



# GLADSTONE REGION VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY

2025



GLADSTONE  
REGIONAL COUNCIL



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# PURPOSE



The purpose of this strategy is to provide the long-term vision and strategic direction for the Gladstone Region in the visitor economy. It provides the framework to collaboratively maximise the economic benefits of tourism, whilst managing the environmental and social impacts, including the impact on resident's lifestyles.

## THE VISITOR ECONOMY - TOURISM IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS.

The term 'visitor economy' is used to reflect a more contemporary definition of tourism, that includes people travelling not just for leisure, but for business, work, education and visiting friends and relatives. It brings together those industries that directly service visitors, for example accommodation, transport providers,

tour companies and attractions, as well as indirectly, such as retail, medical and food production. The visitor economy is crucial for the Gladstone Region. It does not occur in isolation, but contributes to investment and jobs across a range of industry sectors regionally across the Gladstone Regional Council area.







# BACKGROUND



# OUR BRAND STORY

*Gateway to the Southern Great Barrier Reef, famous for fishing, boating and diving.*

The Gladstone Region is the gateway to the Southern Great Barrier Reef. Like nowhere else, the Gladstone Region is a striking juxtaposition of industry and pristine environment of the world heritage listed Great Barrier Reef, including the iconic Town of 1770/Agnes Water, rural hinterland and striking sandstone wilderness.



1H 10M FLIGHT,  
VIRGIN AUSTRALIA/  
ALLIANCE & QANTAS



6 HOUR DRIVE, 550 KM

Like nowhere else, the Gladstone Region is a striking juxtaposition of industry and pristine environment of the world heritage listed Great Barrier Reef.

**Its stunning locations include access to Great Barrier Reef islands and lagoons, including Heron, Lady Musgrave, North West and Wilson, among others. The region is famous for fishing and boating. With Australia's most northerly surf beach, Agnes Water and Town of 1770, proximity to National Parks, laid back coastal villages and rural hinterland lifestyles, make it an attractive destination for holiday makers, sea and tree changers.**

With a population of 62,979, the region stages over 200 festivals and events annually, including the famous Brisbane to Gladstone Yacht Race and harbour celebrations, Australia's largest family friendly fishing tournament, the Boyne Tannum Hook-up and destination events, such as the Agnes Blues

and Roots Festival, Luminous, Captain Cook 1770 Festival and Under the Trees Festival.

As one of the largest, bulk commodity ports in the world, the Gladstone Region has positioned its strength in large scale industry, resources and energy, engineering and advanced manufacturing with a highly skilled workforce.

As a destination featuring a natural deep water port, Gladstone has cruise ship docking capabilities and is now a cruise stop-over destination for over 15 domestic and international cruises annually, with increasing and growing potential in this market.

The region lies on the east coast of Queensland, Australia, within a one hour flight of Brisbane.

# STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Gladstone Region Visitor Economy Strategy has been developed to align with local, regional and state strategies to ensure a coordinated approach.

- AUSTRALIA - TOURISM 2020
- QLD - ADVANCING TOURISM 2020
- TEQ MARKETING STRATEGY 2025
- TEQ EVENTS STRATEGY 2025

→ GLADSTONE REGION  
DESTINATION TOURISM  
PLAN 2020

- GLADSTONE REGIONAL COUNCIL
- CORPORATE PLAN
  - OPERATIONAL PLAN
  - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
    - ARTS & CULTURAL PLAN
    - REGIONAL EVENTS STRATEGY
  - RV AND BUSINESS TOURISM STRATEGIES



# PARTNERSHIPS

Creating a culture of collaboration within the Gladstone Region with strategic partners, the tourism industry, community organisations and all levels of government will be instrumental in achieving long-term outcomes for the region.

## INDUSTRY OPERATORS

- Visitor economy businesses
- Tourism operators
- Local community

## STRATEGIC PARTNERS

### Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Ltd (GAPDL)

- Destination Tourism Plan and implementation
- Destination branding, marketing and media
- Networking with tourism and events industry
- Tourism visitor information services
- Tourism volunteers & cruise ship welcome program
- Event organiser

### Southern Great Barrier Reef Regional Tourism Organisations

- GAPDL partnering with Capricorn Enterprise and Bundaberg Tourism
- SGBR Destination brand and digital assets
- Joint SGBR campaigns, nationally & internationally
- Industry capacity building

### Discovery Coast Tourism & Commerce Inc.

- Discovery Coast tourism marketing and development
- Event organiser
- Industry networks and members

### Industry and Government Organisations

- Gladstone Industry Leadership Group (GILG)
- Gladstone Engineering Alliance (GEA)
- Gladstone Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCl)
- Gladstone Area Water Board (G.A.W.B)
- Great Barrier Reef Marina Park Authority (GRMPA)
- Departments of State Development, National Parks, Sport and Racing (NPSR) and Main Roads (TMR)
- Gladstone Ports Corporation
- Gladstone Airport Corporation

INDUSTRY OPERATORS

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

TOURISM PARTNERS

GLADSTONE REGIONAL COUNCIL

## TOURISM PARTNERS

### Tourism and Events Queensland and Tourism Australia

- Destination Queensland and Australia campaigns
- Digital and media platforms
- QLD Destination event program
- Target market insights

### Queensland Tourism Industry Council

- "Voice for Tourism"
- Queensland Tourism Awards

## GLADSTONE REGIONAL COUNCIL VISION

- Leadership and strategic direction
- Providing infrastructure and services, such as public facilities to enhance visitor experiences
- Policies pertaining to tourism activities on council lands and assets to manage impacts of tourism
- Tourism friendly culture, across internal departments and region





# SITUATION ANALYSIS



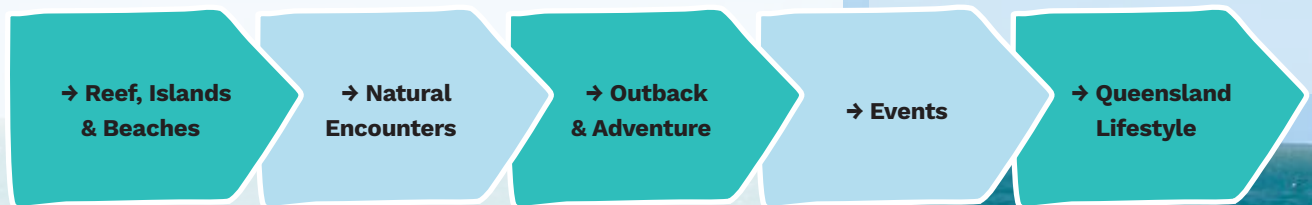
# EXPERIENCES & COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

The Gladstone Region provides an outstanding marine tourism destination. As the gateway to the Southern Great Barrier Reef, it is home to what's considered one of the top dive and snorkelling sites in the world.

Like nowhere else, the Gladstone Region is a striking juxtaposition of industry and world heritage natural environment.

