

OUTBACK BY THE SEA®

TOURISM STRATEGY

March 2023



To manage the Outback by the Sea® as a destination in which tourism, industry, government, and community leaders plan for the future, facilitate and manage the economic growth attached to tourism and market and promote the Outback by the Sea® brand.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Vision

To be on the bucket list of travelers in Australia and to be known as the Outback by the Sea[®] - where adventure, nature and culture come together.

Mission

Create employment, wealth, and well-being for the community by delivering authentic Outback by the Sea[®] Tourism Experiences.

Strategic Objectives

1. Establish benchmarks and best practice for the Outback by the Sea[®] Tourism Framework
2. Develop and deliver quality experiences and events
3. Increase visitation, length of stay and average spend

Core Values

Service

Deliver fantastic service with a great attitude – our Outback by the Sea[®] is a friendly place!

Governance and integrity

Good tourism governance and leadership for our region, which is based on integrity, honesty and transparency, and delivers great outcomes through good stakeholder management.

Innovation

Be bold, be different, take risks – with product development, delivery and promotions.

Community

Strong community partnerships and sense of ownership across all peoples and businesses.

Hero Experiences

Outback

- Birdwatching
- Morning Glory Clouds
- Camp #119
- Mutton Hole Wetlands
- Indigenous Stock Workers, Working on Cattle Stations – Aboriginal Women's Stories and Rodeo Riders Displays
- Cultural tours (Bynoe)

Outback & Sea

- Barramundi Discovery Centre and Hatchery
- Outback by the Sea Festival

Sea

- Fishing Comps Normanton, Karumba, Burketown
- Sunsets over the ocean
- Fishing charters and heli fishing
- Croc Spotting and sunset cruises

Key Priorities

- Early Explorers Display Normanton
- Mutton Hole Wetlands & Boardwalk
- Indigenous tourism

Key Strengths

- accessible via sealed road
- amazing sunsets
- Barra Centre & Hatchery
- unique nature and wildlife
- renowned fishing destination
- Barramundi breeding programme, supporting sustainable fishing
- vibrant communities with strong indigenous representation
- genuine and authentic experiences and product
- great variety of fresh seafood and cattle
- Visitor Info Centres

Key Opportunities

- Increased community engagement
- Expand Outback by the Sea Festival, events in general
- Strategic partnerships
- Government grants
- Year of accessible tourism 2023
- Increased visitation into 'wet season'
- Free camping for self-sufficient campers



Our place – this is the Outback by the Sea®

The Gulf Country, or Gulf Savannah is located across North West Queensland and shares some of the key features of Northern Australia including being resource-rich and close to growing Asian markets. Other key strengths of the Gulf investment environment include its water resources, its active export port, and good levels of infrastructure.

Burke, Carpentaria, Croydon, Doomadgee, and Mornington Shires have important environmental and cultural heritage values, and offer a good lifestyle, a range of services and pro-active Councils. The region enjoys a climate which is not uniformly hot and humid, and the challenges of remoteness have been addressed by recent improvements in infrastructure and services.

The Gulf of Carpentaria has a robust fishing industry and opportunities exist in further development of aquaculture – such as the Karumba Barramundi Hatchery.

There is a range of employment and business opportunities based around the region’s growing tourism industry and its location on major drive



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Plans generated by MapInfo Professional - MGA Zone 54 (GDA94)



routes such as the Savannah Way and Matilda Way. Development of new products, to cater for new tourism market segments and changing consumer preferences, is considered an important opportunity that would further grow and diversify the industry. The small business sector is also considered to have opportunities to service a growing population and a growing economy.

The spectacular natural environment of the Southern Gulf Region ranges from eucalyptus woodlands in inland areas through to lowland coastal plains, pristine wild rivers, and seasonal wetlands to the rich marine resources of the Gulf of Carpentaria. Extensive mangrove forests, vast salt pans, estuaries, beaches, rocky shores, large seagrass beds, reefs and other marine areas typify the landscape.

The area is particularly significant for the extent and continuity of its wetlands and its importance as a rich breeding habitat for many waterbird and shorebird species and encompasses many areas of high cultural significance to Traditional Owners.

The Gulf represents a majestic union of two disparate worlds, where the Outback's red dirt, black soil plains, hard ridges, outcrops and fine Savannah soils meet the Sea with wetlands, mangroves, salt pans and the open ocean. In these parts, Mother Nature reigns supreme.



