for regional school events – such as drama and music camps, cross country, agricultural camps etc.
		4.7.3	Explore opportunities to attract / bid for regional sporting events and also to encourage sporting clubs and commercial promoters to hold a 'round' or 'leg' of a sporting event in Gwydir Shire.
		4.7.4	Working with adjoining LGAs / Tourism Managers, explore opportunities to 'cluster' like events and build a tournament / competition circuit.
4.8	Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR)	4.8.1	Explore opportunities to encourage local and regional residents to show their visitors around the Shire, and formulate and implement a VFR marketing campaign.

Actions		Key Tasks	
Groups, Special Interest and Activity Based Markets – capitalise on cost effective opportunities to			
4.9	Caravan / RV, Car and Motorcycle Clubs	4.9.1	Develop packages and itineraries suitable for clubs and target these clubs through PR and direct marketing.
4.10	Build the coach tour market	4.10.1	Build the Day Tour Coach Market - explore opportunities to include Gwydir Shire product in itineraries of coach companies that regularly bring tours into / through the New England - North West Region.
		4.10.2	Explore with regional coach companies, opportunities to run tours to events held in Gwydir Shire – eg Race Carnivals, events at the Roxy.
4.11	Continue to grow the School Excursion market.	4.11.1	Continue to develop curriculum-based study modules and direct market to schools (and possibly Community Colleges) within the surrounding region.
4.12	Grow Special Interest and Activity based markets.	4.12.1	<p>Use the Shire’s assets and facilities to grow special interest and activity based markets – clubs, individuals and social groups - targeting these groups primarily through direct marketing online, and PR in specialist publications and on specialist websites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Fossicking / lapidary- Bush walkers - walking groups- Bird watchers- Anglers- Water sports enthusiasts (for Copeton Dam)- Horse riders and horse sports enthusiasts- Golfers- Cyclists / Mountain bikers- Canoe / Kayakers- Historical associations- Family historians- Art / photography groups- Landcare / Land Management <p>Basically, the same approach can be used to grow the different special interest markets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify the activities, attractions, facilities and/or services available in the Shire and surrounding region that the market is likely to be interested in.• Package these into itineraries and products.• Use the internet to identify associations, clubs, event organisers etc – develop a data base.• Direct marketing to clubs and associations.• Conduct follow-up calls.• Support the direct marketing with public relations marketing – seeking to place articles in relevant magazines, newsletters and websites.• List on free directories and websites relevant to the interest / activity and participate in forums.• Include pertinent information on the tourism website and seek links to relevant activity based sites.

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 Gwydir Shire Council (2005) Gravesend Community Program – Draft Community Strategic Plan
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 Regional Development Australia – Northern Inland NSW (2016) Regional Plan 2016-2017
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PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Page	Position	Description	Source
Title	Vertical – Left	Gwydir River, Bingara	www.bingara.com.au
Title	Vertical - Centre	Fossicking	www.bngara.nsw.gov.au
Title	Vertical - Right	Jackaroo and Jillaroo School, Bingara	Jackaroojillarooldownunder facebook
Title	Right – Top	Canoeing, Gwydir River	www.bingara.com.au
Title	Right – Second	Going Fishing, Copeton Dam	www.bingara.com.au
Title	Right – Third	The Living Classroom	www.bingara.com.au
Title	Right - Bottom	Warialda Off-Road	www.picssr.com
Contents		Canoeing, Gwydir River at Bingara	www.bingara.com.au
1		Gwydir River, upstream of Bingara	www.bingara.com.au
3		Stamper Battery, All Nations Hill	www.bingara.com.au
5	Top	Roxy Theatre	Jenny Rand and Associates
5	Bottom	Roxy Theatre Cafe	Gwydir Shire Council
6		Ceramic Break Sculpture Park	www.visitnsw.com
9	Left	Warialda Off-Road	www.dirtcomp.com.au
9	Centre	Upper Horton Rodeo	www.bingara.com
9	Right	Gravesend Pony Club	www.horsezone.com.au
10		Bushwalking	www.bingara.com
12	Top	Dining – Imperial Hotel Cafe	www.imperialhotelbingara.com.au
12	Centre	Polo Carnival	www.northstarpoloclub.com.au
12	Bottom	Spoilt Warialda	Spoilt Warialda@Spoiltwialda Instagram
17	Left	Signage to Cranky Rock – Gwydir Highway	Jenny Rand and Associates
17	Centre	North Star Caravan Park	Jenny Rand and Associates
17	Right	Rodeo Sign, Gravesend	Jenny Rand and Associates
18		Caravanning – Gwydir River	www.candm.com.au
20		Killarney Bike Classic	www.killarneybikeclassic.com.au
21		Bush Walking, Koorilgur Nature Reserve, Warialda	www.visitnsw.com.au
24	Left	Camping, Gwydir River	www.bingara.nsw.gov.au
24	Right	Fishing on the Gwydir River	www.outandaboutwithkids.com.au
26		Rocky Creek Glacial Area	www.bingara.com.au
28	Top	Family camping, Copeton Dam	www.bingara.com.au
28	Bottom	Fossicking – Three Creeks Gold Mine	www.bingara.nsw.gov.au
31		Sound Trail App	Gwydir Shire Council
32		Bingara Museum	www.bingara.com.au
33		Jackaroo and Jillaroo School, Gwydir River, Bingara	www.jackaroojillarooldownunder.com
34		Water activities, Gwydir River at Bingara	www.bingara.com.au

