

# BURDEKIN TOURISM STRATEGY



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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1.1. Introduction

Stafford Strategy (Stafford) was commissioned by Burdekin Shire Council (Council) to complete a Tourism Strategy (the Strategy) for the Burdekin Shire (the Burdekin). The purpose of the Strategy is to develop the Burdekin's tourism potential in a coordinated and structured manner which offers sustainable growth and opportunities across the region.

## 1.2. Definitions

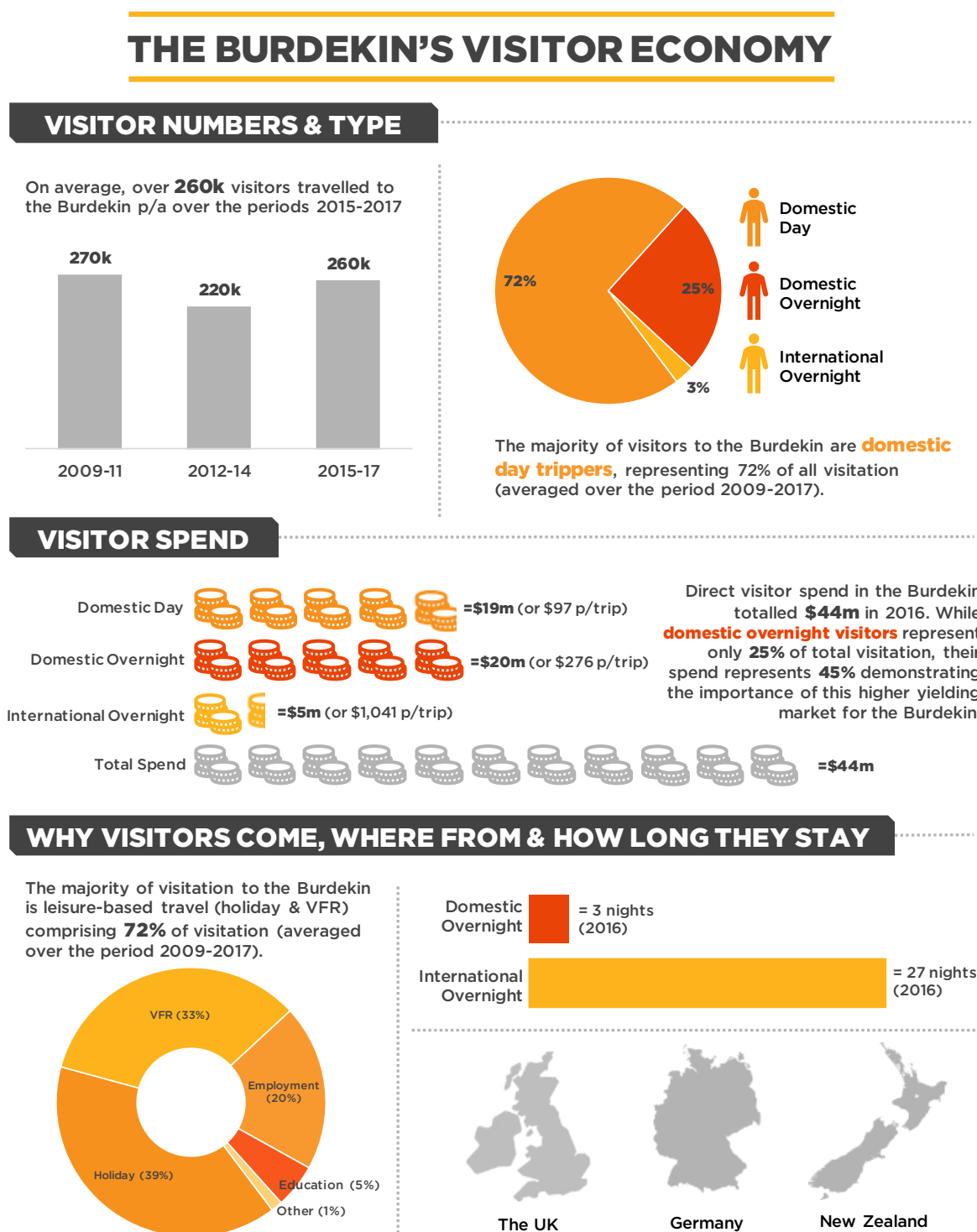
Figure 1: Definitions

Who is a visitor?	<p>For the purpose of this Strategy, a visitor includes all those travelling to the Shire, either for a day trip or staying overnight, for a variety of reasons, including for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Leisure/holiday purposes</li> <li> Events (including sports and events)</li> <li> Business-based travel</li> <li> Visiting friends and relatives (VFR)</li> <li> Educational purposes</li> </ul>
What is the visitor economy?	<p>The visitor economy accounts for the fact that visitor activity does not occur in isolation, but rather, contributes to investment in jobs across a broad range of industry sectors. This includes all industries that directly and indirectly serve visitors, ranging from accommodation and tourism operators and attractions, to broader goods and services such as retail, food and beverage industries.</p> <p>As tourism is not a defined industry sector on its own, but rather the amalgamation of a variety of industry sectors including accommodation, food and beverage, transport and other elements, the full extent of what comprises the visitor economy and its reach across many elements of the broader economy is often not fully understood.</p>
What is a tourism strategy?	<p>Tourism and destination management is about planning for sustainably managing and building the visitor economy. The focus is much broader and covers product development, planning requirements, industry development as well as marketing. Destination management is, therefore, far more comprehensive than destination marketing. Because of this, destination management does not happen in isolation; it involves a wide range of sectors, stakeholder groups and delivery partners — such as government agencies (local, state and federal), communities and business groups — working collaboratively.</p>

### 1.3. Visitation to the Burdekin

Figure 2 provides a graphical summary of the Shire's visitor economy. Importantly, it demonstrates that a significant proportion of the visitor market (72%) are domestic day trippers. While the domestic day tripper market is an important sector, visitor spend data demonstrates that overnight visitor markets are far higher yielding. By way of example, while the domestic overnight visitor only represented 25% of total visitation to the Shire, they generated 45% of all spend. This Strategy, therefore, deliberately focuses on initiatives to increase overnight visitation to the Burdekin and to grow the average length of stay as these will deliver far higher economic benefits including local jobs and investment.

Figure 2: Visitation to the Burdekin



## 1.4. Challenges for growing the visitor economy

Figure 3 summarises the key challenges for growing the Burdekin's visitor economy. They will impact the Burdekin's ability to sustainably grow its visitor economy if they are not adequately addressed. They range from product development and supporting infrastructure challenges to those associated with governance within the sector.

Importantly, to resolve these requires the active participation of both Council and industry who have both expressed their desire to grow the Burdekin's visitor economy.

**Figure 3: Challenges for growing the Burdekin's visitor economy**

Product & Supporting Infrastructure	Marketing & Destination Awareness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Freedom camping (is not free to Council)</li> <li>▪ Lack of evening activities</li> <li>▪ Lack of family-friendly experiences</li> <li>▪ Lack of charge for experiences for the backpacker market</li> <li>▪ Lack of room capacity and higher-quality accommodation stock</li> <li>▪ Limited access to the Burdekin River</li> <li>▪ Limited new investment</li> <li>▪ Limited retail trading hours at weekends</li> <li>▪ Limited showcasing of WW2 heritage sites</li> <li>▪ Limited signage (interpretation and directional)</li> <li>▪ Majority of operators are small businesses</li> <li>▪ Understanding the difference between community and tourism product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of awareness on importance of the visitor economy</li> <li>▪ Lack of brand awareness</li> <li>▪ Lack of unified events calendar</li> <li>▪ Lack of product packaging</li> <li>▪ Lack of promotion and awareness of the Burdekin's coastline and beaches</li> <li>▪ Limited digital-savvy operators</li> <li>▪ Limited/fragmented digital presence</li> <li>▪ Townsville claiming "ownership" of Yongala</li> </ul>
Governance & Industry Collaboration	Other Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of tourism sector coordination and structure</li> <li>▪ Large number of small operators</li> <li>▪ Lifestyle operators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ageing population</li> <li>▪ Rivalry between Ayr and Home Hill</li> <li>▪ Council investment is starting from a low base</li> </ul>

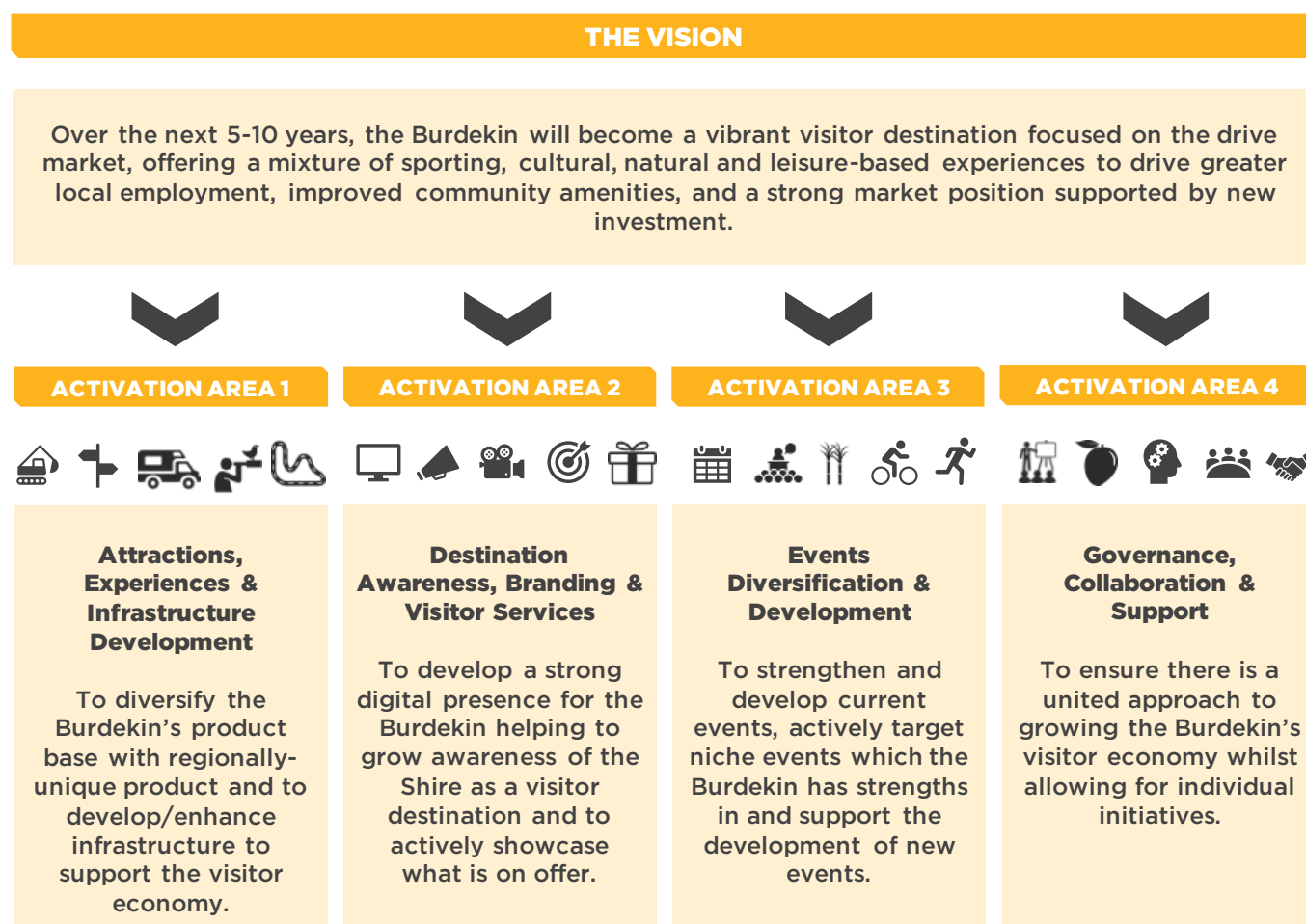


## 1.5. A vision for the visitor economy

To guide the development of the Burdekin as a destination and to strengthen the visitor economy, it is essential that a destination vision is created which industry buys into and supports. The destination vision proposed is outlined in Figure 4 below, along with four activation areas to achieve the vision.

The vision adopts a “low hanging fruit” approach by focusing on visitor markets which the Burdekin is already attracting (i.e. the drive market) but which it is not yet fully leveraging the potential. Over the next few years, and as the Burdekin is positioned and developed as a visitor destination, the potential exists to refine this vision further.

Figure 4: The vision for Burdekin’s visitor economy



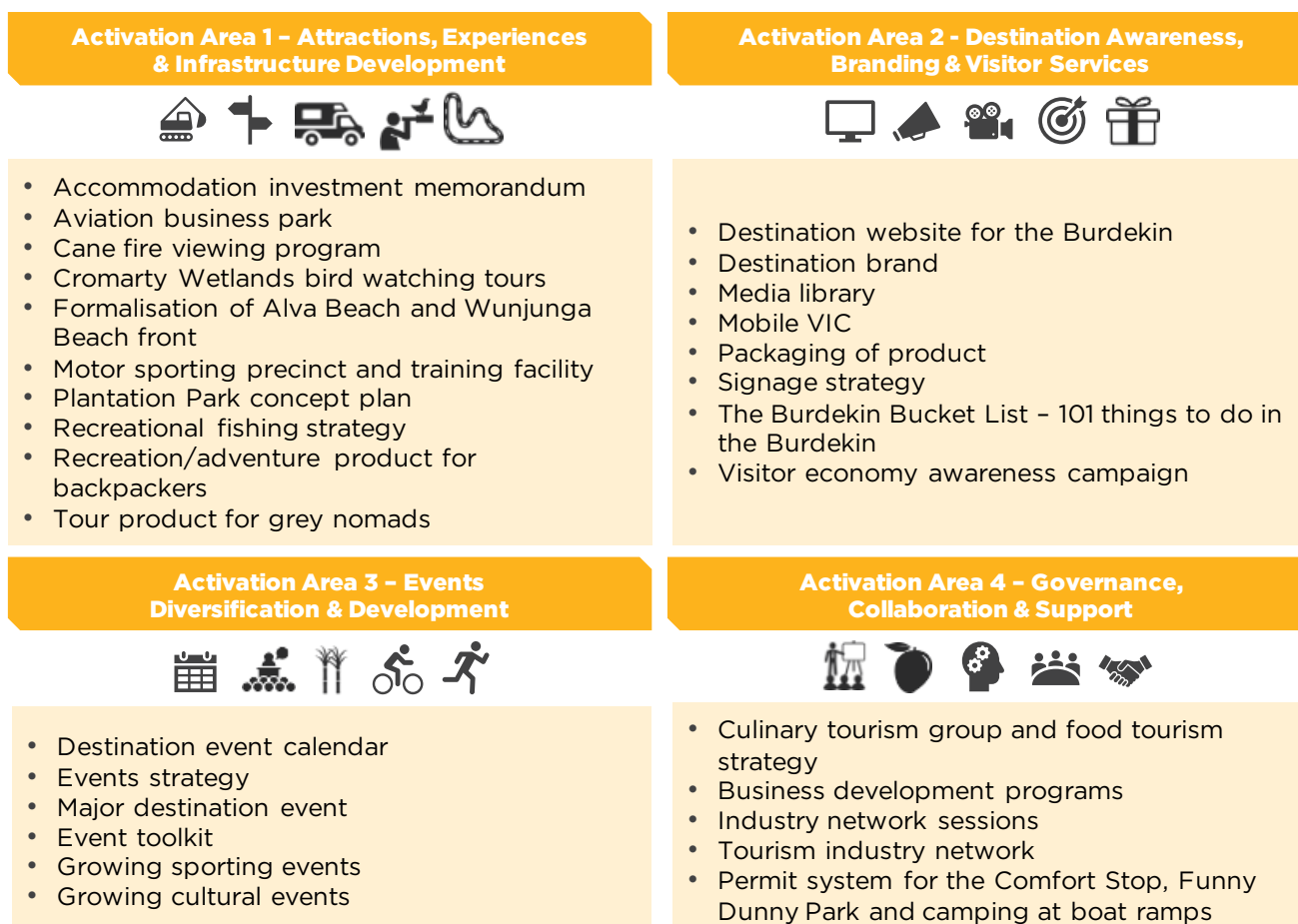
## 1.6. Activating the visitor economy

When considering opportunities to activate the Burdekin's visitor economy, a number of key points were considered, including the following.

- The Burdekin is in a unique position; it is effectively starting with close to a “blank canvas” for developing its visitor economy. This is a very rare position to be in and offers a number of opportunities.
- The Burdekin is situated between two major tourism nodes, being Townsville and the Whitsundays. Both areas generate strong overnight visitation, including a strong mix of domestic and international visitors. The Burdekin could leverage off both the flow through of traffic between these nodes (approximately 1 – 1.5 hours drive time from the Burdekin) for a mixture of both overnight and day visitors.
- The Yongala is one of the world's premier wreck dives and is far more accessible from the Burdekin than elsewhere. This provides strong brand profile and a “hook” to generating stronger destination awareness.
- Raising understanding and awareness of the value of the visitor economy amongst the local community is essential, so developing a community tourism awareness campaign would be a very valuable exercise to help explain that tourism is everyone's business (not just the accommodation providers).
- Developing the building blocks for the digital promotion and profiling of the Burdekin is required as there is currently a limited digital footprint of the Shire from a destination perspective.
- Ensuring that tourism operators are brought together by Council to ensure both industry and council are aligned in the goals to be activated. This should include the creation of a tourism industry network as a partnership to help drive activity which carefully follows the Strategy.

Figure 5 outlines the various opportunities that have been identified for the Burdekin.

Figure 5: Activation opportunities for the Burdekin's visitor economy





## 1.7. The Priority Projects

Starting small and sustainably is the key for the Burdekin. As such, four priority projects (Figure 6) have been selected (from the full list of opportunities outlined in Figure 5) for Council and industry to focus on. These are referred to as priority projects because of their potential to have a major impact on the Burdekin's visitor economy through: increased visitor yield, growing visitor average length of stay, shifting visitation from day trips to overnight and the generation of new investment into the Burdekin.

Figure 6: The priority projects



## 1.8. Concluding Remarks

The Burdekin is in a unique position surrounded by some very strong state and national tourism destinations and associated brands. And while this is an advantageous for the Burdekin as it can leverage off these strong visitor markets, it creates the need to avoid duplicating what surrounding regions already offer. Finding new tourism-based products and products which are complementary to surrounding tourism regions (Townsville, The Whitsundays and Mackay<sup>1</sup>) is especially important.

This Strategy identifies several differentiated opportunities with some reflecting the building blocks for marketing and promotion, and others reflecting new products to consider.

The challenge – which is well-recognised by Council – is the limited resources in personnel and funding to help activate these opportunities. There is, therefore, a need to avoid taking on too much at once. What must be avoided is a traditional “scatter gun” approach, which, while often well intended, tries to take on too much, without strategic direction, and without the time and resources to adequately deliver. A more measured approach is also likely to lead to far more effective outcomes for the Burdekin as well as stronger support from the wider community, whose ongoing support is crucial to build the visitor economy.

The action plan for this Strategy<sup>2</sup> offers a carefully staged approach to delivering the outcomes desired. It also provides an indication of the likely funding levels needed to achieve each action and noting that there may be various State and Federal Government grants which could be applied for, providing that Council is able to contribute as well.

The Burdekin is very fortunate in being surrounded by strong tourism nodes (Townsville and the Whitsundays) unlike many other regional destinations in Queensland, and which offer the chance to leverage a visitor market already captured by these major nodes; if the Burdekin has something unique and/or special to offer.

<sup>1</sup> These are major tourism destinations which offer the chance for the Burdekin to leverage off their success.

<sup>2</sup> See section 8 of this Strategy.

But the steps to being better known are a key building box exercise, which the Burdekin needs to firstly get underway. The relevant personnel in Council are already aware of this and working to get a quality destination web site developed, along with several inter related visitor services and promotional requirements such as the media database. All of this takes time, in order to deliver a quality end product.

In conclusion, the opportunities identified will all help lead to sustainable growth in the visitor economy, which also needs industry stakeholders to be aligned with Council, in addition to the wider community. And the community also need to be better informed of what the visitor economy currently offers and could offer in the future.





## 2. ABOUT THE TOURISM STRATEGY

Stafford Strategy (Stafford) was commissioned by Burdekin Shire Council (Council) to complete a Tourism Strategy (the Strategy) for the Burdekin Shire (the Burdekin). The purpose of the Strategy is to develop the Burdekin's tourism potential in a coordinated and structured manner that is consistent across the Burdekin.

### 2.1. Methodology

The development of the Strategy has involved the following.

- initial liaison with Council to gather background information and to discuss the consultation program for the Strategy;
- an ongoing literature review to build a quality context for the Strategy and to fully understand projects and strategies as well as relevant government policies affecting the region;
- consultation with Council as well as tourism industry stakeholders;
- desktop research, including a full audit of tourism product within the Burdekin;
- collation of historic visitor data for the Burdekin (based on the National and International Visitor Survey);
- multiple visits to The Burdekin to review product, meet with operators and assess new opportunities and development sites;
- liaison with industry operators (accommodation providers, food and beverage providers, farm operators, attraction operators, transport providers);
- structured meetings with Council to discuss the vision for tourism, infrastructure, development and discussion around related projects;
- prioritisation of the opportunities identified, based on follow up discussions with Council and tourism industry stakeholders;
- refinement and further detail regarding the challenges and opportunities;
- development of an action plan based on the confirmation of the opportunities and recommendations identified.
- compilation of progress report findings into a Strategy document to highlight issues and opportunities which have been considered by Council; and
- completion and presentation of the final Strategy based on any changes requested by Council.

### 2.2. Consultation

To complete this Strategy, extensive consultation was undertaken with a broad range of stakeholders, including Council personnel, Councillors, the tourism industry and other industry sectors (including agriculture and food). The community was also invited to several community workshops.