**Gladstone Region's key tourism experiences, link to Tourism and Events Queensland's (TEQ's) Experience Framework which identifies five key Experience Pillars and supporting Hero Experiences that reflect the heart and soul of the Queensland story and represents where we have a competitive advantage.**

## QUEENSLAND EXPERIENCE PILLARS



## GLADSTONE REGION KEY EXPERIENCES



Iconic locations, including the Southern Great Barrier Reef, Heron Island, Town of 1770/Agnes Water, Boyne Island and Tannum Sands should be key features to promote the region's competitive advantage.



# KEY TOURISM EXPERIENCES

The following is provided as a snapshot of key tourism experiences in the Gladstone Region.

Please note: This is not an exhaustive list of all attractions and experiences in the region.

## GLADSTONE CITY & SURROUNDS

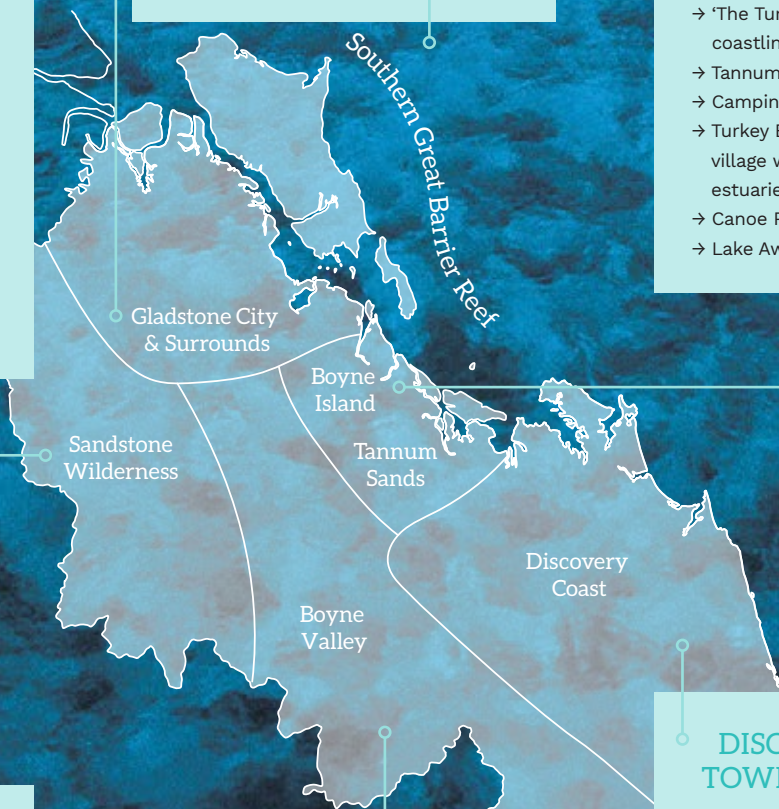
- Gladstone Marina with access to Heron and Islands
- Fish Markets
- Auckland Point & Round Hill Lookout
- Gladstone Entertainment and Convention Centre
- East Shores Marina Precinct and linking to CBD/GECC/Marina
- Industry tours/coffee cruise
- Tondoon Botanic Gardens
- Mt Larcom climb
- Calliope River Historical Village and markets
- Benaraby the gateway to Lake Awoonga for year round barramundi fishing

## SOUTHERN GREAT BARRIER REEF

- Heron Island
- Lady Musgrave Island
- North West Island
- Curtis Island
- Facing Island
- Quoin Island
- Wilson Island
- Fitzroy Lagoon
- Swains Reef

## BOYNE ISLAND, TANNUM SANDS & TURKEY BEACH

- 'The Turtle Way' 15km river and coastline walk
- Tannum Sands Millennium Esplanade
- Camping at Lilley's Beach
- Turkey Beach holiday and fishing village with large mangrove inlets, estuaries and creeks
- Canoe Point
- Lake Awoonga recreational area



## SANDSTONE WILDERNESS

- 25 mountain ranges radiating of the Great Dividing Range, including over 100 State Forests and National Parks.
- Farm stays and camping
- 4WD tracks and camping at Kroombit Tops National Park, including Beautiful Betsy, a World War 2 Bomber Aircraft wreck

## BOYNE VALLEY

- Discovery Centre Ubobo and Boyne Valley Historical Society Cottage
- FREE camping at Boyendale Bush Camp and Futter Creek
- Heritage listed remains of Glassford Creek Copper & Gold Smelter Sites

## DISCOVERY COAST - TOWN OF 1770/AGNES WATER

- Access to Lady Musgrave Island & Lagoon
- Bustard Head lighthouse
- Australia's most northerly surf beach, Agnes Water
- Stand up paddle board, kayak waterways and iconic 1770 Larc Tours
- 4WD Deepwater and Eurimbula National Parks
- Miriam Vale and the famous crab sandwiches
- Baffle Creek coastline for 4WD, swimming, camping, fishing and boating



# VISITOR ECONOMY SNAPSHOT

The following snapshot provides an overview of the value of tourism for the region. As domestic overnight visitors in commercial accommodation spend nearly double those of day trippers, it highlights the need to focus on increasing overnight visitor expenditure (OVE).

PEAK TOURISM SEASON  
APRIL - OCTOBER

DOMESTIC  
DAY TRIPPER

\$100

DOMESTIC  
OVERNIGHT SPEND

\$141

DOMESTIC OVERNIGHT  
SPEND IN COMMERCIAL  
ACCOMMODATION

\$179

VALUE OF  
TOURISM

Total Spend

\$315m

WHY VISITORS  
COME TO  
GLADSTONE

Visiting Friends and  
Relatives (VFR) 27%

Holiday 39%

Business 29%

Other 5%

SPEND

Total average  
spend per trip

\$335

Domestic per trip

\$539

International  
per trip

\$456

CARAVAN &  
CAMPING

14 caravan/holiday  
parks

137 cabins

345 commercial  
campsites

VISITORS

Total Visitors  
941,000

International  
53,000

Domestic  
Overnight  
461,000

Domestic  
Day-trippers  
426,000

MAJOR  
SOURCE  
MARKETS

1. Regional  
Queensland  
(Rockhampton/  
Capricorn,  
Bundaberg/Harvey  
Bay)

2. Brisbane

LENGTH  
OF STAY

Domestic  
4 nights

International  
10 nights

CRUISE SHIPS

15 domestic and  
international cruise  
ships (2019)

15,000+  
passengers

The Gladstone  
Region provides  
a variety of  
accommodation  
from island resorts,  
hotel, motel,  
cabins, caravan/  
holiday parks  
and commercial  
camping sites

ACCOMMODATION

1967  
rooms

5555+  
capacity

GENERATING

2,321,000  
nights



# TRAVEL FORECASTS

Growing at approximately 3.4% per annum, the Gladstone Region is predicted to reach approximately 548,000 overnight visitors in 2022, with a total overnight tourism expenditure of \$326 million.

This continued growth is expected to generate 585,000 overnight visitors by 2025, with total overnight expenditure of \$348 million.

