



# TILMAGROUP

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CREDENTIALS

## One of Australia's most respected regional tourism and events agencies

From its humble beginnings in 2008, Tilma Group has grown to become one of Australia's most respected regional tourism and events agencies.

Led by Managing Director, Linda Tillman, Tilma Group's small and agile team works one-on-one with clients from all over Australia, from 'two-man towns' and lone operators, to thriving rural and regional tourism businesses, up-and-coming events, and bustling destinations.

We only take on projects we love and have the capacity to deliver in the trademark Tilma way - hands on, all in and fully committed to the end!

Team Tilma is born and bred in rural and regional Australia, with ties to larger regional cities like Ballarat in Victoria and Toowoomba in Queensland, and rural areas including the Victorian Mallee and Surfcoast hinterland, New South Wales' Riverina, Northern Rivers and New England High Country, Central Queensland and the Granite Belt, and the mighty red centre in the Northern Territory.

We understand the unique challenges and opportunities rural and regional communities face. We speak your language. We know our stuff and are ready and raring to support you with yours.



**"Hands on,  
all in and fully  
committed to  
the end!"**



**"We connect the dots, providing the strategic direction, mentoring to help get the implementation right, and systems to ensure you get tangible and measurable results."**



# THE TILMA GROUP DIFFERENCE

**We approach our work with clients with one thing in mind – activation!**

Supporting communities to thrive through their visitor economy is at the forefront of everything we do, and we don't stop until we see the hard work, passion and dedication of our clients pay off. We don't go into our work looking to achieve set goals. We go in to blow them out of the water.

Our many years of experience working with regional and rural clients has taught us a thing or two. We have a solid understanding of what our clients want – focused and realistic strategies, a clear way forward, support to get the ball rolling through activation and implementation, and RESULTS.

We're not interested in developing an unrealistic strategy that creates overwhelm, provides no clear starting point, and can't be implemented so it sits on a shelf collecting dust. That benefits no one!

Our approach focuses on the ground up, identifying a small number of key

strategic priority projects that align with your goals, are realistic and doable, and will provide significant results from your tourism investment in the short, medium and long term.

We look at what can be done right now, and what can be built on to create sustainable growth into the future.

We don't stop there.

We connect the dots, providing the strategic direction, mentoring to help get the implementation right, and systems to ensure you get tangible and measurable results.

Whether it be product and experience development, industry and community capacity building, brand and marketing activations, visitor services or events, Tilma Group equips you with the know-how and tools to create a sustainable local visitor economy that ensures the future growth and resilience of the community.

**Tilma Group is a carbon neutral company, which supports our clients' own emissions reduction targets.**

**We are committed to regenerative tourism, and to reducing our business' emissions, including by leveraging technology to replace travel to clients' regions.**

**Our director has undertaken the Global Sustainable Tourism Council's Sustainable Tourism Training, which enables our work to support sustainable tourism development in the regions of our clients.**

**Learn more about our commitment, how we support our clients, and how we reduce our business' impacts at [tilmagroup.com.au/sustainability](https://tilmagroup.com.au/sustainability)**





## BASS COAST SHIRE COUNCIL

"The off peak event strategy has been the catalyst for lots of good things. We are just about to restructure our Economic Development, Events and Tourism Department in an effort to get greater collaboration across the teams. We will also add more operational resources by employing a new Visitor Economy and Events Officer.

The Events and Tourism Coordinator has started planning a new marathon event for next off peak season and we are working with lots of event operators about either shifting the date of their existing peak season event or developing their off peak events. We have also started leveraging off events more. Our jetty redevelopment is also complete now so we can start capitalising on that new event space.

The report has definitely helped clarify our direction and provide strategic justification."

- PETER FRANCIS, MANAGER, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, BASS COAST SHIRE COUNCIL



# TILMA GROUP IS

## Down to earth

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Team Tilma is born and bred in rural Australia. We celebrate the uniqueness of regional communities, understand your frustrations and opportunities, and speak your language

## Big picture thinkers

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Thinking globally as well as locally, not only are we in touch with the fabric of regional communities, but Tilma Group is always looking at the bigger picture. We are on top of the latest trends and have access to cutting-edge tools and up-to-date industry innovation.

## Environmentally responsible

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Our clients are located in some of the most environmentally and culturally rich locations in Australia. We are passionate advocates for responsible tourism and will never put an idea to clients without consideration of its cultural and environmental impacts.

## All about outcomes

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Our passion is seeing regional communities achieve great results from their investments in tourism. We don't stop at the idea generation and planning; it's supporting the achievement of results that excites us the most!

## Full of beans

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We're not sure if it's the fresh country air, the morning sun rising over sunflower fields or the hearty country brekkies, but our team of go-getters jump out of bed each day ready to take on big challenges and put in 100% every step of the way!

## Inspired

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Team Tilma lives and breathes regional tourism, marketing and events. We attend festivals to talk to the volunteers and go on holidays to get some work done! There's no doubt about it, we're passionate and we're proud of it.

## The perfect amount of crazy

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As the quote goes, 'Here's to the crazy ones. The rebels. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently.' At Tilma Group, we have just the right balance of common sense to curiosity, focus to free-thinking, and intuition to imagination.

## We know our stuff

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Tilma Group is an experienced team of highly-skilled over-achievers who are committed to not just deliver on your goals, but blow them completely out of the local watering hole.



**"Tilma Group is an experienced team of highly-skilled over-achievers who are committed to not just deliver on your goals, but blow them completely out of the local watering hole."**





# TILMA GROUP SERVICES

## CONSULTATION

Regional Tourism Activation Plans  
Strategic Marketing Plans  
Event Marketing Plans  
Regional Event Strategies  
Event Manuals & Online Portals  
New Event Development Plans  
Event Revitalisation Plans  
Grant Applications

## CAPACITY BUILDING

Strategic Mentoring for Local Governments  
Mentoring for Event Committees  
Strategic Business Planning Sessions  
Industry Development Programs, Workshops  
and Training  
Tourism Award Submissions  
Online Development Program for Event  
Organisers  
Conference Speaker

FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO [TILMAGROUP.COM.AU](http://TILMAGROUP.COM.AU)



# 2022 PROJECTS

29 CLIENTS

IN 4 STATES

2 NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANISATIONS

1 STATE TOURISM ORGANISATION

6 REGIONAL TOURISM ORGANISATIONS

9 COUNCILS

7 BUSINESSES

20 BUSINESS MENTEES

6 EVENTS

## **REGIONAL EVENT STRATEGIES**

Tweed Shire Council, NSW

Light Regional Council, SA

City of Canterbury Bankstown, NSW

City of Campbelltown, NSW (also streamlined event approval process, and provided an event management guide + templates for local event organisers)

## **DESTINATION MANAGEMENT GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

Echuca Moama Tourism, VIC

## **VISITOR SERVICING REVIEW**

South Burnett Regional Council, QLD

## **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MENTORING**

For Tourism & Events Queensland, we mentored 14 tourism businesses through TEQ's Transformational Experience Mentoring Program

For Brisbane Economic Development Agency, QLD, we developed the Best of Brisbane Region Experiences Support Program (with JJ Strategic Consulting) and mentored 6 tourism businesses

For Paroo Shire Council, QLD, we mentored Council staff to support the realisation of a new state-significant Outback event (we developed the concept for the event in 2021)

### **EVENT MANAGEMENT TRAINING**

Bass Coast Shire Council, VIC

### **EVENT REVITALISATION PLANS**

Kingaroy BaconFest, QLD

Destination Phillip Island, VIC

- 1 concept for a new off-peak event
- 3 event revitalisation plans
- Event management training for 3 committees

### **POST EVENT REVIEW**

Thirlmere Festival of Steam, NSW

### **MAXIMISING OUTCOMES FROM EVENTS**

East Gippsland Shire Council, and Events Gippsland, VIC (developed toolkits to help businesses and community groups to leverage events, and to help event organisers maximise community benefits from events)