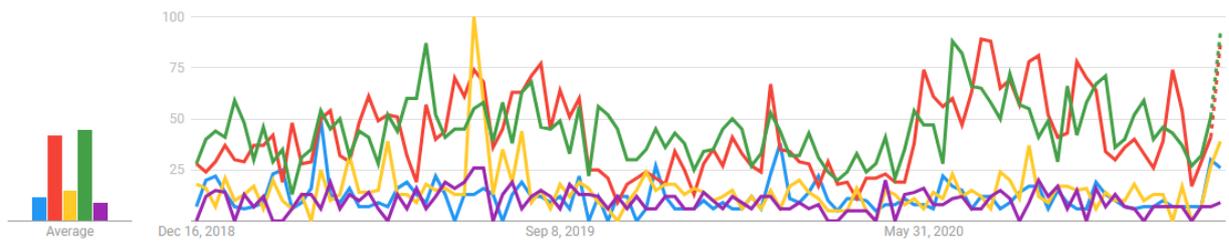


SITUATION ANALYSIS

Market and brand Value

Tourism and hospitality are key industries and major contributors to Australia’s economy.

Google Trends over the last couple of years, showing a definite increase in interest for Karumba and Normanton with the launch of the Barramundi Discovery Centre, as well as the implementation of the Digital Strategy earlier this year. Brand awareness for the Savannah Way is comparatively small.



Compared breakdown by subregion

Subregion ▼ ⬇ ⏪ ⏩ 🔗

- Gulf of Carpentaria
- Karumba
- Burketown
- Normanton
- Savannah Way



Color intensity represents percentage of searches [LEARN MORE](#)

Sort: Interest for Gulf of Carpentaria ▼

1	Northern Territory	■ ■ ■ ■
2	Western Australia	■ ■ ■ ■
3	Victoria	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
4	South Australia	■ ■ ■ ■
5	New South Wales	■ ■ ■ ■ ■

The last detailed visitor analysis was undertaken in 2018 through Gulf Savannah Development (GSD), with the value of tourism to the area estimated at \$69.8m in 2017. This consist of around 55,000 visitors staying an average 13 days and spending around \$97 per day.

Most visitors are from within Queensland, followed by NSW and VIC. The survey also highlighted that 91.6% travelled in 4WD vehicles, with the majority travelling different forms of transportable accommodation including 59.6% towing a caravan, 18.6% towing camping trailers, 10.8% in campervans and 8.7% in motorhomes. The high percentage of 'caravanning' amongst the region's visitors is reflected in the usage rates for the accommodation types. The survey showed that 69% of visitor nights were spent in caravan parks or commercial camping grounds, with 24% of visitor nights being spent in 'bush' or free camping sites and only 5% of visitors choosing to stay in hotel/motel accommodation.

Our Partners

Industry

- Tourism Events Queensland (TEQ)
- Outback Queensland Tourism Association (OQTA)
- Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ)
- Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC)
- Transportation providers (Gulflander, Rex, Trans North, Qantaslink etc)
- Travel bookers (Retail, Wholesale and Inbound- Helloworld currently a key partner)

Community

- Local and regional tourism suppliers
- Community organisations and residents
 - BYNOE, CLCAC Indigenous Rangers
 - Rodeo Committee
 - Gulf Barramundi Restocking Association and other Gulf re-stocking groups

Government

- State and regional Government Departments
 - ROC's (NWQROC)
 - Western Queensland Alliance of Councils (WQAC)
 - Arts Queensland
 - State Development and Infrastructure
 - Museums Queensland
- Neighbouring and regional Local Governments
- Neighbouring and regional Visitor Information Centres

And most importantly: all residents and visitors to the Carpentaria Shire

Market Segments

High value Travellers:

- **50+ travelling without children**
more spare time allows them to pursue a variety of interests
 - domestically, most live in Melbourne or Sydney, but 21% in regional NSW and VIC – largest segment of visitors to the region, which is why the state borders reopening is being pursued by operators
 - half now retired and more spare time on their hands allows them to pursue a variety of interests
 - broad TV repertoire, with high consumption of news and other information channels as well as game shows, dramas, and home improvement. Travel magazines are also more popular than average amongst this group and they will pick up brochures and maps from the VIC's
 - digitally well connected
- **Travelling with children**
Juggling busy careers, social commitments, and family life
 - Affluent families Juggling busy careers, social commitments, and family life
 - Most live in capital cities, working full or part time, while some focus on home duties
 - Kids channels often on TV as well as family dramas and cooking shows
 - For those reading magazines, more are interested in gossip/entertainment, home decorating and health
 - Living in the digital world
- **18-49 travelling without children**
They can afford to spend a little more and live freely
 - Majority live in metropolitan areas and work in white collar jobs
 - Working hard means they can afford to spend a little more and live freely
 - Highly engaged with social media, and enjoying comedy, drama, music, entertainment, lifestyle, and fashion in their mainstream media repertoire

Groups:

- **Coach Tours**
 - and VIC – largest segment of visitors to the region
 - half now retired and more spare time on their hands allows them to pursue a variety of interests
- **Educational tours**
 - Schools and universities

- **Tag-along tours**
 - Organised Adventure seekers

- **Special Interest groups (fishing, bird watching etc)**

Split of market segments:

Visitation has been dominated by the Grey Nomad segment, followed by families and tour groups, but with the current global pandemic the actual split may change in the course of 2021, as people are unable to travel overseas and explore their backyard.