**These estimates are based on visitor growth rates for overnight domestic and international tourism by Tourism Research Australia's 2017 Tourism Forecast Report. These estimates are also based on national and state growth (due to Gladstone specific forecast data being unavailable). As a result, these forecast figures should be treated as 'natural growth' in the context of national averages.**

*Reaching these forecast projections would mean that in 2022, the Gladstone Region would see:*

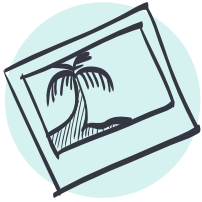
- *An additional 69,000 overnight visitors;*
- *An additional 333,000 nights;*
- *An additional \$41 million in overnight visitor expenditure.*

Source: Gladstone Region Destination Tourism Plan 2014 – 2020



# TARGET MARKETS

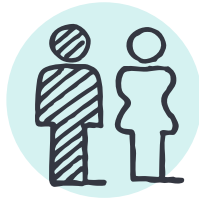
MOST VISITORS TO THE GLADSTONE REGION ARE:



Holiday  
39%



Business  
29%



Visiting Friends and  
Relatives (VFR)  
27%

## Primary Markets



**SHORT BREAK DRIVE**  
Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Hervey Bay,  
Mackay, Emerald, Sunshine Coast.



**FLY-DRIVE**



**BUSINESS EVENTS/MICE**



**FISHING & BOATING**



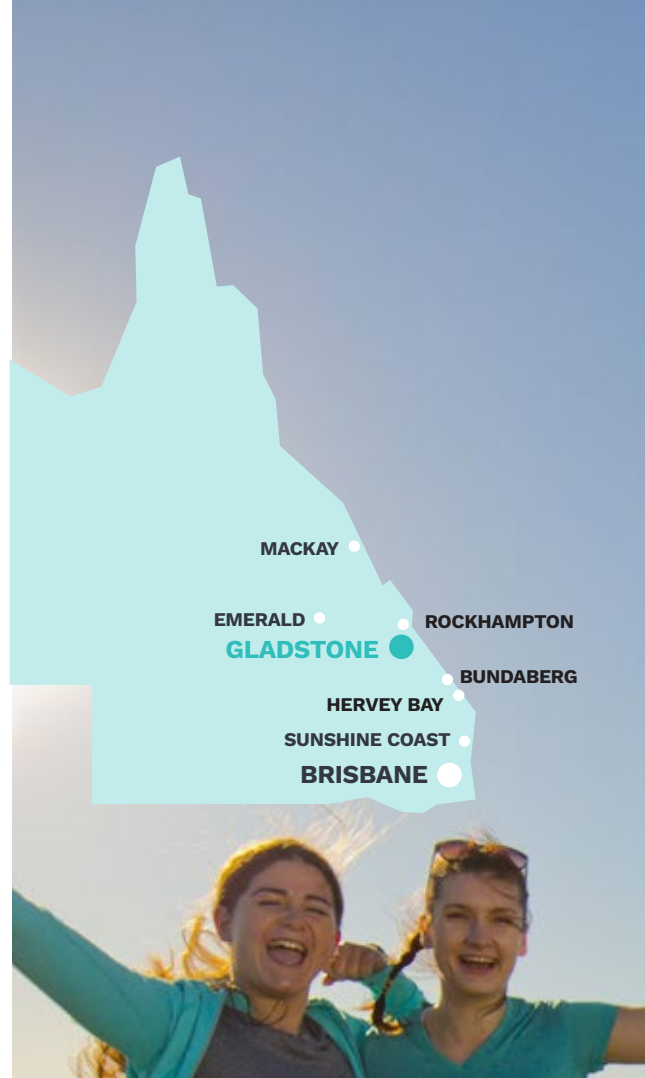
**CRUISE**



**4WD, RV, CARAVAN AND CAMPING**



**EVENTS AND SPECIAL INTEREST-  
YACHTING, DIVING, WEDDINGS**



### HIGH VALUE TRAVELLERS (HVT)

To increase the economic impact, it is recommended to further develop visitor experiences to appeal to domestic travellers who will generate a greater overnight visitor expenditure (OVE).

Tourism and Events Queensland and Tourism Australia have identified such visitors as High Value Travellers (HVT's) who spend more than the average traveller on travel and are aligned to experiences offered in Queensland and Australia.

The domestic intrastate and interstate markets could offer good potential for Gladstone Region, including 18-49 travelling with children and without children and 50+ market travelling without children.





# TRAVEL TRENDS

As competition rises for the tourism dollar and new destinations are being explored world-wide, the travelling consumer is spoilt for choice. The need to be kept abreast of world-wide travel trends to meet market needs is paramount.

## SOLO TRAVEL

Solo travel – once the domain of single backpackers – is a growing trend due to people marrying later in life (or not at all) and an ageing population. It has seen the rise of solo adventure packages for 30 and 40+ age groups and some widowed seniors using long-term hotel stays or cruises as a luxurious alternative to conventional elder care. These tourism trends are set to grow and grow.

### **Opportunities for Gladstone Region**

Offer social and networking experiences. Solo packages (not just based on twin share accommodation). Further growth of cruise market, particularly for single seniors.

## FAMILY DYNAMICS

Changing family dynamics, including single and same sex parents and extended families have changed traditional holiday packages and travel times.

With the increase of freelance employment and home schooling, many families are not necessarily travelling in school holiday periods, opting for 'edventure', family gap years and getting "off the grid" (even for just a few days without screen time).

### **Opportunities for Gladstone Region**

Providing out-of-school holiday family offers, packages for one parent and extended families.

## CONSCIOUS TRAVEL

Reflecting a growing concern among today's travellers for ethical and sustainable tourism options, many are seeking holidays that are purposeful and destinations that are open minded. A staggering 86 per cent of global travellers reportedly told booking.com they would be willing to spend some time on activities that offset the environmental impact of their stay.

### **Opportunities for Gladstone Region**

Include with a volunteer element, perhaps clear plastic and litter from the reef or beach, engaging in conservation work or working on a host farm.

## EMERGING + "ONE-OF-A-KIND" EXPERIENCES

According to booking.com, almost two thirds of travellers (60 per cent) value experiences higher than material possessions, seeking authentic experiences. Emerging, undiscovered destination travel is also on the rise.

### **Opportunities for Gladstone Region**

Developing unconventional and "one-of-a-kind" moments that can't be experienced anywhere else, from tours, accommodation to events, streetscapes and public infrastructure and art.



# TRAVEL TRENDS

## LIVE LIKE A LOCAL

Visitors wanting to engage with and participate in the local culture. From enjoying local cuisine to celebrating regional festivals and holidays.

### **Opportunities for Gladstone Region**

Be surprised by what the region can offer, with hidden, lesser-known, “untourist” spots. Promote and package with accommodation and tours that unearth local hang-outs. “A day in the life of” type experiences, such as experiences on a host farm.

## WELLNESS TRAVEL

Health and Fitness is high on the consumer agenda, with wellness travel becoming more active. Such as growth in cycling, hiking, boarding and walking tours.

### **Opportunities for Gladstone Region**

Rural, coastal and island retreats and workshops. Promotion of local bike hire, SUP, kayak, pilates, yoga and alternative therapies.