### **EVENT MARKETING PLANS**

Warwick CelticFest, QLD

Swim Around Keppel, QLD

Kingaroy BaconFest, QLD

### **INDIGENOUS TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Lumburra Bimbi, QLD

### **TOURISM AWARD SUBMISSIONS AND REVIEWS**

Darwin Festival, NT (Gold)

Spirits of the Red Sand, QLD (Gold)

Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame, QLD (Bronze)

Mirage Whitsundays, QLD (Bronze)

Food I Am, NSW (review) (Silver)

Destination Gold Coast, QLD (review of 3 submissions)

Townsville Enterprise, QLD (award-writing webinar)

### **CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

Toowoomba Regional Council, QLD (for committees of community halls)

Australian Regional Tourism Convention (on the symbiotic relationship between tourism and events) and a webinar on maximising social and economic outcomes from events

Australian Festival Industry Conference (managing revenue streams, and applying for grants)

Association of Agricultural Field Days Australasia Conference (event revitalisation presentation, and facilitation of a strategic priorities workshop)

### **GRANT WRITING**

Tinkersfield, NSW

Australian Agricultural Centre, NSW



# 2021 PROJECTS

1 NATIONAL TOURISM ASSOCIATIONS

2 STATE TOURISM ORGANISATIONS

3 REGIONAL TOURISM OR ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATIONS

8 COUNCILS

2 LOCAL TOURISM ORGANISATIONS

4 COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

14 BUSINESSES

7 EVENT COMMITTEES

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, NSW – agritourism development plan

Canterbury-Bankstown City Council, NSW – regional events strategy

Tweed Shire Council, NSW – regional events strategy

Barcoo Way Rail Trail, QLD – feasibility study

City of Rockingham, WA – visitor servicing review

Mansfield Shire Council, VIC – visitor servicing review

Swim Around Keppel, QLD – strategic marketing plan

Grenfell Henry Lawson Festival, NSW – event strategy

Kingaroy BaconFest, QLD – event strategy

Jumpers and Jazz in July, QLD – event strategy

Noosa alive!, QLD – event strategy

## **CAPACITY BUILDING**

Tourism & Events Queensland – experience development mentoring (7 operators + 4 events)

Brisbane Economic Development Agency, QLD – developed operator support program aligned with TEQ’s Best of Queensland Experiences program (how to deliver exceptional and transformational experiences)

Destination Sydney Surrounds South, NSW – grant writing webinar

Regional Development Australia Orana, NSW – rural tourism workshops

Bulloo Shire Council, QLD – facilitate cross border tourism development and strategic mentoring

Paroo Shire Council, QLD – new event development

East Gippsland Shire Council, VIC – EOI for a new mountain biking event

## **GRANTS**

Clients we helped with grant applications included:

Narooma Mountain Bike Club, NSW – MTB trail

Kula Services, QLD – new Indigenous tourism business

Australian Regional Tourism – national agritourism development program

Clifton & District Progress Association, QLD – new event

Clifton & District Chamber of Commerce, QLD – business improvement, marketing campaign

Grenfell Henry Lawson Festival – concert

Australian Agricultural Centre, NSW – developing a circular economy attraction, and an astrological event

Food I Am, NSW - events venue

PRIMEX Field Days, NSW – new event

Borambola Winery, NSW – expand cellar door

The Charles Boutique Hotel, NSW – renovation

Bidgee Strawberries and Cream, NSW – café and commercial kitchen

A Day on the Green, NSW – to deliver music festivals

Junee Hotel, NSW – renovation

Southbound Escapes, NSW – new Indigenous festival

## **AWARD SUBMISSIONS**

Spirits of the Red Sand, QLD – Gold: Australian and Queensland Tourism Awards

Darwin Festival, NT – Gold: NT Brolga Tourism Awards

Big Red Bash, QLD – Bronze: Queensland Tourism Awards

City of Rockingham, WA (review) – Silver, WA Tourism Awards

Heifer Station, NSW (review) – finalist: NSW Tourism Awards

Orange360, NSW (review) – finalist: NSW Tourism Awards

10 Queensland Tourism Industry Council award submission reviews – 1 Gold, 2 Silver, and 3 Bronze awards in the Queensland Tourism Awards



A woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a light blue patterned button-down shirt, is seated at a table. She is looking towards the right side of the frame, engaged in conversation. In the foreground, the back of a person's head and shoulders is visible, and another person's hand holding a pen is seen on the right. The background is dark with some blue light accents.

*"Destination Gippsland has worked intensively with Tilma Group to create the Gippsland Regional Events Strategy. Tilma Group's collaborative and inquiring approach, coupled with their dedication and professionalism have been a delight."*

- Janine Hayes, Tourism Project Manager,  
Destination Gippsland

# AGRITOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Cootamundra-Gundagai region lies two hours west of Canberra, halfway between Sydney and Melbourne. The region has a strong agricultural base of cattle, sheep, crops and vineyards, combined with attractive rural landscapes and distinct seasons.



**COOTAMUNDRA-GUNDAGAI AGRITOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2023**

Developed by Tilma Group for Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council September 2020

**1. ESTABLISH FOUNDATIONS (2021-2022)**

**2. ONGOING DEVELOPMENT (2022 ONWARDS)**

**2. THE OLD MILL REDEVELOPMENT**

Council has commenced the process of calling for expressions of interest for the development of the site. Based on the review and analysis that has taken place with this plan it is strongly recommended that this development include an intensive experience that connects visitors to local produce and agriculture. There is opportunity for this site to tie in with the Cootamundra Cheese Factory and Jumeau Lorraine & Chocolate Factory to create another iconic regional building that provides a quality food tourist attraction.

Some suggested uses of the site include one or a combination of the following:

- Artisan bakery using local produce
- Winery with distillery - wine collection to showcase all wine from the region
- Craft beverage manufacture
- Tourist facilities (accommodation, function centre, etc)
- Distribution dining with a focus on local produce
- Cheese events celebrating and promoting local produce

**Location:** Gundagai

**Benchmark examples:** Cootamundra Cheese Factory, Cootamundra NSW, Cootamundra Cheese Factory, Jumeau NSW

**FACTORS CRITICAL TO SUCCESS IN ACTIVATION OF THESE PROJECTS, AND ACHIEVEMENT OF THE VISION INCLUDE:**

- collaboration across the region
- supportive and enabling council outlook
- adequate resourcing
- encouraging planning department with a concierge approach to support a streamlined compliance process
- farmers and producers having necessary skills in tourism
- effective biosecurity management

## PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of the plan was to identify priority projects to guide Council's and industry's activities and investments to leverage the opportunity of agritourism. This project was made possible with funding provided by the NSW Bushfire Community Resilience & Economic Recovery Fund to support community and economic recovery following bushfires.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

A review and analysis of the region's tourism and agricultural products, and of regional, state and national agritourism reports and strategic plans, revealed a number of gaps or opportunities for development.

Seven new agritourism products and experiences were recommended to help the region realise its potential as an agritourism destination, including a regional food hub at the Dog on the Tuckerbox tourist attraction, farm stays, redevelopment of an old mill, and spring and autumn harvest festivals.

A number of priority projects were identified to be implemented over the life of the plan to fulfill the plan's objectives.

The implementation of the plan will take place in two phases:

### Phase 1: Establish Foundations

- Build awareness and appeal of the region's existing agritourism product through marketing and experience development
- Improve Council's planning process and local environment plan (LEP) to be more supportive of new agritourism businesses
- Work with partners to develop and implement an agritourism business development program that helps producers develop agritourism offerings

### Phase 2: Ongoing development

- Proactively attract investment into agritourism and support new product development

The plan provides a framework to guide development, with a focus on on-farm diversification to support sustainability and resilience.

It clarifies responsibilities, identifies critical success factors and measures of success, and identifies funding opportunities for projects.