Stafford would like to thank all stakeholders who kindly provided their time, feedback and data. Their commitment and passion to ensuring the Burdekin can grow its visitor economy on a sustainable basis has been a key factor underpinning this Tourism Strategy.





## 3. ABOUT THE BURDEKIN

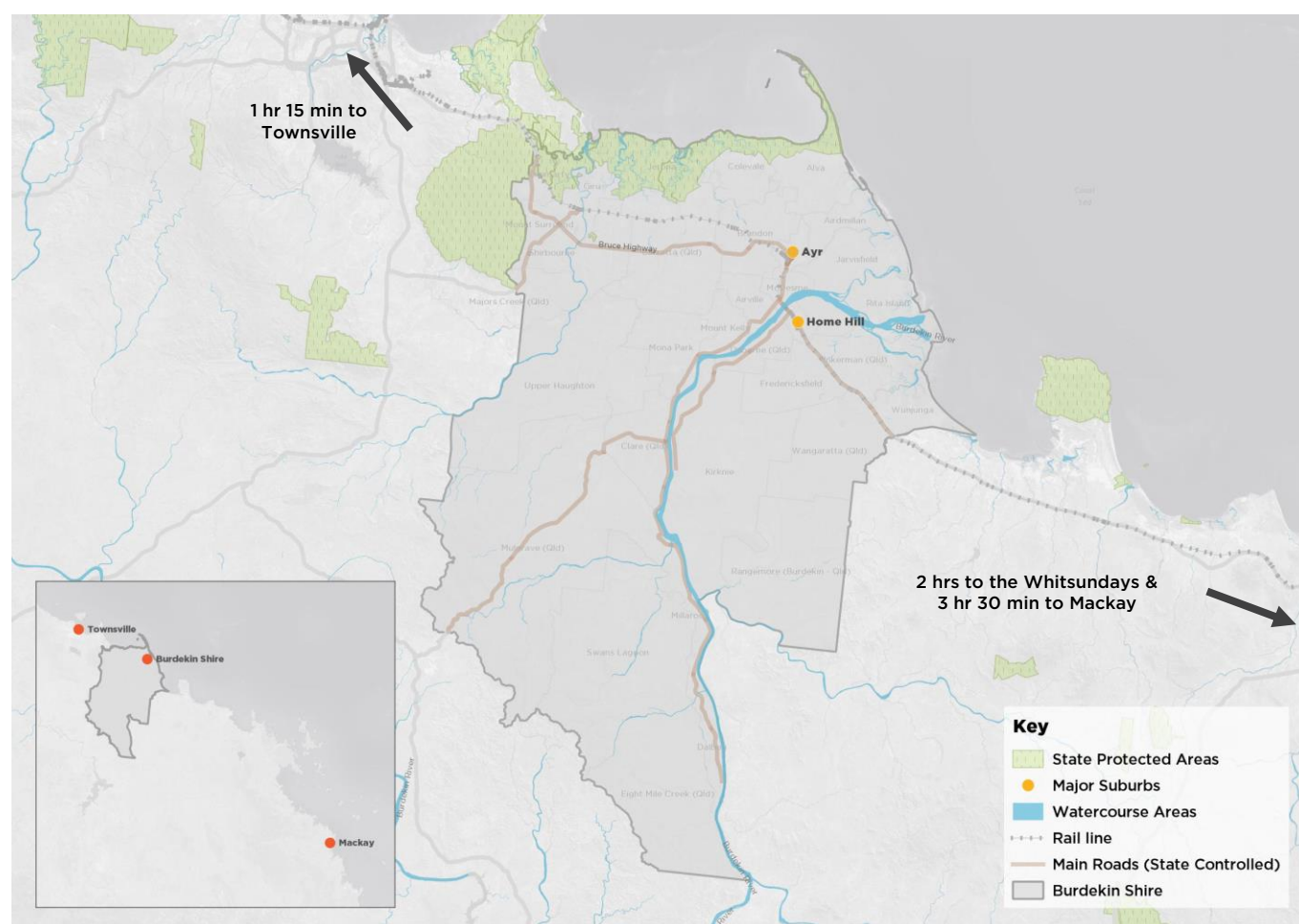
### 3.1. Location

The Burdekin is located along the coast of North Queensland, situated between Townsville and Bowen and along the Burdekin River Delta (Figure 7). The Burdekin covers in excess of 5,000 square kilometres.

Although many smaller coastal and regional communities are scattered throughout the Burdekin, there are two dominant commercial centres that provide the vast majority of services – Ayr and Home Hill.

The Burdekin is well-known as an agricultural region and is considered the sugar capital of Australia due to its extensive sugar cane production. As such, the agricultural industry generates the highest levels of economic output for the Burdekin and is the largest provider of employment in the area.

Figure 7: Map of the Burdekin

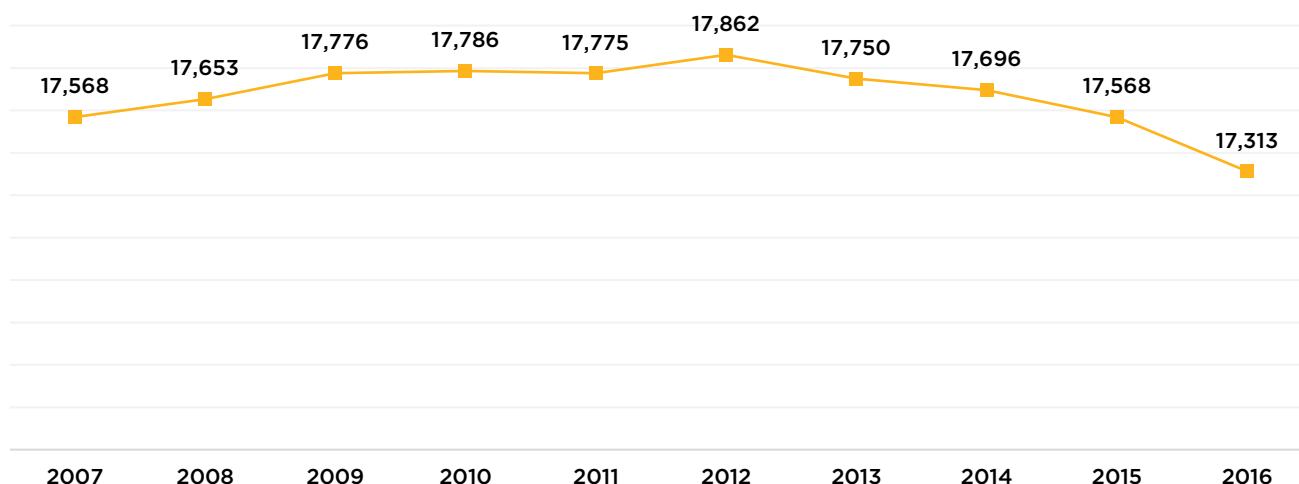




### 3.2. Population

Figure 8 provides a summary of the Burdekin's population over the last 10 years. It demonstrates that, particularly over the last five years, the Burdekin's population has declined – falling from just under 17.9k residents in 2012 to 17.3k residents in 2016 (a total decline of 3.1% or 549 residents).

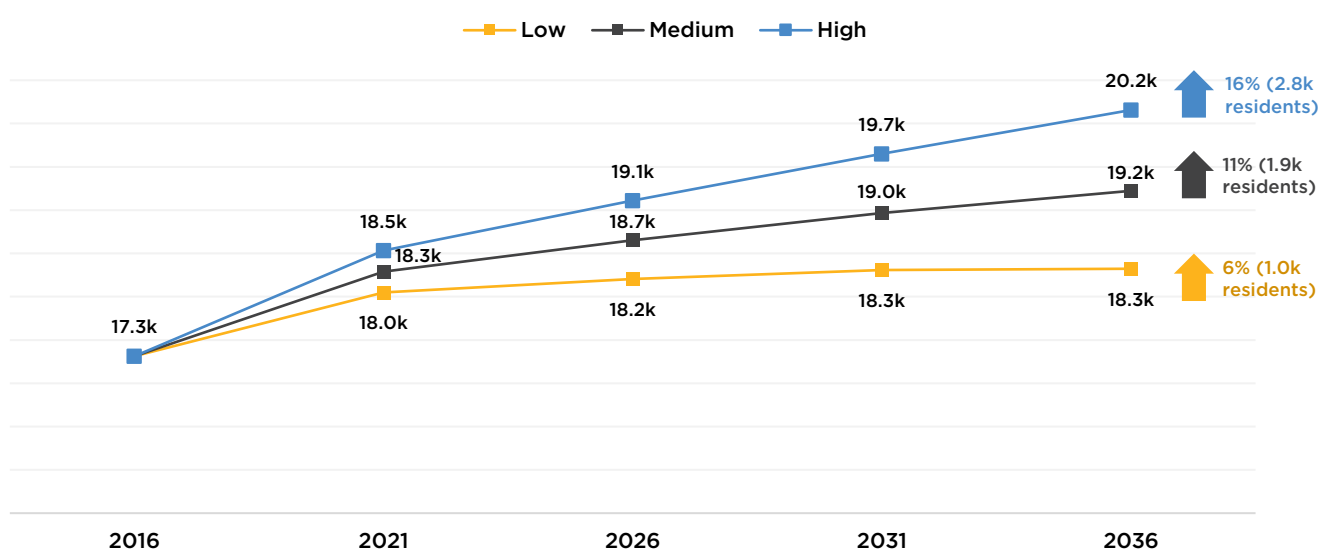
Figure 8: Historic population (2007-16)<sup>3</sup>



While the Burdekin's population has been declining, State Government forecasts – based on low, medium and high scenarios - anticipate growth in the LGA's population. Figure 9 provides a summary of the growth anticipated and demonstrates growth of 6% (1k residents), 11% (1.9k residents) and 16% (2.8k residents) under the low, medium and high scenarios respectively.

Given the historic declining population, it is not entirely clear what factors will be supporting these population growth forecasts provided by the Queensland Government.

Figure 9: Population forecasts (2016-36)<sup>4</sup>



<sup>3</sup> <http://www.economyprofile.com.au/burdekin/trends/population>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/products/tables/proj-pop-lga-qld/index.php>



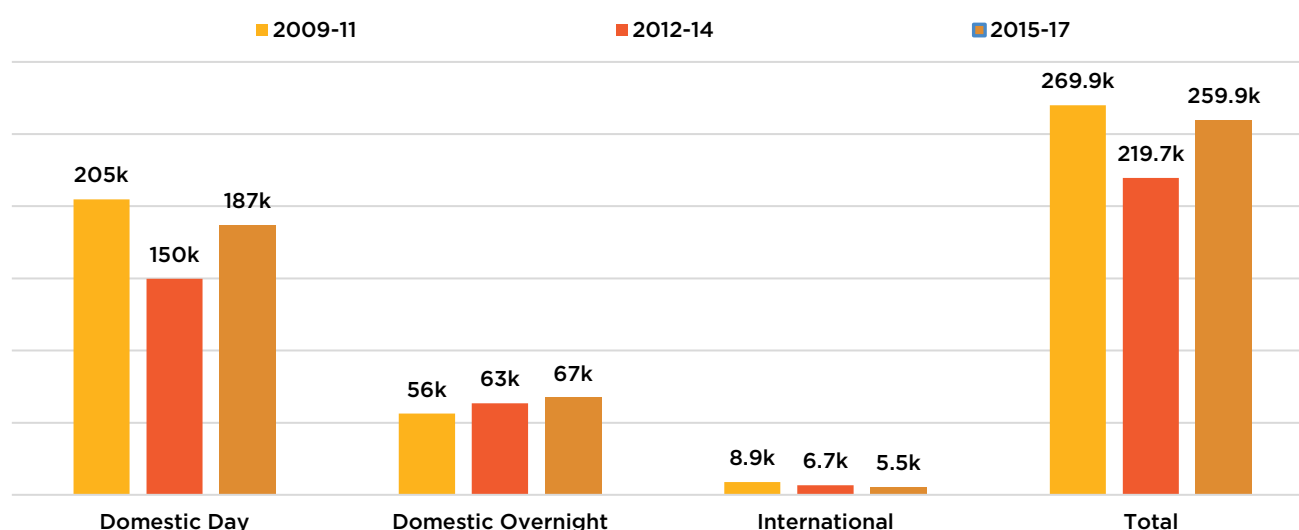
### 3.3. Visitation

#### 3.3.1. Total visitation and by type

Figure 10 provides a summary of visitation to the Burdekin over the period 2009 – 2017. This has been based on three-year averages over this period because of sample size challenges when drilling down to visitation at an LGA level.

The data demonstrates that over the period assessed, total visitation has fluctuated from 220k to 270k. While the domestic overnight market has steadily grown over this period (increasing from 56k to 67k visitors), the domestic day trip market has fluctuated while the international visitor market has declined (falling from 8.9k to 5.5k visitors).

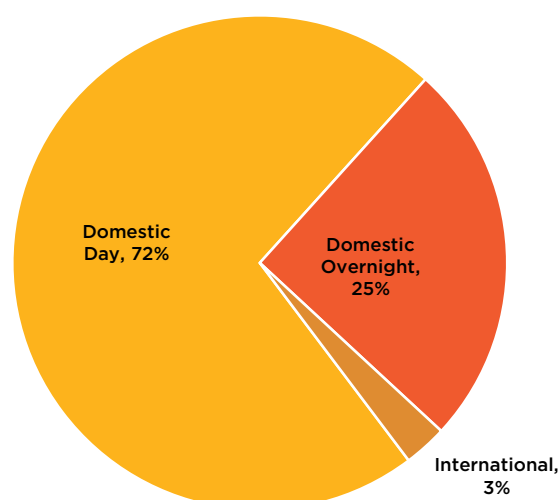
Figure 10: Visitation to the Burdekin (based on three-year averages from 2009/11 – 2015/17)<sup>5</sup>



Averaging visitation over the period assessed demonstrates that the vast majority of visitors to the Burdekin are domestic day trippers, comprising 72% of visitation (see Figure 11)<sup>6</sup>. This is followed by the domestic overnight market (25%) and the international market (3%).

While the domestic day trip market forms an important part of the visitor economy, it is important to note that the overnight market (international and domestic) is generally far higher yielding and provide stronger economic benefits. This Strategy, therefore, deliberately focuses on opportunities which may assist in sustainably growing the overnight market to the Burdekin.

Figure 11: Visitor type to the Burdekin (average from 2009-17)



<sup>5</sup> Based on IVS and NVS data

<sup>6</sup> Based on IVS and NVS data

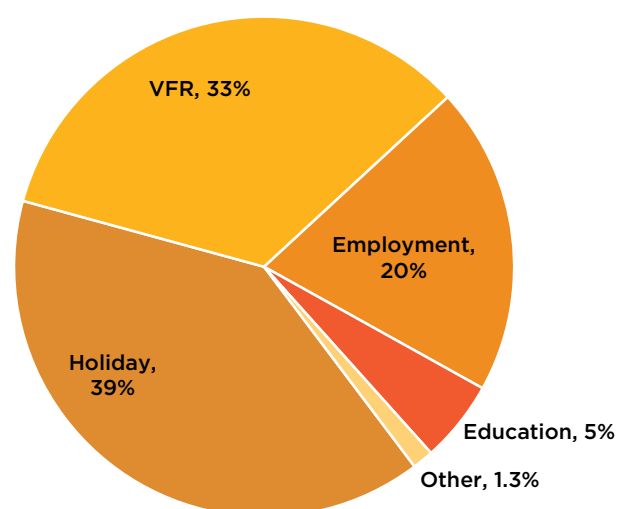
### 3.3.2. Motivation for visitation

Figure 12<sup>7</sup> illustrates motivation for visitation to the Burdekin, averaged over the period 2009-2017. It demonstrates that:

- visitation to the Burdekin is largely centred on leisure visitation (holiday and VFR visitation), comprising 72% of visitation over the period assessed; and
- employment also represents quite a large proportion of total visitation, with 20% of visitors travelling for this purpose.

This demonstrates the need to develop product in the Burdekin which is geared towards not only a leisure-based traditional tourism market, but also to investigate product which may appeal to the large number of international workers who are resident in the LGA during the fruit and vegetable picking seasons. We understand that on any given day, the Burdekin has, on average, 500 international workers living in the Shire. These workers often travel out of the Burdekin at weekends and during breaks looking for experiences to undertake because there is currently a lack of these in the Shire.

**Figure 12: Motivation for visitation to the Burdekin (average from 2009-17)**



### 3.3.3. Penetration of Townsville Region visitation

The Burdekin is situated within the Townsville Region, as defined by Tourism Research Australia (TRA) and TEQ. Table 1 provides a summary of visitation to both areas, based on a three-year average from 2015-17. It demonstrates that over this period the Burdekin captured:

- 10% of total visitation to the Townsville Region;
- 13% of domestic day trip visitation to the Townsville Region;
- 6% of domestic overnight visitation to the Townsville Region; and
- 4% of international overnight visitation to the Townsville Region.

**Table 1: The Burdekin's penetration of Townsville Region's visitation<sup>8</sup>**

	Visitation (Sept YE, 2015-17)		Burdekin Penetration of Townsville Region
	Townsville Region	Burdekin Shire	
International Overnight	125k	5.5k	4%
Domestic Overnight	1.1m	67k	6%
Domestic Day	1.5m	187k	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.7m</b>	<b>260k</b>	<b>10%</b>

<sup>7</sup> Based on IVS and NVS data

<sup>8</sup> Based on IVS and NVS data

### 3.3.4. Total spend

In 2016, visitors to the Burdekin spent an estimated \$44m. The majority of this spend originated from the domestic overnight market (comprising \$20m of spend), followed closely by the domestic day trip market (\$19m). The remainder of spend (\$5m) was by the international visitor market.<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, while the domestic day tripper market represents approximately 72% of visitation to the Burdekin, the market only contributes 43% of all spend. On the other hand, the domestic overnight market, which represents 25% of visitation, generates 45% of total visitor spend. This further demonstrates the higher yielding nature of the overnight market compared with the day tripper market.

### 3.3.5. Comparison with other Council areas

Figure 13 - Figure 16 provide a comparison of visitation to the Burdekin as well as 12 other LGAs which are situated in the surrounding region to the Burdekin. The heatmapping demonstrates total visitation, domestic day trip, domestic overnight and international visitation based on 2016 data produced by TRA and TEQ<sup>10</sup>.

- Across all visitor category types, as well as total visitation, the Burdekin ranks within the bottom three LGAs (as to be expected as it is not yet a well-recognised tourism destination).
- Townsville, the Whitsundays and Mackay – are mature tourism destinations and very well known – received the highest level of visitation across all categories.
- Potential exists to leverage off these strong surrounding regions to help grow the Burdekin's visitor economy.
- Finding a clear point of difference for the Burdekin is the key; what will make visitors stop and stay for an experience or product they can't easily get in the wider region?

<sup>9</sup> Local Government Profile 2016 for the Burdekin produced by TRA  
(<https://cdn2-teq.queensland.com/-/media/db3ea968fa4d4ebab2614642c0ffef58.ashx?la=en-au&vs=1&d=20171019T135850>)

<sup>10</sup> Note, three-year average data was not available for all Shires so 2016 calendar year data, as per TEQ's website has been utilised.



