

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.



DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN 2020-2025

PART A: SETTING THE DIRECTION

The purpose of this Destination Management Plan is to increase the appeal of the region for our visitor markets, create compelling reasons for them to visit across the year, and build a flourishing visitor economy.

The Destination Management Plan (DMP) is the first strategic tourism plan that has been developed by Charters Towers Regional Council (CTRC) to guide tourism development. Funding through the federal government's Building Better Regions Fund grant program enabled the production of the DMP.

While the tourism industry has performed well over recent years, increasingly, it has been reliant on other markets, and industry collaboration and leadership have curtailed the region's tourism achievements. The CTCTC is a global pandemic, with its associated disruption to visitor flows, then brought considerable disruption and distress to many businesses across the region. At the same time, it also provided an opportunity for businesses to take stock, review what was working and what wasn't, to update, increase their digital presence, and engage with consumers in new ways.

Against this backdrop, the DMP draws together practical actions to support the industry in recovering and rebuilding through supporting the region's economic 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. It is about working smarter to get the most out of the existing knowledge and quality tourism product within the region.

Charters Towers needs to give its visitor economy to reap greater benefits for local communities, the business sector and local government. To achieve this is a planned and well-coordinated effort requiring a commitment to prioritising new development and investment, and ensuring that the necessary processes, funding and supporting infrastructure are in place.



3. DIGITAL MARKETING

"People do not buy goods and services. They buy connections, stories and magic."

"Marketing is no longer about the stuff that you make, but about the stories you tell." - Seth Godin

Marketing is no longer about the stuff that you make, but about the stories you tell. Seth Godin, author and entrepreneur Seth Godin. Storytelling can take place across all levels, from a local producer telling their family's challenges leading their business from a Regional Tourism Board sharing the lives of their community's characters. The evolution of the internet has seen consumers connected with advertising and brands. To cut through, it is vital to create an emotional connection with the consumer. Storytelling offers a way to connect with the consumer by moving away from selling to developing engagement at an emotional level.

Optimising digital engagement

Enhancing digital marketing channels is a fundamental strategy for the region as business increasingly use digital devices throughout the entire consumer journey (see customer journey).



Figure 4: Consumer journey

Digital marketing channels to consider include:

- website
- blog
- social media
- customer newsletter (email marketing)
- product
- Search Engines (Marketing paid activity)

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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.

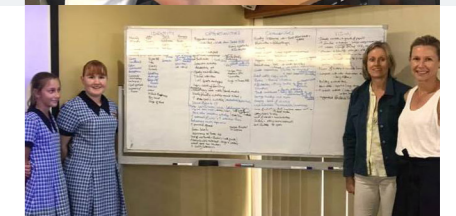
A clear process for implementation and the associated resourcing are critical to the activation of this DMP. During engagement with the local tourism industry the message was clear that without the means to drive projects, tourism development and success in the region will continue to be limited.

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

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Read the Destination Management Plan →