## BLEISURE TRAVEL

Bleisure travel – where business travellers combine business and leisure. They often extend their business trip to accommodate a few days of personal activities or a company may arrange for tourist activities on work trips as a perk.

### **Opportunities for Gladstone Region**

Major opportunity to target the business traveller to Gladstone City with short-break packages and pre-and-post packaging opportunities for business events and conference delegates.

## MICRO TRIPS

Growth of short-break and micro trips is still on the rise. One of the driving forces in bite-sized travel is the rise of bleisure.

### **Opportunities for Gladstone Region**

Targeting the 400km radius. The challenge is to increase access and affordable fly-drive packages out of SEQLD.

## SUPERFOODS, ORGANIC & WHOLESOME FOOD

A major Australian and international visitor trend including food and wine, paddock to plate, coffee culture and foods relating to health.

### **Opportunities for Gladstone Region**

Ensure the foods Gladstone Region is famous for (e.g. mud crab sandwiches, fresh seafood, wholesome traditional cuisine) is featured in all visitor experiences to increase visitor satisfaction.

## MAKE IT EASY FOR ME

With “I’m so busy” on many people’s lips, the need for “seamless” travel, where visitors can easily book a package with airfare, car hire, accommodation, transfers, tours etc. on their phone is imperative.

### **Opportunities for Gladstone Region**

Development and distribution of packages of Gladstone Region, just “make it easy” to purchase and travel.



# CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

In addition to the opportunities identified in Travel Trends, the following opportunities and challenges for growth were identified during the consultation process.

## Potential Constraints

### ACCESS

- Air access and the costs of airfares not competitive with other leisure destinations is a major constraint for future growth, including leisure fly-drive and business tourism markets and tourism packaging.
- Day trip access to the Southern Great Barrier Reef from Gladstone, particularly to harness the increased number of visitors from cruise ships.
- Access to the reef from Town of 1770 was identified as a key constraint throughout consultation. It is limited with tidal issues and inability to dredge creek. It was cited as a major game changer for the region if solutions could be found.
- Permits for marina access.
- All weather road to Agnes Water.

### SEASONALITY

- Need to grow visitation throughout the year to ensure financially sustainable growth for industry operators to grow businesses, enhance the visitor experience and increase employment.

### INTEGRATED PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE

- Lack of strategic integrated planning for tourism, including, but not limited to vehicle parking, fish cleaning/water facilities, low tide access, RV facilities in Gladstone City, Auckland Point and Mt. Larcom.
- Tourism Master Plan for Town of 1770/Agnes Water.
- Capacity management during peak seasons, including parking, illegal camping and RV facilities, particularly at Town of 1770/Agnes Water and Calliope.

### DESTINATION PROFILE

- Limited destination profile of region and continued need to break down barriers of perception of Gladstone.

### MEASURING & MONITORING

- Measuring and monitoring of tourism to track performance, particularly occupancy and seasonality.
- Ongoing monitoring and actioning outcomes from Destination Tourism Plan.





# Opportunities For Growth

## REEF ACCESS

- Reef cruise with larger seat capacity to Lady Musgrave.
- Reef day trip from Gladstone.

## DESTINATION MARKETING

- Continue success of SGBR branding and campaign.  
Work to further leverage partnerships with SGBR and neighbouring regions, including access from Sydney to Hervey Bay.

## PARTNERSHIPS

- Involvement of the First Nations, the Bailai, Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng, Taribelang Bunda people.
- Industry groups, including Gladstone Industry Leadership Group (GILG), Gladstone Engineering Alliance (GEA), Gladstone Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI).
- DCTC as potential satellite arm of GAPDL.

## INFRASTRUCTURE & EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

- Boyne Burnett Inland Rail Trail.
- Increased RV friendly facilities across region.
- Town and region tours.
- Kroombit Tops funding announcement from National Parks.

- Lake Awoonga visitor facilities.
- Increase nature experiences, e.g. outdoor abseiling.
- Planned interpretive center “The 1770 Experience”.
- Signage for drive market.
- Miriam Vale VIC development for north bound traffic to influence.
- Funding of year round surf lifesavers at Agnes Water.

## MARKET DEVELOPMENT

- Business tourism development.
- Growing RV market.
- Drive market – leveraging highway networks, self-drive itineraries and greater linkages between SGBR and Sandstone Wilderness.

## EVENTS

- Major events to change destination perception of region.
- Stage events during shoulder and off-peak season.
- Increase arts through events.





# INTO THE FUTURE

To grow the visitor economy for the Gladstone Region into the future, the region will need to further position itself and deliver on its promise as the gateway to the Southern Great Barrier Reef.

**To remain competitive, distinctive visitor experiences will need to be developed, including products, facilities, services and events.**

Consistent access to the reef, affordable air access, all-weather roads to key locations, and connectivity across the region will be vital to grow visitation, counteract the effects of seasonality and increase regional dispersal.

Integrated planning and tourism management during peak seasons and key locations will be vital to preserve the region's pristine natural environment and local resident's lifestyles, the key attributes that attract visitors and new residents.

This process can only be achieved collectively through a whole-of-region approach and culture that is collaborative, tourism friendly and outcomes focused.



# INTO THE FUTURE

## THE 5 YEAR VISION

The Gladstone Region is firmly positioned as the gateway to the Southern Great Barrier Reef, famous for “one-of-a-kind” experiences from the reef to the sandstone wilderness and home to hallmark and destination events.

The region, from all levels of government, private enterprise and community work collaboratively to welcome visitors to ensure their happiness, positive referrals and return visitation.

With a clear outcomes focus and integrated tourism planning, the region collectively improves sustainable access to the reef, achieves affordable air access, all-weather road access and enhanced facilities that provide for visitor and local resident satisfaction.

As a result, the region enjoys increased employment from overnight visitor expenditure and year-round visitation from its flourishing key markets.

## GOALS

→ **IMPROVE ACCESS** to reef, air and roads to decrease seasonality and ensure regional dispersal.

→ **GENERATE DESTINATION DEMAND** through “one-of-a-kind” visitor experiences that are distinctively SGBR/Gladstone Region and readily available through distribution channels and to purchase online.

→ **INVEST IN VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE** through integrated planning and coordination of public infrastructure for tourism and local community and foster private sector investment.

→ **GROW KEY MARKETS** including outdoor/fishing, drive, cruise, events and business tourism.

## PRIORITIES

1

**KEY ENABLERS**

2

**KEY MARKET SEGMENTS**

3

**“ONE-OF-A-KIND” EXPERIENCES**

4

**DESTINATION PROFILE**

5

**BUILD CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY**





Improved access and “one-of-a-kind” experiences will help to increase overnight visitor expenditure and visitor dispersal to and within the Gladstone Region.



The projects and priorities outlined in this Visitor Economy Strategy align with the Destination Priorities of the Gladstone Region Destination Tourism Plan 2019 - 2024.

Projects and infrastructure items identified in the strategy are not deemed a Gladstone Regional Council financial commitment.