## REFEREE

**Miriam Crane**

Manager Community and Culture  
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council

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Cootamundra NSW 2590  
1300 459 689  
miriam.crane@cgrc.nsw.gov.au  
www.cgrc.nsw.gov.au

Read the agritourism development plan →



# DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Charters Towers region in North Queensland is inland from Townsville, covering an area the size of Tasmania. Grand 19th Century architecture provides glimpses into the region's rich gold mining history while the region's significant role in World War II is revealed through remnants of defence troop activity.



## PROJECT PURPOSE

Seasonality, a reliance on grey nomads, and limited industry collaboration and leadership have curbed the region's tourism achievements. To reap greater benefit for local communities, the business sector and local government, Charters Towers aspires to grow its visitor economy. This requires a commitment to stimulating new development and investment, and ensuring that the necessary processes, funding and supporting infrastructure are in place.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

This Destination Management Plan (DMP) is the first strategic tourism plan that has been developed by Charters Towers Regional Council (CTRC) to guide the region's tourism development. The development of the DMP was a collaboration between Tilma Group and JJ Strategic Consulting.

To ensure the DMP is supported by the local tourism industry, engagement with tourism operators and the community was a central element in its development.

Development of the DMP occurred concurrently with the preparation of the Charters Towers Economic Development and Innovation Strategy. Local business and community commentary highlighted that tourism is considered the economic driver that offers the most value for the region's growth over the next five years.

Tilma Group also collaborated with graphic design firm Embarking to create a new destination brand for the region. Undertaking consultation for the DMP and the new brand simultaneously allowed for project efficiencies.

## OUTCOMES

The DMP draws together practical actions to support the industry in recovery from COVID (and beyond) by optimising the region's assets and strengths. The focus is on rethinking target visitor markets and the experiences offered, and enhancing and adding value rather than reinventing the wheel - working smarter to get the most out of the existing knowledge and quality tourism product within the region.

A clear process for implementation and the associated resourcing are critical to the activation of this DMP. During engagement with the local tourism industry the message was clear that without the means to drive projects, tourism development and success in the region will continue to be limited.

The DMP identifies priority projects to build a flourishing visitor economy in the Charters Towers region. Many of the projects will also benefit local communities through increased recreational and social amenities, services and employment opportunities, and enhanced community pride. The projects are phased across the five-year term of the DMP.

As an industry-owned DMP, industry has an important role in its activation. Formation of a regional Industry Advisory Group is recommended; one which draws together industry and community representatives to be tasked with overseeing the implementation of the DMP and managing specific projects.

### PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

Consultation for this project included a focus group session with students from several of the local schools.

### REFEREE

**Melanie Lavelle-Maloney**  
 Tourism, Trade and Investment Advisor  
 Charters Towers Regional Council  
 PO Box 189  
 Charters Towers QLD 4820  
 0418 216309  
 mlavelle-maloney@charterstowers.qld.gov.au  
 www.charterstowers.qld.gov.au

**Read the Destination Management Plan →**



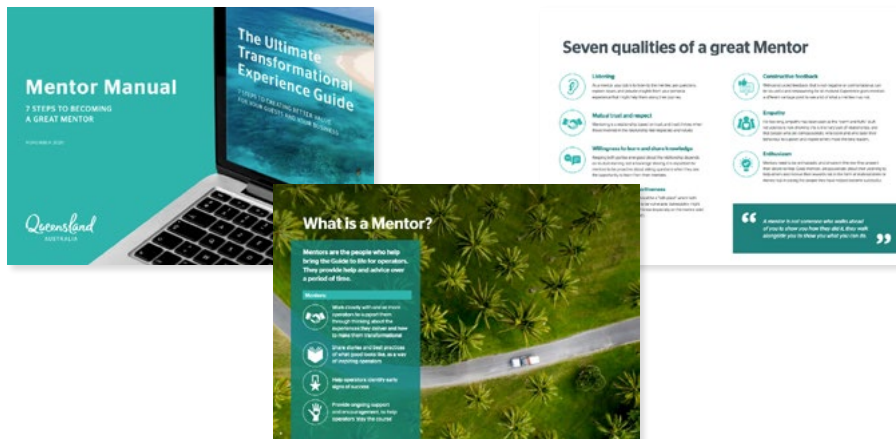
## TRANSFORMATIONAL EXPERIENCES MENTORING

Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) has recently re-branded Queensland with a new 'Travel for Good' brand. Travellers are actively seeking experiences that enrich, awaken and transform them. They want to ignite something new within themselves by consciously connecting with and appreciating our extraordinary planet, its people and cultures.

TEQ developed *The Ultimate Transformational Experience Guide* which focuses on seven steps to creating better value for guests and businesses. The aim is to enable operators to transform their experience offering and business to meet and exceed the needs of the travellers, helping to put Queensland's operators at the forefront of a global travel movement and increase their bookings and revenue.

The guide provides operators and event organisers with insights and knowledge about

- what Queensland's new brand means in practice
- the changing needs and expectations of travellers
- the Five Stages of Travel that guests go through
- how to design and deliver exceptional transformational experiences through each of the stages
- how to deepen engagement with guests
- ways to differentiate an experience through innovation and enhancing the competitive advantage.



*"I wanted to congratulate you - well done - absolutely nailed the brief on TEQ's Experience Design Mentoring Program! Keep up the great work!"*

- ALEX PERPICH, EVENTS AND EXPERIENCES SPECIALIST, TOURISM AND EVENTS QUEENSLAND



### PROJECT PURPOSE

TEQ ran an PILOT Experience Design Program to help businesses implement the learnings in *The Ultimate Transformational Experience Guide*, understanding that the most effective results are realised through one-on-one mentoring.

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

The program involves up to ten hours mentoring and about twenty hours additional commitment over a two-month period to complete the Experience Design program:

- Preparation work such as a basic review of operator's website and social media and Best of Queensland Experiences Program Report provided by TEQ using a standardised template provided
- An initial face-to-face meeting to discuss the details of the guide, review the mentee's self-assessment results, and identify key areas of focus
- One or two follow up video conference meetings to review progress, and identification of three to five actions to enhance the mentee's visitor experience/s
- A brief report to TEQ on the outcomes of the mentoring using a standardised template provided.

### OUTCOMES

Tilma Group has been impressed with the level of commitment of program participants, and their willingness to evolve, and plan for a strong future.

We are offering pragmatic support around how participants can align with Queensland's Travel for Good principles.

We are taking a deep dive into the travel journeys of their visitors and identifying what they can do at each stage to enhance or add things that will bring the brand principles to the forefront.

The biggest gap has been in sharing – the participants had not recognised the importance of sharing when they do something good for the community, the environment or humanity.

### REFEREE

#### Alex Perpich

Events and Experiences Specialist  
Tourism and Events Queensland

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Brisbane QLD 4001

07 3535 5612  
Alex.Perpich@queensland.com  
teq.queensland.com

#### Resources

Brief →

Mentor Manual →

The Ultimate Transformational Experience Guide →

Learn more →

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## GRANT APPLICATION - MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

Narooma is on the far south coast of NSW near the Victorian border between Bateman's Bay and Eden, 220km southeast of Canberra, and 350km south of Sydney.

Local mountain biking enthusiasts together hand built 30km of trails over 4 years, then sought grant writing support from Tilma Group to secure funding to add another 50km of trails and a trailhead to develop a world-class trail network and mountain biking hub.

### PROJECT PURPOSE

The Narooma Mountain Biking Hub would form the central hub of a South Coast regional network of mountain biking (MTB) trails from Bateman's Bay south to Tathra and Eden and inland in Cooma - the biggest MTB region in Australia - lifting the region's appeal for multi-day, interstate, international and year-round visitation by high-value visitors.

This would smooth highly seasonal visitation, create jobs, future-proof the local economy against shocks, and support the Black Summer bushfire-affected community's physical and mental health with recreation, access to nature, and social bonding.

Narooma Mountain Bike Club applied for funding to build the trails from the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund.



### PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund would cover 100% of the costs of projects that would support a bushfire-impacted community's economic or social recovery.