Figure 13: International Visitation (2016)

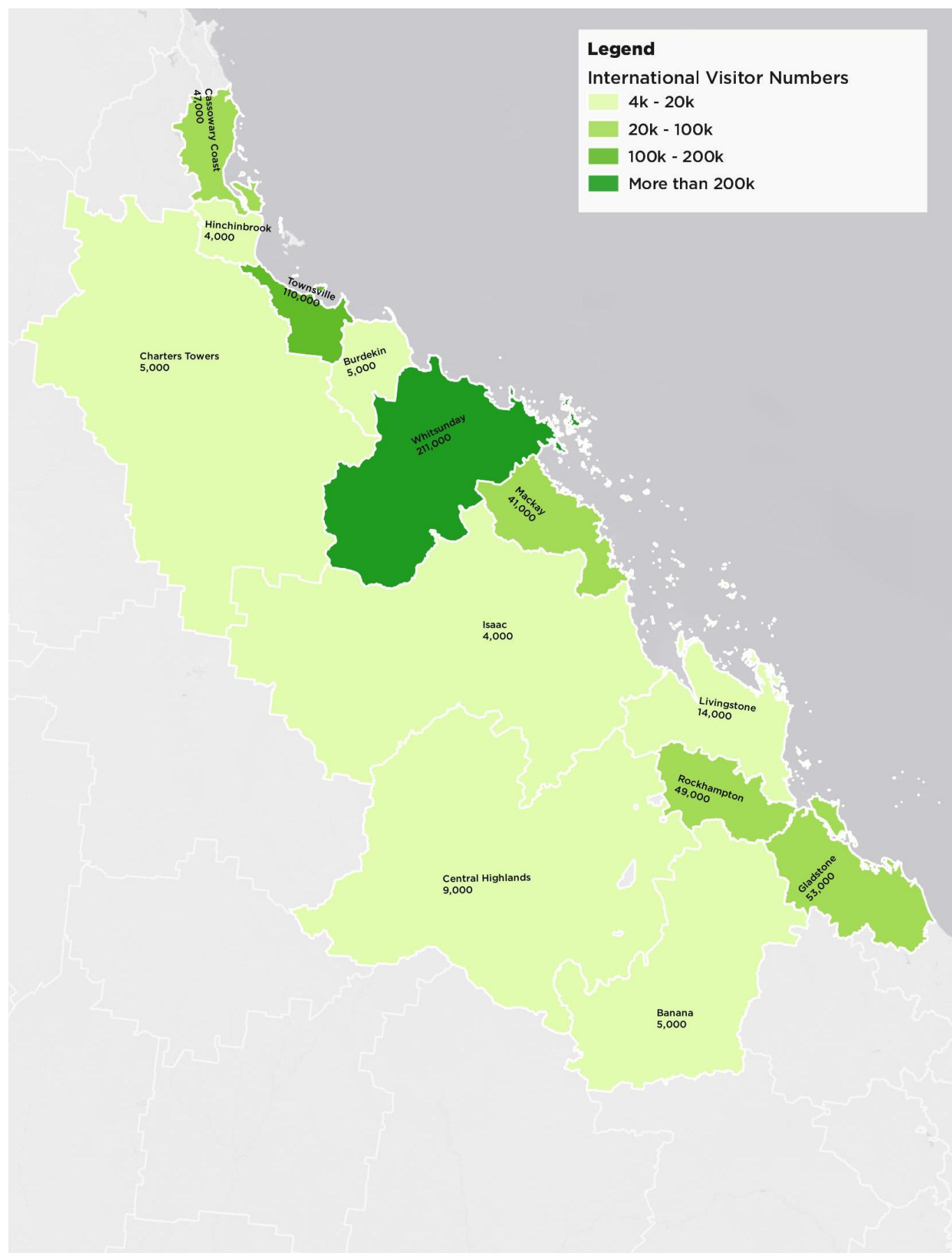


Figure 14: Domestic overnight visitation (2016)

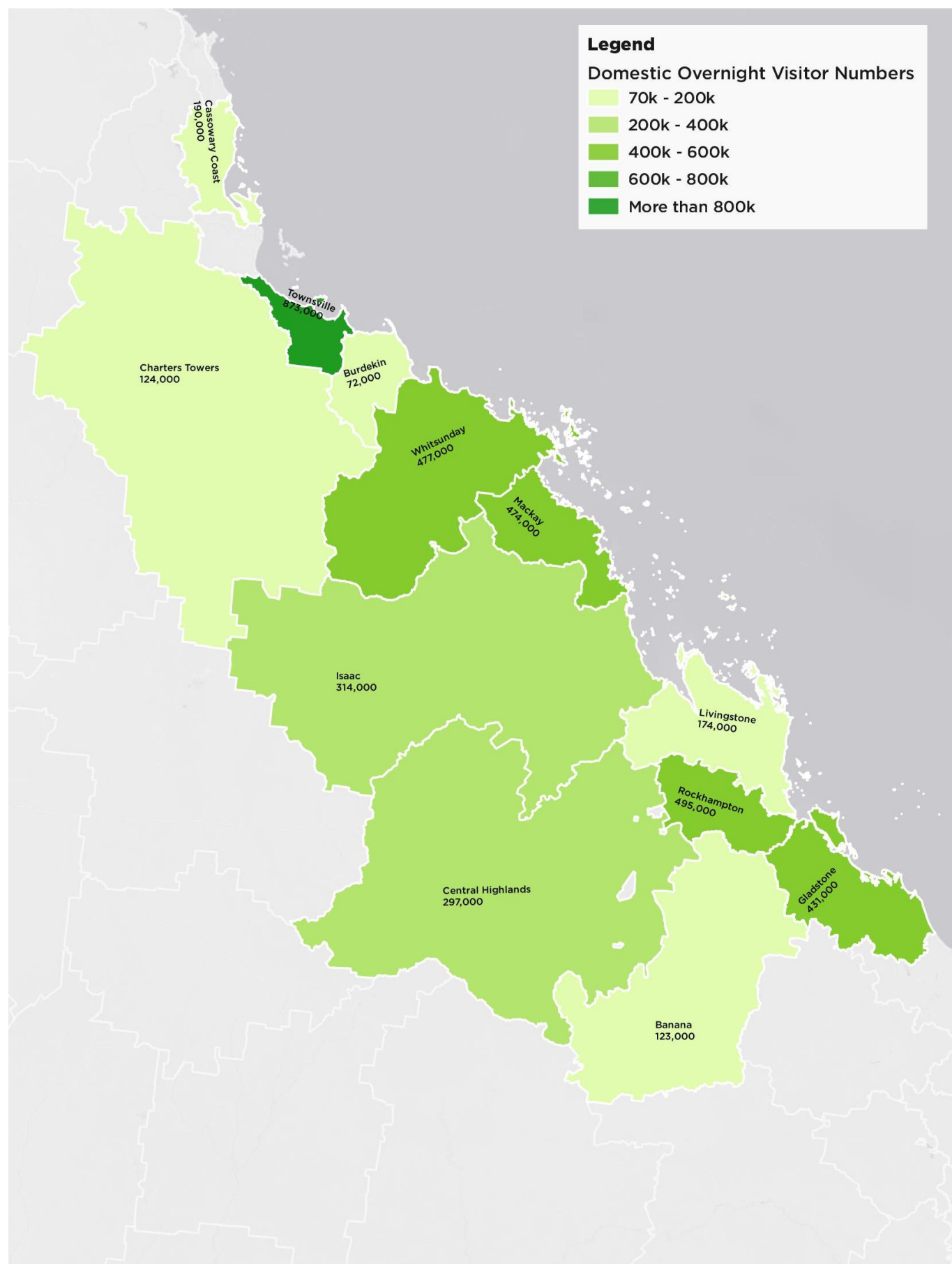


Figure 15: Domestic day visitation (2016)

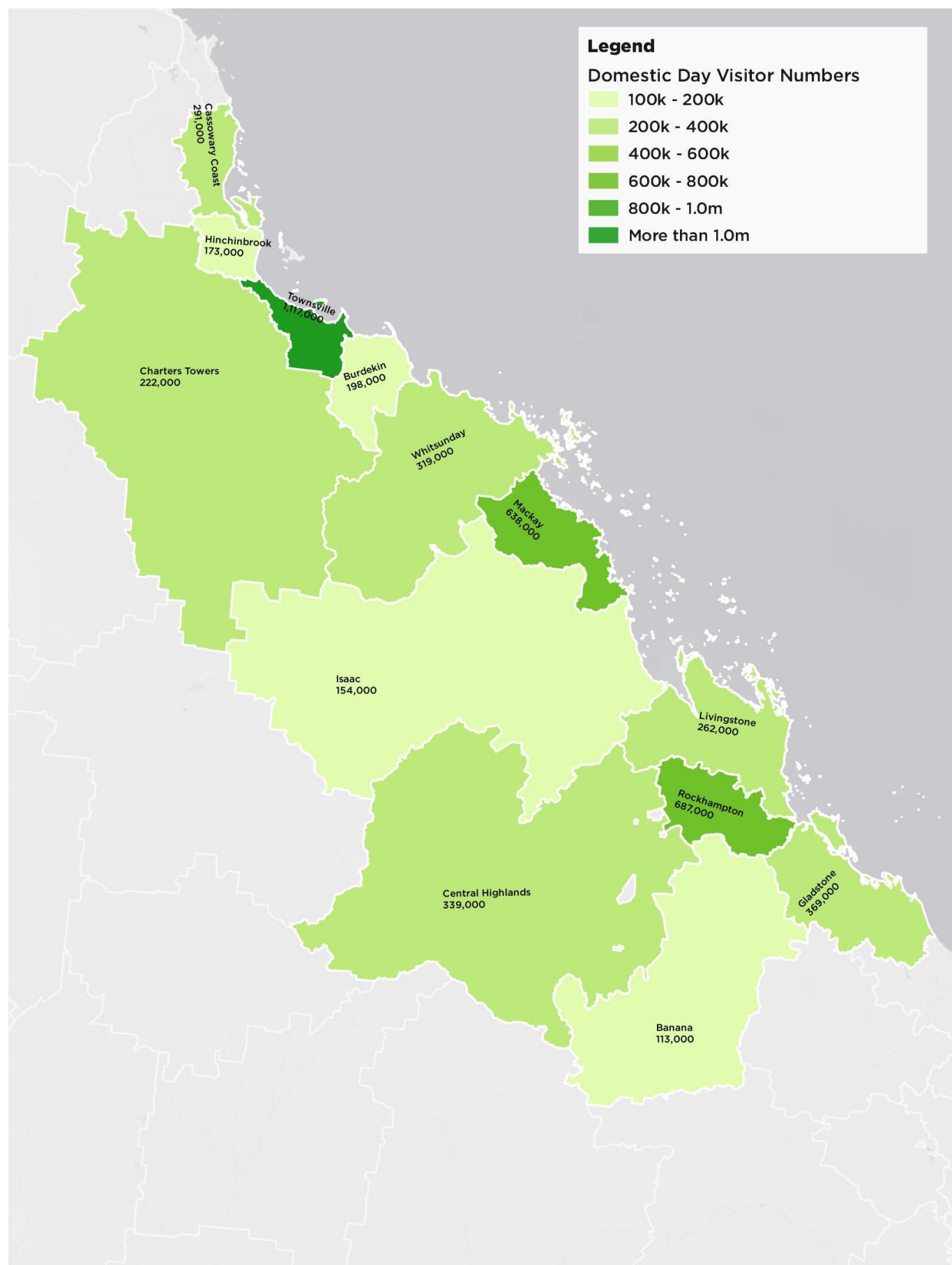
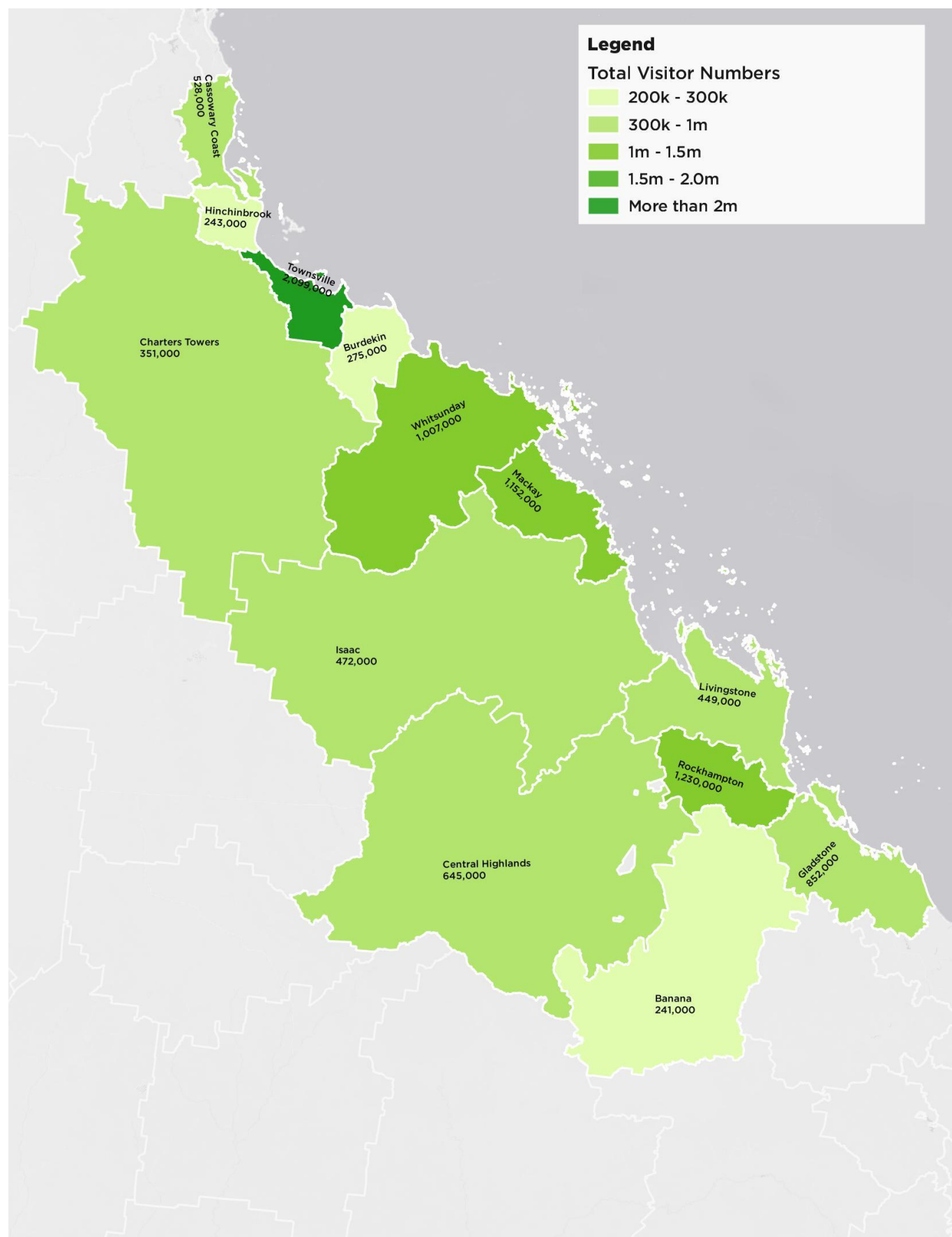




Figure 16: Total visitation (2016)



### 3.4. The visitor economy

The tourism sector is the 13<sup>th</sup> largest sector (in terms of output) in the Burdekin and accounts for just under \$53m in output (Figure 17). The sector comprises 2.0% of total economic output in the LGA, compared with a North Queensland average of 3.5%. This demonstrates that currently tourism is a small sector in the overall economy, but there is strong growth potential if a variety of initiatives can be activated.

Figure 17: Top 15 Sectors by Output in the Burdekin (2016)<sup>11</sup>

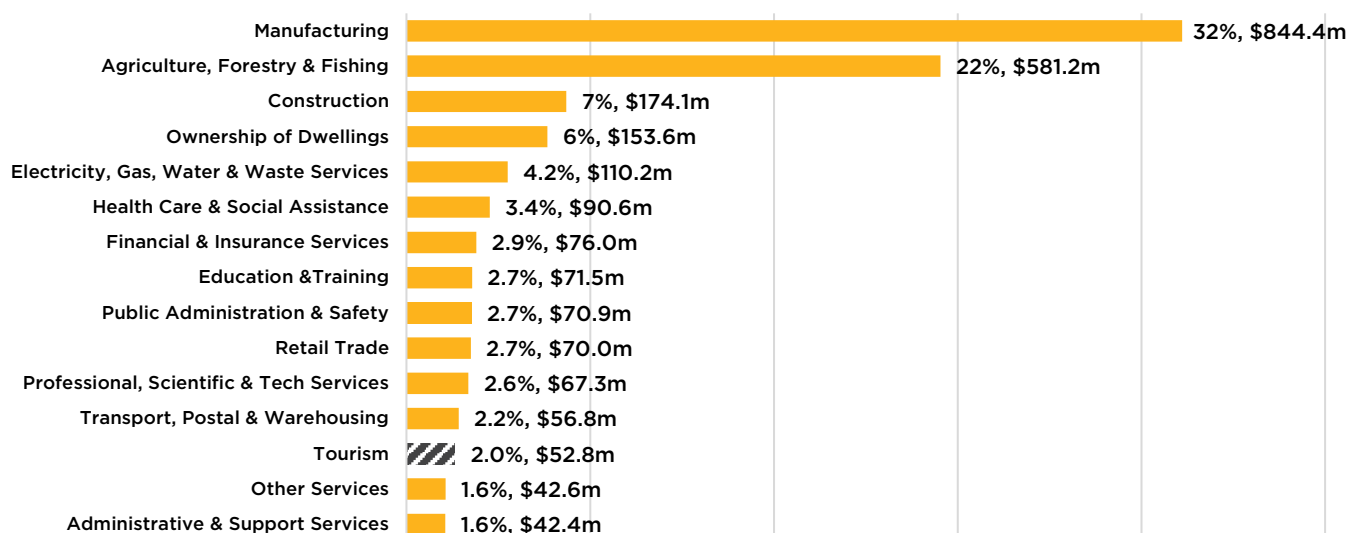
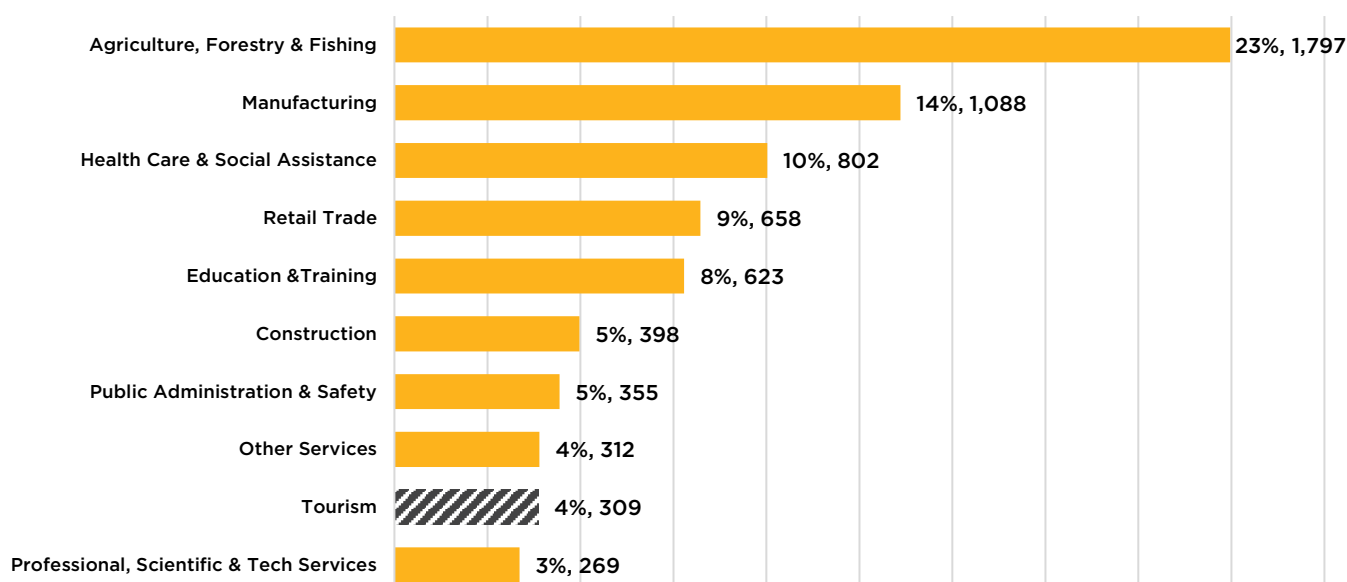


Figure 18 shows that tourism accounts for 4% of all jobs and ranks ninth in terms of job creation. Growing tourism in a sustainable manner should support additional job creation in the Burdekin.

Figure 18: Top 10 Sectors of Employment in the Burdekin (2016)<sup>12</sup>



<sup>11</sup> <http://www.economyprofile.com.au/burdekin/tourism/output>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.economyprofile.com.au/burdekin/tourism/employment>

### 3.5. SWOT analysis

Table 2: SWOT Analysis – Burdekin’s Visitor Economy

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accessibility to Townsville via the Bruce Highway</li> <li>▪ The farming and agricultural sector</li> <li>▪ Sugar capital of Australia</li> <li>▪ The Burdekin is the only region in Australia which still burns its cane crop</li> <li>▪ Proximity to Cromarty Wetlands</li> <li>▪ Access to beaches</li> <li>▪ All beaches in the Shire are accessible to 4WD’ing</li> <li>▪ The ability to attract short-term international farm workers</li> <li>▪ Yongala dive wreck is one of the best dive wrecks in the world</li> <li>▪ Comfort Stop in Home Hill is popular and well-known</li> <li>▪ The Shire has extensive water supply (Burdekin River, Burdekin Falls Dam)</li> <li>▪ High quality fishing throughout the Shire (particularly for barramundi and mud crabs).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of variety, quantity and quality of accommodation stock</li> <li>▪ Lack of evening activities and a night-time economy</li> <li>▪ No central tourism hub</li> <li>▪ Lack of investment or regeneration in major town centres, resulting in vacant lots and ‘tired’ shop fronts</li> <li>▪ Lack of well-defined brand positioning of the Burdekin</li> <li>▪ Community not necessarily understanding of the value of tourism</li> <li>▪ Lack of commissionable (paid) tourism product and recreation activities</li> <li>▪ No destination website for the Burdekin</li> <li>▪ No consolidated events strategy</li> <li>▪ Lack of economic diversity (very reliant on agriculture)</li> <li>▪ Limited industry cohesion</li> <li>▪ Limited budget and resources at Council to drive tourism initiatives</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development of farm stays, fishing lodges and other more niche accommodation products which fit the region</li> <li>▪ Development of more branded destination holiday parks</li> <li>▪ Food tourism strategies and events</li> <li>▪ A signature event (e.g. cane cutting championships)</li> <li>▪ Development of a fishing strategy along with a fishing event</li> <li>▪ Development of light aircraft training hub and various recreational aviation activities</li> <li>▪ Development of a potential motor sport precinct with links to driver education, training, technology testing etc.</li> <li>▪ Digital marketing program with high quality website, media data base etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unforeseen environmental/weather-related disasters that impact the agricultural sector</li> <li>▪ Lack of investment in existing and new accommodation stock could prevent overnight visitation</li> <li>▪ Inability to invest in, or activate, the town centres could drive residents and visitors away from the Burdekin</li> <li>▪ Delays in any of the major regional State Government projects could delay economic growth and negatively impact the tourism industry</li> <li>▪ Lack of appetite from farmers or local businesses to stimulate tourism growth</li> </ul>





## 4. PRODUCT AUDIT

### 4.1. Accommodation Audit

#### 4.1.1. Summary of audit findings

Table 3 provides a summary of the Burdekin accommodation audit<sup>13</sup>.

- There are 425 units (i.e. the number of unique bookable rooms), 317 caravan park sites (powered and unpowered and 562 dorm style beds in backpacker facilities.
- The most common form of accommodation (in terms of number of properties) is AirBnb's/houses, comprising 28% of all accommodation stock. This is followed by backpackers/pubs (26%).
- In terms of units, the most common form is backpackers/pubs, comprising 39% of all units, followed by motels (29%) and caravan park cabins (28%).
- The Burdekin also has a large number of beds in backpackers/pubs, equating to 562 beds, as well as an additional 211 dorm-style beds in caravan parks. These beds are primarily rented by working holiday makers who are picking fruit and vegetables in the Burdekin from April to December, rather than being for the leisure-based visitor market.