They have been identified through the consultation process and items for future prioritisation and may be subject to multi-partner funding and resourcing.





# PRIORITY

# 1

## Key Enablers

**Key enablers for the visitor economy into the future include access to and within the region, infrastructure investment and integrated tourism planning. Investment in private and public infrastructure will be an integral component to growing the visitor economy for the Gladstone Region. Investment by all levels of government in high quality and innovative nature-based, sports, arts, cultural and tourism infrastructure will not only grow visitation, it will help spur private sector investment. Improvements in tourism infrastructure at key locations will help deliver a better experience for both visitors and local residents.**

The Gladstone Region must provide better and reliable access to the region and its stunning natural attractions.

### →REEF DAY TRIP

Encourage the development of a reef day trip from Gladstone to harness opportunity of increased visitation from Cruise Ship visitors. Develop pre-feasibility study.

### →CREEK + ESTUARY ACCESS TOWN OF 1770

Improve water access from Town of 1770, most notably in relation to reliable access with creek and estuary.

### →AFFORDABLE & INCREASED AIR ACCESS

Affordable air access is crucial if Gladstone Region is to compete with other leisure and business tourism destinations and grow higher yield travellers.

Lobbying for increased air access with key markets, including investigation of regional connections and other capital city connections (e.g. Gladstone to Gold Coast, Toowoomba, Townsville and Gladstone to Sydney).

### →ROAD ACCESS + DISPERSAL

Prioritise road access areas for high visitation areas, such as an all-weather access road to Agnes Water.

To facilitate dispersal of self-drive visitors throughout region investigate potential “welcome” road access points to stop visitors and influence dispersal, such as Miriam Vale and township of Mt Larcom as Welcome Centres/RV Friendly Visitor Info Centres.

Continue to further promote linkages from coast and inland with self-drive itineraries and packages and linking with inland highway committees.

Proposed inland development of the rail corridor to link Gladstone and Gayndah. The link would be from Taragoola (near Gladstone) through the Boyne Valley, on to the North Burnett towns of Monto, Eidsvold, Mundubbera and south through Gayndah.

### →INTEGRATED TOURISM PLANNING

Further integrated planning for tourism is required to help manage for sustainable growth.

Clear leadership with tourism management plans and processes with actions is required. The need is highlighted for areas already experiencing capacity issues during high season, including the need for a Tourism Master Plan for Town of 1770/Agnes Water and reef access.

Other priority locations include:

- RV market demands and Gladstone CBD etc.
- Additionally developing links to Auckland Hill lookout, incorporating industrial tourism and sunset/sunrise opportunities.



# PRIORITY



## Key Enablers

### → TOURISM FRIENDLY DESTINATION

Developing the Gladstone Region's reputation as a tourism industry friendly destination will be an essential component in attracting tourism investment and enabling existing tourism businesses and experiences to develop.

The development of a "one stop shop" approach and culture with

council, strategic partners and the greater tourism industry should be a key priority.

This will require a concerted commitment to the development of a corporate culture that is tourism and customer centric, with a whole of Council and regional approach with key strategic partners.

A "one-stop-shop" approach would involve a key contact person/team within council to be the first point of contact.

Their role would be to act as a concierge across multiple Council departments and with the key stakeholders and partners (e.g. other state/federal departments, GAPDL, industry groups etc).

ACTION	LEAD BY
<p><b>1.1 Reef Day Trip</b> Actively support the attraction of a reef day trip opportunity from Gladstone, including pre-feasibility study to ascertain financial viability.</p>	GAPDL GRC
<p><b>1.2 Creek &amp; Estuary Access Town of 1770</b> Actively pursue, support and advocate for reliable access and infrastructure from Town of 1770 for reef/marine operators, particularly to provide for reliable creek/estuary access.</p>	GRC GAPDL DCTC
<p><b>1.3 Affordable &amp; Increased Air Access</b> Partner with airport to identify actions with airlines. Advocate for competitive airfares and potential increased access. Investigate tourism packaging opportunities with airlines. Trial of charter flights for major events, conferences and holiday deals to package flights, events and visitor experiences.</p>	GAPDL GRC GAC
<p><b>1.4 Road Access + Dispersal</b> Advocate for an all-weather access road to Agnes Water and investigate possible future funding partners. Investigate potential Welcome Centre/RV Friendly VICs at Miriam Vale and Mt Larcom township. Promote linkages from coast and inland with self-drive itineraries, packages and highway committees. Support and advocate for proposed Boyne Burnett Inland Rail Trail. Lead by Boyne Burnett Inland Rail Trail Inc.</p>	GRC GAPDL Boyne Burnett Inland Rail Trail Inc.
<p><b>1.5 Integrated Tourism Management Plan</b> Integrated tourism planning. Advocate for the inclusion of tourism in town planning, across council departments and relevant state and federal authorities. Priority projects-Gladstone CBD linkages with waterfront and Tourism Master Plan Town of 1770/Agnes. Partner with Gladstone Ports Corporation (GPC) to re-ignite Auckland Hill Master Plan and linking with Harbour Arbour/East Shores.</p>	GRC Relevant State/Federal departments Industry Partners e.g. Gladstone Ports Corporation (GPC)
<p><b>1.6 Tourism Friendly Destination</b> Identify within council contract person/team for tourism industry enquiries to act as concierge. Include GAPDL's Destination Tourism Committee in major actions to ensure cross-collaboration.</p>	GRC GAPDL Strategic partners State/Federal departments.



# PRIORITY 2

## Key Market Segments

DRIVE → FISHING & BOATING → CRUISE SHIPS → EVENTS → BUSINESS TOURISM

**The development of signature experiences and infrastructure for the Gladstone Region's key market segments is recommended to grow the visitor economy.**

### →DRIVE

The drive market includes short-break drive, fly-drive, 4WD, RV, caravan and camping. To grow the market recommendations include all-weather road access to key locations, regional signage strategy, leveraging highway committees and implementation of the actions in the Gladstone Region RV Strategy.

### →MARINE TOURISM - FISHING, BOATING + DIVING

The fishing and boating market is a significant market for the region's tourism and event operators. The region offers coastal, tributary, reef and inland fishing, including year-round barramundi fishing. The further enhancement of

infrastructure and facilities, including fish cleaning, water and long vehicle parking in key locations is required.

Dive sites on the Southern Great Barrier Reef have been identified as world class and provide dive trail opportunities ex. both Gladstone and Town of 1770.

The dive market provides both domestic international opportunities.

### →CRUISE SHIPS & TOURS

Continue to position the Gladstone Region as a key cruise destination for domestic and international cruise ships, further developing a reef day trip experience and regional tours to maximise the economic benefit of 15,000+ passengers per annum.

### →BUSINESS TOURISM/MICE

The region has the accommodation and conferencing facilities to attract a greater number of

business events. A five year Business Tourism Action Plan to position the Gladstone Region as an emerging business tourism destination has been developed.

### →INDUSTRIAL TOURISM

With its unique juxtaposition with industry along the shores of a World Heritage listed site, the Gladstone Region, particularly Gladstone City, provides opportunities for visitors to learn about industry through better interpretation experiences, for example from Auckland Hill with sunset/evening viewing/show/tour.

