

New study finds tourism in the central west up to 30% more valuable

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A detailed investigation into the tourism industry in central-western Queensland has found the sector is up to 30% stronger than previously believed.

The Remote Area Planning and Development Board has delivered the second Central Western Queensland Data Collection and Analysis for the tourism industry.

The study, undertaken by tourism industry specialists Stafford Strategy found the value of the visitor economy is much stronger in all council areas of the central west than state government statistics suggested.

“For some regions, the difference between government statistics what we were able to find was up to 30% under-reported,” chief researcher Albert Stafford said.

Under this study, all local government areas in the RAPAD region are counted and their data is collected and checked against local sources.

“This means we have a much better picture of exactly how many people are travelling through the region, why they are here, how many nights they are staying and how much they are spending.”

“The study looked at the larger centres like Longreach Barcaldine and Winton but also collected data on communities often overlooked by state or national surveys, like Windorah, Boulia and Bedourie,” Mr Stafford said.

The study has also shed light on the impact of COVID19 restrictions in 2020.

“As expected the figures for 2020 did drop but not much, the surprise was that visitation rose strongly in the September to December period, there was also a significant growth in the family market,” he said.

The Longreach Regional Council has welcomed the second Data and Analysis report.

Its Executive Officer for Economic Development and Public Affairs Simon Kuttner explains it is invaluable to have accurate data sets able to be accessed and understood at the local government area as it will lead to improved decision making and more confidence in investing in the region.

“This project lets us take control of our own data, region by region, and paint a far more accurate picture of one of our most significant growth industries,” he said.

“The communities of the central-west experience data deficiencies in almost all areas of research, simply because our sample sizes are often too small to generate the kind of granular detail that makes for meaningful conclusions. This is especially true for tourism, which isn’t captured as a stand-alone industry in statistical data. Instead, the impact of tourism is expressed by extrapolating a rough composite made up of a series of percentage values taken from other sectors,” Mr Kuttner explained.

The full report can be accessed here -

<https://www.rapad.com.au/assets/Uploads/CWQ-Tourism-Data-Collection-and-Analysis-2021-210621-compress.pdf>

The Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD) area covers a total area of 396 609 km² - or almost a quarter (22.9 per cent) of the land area of Queensland. RAPAD councils are Barcaldine Regional Council, Barcoo Shire Council, Blackall-Tambo Regional Council, Boulia Shire Council, Diamantina Shire Council, Longreach Regional Council and Winton Shire Council.

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