This project relied completely on the club's faith in themselves and their potential trail, as their council, Eurobodalla Shire Council, was applying for funding for a competing MTB trail in Bateman's Bay (Mogo) that had been identified in several of Council's strategic

plans. Additionally, Eden's mountain biking club in the neighbouring shire to the south, was also applying for funding to build MTB trails!

The club's project steering group was adamant that their trail would be the best of all of them in terms of the quality of the trails due to the natural assets of their region, and dispersal of tourists away from the over-tourism mecca of Bateman's Bay.

### OUTCOMES

Just 30% of applications to the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund were successful - the grant was significantly oversubscribed, with over 650 applications submitted, and only 195 successful projects.

Narooma Mountain Bike Club secured \$3.9 million, twice the average amount for the round. Mogo and Eden trails were also successful in securing funding, quite likely because the president of the Narooma Mountain Bike Club visited the region's state MP and shared the club's vision of developing Australia's biggest mountain biking destination for increased visitation appeal.

In its first year of operations, the Narooma mountain biking hub is predicted to attract 18,200 visitors and \$8.1 million in visitor expenditure and create 47 local jobs.

Together with other mountain biking destinations on the South Coast, the Narooma trails will create a large, regional mountain biking circuit that will attract interstate and international visitors - the densest collection of mountain biking trails anywhere in Australia, creating a truly world-class and globally attractive mountain biking destination.

Factors which likely contributed to the success of the grant application include

- The club pitched a bigger idea to their state MP and let him claim the idea as his own.
- The club was ready for the grant opportunity: they had received a previous grant that enabled them to have a business case developed by an economist and trail design developed by a top trail designer which were submitted along with their application.
- The club showed a very high level of community support by requesting numerous letters of support from a variety of community members, businesses, government representatives and departments (such as the Destination Network), the landowner, the local Aboriginal Land Council, nearby MTB clubs, cycling organisations, users including youth, community groups, and business chambers. They got the story published by the media, and shared clippings with the grant application. They ran a community survey, shared trail usage stats, showed how many volunteers had been engaged in building and maintaining the existing trails, and shared the donations they had received, and even their merchandise sales!
- The application clearly showed the project's public benefit, and how it aligned with numerous local and state government strategic plans, and used quotes from government strategic plans to show the community's need for such a project.

### REFEREE

#### Georgie Staley

President  
Narooma Mountain Bike Club

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*"Tilma Group did a great job getting across the detail of our project for the BLERF application and helped us produce a very professional application, which benefited greatly from their expertise in grant writing."*

- MARK STUBBINGS, NAROOMA MOUNTAIN BIKE CLUB

# NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

The Barcoo Way region is based around the Barcoo River which flows north-west from Tambo in Central Queensland, before turning south towards Windorah. Tambo is 850km northwest of Brisbane, west of Bundaberg and the Carnarvon National Park, and north of Charleville. Towns along the Barcoo Way include Blackall, Isisford, Yaraka, and Windorah. A 156km-long railway line between Blackall to Yaraka was closed to trains in 2005.



### 1.4 Local context

The Blackall to Yaraka rail corridor is approximately 156 km in length. The rail corridor was completed in its entirety in 1961, and was used for the majority of the 60 years since. The rail corridor was used for the transport of goods and passengers, and was a vital link between the region and the rest of Queensland.

### 1.5 The region's rail history

This is a central part of Central Queensland's cultural and economic development. The rail corridor was a vital link between the region and the rest of Queensland, and was used for the transport of goods and passengers.



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Photo: Blackall News and Events Page

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## PROJECT PURPOSE

Tilma Group were contracted with project partners JJ Strategic Consulting and Lucid Economics to develop a business case to determine the viability of using the defunct railway corridor as a multi-use rail trail (cycling, hiking, and horseriding) as a compelling tourism experience attracting adventure-seeking visitors to this unique part of Outback Queensland, and improving liveability for local communities.

This project was made possible by funding from the Department of Transport and Main Roads, and was a joint project of the Blackall-Tambo, Longreach, and Barcoo Councils as part of their membership in the Barcoo Way collaborative tourism initiative.

*“Tilma Group were great to work with on the Barcoo Way - they have a wealth of tourism knowledge and an understanding of our remote region. The team was full of innovative ideas and suggests on how we can progress this project, and address the challenges and hurdles!”*

- ALISON SHAW, ARTS & CULTURAL OFFICER, BLACKALL-TAMBO REGIONAL COUNCIL

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project established the

- feasibility of the rail trail
- stakeholder aspirations for the project
- market demand analysis
- strengths, challenges and opportunities (SWOT) of the existing infrastructure along the proposed trail to support visitor use and the trail's financial sustainability
- operational requirements for development, management and maintenance of the trail and any associated built infrastructure

The project outcomes were maximised by

- supporting product and events that will activate the new trail infrastructure and foster sustainable growth of the region
- giving voice to the locals, engaging the tourism industry, local communities and government on their aspirations for the project
- positioning the three local government areas to attract public and private sector investment to support sustainable development of the project
- The project approach was to consult with a broad range of stakeholders, review best practice case studies of similar successful rail trails, review the process of rail trail development, before synthesising learnings into a business case.

## OUTCOMES

There is support for an approach of two phases, starting with product and experience development to grow visitation and demand, and then development of the rail trail, in full or in stages.

If both stages of the plan are developed, the rail trail will offer the following experience.

There is no other rail trail in the Queensland Outback, so there is an opportunity to have an experience that is not available in other destinations, but well-designed interpretation and quality product experiences alongside are critical to offer a sufficiently compelling experience. This is because the region does not have the advantage of stunning scenery (as with the Larapinta Trail in Alice Springs, for example), or easy conditions to cycle in, and closeness to source markets, as many other Australian rail trails have.



## REFEREE

**Alison Shaw**

Previously Arts & Cultural Officer  
Blackall-Tambo Regional Council

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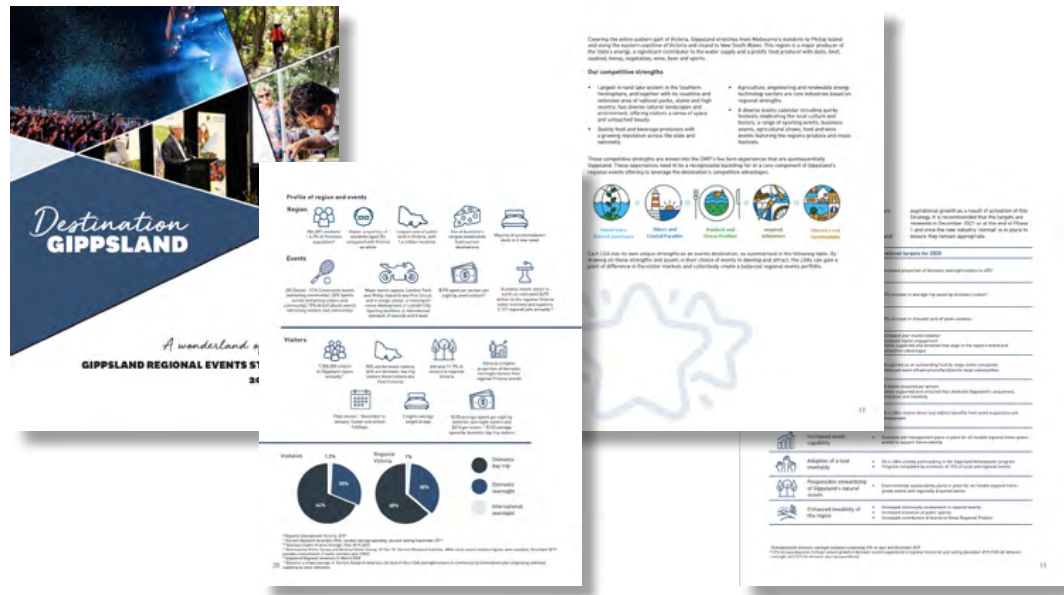
# REGIONAL EVENTS STRATEGY

Covering almost 20% of Victoria, Gippsland is roughly the same size as the Netherlands. It encompasses six local government areas (LGAs) stretching from Melbourne's eastern suburbs to the border with New South Wales in Victoria's far east. Gippsland contains some of Victoria's most striking landscapes, significant national parks, and outstanding alpine areas.