### →EVENTS

The Gladstone Region Events Strategy aims to position the region as a leading event-friendly destination by harnessing the region's competitive advantages. The strategic approach is to develop events that build positive destination profiling and attract new events in bolster shoulder periods.



# PRIORITY 2

## Key Market Segments

### ACTION

### LEAD BY

#### 2.1 Drive Market

Regional campaign within the 400km radius.  
Fly-drive – actions outlined in 1.2 for affordable access and packaging of flights, hire cars and experiences.  
Develop regional signage strategy.  
Implement the Gladstone Region RV Strategy.

**GRC/GAPDL**  
DCTC  
Drive industry operators

#### 2.2 Marine Tourism - Fishing, Boating and Diving

Enhance fishing and boating infrastructure in key locations throughout the region.  
Further promote dive opportunities with a Dive Trail (refer Dive Southern Great Barrier Reef Discussion Paper) and packaging.

**GRC/GAPDL**  
Fishing & boating industry/government organisations

#### 2.3 Business Tourism/Mice

Implement the Gladstone Region Business Events Action Plan.

**GRC/GAPDL**  
Business event operators

#### 2.4 Cruise Ships + Tours

Continue active cruise ship attraction strategy.  
Feasibility study for reef and day trip options for passengers.  
Actions from Gladstone Region DTP, including focus on growth in volume and market share, work with operators to revitalise new and existing tours for cruise companies and educate industry on leveraging opportunities from cruise ship visitation.

**GAPDL**  
GRC

#### 2.5 Industrial Tourism

Further promote industry tours.  
Investigate potential development of Auckland Hill with innovative experience, particularly for sunset/evening viewing (refer Auckland Hill Masterplan).

**GAPDL**  
Gladstone Ports Corporation  
Industry Partners  
GRC

#### 2.6 Events

Implement the Gladstone Region Events Strategy.

**GRC**  
GAPDL  
DCTC  
Event organisers



# PRIORITY 3

## “One-of-a-Kind” Experiences

### →CASE STUDY

**The innovative scUber campaign organised by Tourism and Events Queensland and partnered with GAPDL/Southern Great Barrier Reef gained national and international coverage from the campaign launch on Heron Island.**

Although not a permanent tour experience, it highlighted the interest in new, intimate and innovated experiences...where you literally immerse yourself in the destination.

**With growing competition for the travel dollar, the need for accommodation, attractions, events, visitor services and the wider visitor economy including transport and infrastructure to elevate their visitor experience is required.**

### →SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES

The creation of original “one-of-a-kind” signature experiences through an experience development program is integral.

To give genuine competitive advantage, “one-of-a-kind” experiences should reflect the unique selling points of the region,

the Southern Great Barrier Reef and iconic locations and settings of the Gladstone Region.

Council, GAPDL and strategic partners will hold an important leadership and enabler role in the successful development of signature experiences, as will local entrepreneurs and operators to deliver these experiences to visitors.

The development of signature events and associated actions is outlined in the Gladstone Region Event Strategy.

### →FIRST NATIONS

The active involvement of the First Nations, the Bailai, Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng, Taribelang Bunda people in experience development is recommended. This could take the form of a theatrically staged Welcome to Country at a business event or the input and development of the story and significance of locations for tour operators. The employment of first nation’s people within the tourism industry should be encouraged.

Through a Public Art Development Plan as recommended in the Gladstone Region Arts & Cultural Development Plan, a public arts trial, incorporating both public and private sector, could also assist in visitor dispersal throughout the region.

### →TOURISM INNOVATION FUND

To encourage local businesses to innovate and develop “one-of-a-kind” signature experiences, it is recommended to develop a Tourism Innovation Fund.

The fund could be developed along the lines of the GRC’s Event Funding program, with clear objectives, criteria and outcomes.

The funding program could also act as a conduit for other state and federal funding programs.

### →STREET + PUBLIC ART

As one of the fastest growing visitor sectors from art in laneways and buildings to art on silos and sand sculptures on the beach, with Gladstone Region’s stunning natural environment and it’s juxtaposition with industry, provides an ideal “canvas” for public and street art. It is highly recommended to further develop street and public art throughout the region, particularly in high use visitor areas. This could be undertaken in partnership with local tourism bodies, attractions and businesses e.g. heritage villages, caravan parks, service stations.



# PRIORITY 3

## “One-of-a-Kind” Experiences

### →TRAVEL TRENDS

Experience development should link specifically to world-wide and Australian travel trends. Opportunities include the development of experiences for:

- Solo travellers
- Family dynamics
- Conscious travellers
- Live like a local
- Wellness travel
- Micro trips
- Organic and superfoods

### →PACKAGING

The packaging of experiences and distribution through major networks and online consumer purchasing will need to be undertaken as a key component of the experience development program.

Encouraging tourism experiences that include dawn, dusk and evening experiences will help to grow overnight visitor expenditure.

ACTION	LEAD BY
<p><b>3.1 Signature “one-of-a-kind” experiences</b> Experience development program implemented over a three year period, incorporating travel trends. Invite operators with leading examples and mentoring program developed.</p>	<p><b>GAPDL</b> GRC DCTC Industry operators</p>
<p><b>3.2 First Nations</b> Initiate engagement and involvement in experience development program.</p>	<p><b>GRC</b> GAPDL First Nations</p>
<p><b>3.3 Tourism Innovation Fund</b> Develop Tourism Innovation Fund program to encourage/enable innovative entrepreneurship and “one-of-a-kind” experiences.</p>	<p><b>GRC</b> GAPDL Industry partners Tourism operators</p>
<p><b>3.4 Street &amp; Public Art</b> Implement Public Art Development Plan with tourism partnerships to encourage regional dispersal. Develop “one-of-a-kind” public/street art experiences to reflect the region’s unique selling points and juxtaposition of industry and world heritage.</p>	<p><b>GRC</b> Arts bodies Tourism industry Arts and tourism operators/practitioners</p>
<p><b>3.5 Packaging</b> Packaging program for tourism operators as part of experience development program. Engage professional packaging expert over a two to three year period to encourage distribution of Gladstone Region packages for sale through tourism channels.</p>	<p><b>GAPDL</b> DCTC GRC Industry operators</p>



# PRIORITY 4

## Destination Profile

**Creating a positive destination profile is a key driver for the Gladstone Region, both for tourism and for attracting skilled labour.**

### → THE SOUTHERN GREAT BARRIER REEF

We need to recognise the marketing budget for many regional destinations is often smaller than the annual budget of one major chain hotel or theme park. With limited budgets it is imperative the region continues to embrace and participate in the greater Southern Great Barrier Reef destination brand and campaigns and link with Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) and Tourism Australia (TA) initiatives.

The development of sub-regional applications to the parent Southern Great Barrier Reef brand is recommended. For example for iconic locations, such as Town of 1770/Agnes Water and hinterland

and sandstone wilderness areas. The brand should be adopted by events and business tourism and ideally by the wider visitor economy and industry to increase the region's presence in the market place.