Table 3: Accommodation Audit Summary<sup>14</sup>

Category <sup>15</sup>	Number of Properties	Number of Units <sup>16</sup>	Number of Sites (Powered & Unpowered)	Number of Beds (dorm-style only)
Campground	4	-	n/a <sup>17</sup>	-
Caravan Park	9	120 (cabins)	317	211
Motel	8	125	-	-
Backpackers/Pub	12	164 <sup>18</sup>	-	562
AirBnb/House	13	16	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>773</b>

#### 4.1.2. Accommodation spatial audit

Figure 19 maps<sup>19</sup> the accommodation audit findings. Most accommodation – particularly motel stock - is clustered in the Burdekin's two primary towns being Ayr and Home Hill, as well as a small cluster at Alva Beach. There is limited accommodation dispersed in other parts of the Shire, though this is primarily backpacker and caravan park style accommodation.

<sup>13</sup> Please note the full findings of the audit are in Supporting Documentation 1.

<sup>14</sup> The product audit was a desktop research exercise using the Burdekin visitor guide, Hotels.com, Expedia.com and TripAdvisor. If operators have not listed themselves on these websites, they may not appear in this list. Stafford also provided the list to Council for review.

<sup>15</sup> Note, some properties have multiple different forms of accommodation (for example, BIG4 Ayr Silver Link Caravan Park has powered and unpowered sites, backpacker accommodation and cabins. Stafford has, therefore, assigned the property to the most relevant category available.

<sup>16</sup> A unit constitutes the number of rooms which can be booked for a unique booking. For example, a 2-bedroom apartment would constitute 1 unit because even though it has two rooms, it can only be booked by the one individual unique booking.

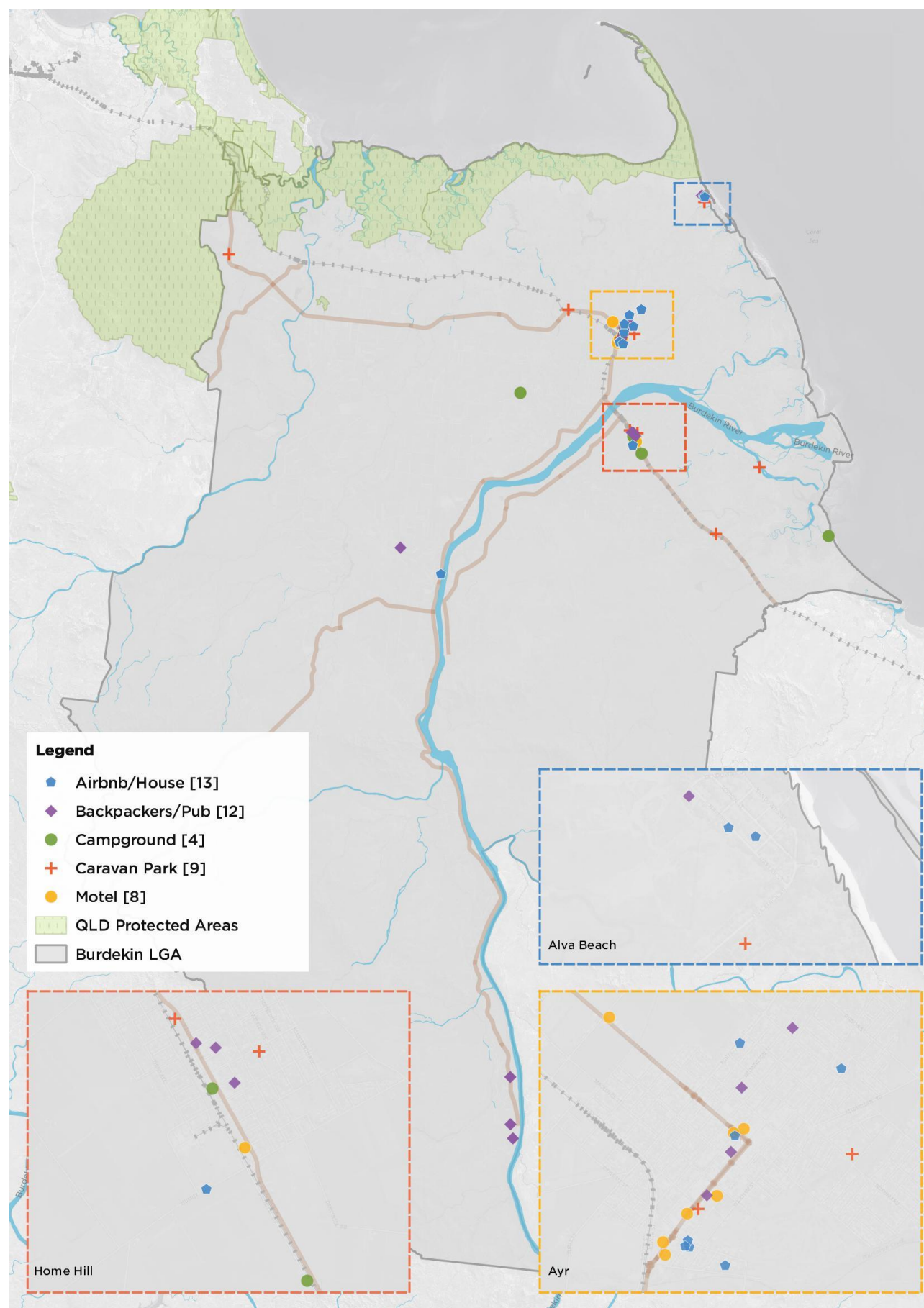
<sup>17</sup> Data was unable to be sourced on the number of sites at each camp ground.

<sup>18</sup> Note, for backpackers, this represents the number of dorm rooms available. The number of beds has also been included as bookings are taken by bed rather than by unit or room.

<sup>19</sup> Mapping data in this section is based on data from ABS, Google and © OpenStreetMap & Contributors, and the GIS user community



Figure 19: Burdekin Accommodation Mapped

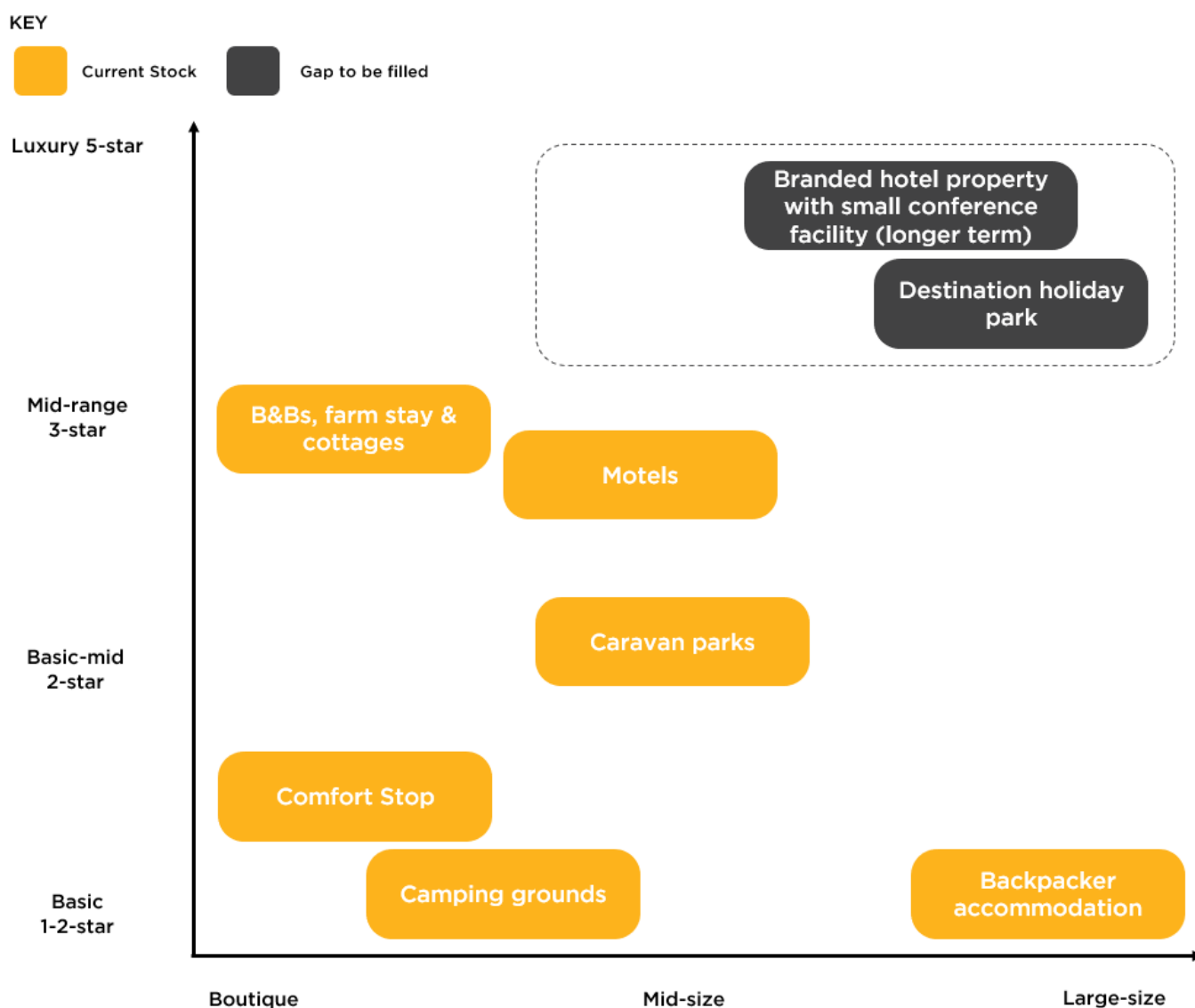




### 4.1.3. Accommodation gap assessment

Figure 20 demonstrates that while the Burdekin currently has a limited range of accommodation options available at the 1-3+star quality category, there are gaps in the higher-quality accommodation segment (3.5 star plus) as well as a lack of branded accommodation stock. The opportunity exists to consider introducing a larger destination holiday park and with consideration to introduce a higher-end mid-size lodge or motor inn style property (40+ rooms) in the medium-longer term with an associated conference venue if demand is proven.

Figure 20: Accommodation gap assessment



## 4.2. Experiences/Attractions Audit

### 4.2.1. Summary of audit findings

Table 4 provides a supply side audit of tourism assets and product in the Burdekin<sup>20</sup>. The audit identified 61 tourism attraction related experiences<sup>21</sup>.

Based on this audit, the Burdekin's tourism assets/product is primarily distributed amongst:

- cultural/heritage product: 21% of the total product identified;
- natural attractions and lookouts: 20% of total product;
- boat ramps: 16% of total product; and
- food experiences/farmgate<sup>22</sup>: 10% of the total product.

Importantly, of the 61 experiences/assets identified, more than two-thirds are free experiences (69%). While having free things for visitors to do is an important part of any visitor economy, there is a balance required. To grow visitor yield in the Burdekin requires introducing more commissionable tourism product which could be in the form of paid tours, admission prices, packaged product etc.

**Table 4: Attractions/experiences audit summary**

Category	Count	% of Total
<b>Free Experiences</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>69%</b>
Culture/Heritage	13	21%
Natural Attractions & Lookouts	12	20%
Boat Ramps	10	16%
Public Art	5	8%
Visitor Information Centre	2	3%
<b>Paid Experiences</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>31%</b>
Food experiences, farmgate	6	10%
Entertainment	5	8%
Water Activities & Recreation	5	8%
Golf	2	3%
Culture/Heritage	1	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 4.2.2. Accommodation spatial audit

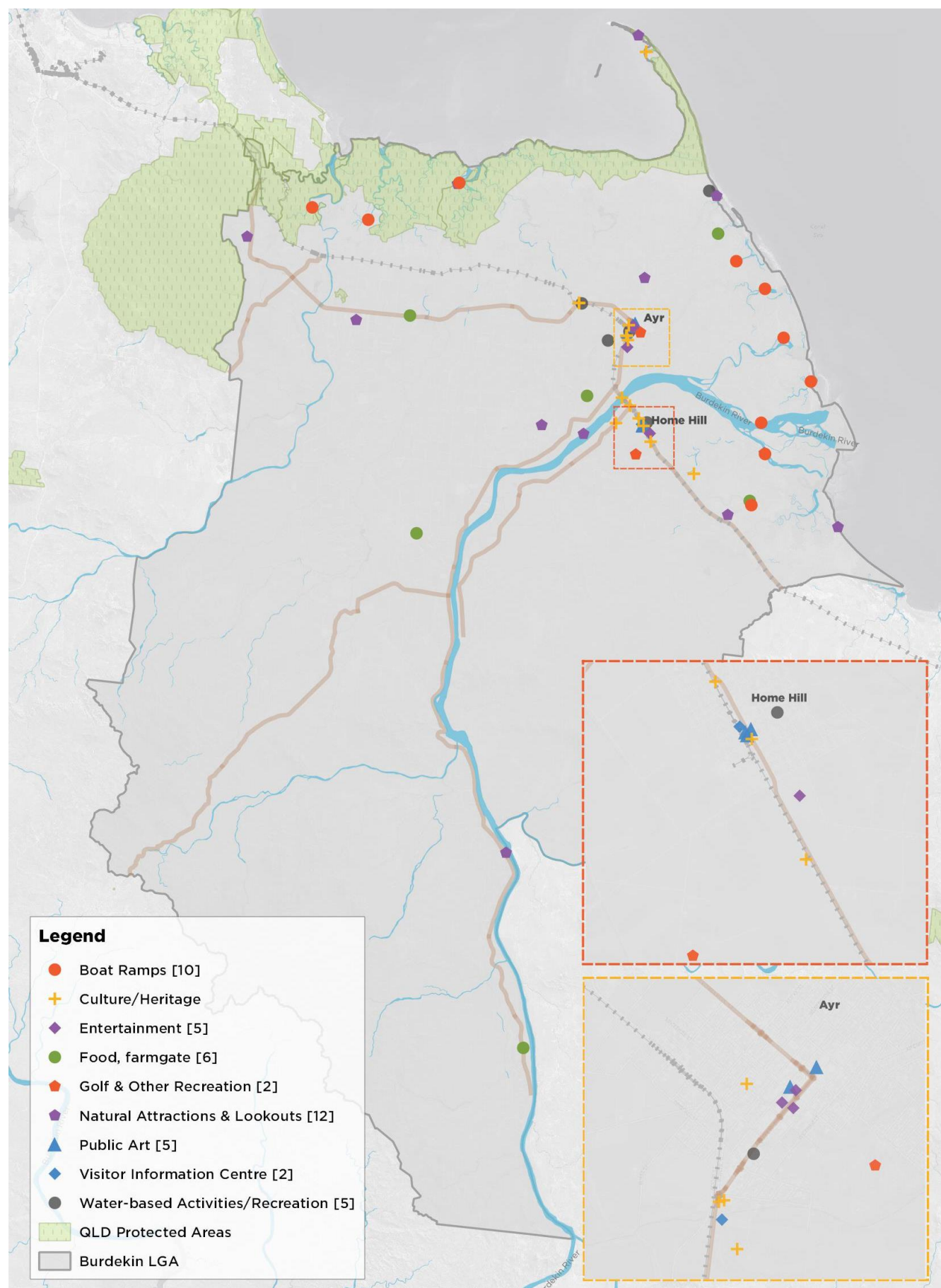
Figure 21 maps the attraction/asset audit. It demonstrates that the majority of tourism assets/product is clustered around the centres of Ayr and Home Hill with the exception of: boat ramps which are for obvious reasons scattered along river and coastal areas; and food/farmgate product and natural attractions which are situated in the rural parts of the Burdekin.

<sup>20</sup> Please note the full findings of the audit are in Supporting Documentation 2.

<sup>21</sup> The product audit captures those operators who are listed in Council's visitor guide and on the ATDW for the Burdekin region. Stafford also provided the audit to Council to add in those operators who may not be listed on Google.

<sup>22</sup> Note this does not include all F&B providers in the Burdekin but rather includes unique food experiences.

Figure 21: Burdekin Attractions Audit Mapped



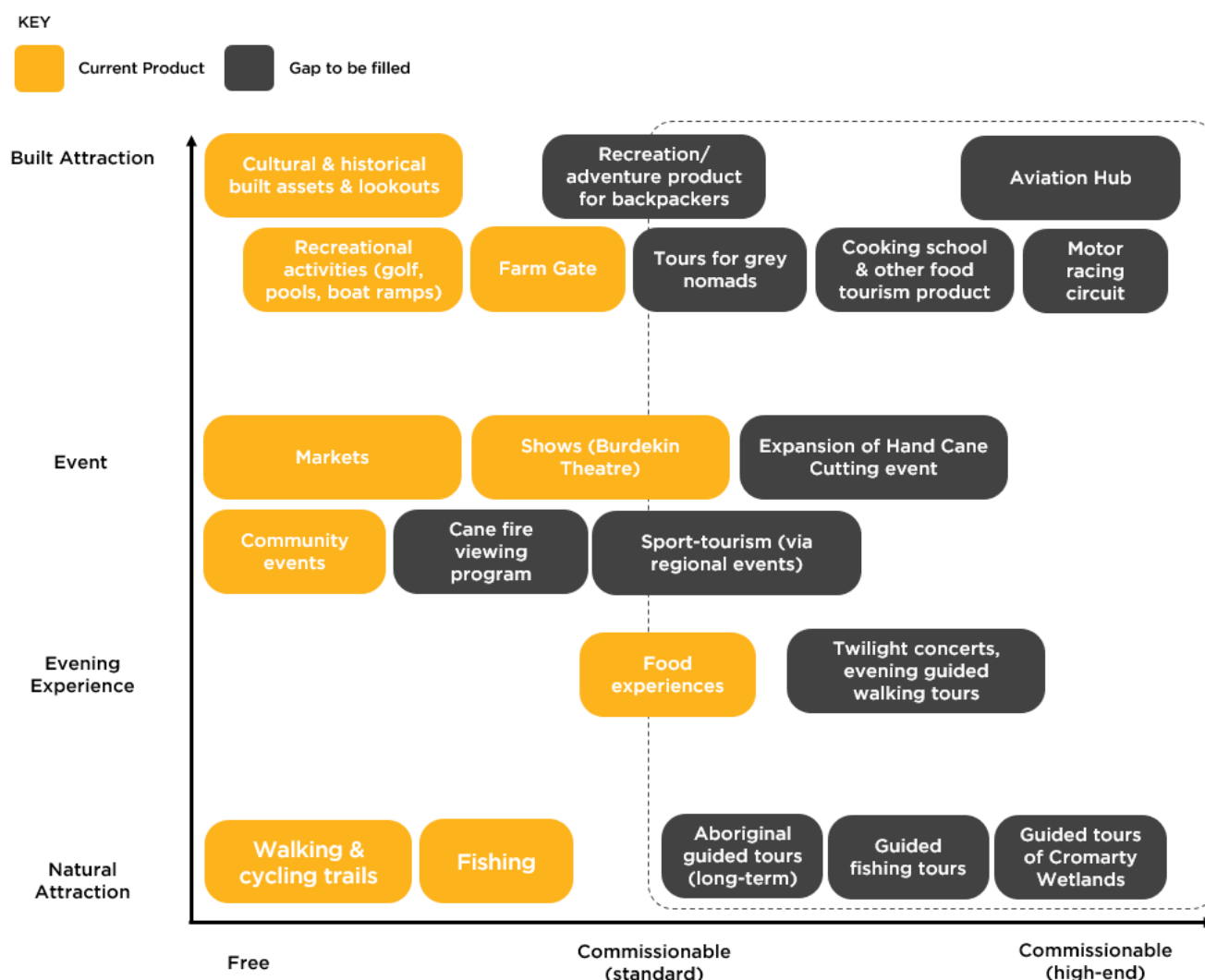
### 4.2.3. Product gap analysis

Figure 22 provides a gap assessment for the attractions/experiences sector in the Burdekin. It demonstrates that:

- there is a large amount of free and self-guided product focused on the Burdekin's natural and cultural assets;
- there are limited evening-based experiences to encourage a longer length of stay and to provide experiences which locals can enjoy rather than having to travel out of the Shire to undertake evening-based activities;
- there is limited pay for and guided eco and adventure tourism product, despite a significant proportion of the Shire comprising natural areas; and
- there is no major destination event – the majority of events are community-based.

The opportunity exists to introduce a range of product<sup>23</sup> which grows the amount of commissionable product available at both a standard<sup>24</sup> price range and higher-end range. This includes (but is not limited to) guided fishing and bird watching tours, a potential motor racing circuit (with a strong training and education component), a potential aviation hub with light aircraft training and recreational activities, as well as expansion of select events within the Shire.

Figure 22: Product gap assessment



<sup>23</sup> Please note this only includes a sample of product development opportunities. The full list of opportunities is included in section 7 of this Strategy.

<sup>24</sup> Standard commissionable product refers to the price of product (rather than the quality).





## 5. CHALLENGES

The following section outlines challenges (in alphabetical order) which were identified during the consultation and analysis undertaken for this Strategy. The challenges have been segmented according to the following categories.

- Product and supporting infrastructure challenges;
- Marketing and destination awareness challenges;
- Governance and industry collaboration challenges; and
- Other challenges.

Section 7 of this Strategy highlights opportunities which provide further detail on how many of these challenges can be mitigated and positive outcomes achieved.

### 5.1. Product & Supporting Infrastructure Challenges

#### 5.1.1. Freedom camping

The Comfort Stop in Home Hill is recognised as a major drawcard for the Burdekin and is popular with the grey nomad market in particular. It offers a free stopover for 48 hours for RVs and caravans etc. as well as providing a dump point, free showers and toilets, barbeque and other cooking facilities. While the Comfort Stop is great for users because it is “free”, one must be careful to recognise that it comes at a significant cost to Council to maintain. There is a need to ensure that value is being derived from these users through purchasing retail, supplies/provisions, food and beverage as well as tourism experiences.

#### 5.1.2. Lack of access to fresh seafood

While the Burdekin has access to high-quality fishing experiences via the Burdekin River and beach areas etc., the ability to purchase fresh seafood caught in the LGA is limited

#### 5.1.3. Lack of evening activities

The Burdekin has a lack of evening activities for visitors and locals. This makes it challenging to convince the day tripper market to convert their trip into an overnight visit and can also mean that residents, particularly families, travel outside of the LGA to engage in evening activities.