Gippsland's events calendar is diverse, with golf and racing days, music festivals and agricultural shows, and a host of food and wine events presenting the region's fresh produce. Latrobe City hosts a diverse range of sporting events in its national- and international-standard sporting facilities.

## PROJECT PURPOSE

Following three years of drought and severe bushfires in January 2020, immediately followed by COVID-19, the region is focused on long term and sustainable recovery via investment in diverse and exciting regional events.



*Tilma Group's collaborative and inquiring approach coupled with their dedication and professionalism have been a delight in what has been a challenging year for the visitor economy sector. We have no hesitations in recommending their work.*

- JANINE HAYES, MANAGER TOURISM & EVENTS LATROBE VALLEY, DESTINATION GIPPSLAND

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project reviewed the needs of events across Gippsland and identified innovative solutions based on the following desired outcomes.

1. Use the collective strength of Gippsland to compete nationally in the event space and optimise the associated benefits; economic – branding – social – legacy
2. Adopt a robust Events Procurement framework and strategy to attract events to the region
3. Explore multiple models and identify the pros & cons of a single entity or structure "Events Gippsland" that includes all primary stakeholders, to provide a one-stop shop for Gippsland events
4. Explore multiple models for the creation of an Event Acquisition Fund that allows for strategic acquisition, growth of existing and creation of new events across the region.
5. Explore the idea of a Coordinated Event Volunteer Pool to support major events and community events and encourage a 'host' mentality within communities hosting events to ensure a positive visitor and participant experience that results in return visitation and positive word of mouth promotion of the region.

## PROJECT OUTCOMES

This strategy is a first for Australia with its focus on creating a modern and innovative governance model that is Australia's first collaborative regional events entity across multiple LGAs.

This governance model is supported by an acquisition and development fund and programs and initiatives that will support resource efficiencies, improved volunteer management, and infrastructure sharing to support the region's recovery and allow the destination to be more competitive against other regional Victoria destinations.

The Board of Destination Gippsland (and all Local Government partners) have agreed to the activation of the model and are excited by the region's future in events.

## REFEREE

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# REGIONAL EVENTS STRATEGY

Penrith is located in Western Sydney with a population of 190,000. With internationally-acclaimed venues, access to transport, plenty of open spaces and the majestic Blue Mountains as a backdrop, Penrith is a great choice for music, sport, culture and community events.

## PROJECT PURPOSE

Council wanted to identify the best-fit events to attract and which existing events to develop to build a balanced and sustainable events portfolio that will grow the visitor economy and enhance the liveability of Penrith. While Penrith hosts hundreds of events each year, Council recognises there are opportunities to achieve greater economic and social outcomes. Penrith aspires to be an event-friendly destination that is a sought-after location for events and home to a balanced portfolio of external and homegrown events that drive economic and social outcomes across the year.



## PROJECT OVERVIEW

The brief was to develop a detailed events strategy to support, develop and attract events that are fitting to the character and aspirations of the region.

The plan was required to:

- provide a robust and transparent decision-making framework to support Council's process of event assessment and support
- identify key target areas for growth
- provide a framework to attract, support and develop events across the region including sponsorship and a process for bidding for events
- identify opportunities to establish a balanced year-round event calendar (activate a variety of locations across the city, activate all seasons, and offer a variety of event types)
- identify how to leverage events to increase ROI deliverables, including benchmark data and evaluation metrics for events
- provide an implementation plan (3-5 years)

The strategy reflects the culmination of desktop review, stakeholder engagement and analysis of Penrith's event strengths, challenges, opportunities, current event portfolio, and performance relative to competitor destinations.

These supporting elements were developed to ensure the strategy can be effectively activated:

- Events Assessment Tool & Event Calendar Assessment Report
- Event Planning Toolkit

A toolkit with templates for event managers on efficient event planning and management and marketing. The content was provided for use in an online portal.

## PROJECT OUTCOMES

The regional event strategy articulated a clear vision and supporting objectives for Penrith, recommending realistic strategies and priority action areas that will drive increased visitation and yield from events.

## REFEREE

**Shelley Lee**  
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## TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLAN

*Clifton is one of a number of small rural towns in the broad-acre cropping lands between Toowoomba (population 105,000) and Warwick (12,000) which are an hour apart beside the Great Dividing Range in south east Queensland.*

### PROJECT PURPOSE

On behalf of Clifton and District Chamber of Commerce, Tilma Group and Toowoomba Regional Council collaborated to secure funds from the Building Better Regions Fund to improve the benefits the region could receive from visitors by developing a [tourism development plan](#), a [marketing plan](#) and a [development plan for a new event](#).

The purpose of the tourism development plan is to identify priority activities to undertake during the next three years that will increase the vibrancy of Clifton through increased visitation, and increase the economic benefits received by Clifton businesses from visitors.

The objective of the project is to excite the community to work on a shared vision to build the vibrancy of the district, leveraging and activating existing assets and developing new opportunities. Tourism development will support the community's recovery from extended drought, and build community resilience.

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

The tourism development plan builds on other work recently done by Tilma Group for the Chamber, including development of a tourism audit, a community consultation workshop on priority projects for the region, and mentoring three community groups to further identified projects.

The plan identifies the following tourism development areas within which are priority projects to realise over the coming three years:

- Build the capacity of businesses and community groups to offer a quality experience to visitors
- Activate existing assets and develop new tourism product and experiences
- Increase awareness of the region through marketing tactics

### OUTCOMES

The tourism development plan looks beyond Clifton to recommend a new destination brand for the rural region that lies between Toowoomba and Warwick, to position it as a sunflower destination for year-round visitation and activate this positioning with a region-wide summer sunflower festival.

Sunflowers are by far the most popular request at Toowoomba and Warwick's visitor information centres – a hook that draws people to the region from across south east Queensland.

A model for a tourism collective is being implemented to drive the establishment and activation of this destination brand.

### REFEREE

#### Amanda Beatson

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## BUSINESS EXPANSION PLANNING & GRANT APPLICATION

*A winery in the Orange region west of Sydney, Heifer Station is looking to continue its recent growth to capitalise on opportunities arising from increased visitation to the region, and increasing consumer interest and participation in food and wine tourism experiences.*

*Heifer Station aims to expand its cellar door to triple its current capacity, develop infrastructure to be able to host large outdoor music events, and build two luxury cottages – a significant investment.*



### PROJECT PURPOSE

The objectives of the planned expansion are:

- Increase capacity by 200% to enable the business to service growing visitor numbers to the region
- Increase wine sales
- Enhance the region's profile as a leading food and wine destination.
- Increase overnight stays and expenditure in the region
- Attract new visitor markets to the area including events, corporate groups, and domestic High Value Travellers, international traveller groups and special interest markets
- Increase local employment

*Tilma Group have a multi-disciplinary team, all of whom are experts in their field. Their team were able to provide us with very professional funding applications and award submissions, one of which has resulted in us recently being awarded Gold at both the 2019 Regional and NSW Tourism Awards for Tourism Wineries, Distilleries and Breweries. We could not put a price on the significant growth this acknowledgment has created for our business.*

– MICHELLE STIVENS, DIRECTOR

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

Heifer Station contracted Tilma Group to assist with securing grant funding for components of the expansion. Tilma Group worked closely with Heifer Station to develop the business case and project plan for these developments to assist with grant applications.