### → AMPLIFYING THE BRAND

The Southern Great Barrier Reef (SGBR) brand is more than a logo. Amplification of the Gladstone Region through the SGBR brand

would be enhanced by the further promotion of a digital tourism and events brand toolkit. This could be accessed by the wider tourism and events industry through GAPDL. To reinforce consistent messaging, the digital toolkit could include brand templates, media releases and the image and digital footage library of GAPDL.

### → DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION

Gladstone Region tourism operators and events need to increase their digital distribution on tourism booking engines and websites such as TripAdvisor and the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW).

Increasing content and compelling images and footage through social media platforms and Media PR units with GAPDL/Southern Great Barrier Reef, Tourism and Events Queensland and Tourism Australia is essential.

ACTION	LEAD BY
<p><b>4.1 Southern Great Barrier Reef Campaign</b> Continue to actively participate in SGBR campaign. Develop sub-regional and event applications.</p>	<p><b>GAPDL</b> DCTC GRC Industry operators</p>
<p><b>4.2 Brand Adoption</b> Digital tourism and events toolkit.</p>	<p><b>GAPDL</b> DCTC GRC Industry operators</p>
<p><b>4.3. Digital Distribution</b> Increase Gladstone Region presence and operators on ATDW. Create Trip Advisor Destination Profile e.g. <a href="http://www.tripadvisor.com.au/Profile/AusOutbackNT">www.tripadvisor.com.au/Profile/AusOutbackNT</a></p>	<p><b>GAPDL</b> DCTC GRC Industry operators</p>



# PRIORITY 5

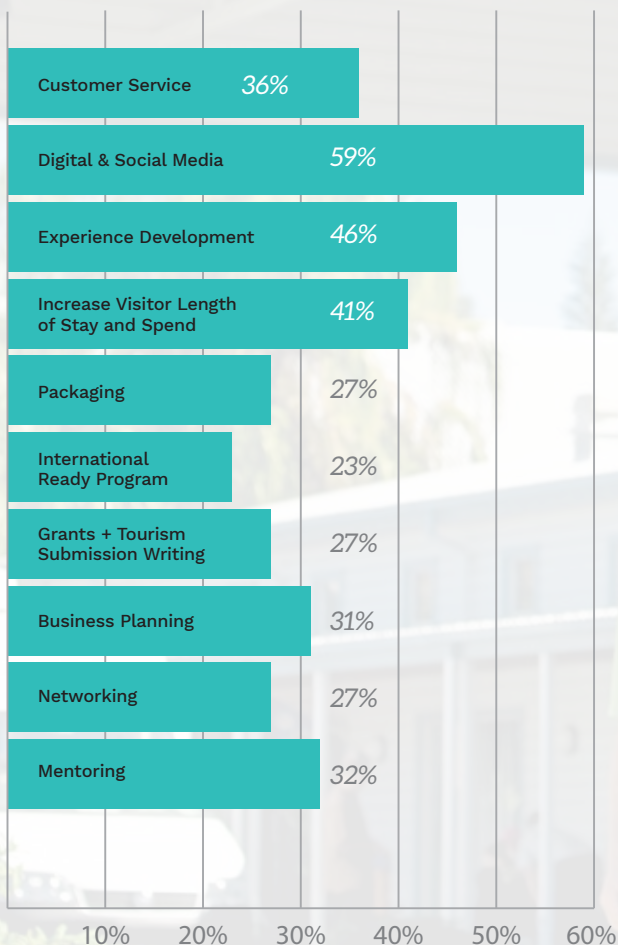
## Build Capability & Capacity

To grow Gladstone Region’s visitor economy and further develop its reputation as a tourism friendly destination will require building capacity of the tourism industry, the wider visitor economy, council, strategic partners and local community.

### → TOURISM TRAINING PROGRAM

To identify the training needs, tourism industry representatives were surveyed as part of the Visitor Economy Survey to indicate what areas of training they would attend. Increasing tourism industry capacity through an annual training program is recommended.

#### WOULD YOU ATTEND TRAINING IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING?



Source: Gladstone Region Visitor Economy Survey 2019

### → EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT & PACKAGING PROGRAM

To realise the region’s 5 year vision to be famous for “one-of-a-kind” experiences, an **experience development and packaging program** is recommended to be rolled out over a three year period.

### → TOURISM & EVENT SYMPOSIUM

During consultation a strong desire for networking between the tourism industry and event organisers was cited. To facilitate this process a tourism and event symposium that included the updating of progress on strategies, information exchanges, market sector updates and tourism trends, case studies and training could be developed.

It is recommended the theme for the Tourism & Event Symposium be for developing innovative “one-of-a-kind” signature tourism experiences with external case studies from private operators with how they did it. The Tourism Innovation Fund could be launched at the Symposium.

### → EXPLORE YOUR OWN BACKYARD

The Gladstone Region has a high percentage of visiting friends and relatives, accounting for 27% of the tourism market. To embrace this market and encourage regional dispersal a local tourism campaign to explore their own backyard and invite their mates to join them could prove successful, particularly during low and shoulder seasons.

### → WELCOME/GREETERS PROGRAM & CUSTOMER SERVICE

Resource GAPDL with GCCI and DCTC to further develop the Gladstone cruise ship ambassadors program as a wider tourism ambassadors program across the region. The concept could be modelled around the Brisbane Greeters Program where local volunteers, passionate about their hometown, take visitors on complimentary walking/cycling tours of their favourite places to introduce visitors to the city. The program is modelled on the international program which began in New York.

A customer service program for the wider visitor economy, such as the Welcome to Noosa program, is an easy to use, online professional development program aimed at delivering memorable experiences for visitors and local customers alike.



# PRIORITY 5

## Build Capability & Capacity

### ACTION

### LEAD BY

#### 5.1 Tourism Training Program

Annual tourism training program with tailored/interactive workshops.

**GAPDL**

GRC

DCTC

Industry operators

#### 5.2 Experience + Packaging Program

Experience development program run over a three year period, incorporating travel trends, packaging and visiting operators with leading examples and mentoring program developed

**GAPDL**

GRC

DCTC

Industry operators

#### 5.3 Tourism + Event Symposium

Annual symposium to network, share ideas and innovations.

Invite external private operators with case studies and launch Tourism innovation Fund.

**GRC**

GAPDL

DCTC

Industry partners & operators

#### 5.4 Explore Your Own Backyard

Visiting friends and relatives campaign In local media.