#### 5.1.4. Lack of family-friendly experiences

While the Burdekin has a range of natural recreational experiences, these are not always suitable for the family market with children under 10 years of age. There is a need to investigate the introduction of experiences for younger children. This could include development/marketing of family-friendly walking and cycling trails or other commercial initiatives, such as high ropes and aerial courses, outdoor mazes and indoor fun parks etc. Indoor family product would also be of benefit to local families.

#### 5.1.5. Lack of experiences for the backpacker market

It is estimated that, on average, on any given day from April to December, the Burdekin has approximately 500 backpackers working within the LGA picking fruit and vegetables. And while these visitors tend to stay in the area for several months, and often have 1-2 days off per week, there are limited experiences that they can undertake. Many backpackers, therefore, travel to surrounding areas, such as Airlie Beach and Townsville, to undertake leisure



and recreation-based experiences. There is a need to investigate the potential to introduce experiences in the Burdekin which would appeal to this market such as 4wd tours, fishing tours and/or boat hire, quad biking tours etc. These need to be packaged in with transport to/from the experience as often backpackers do not have their own vehicles.

#### **5.1.6. Lack of room capacity and higher-quality accommodation stock**

The majority of the Burdekin's room stock are motel rooms, equating to approximately 75% of room stock in the Burdekin (excluding backpacker properties which primarily service the Working Holiday Maker market). During peak periods, such as during major events, there is a lack of larger accommodation properties that can cater to demand. This impacts on the ability to convert day trippers to overnight visitors, to encourage a longer length of stay and to support conferences and events. Though commercial accommodation development of a large scale may be more challenging to achieve, potential may exist to encourage more boutique development.

#### **5.1.7. Limited access to the Burdekin River**

While the Burdekin River provides a variety of recreation-based experiences, including abundant fishing as well as 4wd'ing, accessing the River, particularly for those who are not residents, is difficult. There is a need to investigate how access to the River can be opened up (in a safe and sustainable manner) – potentially via guided tours.

#### **5.1.8. Limited new investment**

There has been a lack of investment in the tourism industry from commercial developers and operators for new accommodation as well as attraction/experience-based product.

There would be benefit in Council developing a tourism investment portfolio to indicate the kind of tourism development it will support as well as the most appropriate location for tourism development. Investors are looking for certainty in where they can develop and what is more likely to be supported by Council. Many investors see Council applied red tape as the major barrier and lack of support in statutory planning documents which do not encourage investment, especially into the tourism sector.

#### **5.1.9. Limited retail trading hours at weekends**

The Burdekin is noted by many as having a strong retail offer, with its many boutique stores drawing visitation from Townsville residents particularly during weekends. However, we understand that many stores close early at weekends and some do not operate on Saturdays or Sundays. This creates the perception that the Burdekin is not open at night or at weekends.

To encourage retailers, and particularly restaurant and café operators, to extend their trading hours, it is important that they (as well as the general community) are provided with insight as to the economic benefits of doing so. Greater community commitment to growing and promoting tourism will lead to greater word of mouth advertising for the Burdekin. It may also be useful to start this as a seasonal initiative over the months where more festivals/events occur, and more visitors are about.

#### **5.1.10. Limited showcasing of WW2 heritage sites**

The Burdekin is home to several heritage assets, including the heritage-listed Charlie's Hill Radar Station. The Radar Station was built in 1943 by the Royal Australian Airforce as part of the frontline defence of Australia during World War II. Despite the significance of this asset, little has been done to showcase it. There is a need to introduce options to interpret the Radar Station, demonstrating its significance and the role it played.

### **5.1.11. Limited signage (interpretation and directional)**

There is a lack of signage – including directional and interpretive. Directional signage, particularly within a CBD, is crucial to encourage visitation to places of interest, outline walks that can be completed through the CBD to attractions (such as heritage and cultural walks).

It is important to consider that better signposting of the Burdekin's natural and built attractions could potentially encourage visitors and the community to make better use of these facilities for walking, cycling and picnicking etc.

There is also a lack of interpretative signage when entering the Burdekin and at attractions. What should be considered are attractive gateway signs on major access roads into the Burdekin, highlighting the key experiences and branding of the Shire. As the area is steeped in history, the potential exists to use sign boards, markers and mobile apps to bring alive the heritage significance of the LGA.

Signage that could potentially be implemented includes attractive static displays (for both directional and interpretive means) as well as high-tech, innovative electronic information displays and touch screens which could be in the town centres main streets.

### **5.1.12. Majority of operators are small businesses**

The Burdekin has limited commissionable (i.e. pay for) tourism product and no large-scale commercial operators. While the boutique nature of operators in the LGA may offer a more personalised experience for visitors, there is a balance required as larger-scale operators tend to bring with them larger marketing budgets which not only markets their product but also the region.

### **5.1.13. Understanding the difference between community and tourism product**

In developing the Burdekin's visitor economy, there is a need to recognise the difference between community-based product versus tourism-specific product. Community-based product is product which will primarily attract a local market, where as tourism-specific product encourages visitation by markets outside of one's own region. Examples of community product includes swimming pools, most local sporting amenities, theatres and cinemas.

We understand there is a desire to introduce a water play park as a tourism initiative for the Burdekin. It is important to recognise that while some visitors may visit the water play park (if developed), this would primarily be a local community initiative as there are already water play parks within Townsville, Mackay, Bowen and the Whitsundays. Introducing a water play park in the Burdekin would, therefore, be duplicating what is already available in three surrounding areas if it were focussed on visitor interest and demand. Council and industry are likely best off focusing on tourism initiatives which are unique within the broader region to encourage those who are currently driving through the Shire to stop and stay longer.

The potential may exist, however, to indirectly encourage the development of a water play park as part of the destination holiday park opportunity recommended as a priority project in this Strategy (see section 7.2.1), like the one recently opened at BIG4 Adventure Whitsunday Resort which is a very high-quality water park. We would therefore encourage Council to consider a higher quality branded destination park operator where major water play features are a key component, and where casual use by locals could also be a pre-requisite for approval.

And we fully accept that there are locals who currently travel out of the Burdekin on weekends to take their families for this type of experience and understand the value of it.



## 5.2. Marketing and Destination Awareness Challenges

### 5.2.1. Lack of awareness on importance of the visitor economy

While the visitor economy is not the Burdekin's largest industry, it does play a key role in the Burdekin's economy, employing 309 people (the 9<sup>th</sup> largest sector by employment) and generating just under \$53m in economic output (the 13<sup>th</sup> largest sector by output).

Additionally, what these statistics do not demonstrate is that the visitor economy is not just confined to one traditional economic sector, but rather, comprises many sectors (such as transport, education, accommodation, training, food and beverage etc.). Growing the visitor economy, therefore, can generate broad-ranging benefits across a range of sectors.

There is a need for Burdekin's residents to understand that a diverse economy will play a key role in the Burdekin's future success and sustainability. While agriculture will likely always be the most important sector for the Shire, the visitor economy provides many opportunities to diversify the Burdekin's economy and many of these opportunities have strong synergy or are complementary with agriculture through farm tours, farm stays, cooking schools, food-based events etc.

### 5.2.2. Lack of brand awareness

The Burdekin brand does not yet have strong brand recognition outside the northern Queensland region. There is a need to undertake a branding exercise to position the Burdekin strategically and to provide clarity on what the "Burdekin" is as a destination. It is important that a consistent brand is developed by a destination brand specialist, along with all associated collateral (tag lines, brand values, vision and design etc.).

### 5.2.3. Lack of unified events calendar

While the Burdekin has a diverse community event portfolio, event operators appear to work in silos and are often unaware when other events – which may be similar to their event – are being held. There is a need for a well-planned and communicated event calendar for the Shire. This would be able to be used by visitors to the Burdekin to see what is on as well as enabling event organisers to better plan their events and to avoid event date clashes.

### 5.2.4. Lack of product packaging

There is limited product packaging available on destination-based websites for the Burdekin and existing operators comment that finding suitable product to package is challenging. As additional new, marketable product is introduced, there is a need to develop packages which visitors can book, rather than providing suggested itineraries. Packages could include accommodation, transport, guided walks/cycling, food and beverage etc.

There is also a need for industry training and up-skilling to identify opportunities for packaging product of a similar quality

### 5.2.5. Lack of promotion and awareness of the Burdekin's coastline and beaches

The Burdekin is situated on the coast and has an attractive coastline and beaches, most notably Alva Beach and Wunjunga. There is, however, currently limited awareness and promotion of this.

### 5.2.6. Limited digital-savvy operators

While there are some operators in the Burdekin who have an up-to-date digital presence, there are some who lack the tools for developing this.

There is a need to ensure that all tourism operators in the Burdekin are listed on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) which is used as a product database by Tourism Australia, TEQ as well as Townsville Enterprise Limited (as the Burdekin's RTO).

### 5.2.7. Limited/fragmented digital presence

Currently, the Burdekin does not have an official destination website, but rather, tourism is promoted via Council's website<sup>25</sup>. Additionally, the RTO website for the region ([www.townsvillenorthqueensland.com.au](http://www.townsvillenorthqueensland.com.au)) lists very little product for the Burdekin, other than free experiences one can undertake in the LGA. There is a need to:

- introduce a high-quality destination website for the Burdekin which is developed by a highly experienced website design agency who has experience in developing destination websites; and
- work with industry to guide them to become digital-ready, including being listed on the ATDW.

### 5.2.8. Townsville claiming “ownership” of Yongala

Yongala is noted as one of the best wreck dives globally due to its significant size and the high diversity of marine life. Despite the Burdekin offering quicker access to the dive site than Townsville (30 minutes compared with 3 hours) and having captured approximately 85% of market share of dive tours to the wreck, Townsville has claimed “ownership” of Yongala with access to the dive site being promoted as “from Townsville”. There is a need for the Burdekin to re-claim ownership of Yongala, positioning it as a Burdekin asset.

## 5.3. Governance and industry collaboration

### 5.3.1. Lack of tourism sector coordination and structure

Operator feedback has indicated that the Burdekin's visitor economy:

- has had limited coordination;
- lacks a unified approach to delivering marketing outcomes and encouraging tourism development; and
- is highly fragmented, without a strong unity of purpose.

Concerns were also expressed regarding the level of communication between industry groups and Council and that a clear demarcation is required on areas where Council should take the lead role and where industry should take the lead to avoid overlap, duplication and disagreement.

Achieving a cooperative model which achieves the buy-in of key stakeholders is an important outcome going forward. Council has a key role to play:

- as “the honest broker” and enabler/facilitator for tourism, helping to drive change and bringing parties together to invest; and
- in seeking funding and related support from State and Federal Government to help activate tourism opportunities rather than expecting to be the investor.

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.burdekin.qld.gov.au/community/visitor-information/things-to-do-around-the-burdekin>

### **5.3.2. Large number of small operators**

The Burdekin has no medium to larger scale commercial tourism operators. While the boutique nature of many operators in the Burdekin may offer a more personalised experience for visitors, there is a balance required as larger-scale operators tend to bring with them larger marketing budgets which not only markets their product but also the region. The Burdekin currently has limited export-ready product which can be marketed domestically and internationally.

### **5.3.3. Lifestyle operators**

There is a proportion of the Burdekin's tourism industry operators who are seen to be more lifestyle rather than full commercial operators. This extends to the hospitality and retail sector where a number of cafés, restaurants and retailers are not open during the weekend periods. This is a major limitation for the area going forward in developing as a tourism destination.

## **5.4. Other Challenges**

### **5.4.1. Ageing population**

An ageing population is challenging as the elderly generally rely more heavily on support facilities and resources and may be less enthusiastic about new or expanded tourism development due to perceived impacts on lifestyles. The disproportionately larger older aged resident demographic in the Burdekin is likely to continue to put pressure on the need for more health and social services to support their needs. While this age group may not be interested in encouraging greater tourism development within the Burdekin, without new development and new jobs for locals, the ability to attract younger people to consider the Burdekin for work and relocation is likely to be constrained.

### **5.4.2. Rivalry between Ayr and Home Hill**

While we understand the historic rationale behind the rivalry between Ayr and Home Hill, there is a need for the Burdekin to recognise that tourism is a highly competitive sector, and the Burdekin has several very strong tourism destinations on its doorstep. For the Burdekin to be competitive, it must recognise that its strength – particularly from a marketing perspective – is in the “sum of its parts” rather than the individual parts itself. There are, therefore, various tourism elements which can comfortably fit in either Ayr or Home Hill, but the collective proposition of all these attractions, experiences, etc. combined throughout the Burdekin, is where the strength lies.



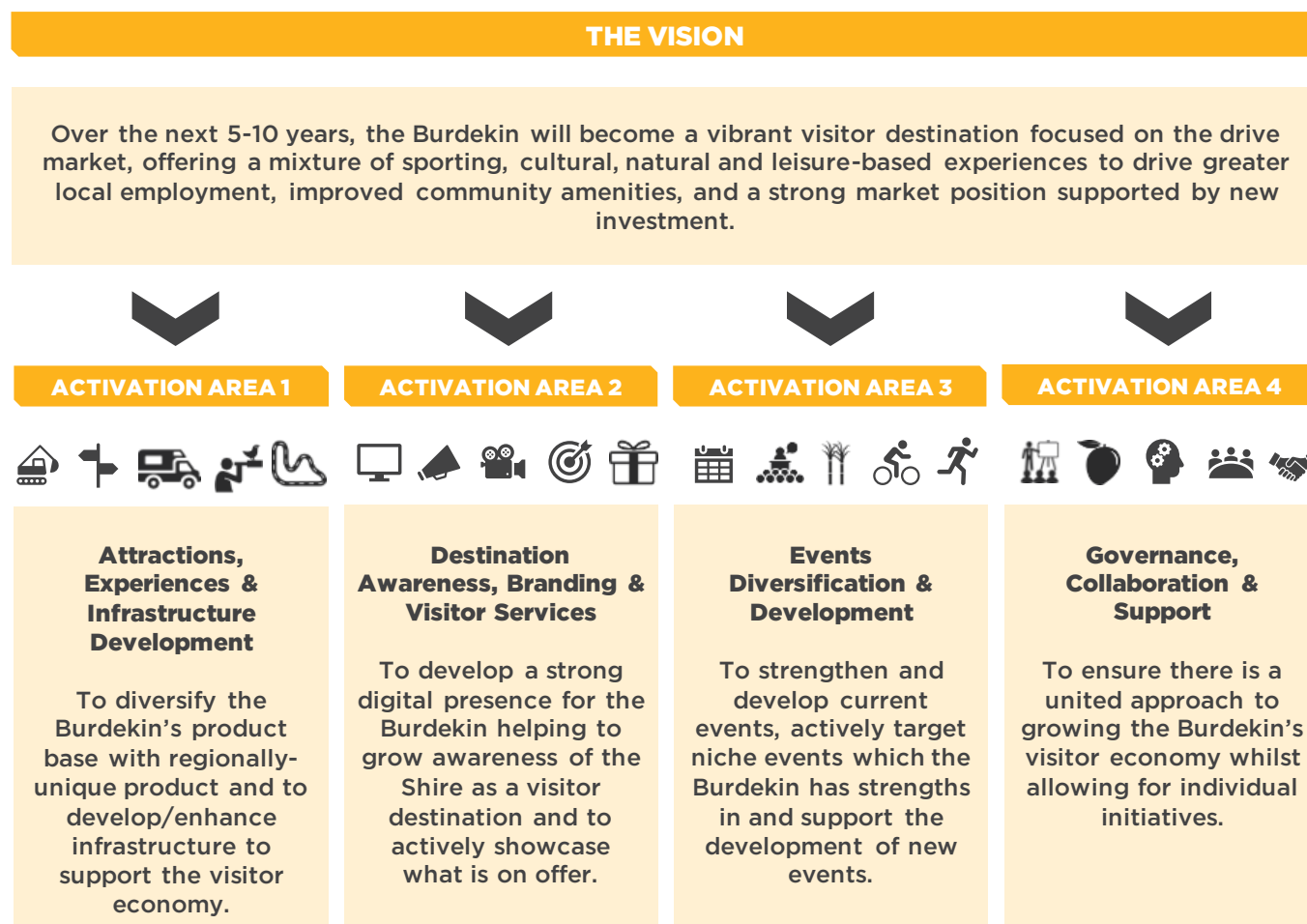




## 6. THE DESTINATION VISION

To guide the development of the Burdekin as a destination and to strengthen the visitor economy, it is essential that a destination vision is created which industry buys into and supports. The destination vision proposed is outlined in Figure 23 below, along with four activation areas to achieve the vision. The opportunities outlined in section 7 are categorised under these activation areas.

Figure 23: The Burdekin's destination vision and activation areas





## 7. ACTIVATING THE VISITOR ECONOMY

The following opportunities (in alphabetical order) are identified to support the growth of sustainable tourism activity within the Burdekin. They have been segmented according to the activation area they align to (as per Figure 23). The activation areas include the following.

- Attractions, Experiences and Infrastructure Development
- Destination Awareness, Branding and Visitor Services
- Events Diversification and Development
- Governance, Collaboration and Support

Opportunities within this Strategy are suggestions only, as many are subject to feasibility studies to test their viability. They will also be subject to further investigation and ultimately Council planning approvals. What they do offer however, are ways of sustainably growing the Burdekin's visitor economy.

### 7.1. Activation Area 1: Attractions, Experiences and Infrastructure Development

#### 7.1.1. Accommodation investment memorandum

As identified in Section 4.1, the majority of commercial accommodation rooms in the Burdekin are motel rooms. Feedback from the consultation undertaken indicates that when major events are on in the Burdekin (sporting and other community events) there is not enough accommodation to cater for demand. It is noted that many event patrons stay in Townsville and drive down to the Burdekin on day trips either because of a lack of accommodation or a lack of higher quality accommodation on offer.

As the Burdekin's visitor economy develops, there may be a need to consider encouraging different forms of accommodation into the Shire. Council should be proactive and develop an Accommodation Investment Memorandum which it can provide to accommodation developers which includes the following.

- An overview of the Burdekin as a tourism destination including its main attractions.
- Historic visitation numbers to the Burdekin, broken down by market segment.
- Forecast visitation numbers to the Burdekin.
- An audit of accommodation currently available within the Burdekin.
- A summary of the type of accommodation development Council is looking to encourage, including the quality Council is looking for.
- A list of potential sites which are appropriately zoned for accommodation.

#### 7.1.2. Aviation business park

Potential may exist for an aviation business park, centred at the Ayr Aerodrome, to support the growth in light aircraft flying and visitor growth. There is a growing demand for new aviation business parks which can cater to the needs of a fly-in market needing places to land and store aircraft, for maintenance of light aircraft and for long term hangars etc. The business park could also serve as a hub which encourages flight training and recreational flying activities.

Demand is seen for those wanting to fly into the North Queensland region but with limitations on access into Townsville Airport because of major commercial aircraft movements and military aviation activity.



The creation of an aviation business park could lead to demand for more commercial accommodation nearby, shuttle buses/taxis and the various employment opportunities which could be generated to support growth in the light aircraft industry.

### 7.1.3. Cane fire viewing program

The Burdekin, which is known as the “sugar capital of Australia”<sup>26</sup>, has a strong history associated with sugar cane farming. It is also the only cane growing region in Australia<sup>27</sup> which still burns its cane before harvesting it. This is primarily because the Burdekin’s abundance of water makes the cane too leafy and large to cut.<sup>28</sup>

The cane fires, which usually take place at dusk (when temperatures and winds have dropped), are a spectacular site, particularly for non-locals and those who reside in city environments and are a unique point of difference for the Burdekin. And while the area is well-known for its cane fires, the only way currently to view a cane fire is to connect with a farmer directly.

The potential, therefore, exists to create a coordinated cane fire viewing program for the Burdekin which connects with local farmers and promotes:

- when burns are taking place;
- the location of the burn; and
- how to safely view the burn.

Because we understand that changing weather conditions can mean a burn is called off, the program should be developed, at first, as a pilot program, to see if it is possible to give visitors advanced notice (circa 2 hours) of cane fires taking place. This could potentially be via a dedicated official Facebook page, or, it could be integrated to the new destination website (see 7.2.1).

**Figure 24: Cane fire in progress**



<sup>26</sup> <https://www.burdekin.qld.gov.au/community/visitor-information/about-the-area/>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2013-08-07/cane-fire-burn/4870888>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2013-08-07/feature-fire-farm/4870852>



#### 7.1.4. Cromarty Wetlands bird watching tours

The Cromarty Wetlands – situated in the Burdekin – are famous for its diversity of wildlife, including some 255 species of birds, 51 species of reptile, 44 species of mammals as well as countless species of invertebrate.<sup>29</sup> The diversity of birdlife at the Wetlands is apparently greater to that in Kakadu National Park.

The bird watching market is rapidly growing, with “an increasing number of birdwatchers ... travelling to long haul destinations to spot new birds that cannot be seen in their own country or region”.<sup>30</sup> To capitalise on the growing twitcher market requires offering what birdwatchers require, which includes: safety, accessibility, quality of birdlife, infrastructure and well-informed guides.

While the Wetlands present a valuable opportunity for the Burdekin, access to the Wetlands is currently limited because of the need to find a safe crossing point of the railway line. We understand discussions with Queensland Rail on this are underway. Should a safe crossing point be developed, the potential exists to develop wetland tours ex Burdekin, focused primarily on the high yielding “twitcher” or bird watching market.

Figure 25: Cromarty Wetlands birdlife



#### 7.1.5. Destination holiday park

While the Burdekin does have several caravan parks, these are traditional transit style<sup>31</sup> caravan parks (see Figure 26 for examples of traditional caravan parks) which appear to have a permanent resident focus rather than a visitor focus. Often transit-style caravan parks have basic facilities and are used as transit parks by travellers (i.e. overnight accommodation when travelling between two destinations, rather than as a destination in their own right).