The project plan covers:

- Project scope: description/objectives/elements/ location
- Project budget: costs/time frame/milestones
- Project management: project proponent/project management team/stakeholders/ implementation methodology/regulatory approvals/ communications strategy
- Risk management
- Procurement
- Evaluation/compliance/audit

The business case covers:

- Project concept
- Project proponent to establish credibility to deliver project and sustain it as a successful business.
- Project location
- Project rationale
- Project elements
- Economic benefits
- Strategic and marketing benefits
- Social benefits
- Value for money
- Project support
- Financial projections
- Project delivery

The largest challenge with this project has been changes with the funding program mid-way through, impacting on the process and the ability to submit in a timely manner. Working with many varied stakeholders to secure necessary funding means that timelines can be impacted and external influences are heightened.

Consistent and regular communication with stakeholders was critical with this project.



### OUTCOMES

Heifer Station expects to be able to deliver the following outcomes:

- **86% increase** in visitor numbers
- **Infrastructure available** to attract large events to the region
- Over **\$650,000 injected into the local economy** per year from wages, wine making, equipment and supplies
- Additional **\$4m injected into the region** from direct expenditure by the business, event organisers and visitors
- Creation of **8 new FTE jobs**
- Additional **150 casual jobs** from major events

### REFEREE

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# CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM FOR EMERGING EVENTS

The Bass Coast southeast of Melbourne includes Phillip Island, one of Australia's most-visited regional destinations, which draws 3.5 million visitors annually from around the world to watch fairy penguins and motorsports.

## PROJECT PURPOSE

The development of a *Growing Off Peak Events* plan for Bass Coast Shire Council by Tilma Group identified an opportunity to increase the benefits for the region from its off peak, homegrown and authentically-Bass Coast events. These events are run by community organisations who needed training to know how to leverage their events to increase visitor expenditure and other visitor benefits.



## PROJECT OVERVIEW

Council asked Tilma Group to design and deliver a capacity building program that include components for all Bass Coast events to participate in and components to more intensively support its off-peak events to grow and develop.

A one-day event development bootcamp was held in the region for all the local event committees.

Three events held outside the peak tourism season with the potential to grow into significant events in terms of visitor economy benefits for the region then received intensive one-on-one monthly event coaching via webinar in a six-month customised and structured development program. This was a modified version of the rEVENTS Academy Foundation Program where the committees each selected five modules to make up a customised program.

The committees also received supporting tools and resources for each of the modules; access to a Q&A platform where all the participating events could ask questions, share knowledge and cross promote; and a wrap-up report with an action plan outlining the strategic and operational priorities for the event moving forward.

Lastly, an in-region half-day presentation and Q&A session was held for all of the Bass Coast event committees where the three events who had undertaken the intensive development program shared their learnings with the other Bass Coast committees.

*When Council asked our committee to be part of the program, I was a little sceptical, thinking we know what we are doing, but we accepted their offer. How wrong I was! While we had a successful event, the things Linda took us through made us realize we were not only missing out on opportunity but lacking real direction for the event's long term future. One of the main lessons learned was the importance, but also the ease, in which planning can make things easier on a committee. There are many things we took from the program which not only assisted with this year's event but has also given a head start to next year. We found Linda to be very accommodating and easily understood through the online sessions - it was more of a discussion with purpose than a teacher-student scenario. We recommend this program to any event committee regardless of what stage they are at or how long the event has been running, but would especially recommend it for new events at the start of planning.*

- CRAIG EDMONDS, PRESIDENT, SAN REMO DISTRICT TOURISM & BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

## REFEREE

**Peter Francis**

Manager, Economic Development and Tourism

Bass Coast Shire Council

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# NEW EVENT DEVELOPMENT

The Southern Highlands southwest of Sydney was one of the first regions settled by Europeans. Its cool climate made it ideal for the gentry to replicate European landscapes on their grand estates. The region has significant heritage, including a town that's straight out of the 1840s.



## PROJECT PURPOSE

In recent years the community has been fighting a proposed coal mine. To highlight the heritage value of the landscape, Berrima Residents Association sought Tilma Group's help to develop an event that would showcase the region's heritage; ultimately to support the landscape's protection from development.



**FESTIVAL OVERVIEW**

**EXETER**

**BERRIMA**

**JOADJA**

**SUTTON FOREST**

**MOSS VALE**

**ROSWAL**

**MITTAGONG**

Working with you was a highlight of the year for us and goodness knows where all your hard work might take us next year! Thank you for being instrumental in getting the project to this stage. I don't think we could have envisaged this when we set out a few years ago.

Engaging a consultant can be hit and miss unless they come recommended by previous clients. Not only does the consultant have to be competent, even expert, in their field, they have to know how to listen, engage in real communication and complete a report within budget and on deadline that delivers a clear message to the client or the client's audience. We have no hesitation in recommending Tilma Group.

- DR. ERIC SAVAGE, PRESIDENT, BERRIMA RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION, INC.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

Based on models of other successful events, Tilma Group proposed a month-long region-wide heritage festival that would connect existing annual events with a program of innovative midweek activities targeted at markets not traditionally associated with heritage tourism.

The event development plan outlined the festival's:

- Purpose, vision and themes
- Structure
- Date and locations
- Governance including potential collaborators and their roles
- Expense forecasts and revenue sources
- Program including Tier 1 and 2 events
- Marketing plan
- Planning timeline
- Post event review process including measurement and evaluation
- Next steps in realising the event

Event planning templates and a marketing kit for participating event hosts were included as supporting pieces.

The biggest challenge was the need to create an event model that ensured long term viability, taking into consideration the capacity of local volunteers. Consequently, a model with a paid resource was developed.

Case studies of the power of local government support of events were provided to support a pitch for Council to support the new event with human resources in its first year.

**MARKETING SUPPORT**

**IN-KIND SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY**

**FUNDING SUPPORT**

**MARKETING SUPPORT**

**FUNDING SUPPORT**

**EVENTS**

**PROGRAM**

**WEEK 1**

**WEEK 2**

## OUTCOMES

Tilma Group successfully secured Council's support for the festival, with their tourism arm, Destination Southern Highlands, poised to support the event's delivery once funding has been secured. This support will enable the event to maximise economic outcomes and develop into a flagship festival for the region.

Berrima Residents Association has used the event development plan to support an application for \$300,000 of federal grant funding over three years.

## REFEREE

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 Berrima Residents Association  
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**TILMA GROUP**

# REGIONAL EVENT STRATEGY TO DRIVE OFF PEAK VISITATION

The Bass Coast southeast of Melbourne includes Phillip Island, one of Australia's most-visited regional destinations, which draws 3.5 million visitors annually from around the world to watch fairy penguins and motorsports.

## PROJECT PURPOSE

Bass Coast is Australia's second most tourism-dependent shire, with tourism accounting for 17.4% of the region's economy, though visitation is highly seasonal with low visitation in the colder months. The primary goal in the region's Visitor Economy Strategy is to grow off-peak visitor expenditure.



## PROJECT OVERVIEW

Tilma Group developed a strategic plan for Bass Coast Shire Council on how to grow off peak events, outlining how Council could support growth in existing events to smooth seasonal visitation.

Research included analysis of an event and event venue audit, and benchmarking against other regions to identify gaps and opportunities, along with consultation with key stakeholders.

A discussion paper was developed which outlined the region's event strengths, challenges and opportunities, along with recommended strategic priorities and a suggested annual events calendar. The paper was tested with a project control group who discussed and finessed its proposals.

The strategic activation plan developed from this feedback included a recommended event calendar outlining the kinds of events that are a good fit for the Bass Coast brand and assets, along with funding opportunities and strategic partners. The report also included details of governance and resourcing, and a balanced portfolio of homegrown and external events.

Consultation for the plan revealed a need for upskilling in the Shire's event committees. Tilma Group facilitated a capability-building program using the rEVENTS Academy platform.

A one-day event development bootcamp was held for Bass Coast event committees. Three events with the potential to grow into significant off peak events received intensive one-on-one monthly coaching via webinar in a six-month structured development program. This was a modified version of the 10-module rEVENTS Academy course where each committee selected five modules for a customized program.