**GAPDL**

GRC

Local media

#### 5.5 Welcome/Greeters Program + Customer Service

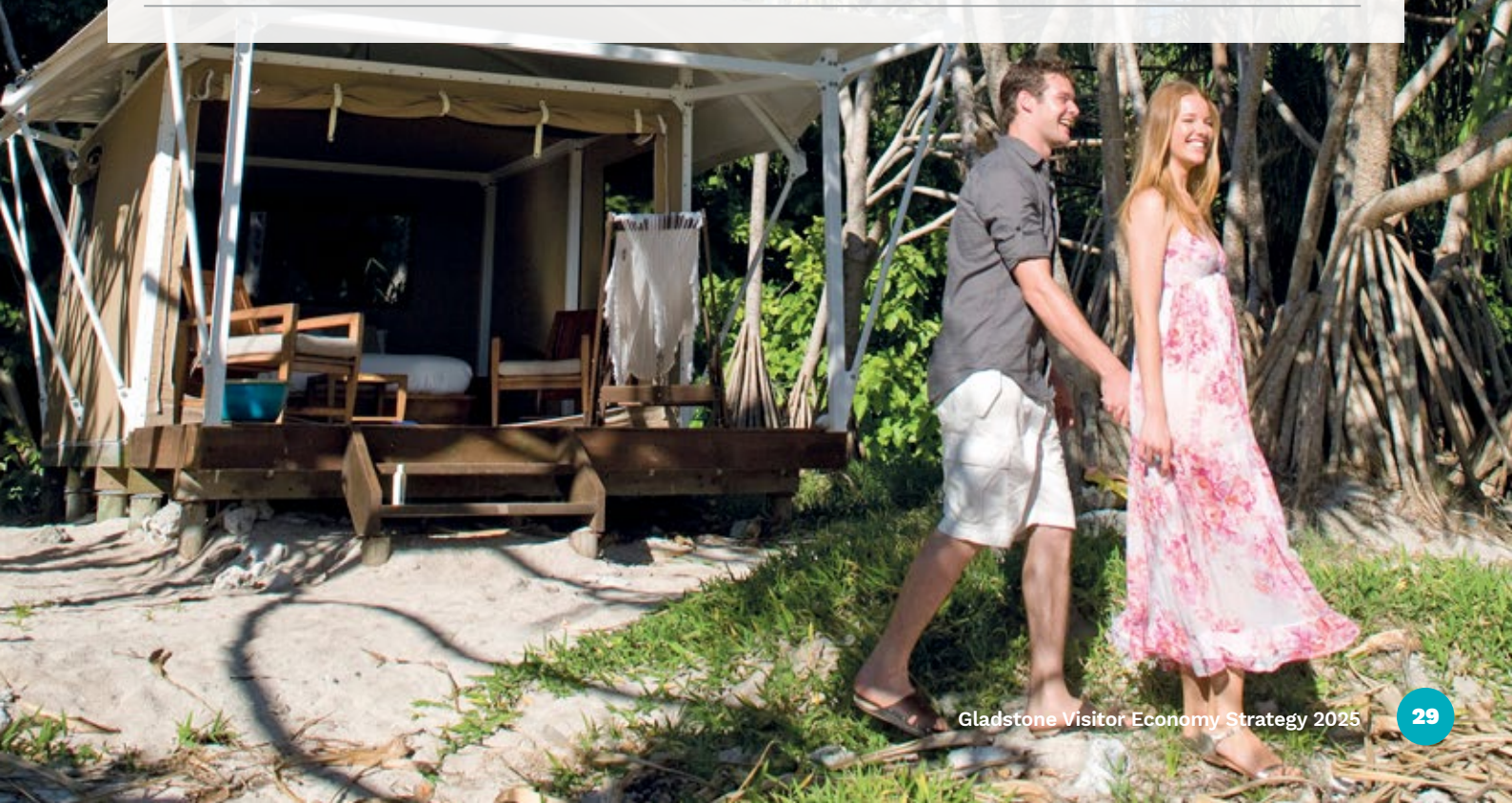
Long-term development of welcome/greeters program and customer service throughout the region.

**GAPDL**

GRC

DCTC

GCCI





# MONITORING OUTCOMES ACTION PLAN

To grow the visitor economy in the Gladstone Region, critical success factors will include building a corporate culture of collaboration across the region and highlighting the importance of the visitor economy. It will require adequate resourcing and good governance.

**In building the visitor economy, outcomes will go beyond just visitor numbers and include the key indicators of:**

- Visitor Expenditure
- Length-of-stay
- Visitor numbers
- Satisfaction

The first three indicators can be monitored by Tourism Research Australia's Local Government Area Profiles issued annually.

## VISITOR SATISFACTION SURVEY

Visitor satisfaction at the regional level is currently not measured.

The introduction of visitor sampling at different intervals throughout the year in multiple locations is highly recommended. This would help to gain a greater understanding of current visitor perceptions, satisfactions, purchasing habits and intentions to return.

## GOVERNANCE

To monitor the progress and outcomes of this strategy, it is recommended to resource the Destination Tourism Plan committee of GAPDL with secretariat support to administer the ongoing facilitation and monitoring of outcomes of the Visitor Economy Strategy in

partnership with the Destination Tourism Plan.

Involvement of strategic partners and relevant council, industry organisations and government departments will be required to help facilitate this process.

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The strategy should be reviewed annually with the TRA Local Government Area profiles. Other key performance indicators should be reviewed quarterly through the implementation of the actions outlined in the 5 Key Priority areas (p. 21 - 29) of this strategy.





# CONSULTATION

This Strategy has been prepared through consultation with the Gladstone Region tourism industry through workshops, internal workshops, and councillor meetings. Face-to-face meetings were conducted with key stakeholders such as GAPDL and DCTC.

**In addition to in region workshops and face-to-face meetings, an online event survey distributed to participants by the council, GAPDL and DCTC, sent to over two hundred industry members across the Gladstone region with 29 respondents.**

## GLADSTONE REGION VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY 2025

**1** **Face-to-Face Consultation**  
17 – 19 June 2019

**2** **Desktop Audit**  
July 2019

**3** **Phone Interviews**  
July 2019

**4** **Online Survey**  
August 2019

**5** **Draft Gladstone RV Strategy**  
August 2019

**6** **Draft Gladstone Region Visitor Economy Strategy**  
September 2019



# REFERENCES

- Advancing Tourism 2016 – 2020, Queensland Government
- Central Queensland Tourism Opportunity Plan 2009 – 2019
- Dive Southern Great Barrier Reef Discussion Paper, 2013, Tourism & Events Queensland
- Gladstone Region Arts and Cultural Plan 2018 – 2022
- Gladstone Regional Council 2018 – 2023 Corporate Plan
- Gladstone Region 2019/20 Operational Plan
- Gladstone Region Destination Tourism Plan 2014 – 2020 (DTP Review 2019)
- Gladstone Region Economic Development Strategy
- Gladstone Region Business Tourism Action Plan 2025
- Gladstone Regional Events Strategy 2019 – 2024
- Gladstone Region RV Strategy 2025
- Gladstone Region Destination Tourism Plan 2019 - 2024.
- Local Government Area Profiles 2018, Gladstone (R) Queensland, Tourism Research Australia
- South Coast Marine Tourism Strategy 2019 NSW
- Tasmania Visitor Economy Strategy 2020
- TEQ Marketing Strategy 2025
- TEQ Events Strategy 2025
- Vancouver Tourism Master Plan 2013



The preparation of this report was developed in consultation for Gladstone Regional Council

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