Page	Position	Description	Source
35		Overlooking Rocky Creek	http://transalp.org
36	Top Left	Coolatai Tractor Pull	www.aroundyou.com.au
36	Top Centre	Fishing Gwydir River	www.fishingmonthly.com.au
36	Top Right	Orange Festival	Gwydir Shire Council
36	Bottom Left	North Star Show Jumping Classic	www.northstarshowjumpingclassic.com
36	Bottom Centre	Upper Horton Rodeo	www.bingara.com
36	Bottom Right	Upper Horton Pony Express	ww.coffsktm.com.au
37	Top	Fossicking, Three Creeks Gold Mine	www.fossickersway.com
37	Bottom	Gold Panning Upper Bingara	www.bingara.com.au
38	Top	Tour Group, Fossicking at Three Creeks Gold Mine	www.travelin.com.au
38	Centre	Fossicking, Warialda	www.travelin.com.au
38	Bottom	Fossicking, Three Creeks Gold Mine	www.bingara.com.au
39		Wells Gem and Mineral Collection, Warialda	www.warialdansw.com.au
40	Left	Fossicking near Bingara	www.caravancampngsales.com.au
40	Centre	Gemstones	www.jewellerypirate.com.au
40	Right	Gold Nuggets, Upper Bingara	www.bingara.com.au
41	Left	Motorcycle Touring – Copeton Dam	www.motorbikenation.com
41	Right	Camping, Gwydir River	www.bingara.com42
42		Cycle Touring – from Texas to Warialda	http://looking442.wordpress.com
46		Upper Horton Falls	www.26design.com.au
50	Left	4WD Horton Falls National Park	www.4wdadventures.com.au
50	Centre	Mountain Biking, Copeton	www.northerndailyleader.com
50	Right	Canoeing, Gwydir River	www.tripadvisor.com.au
51	Left	Grass Trees Upper Bingara	www.bingara.com.au
51	Top Left	Gorge at Cranky Rock	www.girtbyseaphotography.com
51	Bottom Left	Rocky Creek Glacial Area	Jenny Rand and Associates
52	Left	Rocky Creek Glacial Area	www.mapio.net
52	Right	Gorge at Cranky Rock	Jenny Rand and Associates
53		Cranky Rock	www.redbubble.com
55	Left	Sawn Rocks, Narrabri Shire	www.redaustralia.com
55	Top Right	Upper Horton Falls, Tamworth Regional LGA	www.26design.com.au
55	Bottom Right	Waa Gorge, Kaputar National Park, Moree Plains Shire	www.vk2fmia.com
56		Picking of the Oranges – Orange Festival, Bingara	www.bingara.com.au
57	Top	Local and regional gourmet products, sold by Meat on Maitland, Bingara	www.bethelfarmml.com.au
57	Bottom	Locally-made Condiments, Warialda	Jenny Rand and Associates
58	Top	Picking of the Oranges – Orange Festival, Bingara	www.bingara.nsw.gov.au
58	Centre – Left	Jac Wagyu Brand	www.industry.nsw.gov.au