The committees also received supporting templates for each module; access to a Q&A platform where all the local event committees could ask questions, share knowledge and cross promote; and a wrap-up report with an action plan outlining the strategic and operational priorities for their event moving forward.

Lastly, an in-region half-day presentation and Q&A session was held for all of the Bass Coast event committees where the three events who had undertaken the intensive development program shared their learnings with the others.



The off peak event strategy has been the catalyst for lots of good things. We are about to restructure our Economic Development, Events and Tourism Department to get greater collaboration across the teams. We will add more operational resources by employing a new Visitor Economy and Events Officer.

The Events and Tourism Coordinator is planning a new marathon event for next off peak season and we are working with lots of event operators about either shifting the date of their existing peak season event or developing their off peak events. We have also started leveraging off events more.

The report has definitely helped clarify our direction and provide strategic justification.

- PETER FRANCIS, MANAGER, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, BASS COAST SHIRE COUNCIL

## REFEREE

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## TOURISM ACTIVATION PLAN + STRATEGIC MENTORING

*Bulloo in southwest Queensland has a population of just 350 spread across one of Queensland's biggest Shires. Tourism plays an important role in the region's economy, though most visitation is concentrated between Easter and October.*

*Council's tourism team has some big wins on the board, including decreasing the percentage of visitors to the visitor information centre who pass through without staying overnight from 60% to just 6% within two years.*

### PROJECT PURPOSE

Council wanted to increase the economic benefits the Shire received from tourists to support local businesses.



*"Linda and her team painstakingly poked, prodded, interviewed and researched every corner of our region, leaving no stone unturned. Their efforts were rewarded with the epiphany of the 'Explorers' brand for our shire. They stripped down all the information presented to them and recognised a common denominator between our visitors and the famous Burke and Wills story.*

*This brand then became the focal point behind an insightful, detailed and honest approach to a practical and achievable tourism activation plan.*

*The plan includes a fresh approach to the development and marketing of existing assets, plus new asset development based on research.*

*Linda has managed to problem solve long standing issues in staff structure, workloads and has broken down barriers of perceived risk by submitting valued research and case studies to Council on new product development.*

*Tourism is now a priority for Council with strong administrative structure and financial support. The path to achieve our goals of an increase in economic benefits to the Shire, to support local businesses and the local community is laid out clearly in the tourism activation plan and each step can be measured for success."*

- GILLIAN STRONG, TOURISM COORDINATOR, BULLOO SHIRE COUNCIL

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

Tilma developed a tourism activation plan which identified priority projects to achieve the Shire's tourism goals, supported by strategic mentoring support for 12 months to ensure that Council's team had the capability to achieve results.

Tilma Group undertook desktop research and phone consultations to gain a comprehensive view of the current tourism situation in the Shire. From this, a discussion paper was developed which outlined tourism trends and suitable opportunities, opportunity markets, and a review of the region's brand story and marketing focused on how visitors perceive Bulloo. The paper provided insights and context into the current situation and high level opportunities for Council's consideration.

Tilma Group visited the region to facilitate a tourism workshop with Councillors and Council's tourism staff to discuss the gaps and opportunities outlined in the paper. Site visits provided additional insight into the tourism offering.

A tourism activation plan was developed based on their feedback which included

- The destination's story and unique selling points
- Priority opportunities to develop
- An activation roadmap to support implementation

Twelve months of mentoring is supporting the implementation of the activation plan.

To date, mentoring has included help with restructuring Council's tourism department to enhance efficiencies, and with allocating the annual tourism budget. Tilma Group is working with local operators on projects and sourcing funding for a revitalization of the visitor information centre into an anchor tourism product that reflects the region's brand identity.

### OUTCOMES

The project has reinvigorated Council, community and industry to realize their tourism potential. Council immediately embarked on a restructure of the team, highlighting its commitment to growth. Funding applications are currently submitted for two major product development projects and funding has been secured to grow their annual flagship festival. This is one small but powerful Council - watch this space!

### REFEREE

#### Lew Rojahn

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# TOURISM ACTIVATION PLAN

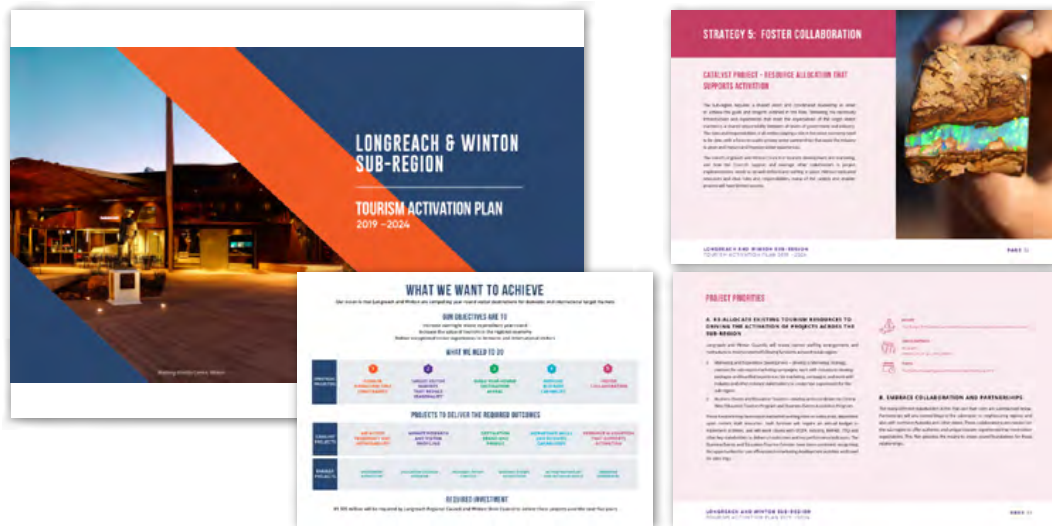
This region in Queensland's Central Outback has fewer than 5,000 residents but hosts more than 110,000 visitors annually, concentrated within five months to avoid the hot Outback summer. \$100 million-worth of tourism assets include the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame, Australian Age of Dinosaurs, Qantas Founders Museum and the Waltzing Matilda Centre, as well as award-winning experiences such as Outback Pioneers and Outback Aussie Tours.

## PROJECT PURPOSE

Longreach Regional Council and Winton Shire Council wanted to ensure their existing tourism infrastructure would be optimised and new market and investment opportunities embraced to more evenly distribute visitation across the year. Establishing and maintaining a year-round visitor economy is fundamental for Longreach and Winton to attract future investment and grow business and community vibrancy.

The purpose of the Tourism Activation Plan is to

- ensure the region is ready for the growth being driven by their four major tourism attractions
- identify opportunities and target markets to grow visitation outside of the peak season to support year-round employment and the viability of local tourism businesses.



As a first for Outback Queensland, Longreach and Winton Councils collaborated to create an outcomes-based tourism strategy focused directly on the needs of their small rural communities.

Tilma Group used their extensive industry and stakeholder consultation experience to connect with and bring together the relevant stakeholders of the two councils to specifically focus on realistic results-driven projects whilst remaining pragmatic, friendly and engaging.

Throughout the project Tilma Group always ensured that the key stakeholders were engaged and kept fully informed at each identified reporting milestone.

Tilma Group have extensive regional and remote tourism experience and this was invaluable to creating a workable strategy with defined implementable projects that will benefit the tourism in Western Queensland in the years to come.

- RUSSELL LOWRY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM MANAGER, LONGREACH REGIONAL COUNCIL

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

The development of a tourism activation plan for the region was a joint project between Tilma Group, JJ Strategic Consulting and Alphacrane Intercultural Specialists.

A project reference group of ten diverse stakeholders helped develop a comprehensive list of further stakeholders, and a gaps and opportunities paper based on a tourism and events audit of the region was shared with them to encourage their commentary.