Figure 26: Traditional caravan park examples



Goomaling Caravan Park, WA

St Leonards Caravan Park, VIC

<sup>29</sup> <https://bookings.conservationvolunteers.org/project/wondrous-wongaloo-community-driven-volunteering-nqdt>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.cbi.eu/sites/default/files/study/product-factsheet-birdwatching-tourism-europe-tourism-2013.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> i.e. often having basic facilities and are used primarily as a place to stop when travelling between two destinations, rather than as a destination in their own right.

Figure 27 shows pictures of destination holiday parks. These parks tend to be operated by major operators (including BIG4, Discovery Parks, NRMA and Ingenia) and they offer a mix of facilities to guests such as: swimming pools, aquatic parks, kids clubs, camp kitchens, mini-golf, group entertainment and shops etc. These parks often attract a family market who use the parks as a base for day excursions to surrounding regions.

**Figure 27: Destination holiday park examples**



**Cairns Coconut Resort, QLD**



**North Star BIG4 Holiday Park, NSW**



**Deniliquin Holiday Park, NSW**



**Port Fairy Holiday Park, VIC**

Based on discussions with major destination holiday park operators, the potential exists to introduce a true destination holiday park into the Burdekin's accommodation mix which focuses on leisure-based visitors (rather than a permanent or backpacker market).

Over the past 15 years, the domestic caravan, motorhome and camping industry has been fast growing. Caravan and RV registrations have increased by more than 250%<sup>32</sup>. The industry is worth \$19 billion nationally and generates 11m overnight trips.<sup>33</sup> Savvy operators are responding to consumer demand for better standards and facilities by transforming traditional transit parks into holiday/destination parks.

From discussions with major operators, the following provides a basic list of criteria for destination holiday parks:

- land area of 8 ha. or greater (able to be leased ideally for a minimum of 40 years + or purchased);
- capacity for 100+ powered sites, 60+ non-powered sites and 25-30 cabins/chalets;
- a focus on visitors rather than permanent residents;
- a family friendly focus to attract the family market and to convert day trips into overnight stays;
- best practice design of facilities;
- amenities such as a heated pool, spa, BBQ facilities, camp kitchen, tennis court, bike hire/loan, kids' playground, daily children's activities, a café and a convenience store; and

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.caravanningnews.com/penrth.htm>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.smh.com.au/small-business/growing/australias-caravan-industry-worth-19-billion-and-growing-20160722-gqbgp5.html>



- easy access to major roads and highways.

It is suggested that the holiday park is developed and managed by a major operator within the sector to ensure that appropriate infrastructure is introduced, especially in areas not easily linked to town supply facilities. Additionally, this reduces the burden on ratepayers and Council through a commercial user pays model.

In addition to developing a destination holiday park, the potential exists to investigate introducing an RV and caravan service centre and storage facility as part of a cluster. This could include:

- a mechanical servicing facility for RVs and caravans;
- a rental centre for those looking to hire an RV or caravan; and
- a storage facility providing RV and caravan owners with a safe place to store their RVs/caravans and have them serviced as required.

A feasibility and site assessment exercise should be undertaken to determine the most appropriate sites for a destination holiday park and potential service centre within the Shire.

### **7.1.6. Formalisation of Alva Beach and Wunjunga Beach front**

Despite the Burdekin being on the coast and having an attractive coastline and beaches, there is limited awareness, promotion and leveraging off this. Because the major towns of the Burdekin (Ayr and Home Hill) are not situated on the coast, the beaches and coastline are, at times, forgotten. There is a need to:

- investigate formalising infrastructure at Alva Beach and Wunjunga (including parking, signage, cleaning up the foreshore areas etc.);
- ensure the coastline and beaches are strongly promoted through the destination website (recommended as part of this Strategy); and
- introduce clever signage to these locations from Ayr and Home Hill and along the Bruce Highway.

### **7.1.7. Motor sport precinct and training facility**

Queensland currently only has three motor racing circuits, each of which is clustered in South East Queensland near Brisbane and the Gold Coast. While there are other speedway facilities scattered throughout Queensland, there are no other formalised racing circuits. Most importantly, Northern Queensland is noticeably lacking in motor sport circuits and drag strips with North Queensland participants often having to drive for 16 hours or more to attend competitions and track days in South East Queensland.

With the abundance of undeveloped land which the Burdekin has, the potential exists to investigate the opportunity to introduce a motor sport precinct within the Shire. Council's role should only be to facilitate the project, as the project should be activated, funded and operated by private sector and/or with external funding support.

This could potentially also provide a training facility which links with TAFE auto mechanic training courses as well as driver training (cars, motor bikes, mechanical equipment such as forklifts etc.). And noting many motor vehicle manufacturers are moving into alternative fuel options, creating a hub for alternative fuel/energy development could also be considered.

Based on initial discussions with stakeholders in the motor sport sector, the opportunity exists to investigate the potential to create a motor sport precinct at or near the Burdekin Airfield at Brandon, which is approximately 50 minutes from Townsville. This could be focussed as a driver training centre, a TAFE mechanical engineering centre,



an innovation and technology hub for electric and hydrogen fuelled cars, for use by car and motor bike clubs travelling to the LGA and most importantly, as a major motor sport precinct to service North Queensland.

Northern Qld specifically, has a disproportionately low number of motor sport precincts yet demand is noted as very high. Finding sites in the region and in and around Townsville, Mackay and Cairns is increasingly hard due to the pressure of urban growth and the challenge of finding sites with sufficient distance from residential communities.

Stakeholder feedback indicates Brandon (within the Burdekin) may offer sites to consider, with less urban development and greater opportunity to create appropriate sound and visual buffer zones.

The development of a motor sport precinct may therefore offer a number of benefits to the local and wider community by offering:

- A quality venue for a motor sport circuit for car clubs, motor vehicle manufacturers etc;
- For driver training days either as part of motor vehicle dealer value add, for new drivers, for specialist driver training such as trucks etc. and motor bikes;
- For education days associated with student driver training;
- Linking to TAFE or other tertiary education and high school programs geared to engineering programs, mechanical training as well as innovation testing for electric, solar and hydrogen fuelled/powered vehicles; and
- For events such as classic race days and larger motor sport events.

The likely level of demand would extend to mid-week and weekends, and in turn, would likely support demand for new accommodation, new food and beverage outlets (permanent or popup), and activity associated with the motor industry. We also understand that there are several active motor sport drivers and supporters who reside within the Burdekin, so an existing hub of activity could probably be leveraged off quite quickly.

### **7.1.8. Plantation Park concept plan**

We understand there are several ideas and concept options to further develop Plantation Park. To ensure a strategic and planned approach is followed, it is suggested that a concept plan, or master plan, for the Park is developed. The concept plan could indicate long term plans for the park, local and visitor demand for a variety of elements and a cost benefit to outline the costs involved.

### **7.1.9. Recreational fishing strategy**

The Burdekin is well-known for its barramundi, mud crabs, other estuary species and off-coast reef fishing and the Shire is purported to have the highest boat ownership rates per capita. But while fishing is a very popular activity for locals and those who own their own boat and equipment, the tourism fishing sector is not well coordinated or set up to cater for any growth.

A pre-feasibility report on marine recreational facilities completed for Council in 2016 identified that the “recreational fishery of the Burdekin ... is a virtually untapped economic resource in terms of tourism ... [and the development of an] all-tide facility will significantly enhance the access and enjoyment of the resource ... to further diversify the regional economy in terms of recreational fishing tourism”<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> Marine Recreational Facilities Report Burdekin Shire, Jeffrey Smith, page 3.

To grow sustainable fishing tourism in the Burdekin, the opportunity exists to develop a Burdekin Fishing Tourism Strategy. The Strategy should investigate the following.

- The size of the fishing tourism market to the Burdekin currently (to forecast growth potential).
- Target markets to focus on for recreational fishing.
- A comparison of the Burdekin as a fishing destination compared with other competitor fishing destinations to identify what the Burdekin's unique selling point (USP) is in this market.
- Whether there is sufficient boating infrastructure (such as boat ramps and cleaning areas) to cater for current demand as well as any growth in demand (via a detailed fishing infrastructure audit). We understand a pre-feasibility study completed for Council identified that an all-tide access facility could be possible at Kierle's Landing. This should be investigated further as part of the Recreational Fishing Strategy.
- Whether there is demand for additional professional fishing guides in the Burdekin.
- Whether demand exists for boat and equipment hire (with or without a guide) so that visitors can experience fishing in the Burdekin without having to have their own gear.
- Whether there is sufficient demand to establish land-based fishing opportunities across the Burdekin and what infrastructure is required to support this (such as land-based fishing platforms).
- A framework for monitoring the health of fish stock and the quality of their environment.
- Investigate marketing opportunities for fishing and the Burdekin, including the need for a fishing website (or whether this can link in with the new destination website for the Burdekin – see 7.2.1), the potential to link in with the Barra Trail which is currently being expanded and product packaging opportunities.

#### **7.1.10. Recreation/adventure product for backpackers**

While the Burdekin has an estimated 500 working holiday makers/backpackers who are in the region on any given day from April to December to pick fruit and vegetables, there is limited tourism product which these visitors can undertake and to encourage them to spend their disposable income locally. Despite the common assumption that these visitors are on limited budgets and, therefore, do not spend, feedback indicates that they are spending on tourism experiences, however, they are undertaking these outside of the Burdekin (such as in Townsville, Cairns and the Whitsundays) because the product does not currently exist within the region.

The opportunity exists to investigate the introduction of recreation and adventure-based tours which specifically targets this market. This could potentially include:

- 4wd tours which can leverage off the river and beaches which are all accessible to 4wds (a unique feature of the Burdekin);
- fishing tours or boat hire;
- 4wd driver training programs;
- 4wd motorsport events; and
- River and sea kayaking
- Beach sand sailing

Whatever is created would need to include transport to/from the experience as often these visitors do not have their own form of transport.

### 7.1.11. Tour product for grey nomads

The Burdekin currently receives significant numbers of both grey nomads and backpackers each year, however, there is little tourism product available to capitalise on these markets.

The potential, therefore, exists to develop a half day coach tour to extend the stay of grey nomads within the Burdekin. The tours could be focused on:

- the agricultural sector in the Burdekin, including a history of agriculture and the significance of the Burdekin as one of Australia's major agricultural regions;
- farm gate/food tours providing visitors with an opportunity to sample local produce;
- cane fire tours (during the season);
- visits to WWII sites;
- river and sea fishing.

## 7.2. Activation Area 2: Destination Awareness, Branding and Visitor Services

### 7.2.1. Destination website for the Burdekin

Currently, the Burdekin does not have a standalone destination website. The main website which is displayed when "visit the Burdekin" is entered into Google is the "Things to do" sub-page on Council's primary website (Figure 28). While the Burdekin is listed on the Townsville region's RTO website<sup>35</sup> and TEQ's website<sup>36</sup>, the Burdekin is competing with other major destinations on these websites and is not featured strongly.

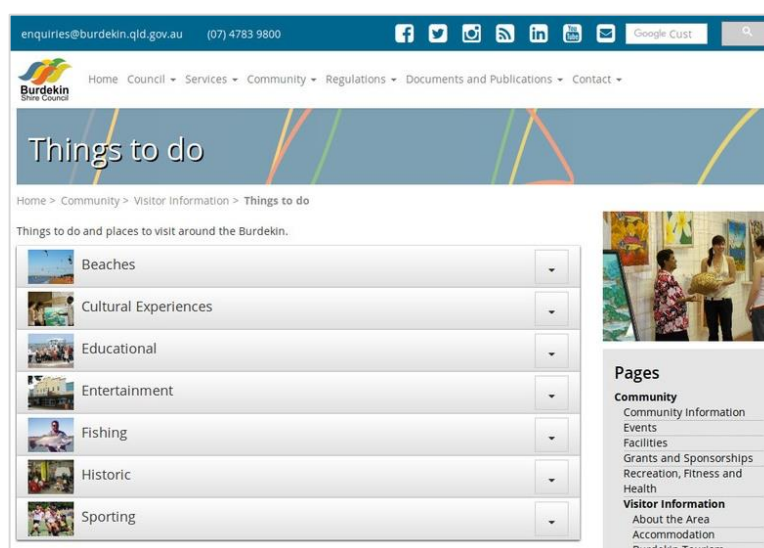
There is a need to develop a "one stop shop" destination website which is focused on the Burdekin as a tourism destination. The website/user interface needs to be carefully designed to reflect and showcase:

- iconic experiences in the Burdekin;
- the nature-based experiences, walking tracks, 4WD'ing tracks and mountain biking tracks and lookouts;
- the range of operators and commercial experiences on offer;
- major events and festivals; and
- packages and itineraries which visitors can undertake.

The website needs to be unashamedly tourism-based. While we recognise other local operators may want to be listed on the website, a criteria should be established to ensure a tourism focus is achieved. One of the major criterion being that operators must be listed on the ATDW to be listed on the Burdekin destination website.

The destination website also needs to be designed and developed by destination website specialists. Figure 67 provides examples of best practice destination websites as examples only. While some of these websites are for

Figure 28: Current visitor information website for the Burdekin



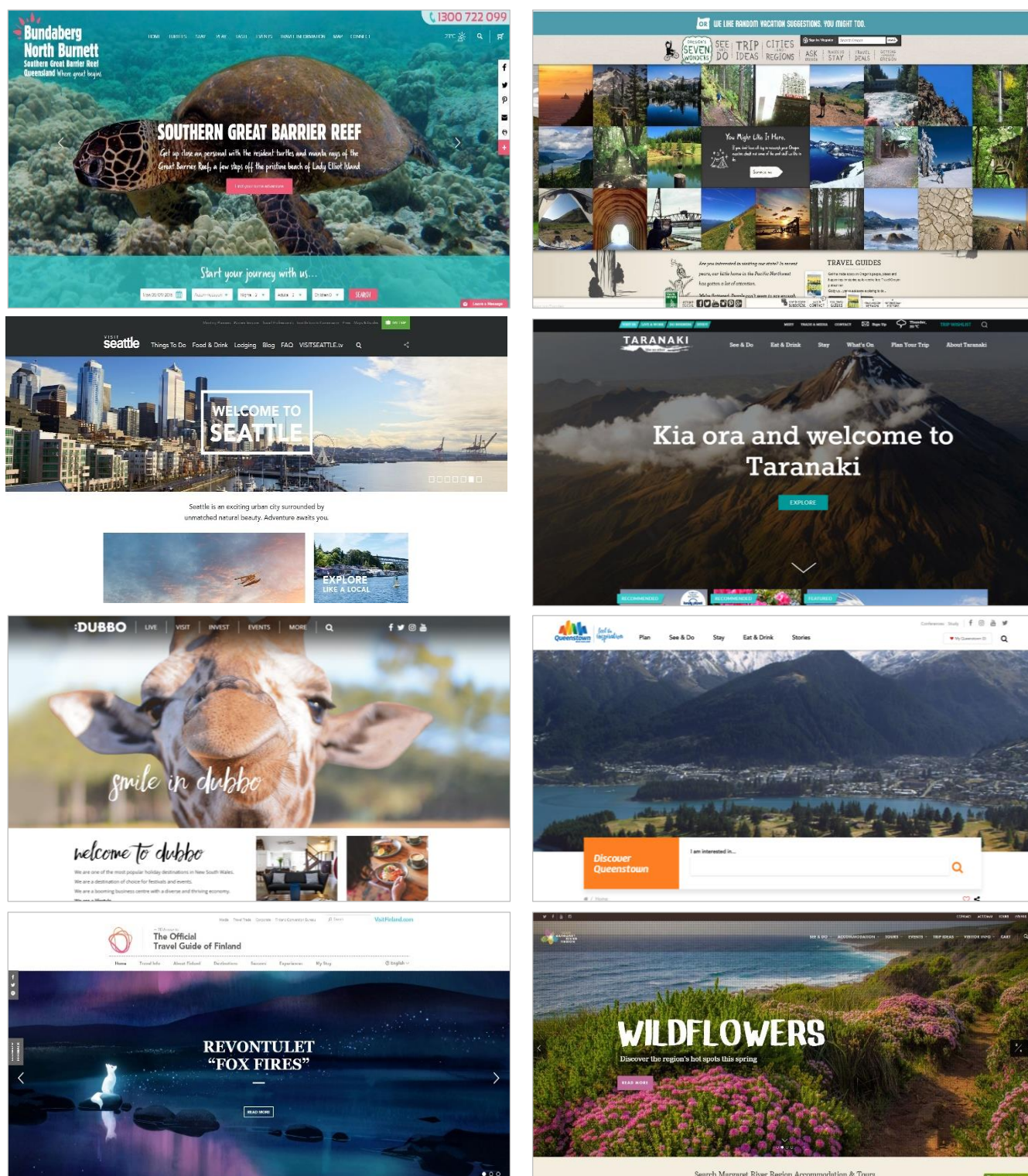
<sup>35</sup> <https://www.townsvillenorthqueensland.com.au/destinations/burdekin/>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.queensland.com/en-au/explore-queensland/townsville-north-queensland/places-to-visit/burdekin>



much larger tourism destinations, they demonstrate what is possible and each have elements of best practice destination website design which provide valuable learning points for the Burdekin.

Figure 29: Examples of Best Practice Destination Websites User Interfaces



As part of the website's functionality, there is a need to investigate whether e-commerce functions (such as online booking) should be included. While having e-commerce functions can provide a range of benefits, it also may add complexity to managing the website and will require a larger budget for developing and maintaining the website.

The new website could also feature an up-to-date and robust events calendar. It could provide visitors with the ability to see what is on and to book events (via an internal or external booking system) but also to enable industry to better plan dates and avoid clashes.

### 7.2.2. Destination brand

In addition to developing a destination website for the Burdekin, there is also a need to develop a destination brand. This brand needs to be developed prior to the website being launched to ensure that it is incorporated into the website design. Currently, there is confusion in the market place as to what brand Burdekin is and what is the region's unique points of difference. The destination brand needs to reflect this.

Additionally, a destination brand is just that – a brand to promote the Burdekin as a visitor destination. It is different from a city liveability brand, the purpose of which is to encourage people to relocate and work within the Burdekin. Some Council areas have created the one brand which they use in city liveability marketing and then have several sub-brands which spin off this liveability brand for destination marketing, events, investment etc.

It is important to recognise, however, that while a destination brand is an important tool to have, it is not a panacea. It must be developed in conjunction with new and rejuvenated product, infrastructure and improved governance and coordination.

### 7.2.3. Media library

To promote the Burdekin as a tourism destination, there is a need for a high-quality media library. The media library images should feature professionally shot images of attractions and experiences available within the Burdekin which can then also be shared with the TEQ media library as currently there is a very limited selection in this database of the Burdekin.

There is a need to ensure Council's tourism department retains control of these images to ensure that "hero shots" of the Burdekin are not overused or converted into low-res format which can diminish the significance of these hero shots.

### 7.2.4. Mobile VIC

The nature of visitor information services is changing. Recent research by TEQ found that only 3.6% of visitors to the State entered a VIC – compared with a nation-wide average of 4.4%.<sup>37</sup> The vexed question, therefore, is how the remaining 96.4% of visitors to Queensland are being serviced?

Going forward for the Burdekin, there is a need to investigate alternative forms of visitor information services. This includes the provision of information digitally via the destination website recommended in this Strategy (see Priority Project 1 - section 7.2.1) as well as a range of mobile-friendly visitor information service options including the below.

- The Copenhagen 'Automated' Model: A highly customised shipping container which contains a 12-metre multi-touch touchscreen which directly links to a central database and is entirely remotely managed. The container could be open for a set number of hours per day and automatically shut down out of operating hours. The model was designed by a New Zealand firm, Gibson Group, which specialises in interactive experiences.

<sup>37</sup> Queensland Visitor Information Centres Snapshot of the year ending September 2017, Tourism and Events Queensland



- The Mobile Kiosk Model: A visitor information kiosk in a mobile van or truck which can be taken around to key visitor locations throughout the Burdekin during events etc. This kiosk could be staffed by a volunteer or Council staff member.
- A Pop-up Visitor Information Centre: A pop-up shipping container which can be relocated when required (such as during events). This could be staffed by Council staff or volunteers. The potential exists to incorporate interactive touch screens etc. into this model.

It is recommended that a feasibility be undertaken to determine the cost of implementing the three options.

Figure 30: Pop-up and Digital VICs<sup>38</sup>



<sup>38</sup> Copenhagen Information Touch Wall, Denmark; <sup>38</sup> Copenhagen Information Touch Wall, Denmark; Anglesey Mobile Tourist Information Centre, UK (pictured at cruise port); Arlington Mobile Tourist Centre, USA; Canberra and Region Visitors Centre Pop-up, ACT; and Seattle Space Needle Digital Experience and Information, USA.



### 7.2.5. Packaging of product

There are several visitor experiences, attractions and accommodation etc. available throughout the Burdekin, however, currently there is generally very limited synergy between these operators/providers.

There is a need for a composite package experience to be offered to the consumer, helping to extend visitor stay as well as greater regional dispersal.

Packages could include activities such as fishing tours, snorkelling, the nature display etc. connecting to accommodation offers and also food and beverage experiences. This will help strengthen the product offering, allow for cross product selling, increase pre-bookings and help with improved transport and related planning.

### 7.2.6. Signage strategy

The lack of signage (interpretive and directional) was noted by many as a challenge for the Burdekin. This includes gateway entry signage to create a sense of entrance into the Shire as well as signage to guide visitors to points of interest throughout the Burdekin. There is a need for a signage strategy to be developed to ensure a consistent approach to signage is applied throughout the Burdekin and which can, in turn, support drive circuits and other trails across the LGA.

### 7.2.7. The Burdekin Bucket List – 101 things to do in the Burdekin

While the Burdekin does have a variety of free and commissionable tourism product available, there is limited awareness and promotion of this. To showcase what the Shire has on offer; the opportunity exists to develop the Burdekin Bucket List – a list of 101 things to do in the Burdekin. This list, while primarily targeted at visitors, will likely have equal application to locals in the Burdekin as residents often forget what is in their own backyard. With the Burdekin's strong VFR market, residents are a marketing tool to leverage off so having this product awareness is important.