Page	Position	Description	Source
58	Centre – Right	Jac Wagyu Steaks	www.webnetwork.com.au
58	Centre	Olives – Bingara Memorial Olive Grove	www.roxybingara.com.au
58	Bottom	Honey, produced by Ruby Creek Farm	Jenny Rand and Associates
59	Left	Classroom complex, The Living Classroom	Jenny Rand and Associates
59	Top Right	Costa Georgiadas, Gardening Australia with Peter Princeas, Writer / Historian	www.bingara.com.au
59	Bottom Right	Classroom / Seminar Room, The Living Classroom	Jenny Rand and Associates
60		Masterplan, The Living Classroom	www.bingara.com.au
61	All	Activities at The Living Classroom	www.bingara.com.au
62	Left	Recently planted Olive Grove, The Living Classroom	Jenny Rand and Associates
62	Right	Bee Keeping Workshop, The Living Classroom	www.bingara.com.au
63		Copeton Dam, Open Water Swim	www.sunsense.com.au
64		Warialda Fun Fly	www.gwydirshire.com
70		Easterfish, Bingara	www.bingara.com.au
73	Centre, Right	Gwydir Shire representation at a Caravan show as part of the NE-NW Region	Gwydir Shire Council / Inverell Shire Council
73	Left	Sydney Caravan and Camping Show	NSW Caravan and Camping Industry Association
74		Function at the Roxy Theatre	www.roxybingara.com.au
75		The Garrawilla Stampede – Jackaroo and Jillaroo School, Bingara	www.jackarooljillaroo.downunder.com
76		Brands of Gwydir Shire, Bingara Museum	www.bingara.com
77	Top	Anglican Youth Muster, Roxy Theatre, Bingara	www.bingara.com.au
77	Bottom	Three Sisters Eco Farm, Coolatai	www.airbnb.com
78	Top	Warialda Visitor Information Centre	Google Maps – Street View
78	Middle	Interpretative sign – Koorilgur Walking Track	www.warialda.nsw.com.au
78	Bottom	Sound Trails	www.bingara.com
96		Playing with the dogs, Jackaroo and Jillaroo School	Jackarooljillarooldownunder facebook
100		Memorial, Myall Creek Memorial Site	www.newagemultimedia.com



Appendix 1: FOSSICKERS WAY - FOSSICKING PRODUCT

Activity	Glen Innes	Inverell	Gwydir Shire	Barraba	Nundle
Gemstone / Minerals	Sapphires, zircons, topaz, quartz crystal, gold, beryl, fluorite, Tin, Silver	Sapphires, Gemstone, Quartz Crystal	Gold, Petrified Wood, Quartz Crystals, Agate, Jasper, Amethyst, Diamonds, Manganite, Calcite, Garnets, Serpentine	Gold, Copper, Garnets, Zeolite, Quartz Crystals, Petrified Wood, Jasper, Fossils	Gold
Commercial Fossicking Parks	Fossicker's Fossicking Park Bullock Mountain Homestead Three Waters Country Holidays	7 Oaks Sapphire Fossicking Billabong Blue Fossicking Park	Three Creeks Gold Mine		Mt Misery Gold Mine Gil Bennett Gem and Mineral Collections
Dedicated Fossicking Reserves	Glencoe - Sapphires, Zircons Kookaburra – Topaz, Quartz Crystals, Gold, Sapphires Torrington SCA – Beryl, Fluorite, Quartz, Gold, Sapphires Wellingrove - Sapphires	Fossicking Reserves - 7	Warialda – 4 fossicking areas Bingara- 5 fossicking areas	Woodreef Recreation Reserve Iron Bark Creek	Fossicking reserves along the River
Supplies	GI Lapidary and Jewellery Supplies		Three Creeks Gold Mine		Mt Misery Gold Mine – equipment sales and hire
Gem Cutting		Sapphire City Gem Cutting The Gem Centre Billabong Blue			
Jewellery Store	Numerous	Numerous			
Museum	Emmaville Mining Museum		Wells Gem and Mineral Collection – Warialda VIC Bingara Historical Museum		Mt Misery Gold Mine Museum Gil Bennett Gem and Mineral Museum
Historic Sites	Ottery Historic Mine		Stamper Battery - All Nations Mine, Bingara Three Creeks Gold Mine		Mt Misery
Events	Minerama Festival				Go for Gold Festival

Appendix 2: KEY ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES - GWYDIR HIGHWAY CORRIDOR