The audit's findings and opportunities were discussed in one-on-one meetings with stakeholders in person and by phone. A workshop was held in Longreach which twenty stakeholders attended to discuss findings and aspirations, a potential vision for the region, and strategies required to activate the existing tourism infrastructure.

The resulting tourism activation plan outlines strategic priorities and required catalyst and enabler projects to deliver results immediately and in the medium to long term, with a framework and pragmatic approach to activating projects based on priority and consumer demand.

Catalyst projects were identified as those critical to the sub-region to reduce seasonality, attract high spend visitors and grow the visitor economy. Further enabler projects were recommended to deliver specific outcomes needed to ensure the success of the catalyst projects.

Working across local government borders presented some concern initially, however this innovative approach proved to be extremely successful. However changing staff throughout the life of the project presented a challenge, with CEOs replaced at both Councils and the resignation of the project leader at the end of the project.

## OUTCOMES

This collaborative cross border plan has provided the Councils and industry with a clear roadmap on the priority projects to focus on. The plan was a catalyst for bringing industry together and supporting opportunities to undertake collaborative projects.

### REFEREE

**Russell Lowry**  
 (Former) Economic Development and Tourism Manager  
 Longreach Regional Council

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# VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY & ACTIVATION PLAN

*The Central Highlands region of Central Queensland inland from Rockhampton around Emerald includes stunning natural beauty such as Carnarvon Gorge and unique attractions including one of the world's largest sapphire fields.*

## PROJECT PURPOSE

Central Highlands Development Corporation (CHDC) sought help to prioritise the many opportunities available and understand how to most effectively use their limited human resources to achieve increased visitor expenditure and reduced seasonality.



*From our first phone call with Tilma Group, I knew they knew their stuff and were fully engaged in what we wanted to achieve. When we asked Tilma Group to quote on our three-year Tourism Strategy, they came back to us with a proposal for a Tourism Activation Plan that we could implement and achieve. That was right on the money - all of our previous strategies have sat on the shelf with limited outcomes. Tilma Group's approach was highly consultative, including engagement with our tourism community, businesses and stakeholders, and our whole community - exactly what we needed to get our region on board and achieving together. Their ability to engage with operators, Council and all stakeholders is helping us to achieve outcomes we did not even know were achievable. The visitor economy strategy developed for us is the perfect strategy for us. Our tourism businesses have labelled it the best one we have seen for decades and are now very excited to get stuck in and achieve it. We now have a pathway and roadmap to achieve great things over the coming years! We highly recommend Tilma Group to other regional Councils and destinations.*

PAUL THOMPSON, TOURISM DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR, CENTRAL HIGHLANDS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Tourism and Events Activation Plan developed for CHDC takes a focused approach in its recommendations, outlining just a few achievable priority projects.

Tilma Group collaborated with JJ Strategic Consulting using a project-based approach that was pragmatic and focused on activation and outcomes.

The following methodology outlines the project process which was based on extensive stakeholder consultation, a tourism and events audit, and desktop research:



A gaps and opportunities paper developed from desktop research was used to test ideas and trigger input from a variety of stakeholders. Their feedback fed the development of the tourism activation plan, ensuring this is an industry-led plan.

On completion, a 12-month strategic mentoring process commenced, with Tilma Group providing quarterly strategic workshops to assess progress and work on any potential barriers. The focus is 100% on outcomes!

## OUTCOMES

This pragmatic plan was designed for straightforward implementation. It outlines how to grow the local visitor economy via catalyst projects that focus the community's efforts on what will have the biggest return on investment.

The plan was presented to Central Highlands Regional Council on completion and launched at their annual Tourism & Events Forum to overwhelming positive feedback and great enthusiasm from industry to start activation.

## REFEREE

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**TILMA GROUP**

## VISITOR SERVICING RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

*Tourism Central Australia (TCA) operates an award-winning visitor information service in Central Australia, with the Alice Springs Visitor Information Centre (VIC) as the service hub.*

*Technology has altered how travellers access information and make travel decisions. Visitor service providers must be proactive, adapting to engage visitors where and how visitors want to be served.*

*A new visitor services model was required to support convenient, relevant and innovative multi-channel access for visitors to Central Australia; maximisation of economic benefits; and collaboration amongst stakeholders.*

### PROJECT PURPOSE

In the context of increasing use of digital technology for travel planning, and declining funding for VICs, TCA wanted to ensure its visitor servicing model remains valued by visitors and industry stakeholders.

The purpose of the Visitor Servicing Recommendations Report was to identify the ideal visitor servicing options for TCA.

The report had to reflect the expectations of industry stakeholders, best practice in visitor servicing, the changing nature of visitor engagement, and the operating context.

Intentions that drove this work included

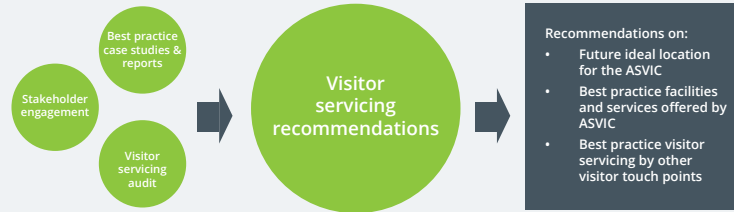
- Operating a commercially viable VIC
- Sustainably growing the visitor economy
- Maximising value for TCA members

*I am very excited by this document. The consultants have gone above and beyond expectations, providing a far more detailed and region-wide report than what was in the scope, and in doing so have painted a very ambitious and exciting vision for visitor servicing across the Red Centre. This document will provide a great lobbying platform to expand our visitor servicing across the region and service the customer in the best way possible.*

– STEPHEN SCHWER, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, TOURISM CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

The approach to developing the report was:



Recommendations on:

- Future ideal location for the ASVIC
- Best practice facilities and services offered by ASVIC
- Best practice visitor servicing by other visitor touch points

Engagement was a critical element of the project to identify and prioritise visitor servicing needs, and the expectations of industry stakeholders, and to inform recommendations.

Key elements included one-one meetings with stakeholders to understand their needs and wants from visitor servicing, and the potential impacts of a new VIC location; and an online survey and use of social media to reach and gather the view of other stakeholders not otherwise engaged. Video conferencing and phone meetings were used to deliver cost efficiencies.

The project

- identified and reviewed the visitor touch points across Central Australia
- audited the facilities and services provided by the VIC
- reviewed best practice visitor information centres and recent research reports in terms of the elements critical to contemporary visitor servicing
- built an understanding of current and future visitor markets
- reviewed the current VIC location and other potential location options in Alice Springs including co-location with the National Aboriginal Art Gallery and National Indigenous Cultural Centre
- identified gaps and opportunities for enhancement of visitor servicing in Alice Springs
- provided pragmatic recommendations to inform decision-making on the future of visitor servicing in Alice Springs
- identified important enablers for the delivery of best practice visitor servicing in Central Australia

Visitors have multiple touchpoints when travelling to and through a destination which influence the quality of the visitor experience and decision-making on what to see and do. The visitor servicing review for TCA highlighted the importance of visitor hotspots such as attractions and rest stops as key touchpoints beyond bricks and mortar visitor information centres, and the need for a consistent visitor servicing approach.



### OUTCOMES

Based on a recommendation to service visitors further afield, TCA had discussions with the Northern Territory government about operating the Battery Hill Mining Centre and Tennant Creek Visitor Information Centre in Tennant Creek five hours north of Alice Springs. TCA is now managing the site under a short-term contract while long-term details are being finessed.

In Alice Springs, TCA is in the process of finding a new location for the Alice Springs Visitor Information Centre that would better meet visitor needs. A number of sites were assessed to see if they fit with the checklist provided in the report on what a best practice site for a visitor information centre would include. A couple of likely sites were identified, and TCA is now seeking funding for pre-feasibility studies that would outline the costs of using each site.

### REFEREE

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Contact us for  
a free one hour  
consultation  
to discuss your  
project and  
brainstorm  
ideas with the  
team

Thank you for the opportunity to tell you about Tilma Group.

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