Mackay Airport created a similar list – 101 Things to do in the Mackay Region (see Figure 31<sup>39</sup>) – which has been highly successful. Examples of experiences on this list include: the Wintermoon Festival; Fish in Eungella Dam; taste local produce; take a Tiger Moth joy flight; take an art trail; go bowling etc.

To compile the Burdekin Bucket list, it could be opened to locals to submit their favourite things to do in the Burdekin.

The full list should be featured on the Burdekin destination website and potentially a fold up brochure could be produced which would allow visitors and locals to tick off items on the list as they complete them.

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<sup>39</sup> <https://www.mackayairport.com.au/travelling/arriving/destination-guide/>

Figure 31: Mackay Airport – 101 Things to do in the Mackay Region



### 7.2.8. Visitor economy awareness campaign

There is insufficient understanding about the important role the visitor economy plays in the Burdekin and why it needs strong support.

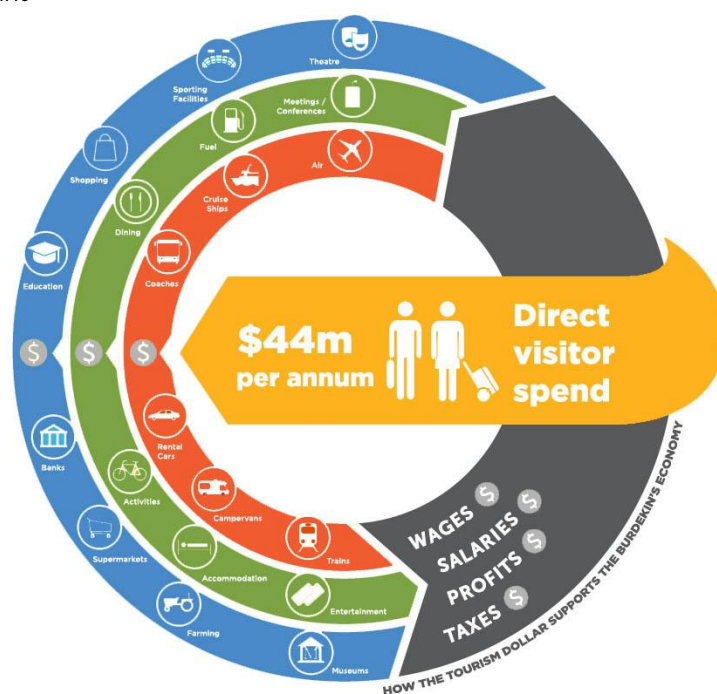
There is also a lack of awareness of how the tourism dollar spreads throughout the economy (Figure 75).

The Burdekin visitor economy<sup>40</sup>:

- is valued at \$52.8m and accounts for 2% of total output<sup>41</sup>, with total direct visitor spend estimated at \$44m<sup>42</sup>; and
- accounts for over 300 jobs, comprising 4% of all employment in the LGA<sup>43</sup>.

Whilst these current percentage figures are very modest, they do reflect that the Burdekin is at an embryonic stage in the development of its visitor

Figure 32: The Importance of the Visitor Economy



<sup>40</sup> Note this incorporates both tourism and hospitality

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.economyprofile.com.au/burdekin/tourism/output>

<sup>42</sup> Local Government Area Profiles 2016 – Burdekin, Tourism Research Australia

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.economyprofile.com.au/burdekin/tourism/employment>

economy. Luckily, as there isn't a large amount of existing product, there isn't a need to try and do major fix ups; the Burdekin is starting from a clean sheet approach, which is rare to find now throughout Australia.

The issue and opportunity are; what can be done with minimal resourcing to generate sustainable growth in the visitor economy? To help generate better understanding on the importance and value of the visitor economy, Council should consider developing and implementing a community tourism awareness campaign to show:

- how the tourism dollar disperses through the local economy (the direct and indirect impact of visitor spend);
- what businesses benefit from tourism including cafés, retailers, service stations, bars and transport providers etc;
- how extended trading hours (even seasonally) can benefit the community;
- what the estimated value of tourism is via direct, indirect and induced spending impacts (this could be demonstrated in terms such as how many loaves of bread, cups of coffee and litres of fuel etc. are purchased by visitors on any given day: a large figure such as \$52.8m does not provide the information needed to illustrate its impact on local businesses and their suppliers); and
- why Council/ratepayer funding is required to maximise returns to the Burdekin's community via economic, social and infrastructure benefits.

### 7.3. Activation Area 3: Events Diversification & Development

#### 7.3.1. Destination Event calendar

The new website (recommended in section 7.2.1) should also feature an up-to-date and robust destination events calendar. It could provide visitors with the ability to see what is on and to book events (via an internal or external booking system) but also to enable industry to better plan dates and avoid clashes.

It is important that the events calendar on the destination website is for destination events only; that is, it focuses on events which draw many visitors from outside the Burdekin, rather than community events which are primarily focused on a local market. This will ensure visitors are able to clearly identify those events which are the Burdekin's "hallmark" or major events. Council will need to develop criteria (which could be based on achieving certain KPIs such as numbers of non-locals attending events, ticket sales, uniqueness, TEQ recognition of the event etc.) which should be used to delineate between destination and community events.

Community events – which form an important part of the Burdekin's cultural and sporting fabric – should continue to be featured on Council's events calendar<sup>44</sup>.

Going forward, and as sport-based tourism to the Shire grows, there may also be the opportunity to investigate developing a sporting event specific calendar.

#### 7.3.2. Events strategy

Events are an important element of the Burdekin's product offering for both locals and visitors. Events are considered a mechanism to "feel more connected to other people, the community, and the world"<sup>45</sup>.

The Burdekin currently has a small yet vibrant calendar of events, though the clear majority of these are community-based events rather than destination events that attract visitors from out of the Burdekin.

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.burdekin.qld.gov.au/community/community-events/#gsc.tab=0>

<sup>45</sup> Eventbrite Research Shows Australians Believe Events Inspire Positive Change, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2017, Ausleisure



Going forward, there is a need for an events strategy which identifies:

- current major/key events to evaluate actual running costs including costs incurred by various Council departments not directly involved, community vs visitor patronage, economic and social impacts of these events etc.;
- current gaps within the existing events calendar and to determine existing key events that could be used to enhance visitation to the Burdekin;
- learning/workshop experiences associated with events and festivals to offer broader community benefits where ever possible;
- opportunities to develop a signature destination event for the Burdekin to attract greater fee-paying visitors especially;
- prioritising existing community events and festivals and determining those which offer the best social and related benefits;
- assess potential sites for holding larger scale events;
- determining those events and festivals which can operate on a cost neutral basis or better for Council specifically; and
- how to build capacity for event organisers, including identifying skill gaps and recommendations for targeted training on topics such as Traffic Management Plans etc.

An Event Strategy for the Burdekin would provide a strategic framework for identified signature or key events, ensuring that these events further boost the economic, cultural and social fabric of the Shire.

### **7.3.3. Major destination event**

While the Burdekin has several community events, it does not yet have a major destination event which generates significant visitation from outside the Burdekin. The Australian Hand Cane Cutting Championships is a highly unique event and possibly could be expanded to be a true destination event, however, to achieve this would require greater investment from Council with funding support from State Government.

There would also be value in liaising with Townsville Enterprise (the regional tourism organisation) and Tourism Events Queensland, to see what level of support could be provided to help develop this event further.

### **7.3.4. Event toolkit**

To grow the events sector in the Burdekin requires actively seeking out events and promoting to event organisers that the Burdekin is “open” for events. The opportunity exists for Council to develop an Event Toolkit which can be provided to event organisers which:

- demonstrates that Council has a number of pre-approved event locations ready to go so that red tape for event organisers is minimal;
- has an overview of the pre-approved locations including their capacities, types of events they can support, the hours of operation permitted etc.;
- includes a simple summary of the events approval process as well as an overview of insurance required;
- has information on waste management required (based on the size of the event) as well as toilets;
- has a summary of applicable fees and how these are to be paid; and
- includes contact details for event management personnel at Council.

### 7.3.5. Growing sporting and cultural events

The Burdekin's residents have a strong interest in sports and community sporting events have high patronage rates amongst locals. The potential could exist to expand the number of regional sporting events held in the Burdekin by assisting sports clubs in their bids for these events. To assist with this, Council could develop a compiled list of accommodation, caterers, restaurants and cafés available, alongside a detailed brochure of sporting facilities available throughout the Burdekin and the specifications of these facilities. This, in tandem with the Event Toolkit (see 7.3.4), would be useful tools to growing the sporting events market.

In addition, the Burdekin has a strong cultural community with quality performing arts theatre facilities. Potential may also exist to work closely with the local Indigenous community to develop and promote Indigenous cultural events and products. This should be explored with Traditional Owners and other community leaders to see if and how the Indigenous history and the significance of the area can be appropriately promoted.

It is important to note, however, that we are not recommending competing with the much larger regional and state events which are held in Townsville and are of a different scale requiring much larger facilities and supporting accommodation etc.

## 7.4. Activation Area 4: Governance, Collaboration & Support

### 7.4.1. Culinary tourism group and food tourism strategy

The Burdekin is a major agricultural region in Australia, producing 8-9 million tonnes of sugar cane, a diverse range of horticulture (including mangoes, lychees, melons, eggplant, pumpkin etc.), beef cattle as well as having an established aquaculture industry (through Pacific Reef Fisheries). While the Burdekin has the raw product required to position it as a food tourism destination, there is limited ready-to-market food tourism product including farm gate trails, cooking schools, fruit/vegie picking experiences, food events and paddock to plate dining experiences etc.

There is, however, a desire to grow the Burdekin's positioning as a foodie destination. To do this, there is a need to develop a food tourism strategy (which could lead to the development of a food network) led and developed by a Culinary Tourism Group of growers, producers and food/beverage operators. The food tourism strategy could include the following.

- “The ingredients” which make the Burdekin and its surrounding areas a foodie destination. This should also cover an overview on the size of the food tourism market to Australia, Queensland, North Queensland and the Burdekin specifically.
- A “foodie SWOT” which demonstrates the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Burdekin's and the surrounding areas' culinary offering.
- A “sampling plate” of the Burdekin and its surrounding areas most appealing/unique food experiences. This could include a produce calendar which interactively demonstrates what produce is available during each season.
- “The recipe” which outlines:
  - the regulatory environment, including red-tape reduction initiatives which limit the regulatory burden for food tourism operators;
  - the liquor control laws as they specifically apply to food tourism operators;
  - how operators can facilitate access to fresh, local produce as food tourism visitors indicate that the key priority is that they are given the opportunity to sample and purchase authentic local produce;

- a potential brand framework for the Burdekin which leverages off the Burdekin's tourism/destination brand (see 7.2.2) but which is tailored for food tourism and food product;
  - how operators can be upskilled to provide higher standards and quality, particularly with respect to service standards;
  - an audit of food tourism product and the staging of market readiness the product is at;
  - an audit of festivals and events which are food-related which occur in the Burdekin and surrounding areas; and
  - promotion and marketing initiatives to grow food tourism, including identification of primary and secondary markets within the food tourism niche market and how specific experiences will appeal to these markets.
- A "regional flavours" section which ties in the food tourism strategy with regional initiatives occurring outside of the Burdekin and how it can leverage off these.
  - A "putting the recipe together" section which provides an action plan for growing food tourism in the Burdekin and the surrounding region, including key actions, stakeholders involved, budgets, timeframes, priorities and KPIs to measure the success of each action.

In addition to the Food Tourism Strategy, the Culinary Tourism Group should work together to promote the use of local produce in cafés and restaurants throughout the Burdekin. It is important that visitors to the region can sample local fruit, vegetables, meat, seafood and other local produce. This will reinforce to visitors that locals take pride in their region's produce and that the Burdekin is a foodie destination.

#### 7.4.2. Business development programs

The vast majority of operators in the tourism sector in the Burdekin generally are micro to small operators. To grow its visitor economy and to achieve many of the recommendations outlined in this Strategy, there is a need to offer upskilling and business development programs for micro to small operators.

The types of support required is likely to include (but is not limited to):

- programs focused on social media and how to correctly utilise the various social media tools available (including what tool is best for specific types of marketing);
- assistance in storytelling and experience development;
- help in clustering and bundling experiences to make itineraries interesting and appealing;
- visibility and assistance in helping to stand out;
- networking with other businesses to understand what is in the area;
- help in participating in additional programs to develop product offering;
- understanding how to value add to existing product;
- providing the opportunity to network along the value chain to develop relationships with other suppliers.
- training on getting listed on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) to ensure their product is listed on the appropriate RTO and state government tourism websites;
- customer service upskilling; and
- programs on understanding the difference between start-up, market ready, accredited and export ready tourism product (Figure 33).

The Tourism and Events Queensland's *Best of Queensland Experiences Program* provides a set of criteria to identify those Queensland experiences which "will foster trust in the Queensland brand and ensure that Queensland is at



the forefront of consumer expectations”<sup>46</sup>. The business development programs for the Burdekin should also focus on assisting businesses to align with the criteria and expectations identified to be listed in this program.

Figure 33: Market readiness sTINes



### 7.4.3. Industry networking sessions

The consultation undertaken for this Strategy highlighted that, currently, there is limited collaboration amongst industry operators within the tourism sector. The opportunity exists to set up quarterly industry networking sessions where:

- Council can provide industry with an update on the state of the sector;
- industry can discuss with Council any issues they are facing collectively as an industry (rather than focusing on issues individual operators are experiencing);
- industry can network and get to know other operators in the sector; and
- Council and industry can discuss updates and the progress of implementing the opportunities identified in this Strategy.

The sessions could potentially be hosted at different businesses throughout the Burdekin to increase awareness of the product available.

### 7.4.4. Tourism industry network

The Burdekin does not currently have an official Local Tourism Organisation (LTO) and, while some considered this was needed, there are several criteria to be satisfied before an LTO is created. That criteria includes:

- the ability of tourism industry stakeholders and operators within the LGA to form a peak body which is widely supported by industry (there is little point if many won't join an LTO);
- to ensure that the LTO is representative of industry and covers all aspects of tourism;
- to ensure that it receives Council recognition and support;
- to ensure that it can operate as an independent body rather than as an arm of Council;

<sup>46</sup> <https://teq.queensland.com/experiences/best-of-queensland-experiences>

- that it can raise membership fees or other income to pay for some of its operating costs, with the balance potentially funded by local chambers of commerce and/or Council;
- that it is legally constituted as an incorporated society or other form of legal entity so that it is formally structured rather than ad hoc; and
- that it is truly representative of the various areas within the Shire.

Generally, the creation of an LTO is often part of an evolutionary process in the maturing of tourism. It requires commonality and agreement of purpose amongst competing operators and areas to recognise that their ability to lobby and leverage support from government at various levels is dependent on playing as a “team”. It is also highly dependent on an agreed common purpose and outcome being achieved.

Currently, within the Burdekin, there are different and divergent views at times between industry requirements and desires. While there is likely to be agreement on some issues, it is considered too early to determine that a common single and formalised LTO could be formed to represent the views, aspirations and outcomes required by industry throughout the Burdekin.

As such, forming an industry operated LTO is considered premature. For the interim, and to be representative of the various tourism stakeholder groups throughout the Shire, it is, therefore, suggested that Council establish a Tourism industry network (TIN) to work alongside Council and to assist in rolling out selected initiatives from this Strategy, where industry input is essential.

The TIN needs to be representative of industry. To ensure this, and to guarantee a good composition of skills, Council should advertise for the positions via an expression of interest, requesting CVs from interested parties. A very specific set of criteria for choosing candidates should be developed to ensure that those selected are proactive and progressive members of the tourism sector.

The composition of the TIN could include the following stakeholders:

- a Council staff member(s);
- an accommodation sector representative;
- a cultural sector (but who has a tourism-focus) representative;
- an experienced operator;
- an events sector representative;
- a representative from the Ayr and/or Home Hill Chambers of Commerce; and
- a representative from the investment and development community.

For specific projects, there should be the ability to second others if specialised skills or knowledge is needed (such as IT expertise).

Other points to consider for the TIN include the following.

- Importantly, the Chair of the TIN should be an industry stakeholder rather than from Council.
- Each non-Council member should have a maximum serving term of 2 – 3 years to ensure continuity is achieved and other tourism industry stakeholders are given the chance to be on the TIN.
- The TIN should meet 6-7 times per year and be focused on activating the initiatives outlined in this Strategy.
- Council should provide a secretariat and facilitate all TIN meetings.
- The TIN should have the ability to input into the Burdekin’s destination website, but importantly, they should not control it.

- To ensure the TIN is communicating with the tourism industry generally, there is a need for a quarterly industry update to be released on progress and outcomes. In addition, there should be at least 2 industry forums per annum to share ideas and gather feedback.

As Council has indicated its interest in playing a more significant role as an enabler of tourism throughout the LGA, the formation of a TIN (which comprises both Council and industry stakeholders) offers an appropriate interim step until such time in the future that a strong and vibrant tourism-focused LTO is able to be created for the Burdekin.

#### **7.4.5. Permit system for the Comfort Stop**

The Comfort Stop is very popular and well-known in the caravan and RV community and provides a free overnight stopover with free showers, parenting facilities, electric barbeques, kitchen facilities and eating areas. While the Comfort Stop does have a 48-hour limit (every 2 weeks), there is currently no way for Council to easily monitor the fair use of this policy.

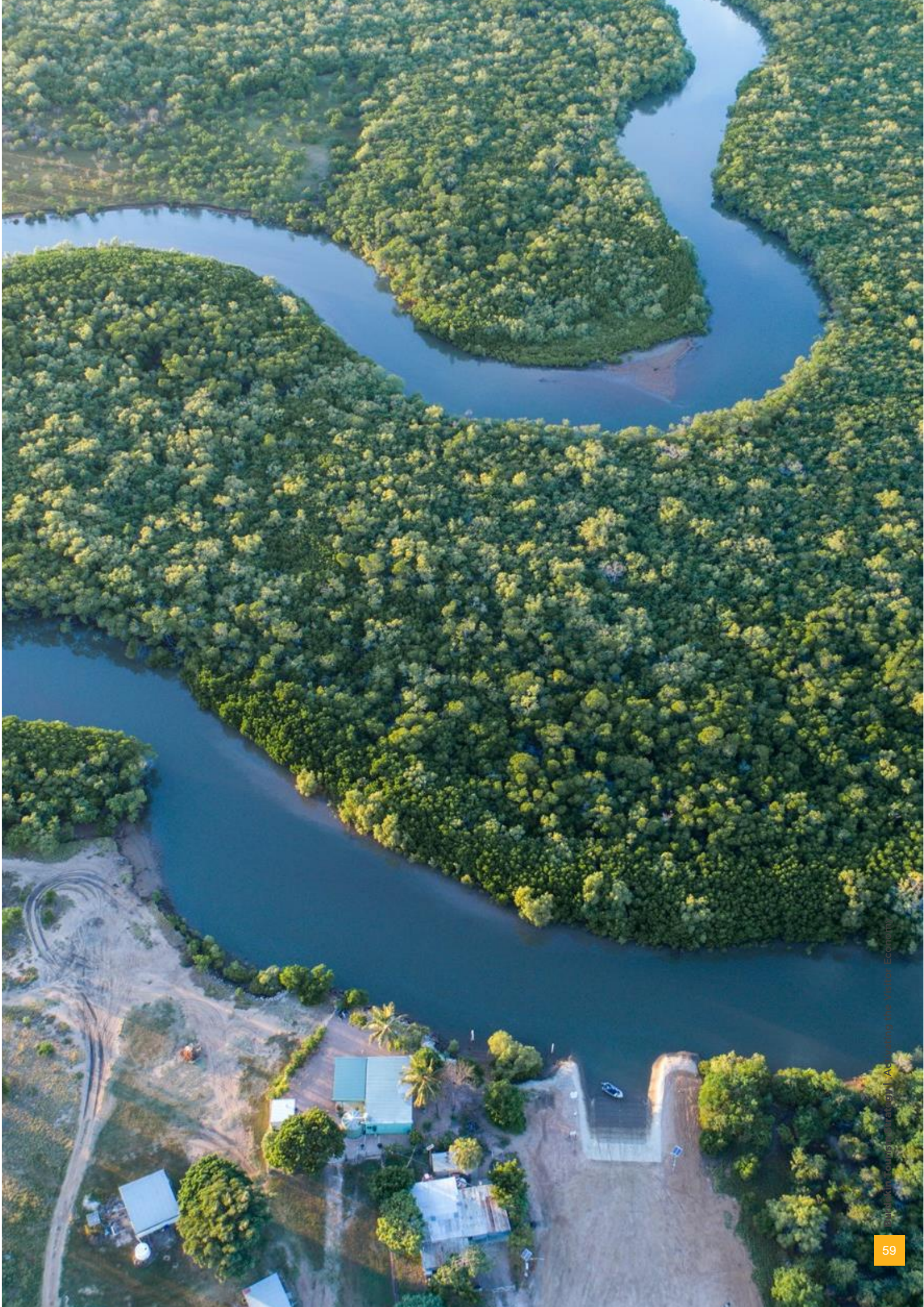
There is a need to consider introducing a permit system for the Comfort Stop which encourages users to pre-book their stay at the Comfort Stop in advance and allows Council to easily identify those who are abusing the 48-hour fair use policy as well as those who are staying more than 48 hours over a two-week period. Given the popularity of the Comfort Stop, this will encourage a more equitable approach being applied.

There are a variety of systems which could be rolled out, and Council would need to investigate the benefits and weaknesses of each of these as part of a separate exercise. National Parks in many states and territories often have online booking systems for camping and caravan sites so there are a variety of precedents around.

The permit system will also allow Council to track usage of the Stop as currently very limited data is collected. This will help in building a more robust picture of visitation to the Burdekin and will also enable capacity planning. Another way usage could be tracked is through collating Wi-Fi data and having a sign-in to access Wi-Fi which requests users to enter their origin etc.