Gwydir Highway east of Glen Innes is marketed as World Heritage Way

	Glen Innes – Severn Shire	Inverell Shire	Gwydir Shire	Moree Plains Shire	Walgett Shire
Branding	New England High Country Celtic Country			Artesian Water Country	
Towns and Villages on Gwydir Highway	Glen Innes	Inverell	Warialda, Gravesend	Moree Pallamallawa	Collarenebri
Towns and Villages off Highway (45 mins)	Stonehenge, Glencoe, Ben Lomand, Deepwater, Emmaville, Torrington	Tingha	Bingara Coolatai Croppa Creek		Walgett Lightning Ridge
Iconic / High Profile	Standing Stones	Sapphires	Roxy Theatre	Hot Artesian Spas	Lightning Ridge / Opals
Unusual / Unique Rock Formations /Natural Features	Stonehenge – Balancing Rock Gibraltar Range Granite formations Waterfalls	Dungeon (Gorge) MacIntye Falls	Cranky Rock Rocky Creek Glacial Area	Waa Gorge	Bundabreena Falls, Collarenebri. Opal Fields
National Parks (NP), Nature Reserves (NR), State Conservation Areas (SCAs), Crown Reserves	Washpool NP Gibraltar Range NP Guy Fawkes River NP Capoopeta NP Kings Plains NP Mann River NR Little Llangothlin NR Torrington SCA	Goonoowigal SCA Barayamal National Park Nullamanna National Park Kwiambal NP	Koorilgur Nature Walk	Gwydir Wetlands NP Kaputar NP	Narran Lakes
Waterways, Lakes and Dams	Numerous headwater streams	Copeton Dam Inverell Lake Pindari Dam	Gwydir River Copeton Dam Horton River	Gwydir River Weirs Water Ski Lake	Barwon River (Collarenebri) Barwon and Namoi Rivers (Walgett)
Artesian Baths				Moree Artesian Aquatic Centre 3 accommodation properties with artesian baths.	Lightning Ridge Hot Artesian Bore Baths Burren Junction Bore Baths
Lookout	Sinclair Lookout National Park Lookouts	MacIntyre Falls Lookout McIlveen Park Lookout Dungeon Lookout	Batterham Lookout, Bingara		Lightning Ridge - lookouts
Aboriginal Sites / Experiences	Glen Innes Art Gallery – Aboriginal Art	Goonoowigal SCA	Myall Creek Memorial Site	Terry Hi Hi Aboriginal Area Dhiyaan Centre	<u>Collarenebri</u> Fish traps

	Glen Innes – Severn Shire	Inverell Shire	Gwydir Shire	Moree Plains Shire	Walgett Shire
				Centre for Aboriginal Art – Moree Plains Regional Gallery TAFE Artist Studios and Mehi Gallery Yaama Ganu Café and Gallery	Aboriginal cemetery Collymongle Carved Trees <u>Walgett</u> Dharriwaa Elders Cultural Exhibition Norman Tracker Walford Walkway Don Lillyman Aboriginal Art Gallery
Arts and Cultural	Glen Innes Art Gallery Chapel Theatre	Inverell Art Gallery Itty Bitty Art Gallery New England Wood Turning – Yangoora Gallery NE Conservatorium of Music	Ceramic Break Sculpture Park Roxy Theatre Ceramic Break Sculpture Park Carinda House, Warialda	Moree Regional Gallery Moree Gallery Mehi Gallery Yaama Ganu Café and Gallery	Café 64 Gallery, Warialda Lightning Ridge: - John Murray Gallery - The Gallery - 2834 Studios - A Quiet Man's Place
Museums and Historic Sites	Land of Beardies History House and Museum Emmaville Mining Museum Ottery Mine Glen Innes Heritage Walk	Pioneer Museum National Transport Museum Wing Hing Museum Inverell Heritage Walk Family History Group WWII Remembrance Group Various Memorials	Roxy Theatre Museum Bingara Museum Bingara Sound Trail Warialda Sound Trail Myall Creek Memorial Site and Sound Trail Warialda Historic Walk All Nations Mine and Stamper Battery Warialda Historical Museum		Town walks and drives. Miners Hut, LR
Showcase Parks and Gardens			The Living Classroom Bingara Memorial Orange and Olive Trees		Lightning Ridge Bush Tucker and Medicine Garden Bevan's Cactus Garden, LR
Fossicking / Gemstones	Sapphires, zircons, topaz, quartz crystal, gold, beryl, fluorite, 3 commercial fossicking parks 3 designated fossicking reserves Torrington SCA Ottery Historic Mine Emmaville Mining Museum	Sapphires, Quartz Crystal, Gemstones 3 commercial fossicking areas 6 Fossicking Reserves 3 local gem centres / gem cutting Numerous jewellery shops	Gold, Petrified Wood, Quartz Crystals, Agate, Jasper, Amethyst, Diamonds, Manganite, Calcite, Garnets, Serpentine Warialda – 4 fossicking areas Bingara- 5 fossicking areas		Opals Opal Fields – Lightning Ridge, Grawin, Glengarry, Sheepyards Underground mine tours Buyers and cutters Jewellery Stores / Opal Sales