The Outback is considered a safe destination, no virus and plenty of wide-open spaces, and marketing funds are being diverted from international campaigns to domestic ones, including a push for Drive North Queensland.

The development of our product is geared towards any of the target segments.

Seasonality

Tourism to the the Outback by the Sea® is generally restricted to April – October, with a lot of operators closing for the summer months.

The challenge and the opportunity are to extend the season, opening different markets such as bird watching and Morning Glory cloud experiences.



Strategic Objectives

1. Establish benchmarks and best practice for the Outback by the Sea® Tourism Framework
2. Develop and deliver quality experiences and events
3. Increase visitation, length of stay and average spend

1. Outback by the Sea® Tourism Framework – effective 01 July 2023

Destination Champion/Consultant – Outback by the Sea®:

- Contract role (Vendor Panel)
- Funding requirement: approx. \$70k per annum (\$12k digital strategy, \$15k Outback by the Sea Event Management, around \$3,500 per month for other activities/responsibilities as listed below)
- reporting to CEO and Council and lead/spokesperson for Destination Committee

Overall Objective:

Lead the Outback by the Sea® Committee to drive sustainable tourism growth outcomes and liaise with industry, trade, and tourism stakeholders in the key domestic and international markets.

Responsibilities:

- **Destination Marketing**
 - drive digital media, including Facebook and Instagram
 - destination website development and maintenance – possibly part of the CSC site (Discover Carpentaria – www.discovercarpentaria.com.au), links to Barra Centre
 - tradeshows
 - Gulf Country booklet – rename ‘Outback by the Sea’

- **Industry Development**
 - advocate and advise in an ongoing process to deliver the vision, mission, and strategic goals of the destination
 - building capabilities, i.e., delivery of digital toolkit
- **Experience and Event development, including running the Outback by the Sea Festival**
 - more product on to ADTW and Best of Queensland
 - coordinate event timings
 - Pursue other key tourism developments including Mutton Hole Wetlands and indigenous tourism opportunities
- **Economic development – increase yields**
 - Lead tourism strategy and actions
 - access and drive grant opportunities
 - work with council on supporting infrastructure priorities such as roads/access
 - align strategies with DMO's
 - Assist with Award opportunities (RTO/QLD and National)

Outback by the Sea® Committee – industry led:

Purpose: feedback, advise → action through Destination Champion/CEO/Consultant

Members:

- In accordance with Advisory Committee Structure adopted by Council



Action	Who	When
Form Committee	CEO	By 01 April 2023
Appoint a Tourism Champion/s/Consultant	CEO	01 July 2023
Engage stakeholders, including potentially other councils	CEO	By 01 April 2023



2. Develop and deliver quality experiences and events

Defining our experiences

What are our unique destination assets?

- The only Gulf beach accessible via sealed road
- Renowned for Fishing – in the Gulf and the rivers and creeks
 - Unique nature and wildlife – hand-feed barramundi at the Barramundi Discovery Centre and Hatchery in Karumba
- Saltpans and wetlands – twitchers paradise
- Rich indigenous history

“Australia’s Indigenous culture sets it apart from countries around the world. The culture and its relationship with our extraordinary landscapes, combine to provide travellers with a truly unique experience. There is no question that such an experience is becoming more and more important to Australians and international visitors planning to explore this vast country.”

An Indigenous experience is now an essential element of the Australian tourism experience.”

Aden Ridgeway, Executive Chairman,
Indigenous Tourism Industry Advisory Panel

What is special about our product?

We have the most iconic tourist attraction in the Gulf Savannah
Les Wilson Barramundi Discovery Centre

We have rich indigenous culture and natural assets

Indigenous Stock Workers Rodeo Riders Displays and Working on Cattle Stations –
Aboriginal Women’s Stories in Normanton
Mutton Hole Wetlands and Saltpans

We have fantastic sunset experiences

Karumba Point: Sunset Tavern, Ash’s and End of the Road
Ferryman cruises, Croc & Crab cruises

We have great fishing charters

Heli Fishing
Kerry D Charters
Karumba Fishing Charters

We have spectacular events

Outback by the Sea Festival

What is unique about our service?