Once the permit system is rolled out, the potential could exist to extending the system to other Council-owned caravan/camping sites including Funny Dunny Park.







## 8. THE PRIORITY PROJECTS

The priority projects (Figure 34)<sup>47</sup> are noted as the following:

- the development of a destination website (see section 7.2.1) to develop a strong digital presence for the Burdekin and to increase destination awareness;
- development of an event strategy, an event calendar and a signature destination event (see sections 7.3.1, 7.3.2 and 7.3.3);
- the development of a recreational fishing strategy (see section 7.1.9) to ensure a strategic approach is followed to growing fishing tourism to the Shire and a fishing event; and
- development of a culinary tourism group and food tourism strategy (see section 7.4.1) to leverage off the natural strengths of the Shire as a “foodie” destination.

These projects are referred to as priority projects because of their potential to have a major impact on the Burdekin's visitor economy through: increased visitor yield, growing visitor average length of stay, shifting visitation from day trips to overnight and the generation of new investment into the Burdekin.

Figure 34: The priority projects



<sup>47</sup> These were selected after presentation and discussions with Councillors, council personnel, industry operators and independent assessment by the consultant team.







## 9. ACTION PLAN

Table 5 - Table 9 are the key result areas to be focused on to facilitate the implementation of this Tourism Strategy.

Strategies are deliberately aligned with Councils financial planning cycles to cover:

- short Term - June 2020
- Medium Term - July 2020 to June 2022
- Long term - anything post July 2022

It is also important to note that some actions logically link with others so the staging of some of these may be able to be concertinaed closer together, such as the website development and the data media base development as good images are going to be needed for the website.

The ability to do this will also be dependent on Council's ability to resource actions in both funding allocations and personnel. With only one current full-time person dedicated to the tourism sector, we are mindful of what can be achieved within a realistic timeframe.



Table 5: Action Plan – Priority Projects

Action	Tasks	Responsibility	Timeframe	Budget Estimate	KPIs
Destination website for the Burdekin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with a professional website development firm to develop high quality website</li> <li>Test and roll out website with industry support</li> </ul>	Council with industry involvement	Short term	\$20k for website development only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission website development firm by September 2018</li> <li>Test website by Dec 2018</li> <li>Roll out final version by Feb 2019</li> </ul>
Culinary tourism group and food tourism strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate food tourism industry group to determine initiatives</li> <li>Develop a strategy with agreed action steps</li> </ul>	Council and local culinary tourism operators	Short term	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council to facilitate formation of industry group by 30 September 2018</li> <li>Determination of food sector-based initiatives by 30 September 2018</li> <li>Development of strategy and activation by September 2018</li> <li>Achieve short term activation by December 2018</li> </ul>
Recreational fishing strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop strategy with industry input</li> <li>Look to create fishing event</li> <li>Find local sponsors</li> </ul>	Council with industry involvement	Short term	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council to facilitate fishing industry-tourism operator strategy session by 30 June 2019</li> <li>Develop fishing strategy by early September 2019</li> <li>If viable, develop fishing tourism event by late Sept 2019</li> </ul>
Destination Event calendar, Events Strategy, Major destination event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop manageable and tightly focussed destination event calendar which separates from community style events</li> <li>Develop event strategy to focus activities around a cluster of highly marketable events which can also gain sponsorship and funding grant support</li> <li>Work with industry to determine if the cane cutting championships or another event could be expanded into a major signature event</li> <li>approach TEQ for funding assistance</li> </ul>	Council, tourism industry network, TEQ and Townsville Enterprise Ltd	Short term	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a destination events calendar by Dec 2018</li> <li>Ensure it is on the new destination website by May 2019</li> <li>Update the calendar by August 2019 and annually thereafter</li> <li>Work with industry to develop an event strategy to cover all seasons, by July 2019</li> <li>to liaise with TEQ and Townsville Enterprise on major event options which are more likely to gain funding support, by Sept 2019</li> <li>to develop a business case to support a major event funding application, by Nov 2019</li> <li>if successful, to develop the event with an expectation of implementation in late 2020</li> </ul>

**Table 6: Action Plan – Attractions Experiences and Infrastructure Development**

Action	Tasks	Responsibility	Timeframe	Budget Estimate	KPIs
Accommodation investment memorandum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a succinct memorandum to go out to developers and investors to indicate what council would support</li> </ul>	Council	Short-medium	\$15k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council to affirm the various forms of new accommodation noted in this Strategy by 30 Nov 2018</li> <li>Identify potential sites for each opportunity by 30 March 2019</li> <li>Commission an investment memorandum or develop inhouse by July 2019</li> <li>Liaise with the development community nationally by Nov 2019</li> </ul>
Aviation business park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake feasibility and business case for an aviation business park and activating the existing airfield for tourism and related recreational uses</li> </ul>	Council with input from the sector	medium	\$15k-\$25k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop brief for airfield tourism feasibility study by July 2019</li> <li>Commission preferred tenderer by Oct 2019</li> <li>Assess findings and opportunities by Feb 2020</li> <li>Liaise with stakeholders to develop cost effective options by June 2020</li> <li>Look to activate development by Nov 2020</li> </ul>
Cane fire viewing program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with cane farmers, processing plant operators and tour operators to develop a program</li> </ul>	Council, Cane Processing Plants and farmers	Short-medium	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess ability to develop program, through sector liaison, by Oct 2018</li> <li>Develop program by June 2019</li> <li>Assess effectiveness by Jan 2020</li> </ul>
Cromarty Wetlands bird watching tours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify ways to develop bird watching in this nationally significant wetland and access improvements with the rail corridor issue</li> </ul>	Council to help facilitate and private sector to drive the opportunity, with relevant State and Fed Govt agencies	Medium	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise with key agencies to determine options, by June 2019</li> <li>Based on positive response, assess market demand and operator interest by Oct 2019</li> <li>Develop and promote a program for bird watching by Jan 2021</li> </ul>
Destination holiday park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify a site for a larger scale branded destination holiday park and require it to offer water play features with access for local families</li> </ul>	Council	Short-medium	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify potential sites by Feb 2019</li> <li>Build opportunity into the accommodation investment memorandum by July 2019</li> <li>Liaise with branded quality destination holiday park operators by June 2019</li> <li>Aim to introduce, if viable, a quality destination holiday park by Dec 2022</li> </ul>
Formalisation of infrastructure for Alva Beach and Wunjunga Beach front	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a master plan to introduce signage, seating, picnic tables, expanded parking, public toilets at both beach sites</li> </ul>	Council	Medium	master plan, Council budget needed for implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop master plan for beach infrastructure internally by Nov 2019</li> <li>release for public comment by Dec 2019</li> <li>Budget for staging implementation from 2020 onwards</li> </ul>
Plantation Park concept plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a final concept plan after independent assessment of cost effective development options</li> </ul>	Council	Medium	n/a for concept plan Council budget needed for implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop concept plan for site internally by Nov 2019 or contract out if required</li> <li>release for public comment by Dec 2019</li> <li>Budget for staging implementation from 2020 onwards</li> </ul>

Action	Tasks	Responsibility	Timeframe	Budget Estimate	KPIs
Recreation/adventure product for backpackers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with industry to create tours, pay for experiences to encourage local backpackers and related farm workers to spend in the Burdekin rather than travelling out on leave days</li> </ul>	Industry operators and Council	Medium	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council to facilitate tour operator discussion with tourism industry network, by March 2019</li> <li>Assess viability and encourage industry to implement by July 2019</li> </ul>
Tour product for grey nomads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a series of guided and self-guided tour options</li> </ul>	Industry operators and Council	Medium	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council to facilitate tour operator discussion with tourism industry network, by March 2019</li> <li>Assess viability and encourage industry to implement by July 2019</li> </ul>
Motor sport precinct and training facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a site assessment as part of a feasibility</li> <li>Develop a feasibility study and business case</li> <li>Identify and apply for grant funding as well as finding private investors</li> </ul>	Council to facilitate, private sector to develop and fund, with support from State Govt	Medium-long term	\$40k for initial feasibility study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preferred site determined by July 2019</li> <li>Feasibility study and business case commissioned and completed by June 2020</li> <li>Assuming positive outcome, go out for grant and other funding by Nov 2020</li> <li>If funding successful, look to develop precinct by June 2023</li> </ul>



Table 7: Action Plan – Destination Awareness, Branding and Visitor Services

Action	Tasks	Responsibility	Timeframe	Budget Estimate	KPIs
Destination brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a destination brand once sufficient product has been developed</li> </ul>	Council and tourism industry network	Medium	\$35k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess product offering as basis for brand development by Dec 2018</li> <li>Develop brief and provide select tender by Sept 2019</li> <li>Work with successful tenderer to develop the destination brand by July 2020</li> <li>Ensure the destination brand is used on all promotional and related material by Dec 2020</li> </ul>
Media library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop as part of destination website development as website will require quality images as will other online marketing</li> </ul>	Council and tourism industry network	Medium	\$8k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop photography competition with sponsored prizes to gain images for destination promotion by March 2019</li> <li>Assess results and develop media library by June 2019</li> <li>Update the media library on an annual basis</li> </ul>
Mobile VIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss options with Mackay regional tourism organisation who have a successful mobile VIC</li> <li>Develop a mobile VIC to take to all events and higher visited sites like the comfort stop</li> </ul>	Council and tourism industry network	Medium	purchase of trailer-caravan unless there is sponsors locally to assist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess potential for sponsored mobile VIC by Feb 2019</li> <li>Get quotes and develop mobile VIC by June 2019</li> <li>Develop a program of site locations centred on events and key venues by July 2019</li> <li>Implement by Dec 2019</li> </ul>
Packaging of product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage industry to package up product components</li> <li>Promote packaged product on the new website</li> </ul>	Council and tourism industry network	Medium	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with industry to develop packaged product based on market data by March 2019</li> <li>Ensure packaged product is promoted via the destination website by July 2019</li> <li>Develop ongoing package upgrades etc.as advised by Tourism industry network</li> </ul>
Signage strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve signage (directional and interpretive) throughout the Burdekin to encourage more self-drive tours</li> </ul>	Council and tourism industry network	Medium-longer term	n/a for strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess signage issues and options as a Council-Tourism industry network initiative by Oct 2019</li> <li>Determine signage options to enhance online and on road signage by Dec 2020</li> <li>Find government grants to assist with funding of new signage by June 2020</li> <li>Implement signage strategy by 2021</li> </ul>
The Burdekin Bucket List – 101 things to do in the Burdekin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage the community to get behind tourism by engaging them to come up with the 101 things to do in the Burdekin</li> </ul>	Council, community and tourism industry network	Medium	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Tourism industry network to develop community campaign to develop the 101 things to do, by May 2019</li> <li>Roll out campaign by February 2019</li> <li>Agree the 101 things to do by Dec 2019</li> <li>Publish the list on the new destination website by March 2020</li> </ul>

Action	Tasks	Responsibility	Timeframe	Budget Estimate	KPIs
Visitor economy awareness campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Help explain to the community that tourism is everyone's business by developing a simple awareness promotional campaign</li></ul>	Council and tourism industry network	Medium	\$15k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Secure funding and go out for expressions of interest to create a clever campaign to better inform the community by June 2019</li><li>Develop the awareness campaign by September 2020</li><li>Assess its success by Dec 2020</li><li>Look to ongoing updates which Council can generate internally, by 2021</li></ul>

Table 8: Action Plan – Events Diversification and Development

Action	Tasks	Responsibility	Timeframe	Budget Estimate	KPIs
Destination Event calendar (noted as part of a priority project)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop manageable and tightly focussed destination event calendar which separates from community style events</li> </ul>	Council and tourism industry network	short	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a destination events calendar by Dec 2018</li> <li>Ensure it is on the new destination website by May 2019</li> <li>Update the calendar by August 2019 and annually thereafter</li> </ul>
Events strategy (noted as part of a priority project)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop event strategy to focus activities around a cluster of highly marketable events which can also gain sponsorship and funding grant support</li> </ul>	Council and tourism industry network	short	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with industry to develop an event strategy to cover all seasons, by July 2019</li> <li>Look to activate the events commencing in 2020</li> <li>Assess and review the events and update as required</li> </ul>
Major destination event (noted as part of a priority project)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with industry to determine if the cane cutting championships or another event could be expanded into a major signature event</li> <li>approach TEQ for funding assistance</li> </ul>	Council, tourism industry network, TEQ and Townsville Enterprise	short	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to liaise with TEQ and Townsville Enterprise on major event options which are more likely to gain funding support, by May 2019</li> <li>to develop a business case to support a major event funding application, by Nov 2019</li> <li>if successful, to develop the event with an expectation of implementation in 2020</li> </ul>
Event toolkit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an event toolkit to supply to all interested parties</li> </ul>	Council	Medium	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are online free event toolkits which Council should refer to interested parties, commencing before March 2019</li> <li>To work with the tourism industry network to check on the event toolkit uptake by August 2019</li> </ul>
Growing sporting events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the sports clubs and associations to develop overnight (2 day) sporting tournaments and events to encourage tourism spend</li> </ul>	Sports clubs and Council, and tourism industry network	Medium-longer term	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To work with sports clubs and associations to assess potential of sports tourism overnight events (2-3 day events), by Dec 2019</li> <li>If interest and potential is shown, to develop a sports tourism event initiative by 2020</li> </ul>



Table 9: Action Plan – Governance, Collaboration and Support

Action	Tasks	Responsibility	Timeframe	Budget Estimate	Priority
Business development programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a steady stream of upskilling options are provided to industry operators and to encourage others to move into the tourism sector</li> </ul>	Council and Chambers of Commerce	Medium	n/a as sponsorship or via State funded programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the Tourism industry network and the Chambers to develop an annual program for upskilling in marketing, IT, communications etc. by Oct 2019</li> <li>Roll out program, ideally with a sponsor, by June 2020</li> </ul>
Industry networking sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage a series of sessions to develop greater communication and cooperation amongst the tourism industry network</li> </ul>	Council and tourism industry network	Medium	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Tourism industry network to offer 6 annual networking sessions commencing March 2019</li> </ul>
Tourism industry network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish an advisory group to work with Council to help activate this Tourism Strategy and to coordinate a single industry response</li> </ul>	Council	Short	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish tourism industry network membership by Jan 2019</li> <li>Develop a MOU and TOR for the tourism industry network to operate in, by February 2019</li> <li>Look to encourage member change over every 2 years to allow for fresh ideas but staging this to retain knowledge</li> </ul>
Permit system for the Comfort Stop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look to develop a permit system to encourage better site utilisation at the Comfort Stop and to gather market intelligence on users.</li> </ul>	Council and tourism industry network	Medium-longer term	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify other similar styled permit system operated by National Parks and others nationally, by March 2020</li> <li>Determine preferred permit system by Dec 2020</li> <li>Assess cost implications from introducing the permit system by Feb 2021</li> <li>If cost effective, implement the permit system by Dec 2021</li> </ul>







# 10. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

## Supporting Documentation 1: Accommodation Audit

Table 10: Accommodation audit – full findings

Category	Name	Accommodation Units	Sites	Backpacker Beds
Motel	Ayr Traveller's Motel	28	-	-
Motel	Burdekin Motor Inn	15	-	-
Motel	Plantation Park Motor Inn	10	-	-
Motel	Country Ayr Motel and Peppers on Queens	12	-	-
Motel	Tropical City Motor Inn	16	-	-
Motel	Parkside Motel Ayr	18	-	-
Motel	Ayr Max Motel	12	-	-
Motel	Ayrlane Motel	14	-	-
Backpackers/Pub	The Burdekin Hotel	-	-	21
Backpackers/Pub	Home Hill Backpackers	22	-	102
Backpackers/Pub	Ayr Backpackers	27	-	122
Backpackers/Pub	Delta Backpackers	27	-	114
Backpackers/Pub	Imperial Backpackers	8	-	15
Backpackers/Pub	Lazy Lizard Lodge	20	-	60
Backpackers/Pub	Dalbeg Inn	11	-	37
Backpackers/Pub	Malpass Hotel	13	-	25
Backpackers/Pub	Claredale Pastures	24	-	24
Backpackers/Pub	Yongala Dive	3	-	12
Backpackers/Pub	Dalbeg TFS House 1	4	-	16
Backpackers/Pub	Dalbeg TFS House 2	5	-	14
Caravan Park	Mt Inkerman Caravan Park	2	8	-
Caravan Park	Home Hill Caravan Park	2	22	-
Caravan Park	Hotel Brandon Caravan Park	21	12	-
Caravan Park	BIG4 Ayr Silver Link Caravan Park	52	55	211
Caravan Park	Alva Beach Tourist Park	19	71	-
Caravan Park	Groper Creek Caravan Park	2	48	-
Caravan Park	Burdekin Cascades Caravan Park	13	56	-
Caravan Park	Mountain View Lake Holiday Park	4	22	-
Caravan Park	Michelle's Caravan Park	5	23	-
Caravan Park	Home Hill Comfort Stop Rest Area	-	-	-
Campground	Funny Dunny Campground	-	-	-
Campground	Burdekin Farmstay	-	-	-
Campground	Home Hill Showgrounds	-	-	-
AirBnb/House	Ayr Cozy House	1	-	-
AirBnb/House	My Happy Place	1	-	-
AirBnb/House	Parkside Guesthouse	1	-	-
AirBnb/House	SeaEsta Beach House	1	-	-
AirBnb/House	Tony's Units	1	-	-
AirBnb/House	Ayr Room 1	1	-	-
AirBnb/House	Ayr Room 2	1	-	-



Category	Name	Accommodation Units	Sites	Backpacker Beds
AirBnb/House	Ayr Room 3	1	-	-
AirBnb/House	Ayr Room 4	1	-	-
AirBnb/House	Clare Room 1	1	-	-
AirBnb/House	Home Hill Room 1	1	-	-
AirBnb/House	Kate's Place - House 1 (Grey St)	2	-	-
AirBnb/House	Kate's Place - House 1 (Leichardt St)	3	-	-

## Supporting Documentation 2: Product Audit

Table 11: Product audit – full findings

Category	Name	Free or Paid <sup>48</sup>
Boat Ramps	Barramundi Creek Boat Ramp	Free
Boat Ramps	Cromarty Creek Boat Ramp	Free
Boat Ramps	Barratta Boat Ramp	Free
Boat Ramps	Ocean Creek Boat Ramp	Free
Boat Ramps	Plantation Creek Boat Ramp	Free
Boat Ramps	Phillips Camp Boat Ramp	Free
Boat Ramps	Hell Hole Boat Ramp	Free
Boat Ramps	Kierles Landing	Free
Boat Ramps	Groper Creek Boat Ramp	Free
Boat Ramps	Wallace Creek Boat Ramp	Free
Culture/Heritage	Ayr Nature Display	Paid
Culture/Heritage	Burdekin Bridge	Free
Culture/Heritage	Charlies Hill	Free
Culture/Heritage	Tom's Toybox	Free
Culture/Heritage	Burdekin Machinery Preservationists	Free
Culture/Heritage	Gubulla Munda Giant Carpet Snake	Free
Culture/Heritage	Brandon Heritage Precinct	Free
Culture/Heritage	Burdekin Potters	Free
Culture/Heritage	Ashworth's Treasures of the Earth	Free
Culture/Heritage	Pioneer Avenue	Free
Culture/Heritage	Cane Cutters Statues	Free
Culture/Heritage	Juru Walk	Free
Culture/Heritage	Cape Bowling Green Lighthouse	Free
Culture/Heritage	Home Hill Lions Club Diorama	Free
Entertainment	Burdekin Theatre	Paid
Entertainment	Burdekin Delta Cinemas	Paid
Entertainment	Stardust Drive - In Theatre	Paid
Entertainment	Burdekin Bowl	Paid
Entertainment	Burdekin Racecourse	Paid
Food experiences, farmgate	Pacific Reef Fisheries Prawn Farm	Paid
Food experiences, farmgate	Achacha Plantation	Paid
Food experiences, farmgate	Mt Alma Organics	Paid
Food experiences, farmgate	Burdekin Farmstay	Paid
Food experiences, farmgate	Claredale Pastures	Paid
Food experiences, farmgate	Dalbeg Inn	Paid
Golf	Ayr Golf Club	Paid
Golf	Home Hill Golf Course	Paid
Natural Attractions & Lookouts	Lynchs Beach (Alva Beach)	Free
Natural Attractions & Lookouts	Wunjunga Beach	Free
Natural Attractions & Lookouts	Cromarty Wetlands	Free
Natural Attractions & Lookouts	Groper Creek	Free
Natural Attractions & Lookouts	Burdekin River	Free
Natural Attractions & Lookouts	Lilliesmere Lagoon	Free

<sup>48</sup> Based on online information/desktop research

Category	Name	Free or Paid <sup>48</sup>
Natural Attractions & Lookouts	Horseshoe Lagoon	Free
Natural Attractions & Lookouts	Jerona	Free
Natural Attractions & Lookouts	Cape Bowling Green	Free
Natural Attractions & Lookouts	Mt Kelly Lookout	Free
Natural Attractions & Lookouts	Mt. Inkerman Scenic Lookout	Free
Natural Attractions & Lookouts	Cornford Lookout	Free
Visitor Information Centre	Burdekin Visitor Information Centre	Free
Visitor Information Centre	Burdekin Gateway Visitor Information Centre	Free
Water Activities & Recreation	Ayr Swimming Pool	Paid
Water Activities & Recreation	Yongala Dive	Paid
Water Activities & Recreation	JC'S Guided Sportfishing	Paid
Water Activities & Recreation	Hutchings Lagoon Waterskiing (by appt)	Paid
Water Activities & Recreation	Home Hill Swimming Pool	Paid
Public Art	John Bradshaw Mural	Free
Public Art	Nicky Bidju-Pryor Mural	Free
Public Art	Nicky Bidju-Pryor Mural	Free
Public Art	Burdekin Singers Building Mural	Free
Public Art	Mural	Free