	Glen Innes – Severn Shire	Inverell Shire	Gwydir Shire	Moree Plains Shire	Walgett Shire
	Minerama Festival Jewellery Shops (local gemstones) Lapidary and Jewellery Supplies		Wells Gem and Mineral Collection – Wialda VIC		
Food and Wine	Wright Robertson Winery Topper Wines Super Strawberry Glen Innes Pie Shop Smeatons Bakery Specialty Butchers (3) Free Range Eggs – River Gum and Sarah Downs	Olives of Beaulieu Bakery (2) Patisserie Fe Fi Fo Bindaree Beef Several wineries Community Garden	Bethel Mill Flours Jac Wagyu Horton Valley Premium Pork Meat on Maitland, Bingara Gwydir Meats, Wialda Ruby Farm Honey and Olives Locally produced Jams, Condiments and Cordials	Pecans / Pecan Farm Tour Olives Woolaway Winery Moree on a Plate - Festival	Quirky Clubs and Pubs
Specialty Shopping and Dining	Boutiques Lifestyle Cafes	Antique Boutiques Lifestyle Cafes	Boutiques and Lifestyle – Wialda Hotel Lane Op Shop, Coolatai Cafes – Bingara and Wialda	Boutiques Lifestyle Shops Cafes	Lightning Ridge - galleries, opals, souvenirs etc Stone's Throw – Walgett – Lifestyle and local produce
Guided Tours				Pecan Farm Tours Cotton Farm / Gin Tours Art Deco Tours Town Tours	Various Opal Tours Aboriginal Tours by Appointment
Family / Group Fun		Shake Rattle N Bowl Inverell Paintball	Copeton Dam Water Park	Moree Artesian Aquatic Centre – water slides and water playground.	Lightning Ridge Pool
Scenic Drives / Trails	Old Grafton Road Touring Route Celtic Country Drives High Country Motorbike Touring Routes		Geological Drives	Scenic drive routes	LR Car Door Tour Scenic Drive Routes
Signature Walks	Great Walk (50km)	Slippery Rock Walking Track			
Fishing	Fly and line fishing Monster Murray Cod Fishing Retreat Silent Grove Farmstay Uncle Billy's Retreat Numerous fishing locations	Copeton Dam	Copeton Dam Gwydir River	Gwydir River Mehi River Carp Muster	Barwon River Namoi River

	Glen Innes – Severn Shire	Inverell Shire	Gwydir Shire	Moree Plains Shire	Walgett Shire
Rock Sports	Stonehenge Bouldering				
Bird Watching	Bird Routes and Sites		Bird Trails	Gwydir Wetlands + Live Bird Cam Bird Routes	Bird sites
Golf	Glen Innes – 18 hole	Inverell – 18 holes	Bingara Warialda Croppa Creek North Star	Moree Golf Club	
Horseriding	Farmstay		Wades Horses		
Mountain Bikes / BMX	National Parks Torrington SCA	Copeton Waters State Park Kwiambal NP			
Cycle Routes			Cycle routes defined		
Water Sports/ Tours		Copeton Dam – Power boating, water skiing etc Joey's Kayaking Tours	Copeton Dam Gwydir River Canoe Hire	Water Ski Lake	
Camping	Numerous NP and SCA camping areas Camping areas on farm stays and private properties/ Camping areas at fossicking and fishing reserves	Copeton Dam Fossicking Reserves Camping areas at commercial fossicking parks National Parks	Copeton Dam Gwydir River corridor Horton River corridor Ezzy's Crossing Gravesend	Gwydir River Weirs	Burren Junction Walgett Collarenebri River Bank