We consist of small and remote Shires with friendly and inclusive communities

Our local businesses look after all visitors and provide great customer service

from supermarkets, chemists, bakeries, butchers, petrol stations, visitor information centres and tourist operators

Product development priorities

Remaining Focus areas from the Carpentaria Community Plan 2012-2022

We need to broaden the tourism experience available including: -

1. Re-introduction of the Sunset Tour and Billy Tea Tour on the Gulflander. **(Queensland Rail)**
2. Establishing bird watching tours around regional wetlands including the establishment of bird hides.
3. Introducing indigenous experience tours to introduce tourists to local art, dance, culture, and country.
4. Exploring niche elements of the experience tourism sector including photography, astronomy, and other eco-tourism opportunities.

Encourage tourists who are likely to spend more per day through the development of short stay visitor packages that focus on key iconic visitor attractions in the region.

Encourage the establishment of high standard visitor lodging and dining in B & B style accommodation.

We can improve the experience for tourists by improving directional and information signage, town entry features at Normanton and Karumba and the ongoing development of high-quality public amenities.

Major events attract a lot of visitors to the region, which is great for the economy, so we need to support and grow signature events such as the Fishing Competition, Rodeo and look at hosting major regional sporting events.

Game-Changing Tourism Infrastructure Priorities

Establish and market the Monsoon Centre at Normanton as an iconic outback experience in the region.

Other Tourism Infrastructure Priorities and options

- **Early Explorers Display - Burns Philp Building Normanton**
- Karumba town to Barra Centre walkway and bicycle path
- Free bicycles from Karumba Point via Town Centre to Barra Centre
- Karumba Foreshore protection
- Normanton Visitor Information Centre and Gardens
- Hatchery redevelopment stage 3 – grow out ponds, pontoon landing
- Karumba Nature Walk and Boardwalk upgrade
- Normanton Town Walk
- Skywalk at the Barra Centre
- Mutton Hole Wetlands Interpretive Boardwalk and experiences

Recently completed tourism projects

- Savannah Way Arts Trail (new sculptures)
- Karumba Town Walks signage revamp and upgrade

Other tourism opportunities

- Norman River cruise from Normanton
- Guided indigenous tours

Community and Event priorities

- Outback by the Sea Festival expansion
- Normanton Rodeo and Races
- Introduce additional events that will attract new audiences

Action	Who	When
Develop an action and implementation plan from priorities identified in the Tourism Strategy	Advisory Committee	May 2023
Organise OBTSF for 2023, 2024 and 2025	Centre Manager MECD	September 2023 and annually
Liaise with council re priorities for tourism product	Advisory Committee	Ongoing
Identification of other significant event opportunities for the Region and present to Council for consideration	MECD	Ongoing



3. Increase visitation, length of stay and average spend

Use our story to produce engaging marketing campaigns

- Digital media strategy
- Destination website
- Outback by the Sea® Destination brochure
- Strategic marketing partnerships and campaigns including tradeshow, familiarisations, promotional campaigns, and advertising
- Brand management

What is our story?

We are The Outback by the Sea®

We represent a majestic union of two disparate worlds, where the Outback's red dirt, black soil plains, hard ridges, outcrops, and fine Savannah soils meet wetlands, mangroves, salt pans, and the open ocean. In these parts, Mother Nature reigns supreme. Discover the rustic towns of Normanton and Karumba filled with artful treasures and rich history. Explore our indigenous culture and learn about our vast cattle stations. Spend your days exploring rivers and coastlines and sample the culinary delights of wild-caught barramundi. This is the place for nomads and fishermen to connect, exchange stories and celebrate the untouched beauty of the top end.

How do we create brand ambassadors?

- Greeting – how do we greet our guests?
Making a personal connection, eye contact, smile! Welcome to Carpentaria Shire!
- Understanding – do we understand what our customers want?
Asking questions – don't make assumptions, show empathy
- Efficiency – can we connect our visitors with the right experiences for them?
know your local products and services so you can match them to the visitors
- Special treatment – how do we leave a positive impression?
engage, educate, and entertain

- **Thankfulness** – we need to thank every guest for their business and understand their lifetime value
Always say thank you for visiting us and we would love to have them back!
- **Engaging social media** – keep the connection once it is established, but also entice new visitors to the destination

A story isn't a story until it's shared:

Digital media, website
Advertising
Promotions, such as tradeshow
PR
Industry channels

How do our customers share their stories?

Facebook and Instagram Reviews



Action	Who	When
Digital Media strategy	CEO/Consultant	ongoing
Tourism toolkits available to tourism suppliers	CEO/Consultant	ongoing
Stakeholder Management TTNQ, OQTA	CEO/Consultant	ongoing

OUTBACK BY THE SEA® TOURISM STRATEGY – IMPLEMENTATION

This is a working document which will be subject to continuous reviews and changes, led by the tourism champion. Strong leadership and functioning committee are necessary to achieve the strategic goals and continue to build the destination brand – exciting times ahead for our remote Outback region, so let's get to work!

