

Implementation of CWOQTA Tourism Development Action Plan 2013 – 2014

Final Report – May 2014



This project was proudly funded
by the Queensland Government



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NOTE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Tourism is a vital contributor to the Central Western and Outback Queensland economy. Behind the all-important agricultural sector, which is still the economic mainstay of our region, tourism's contribution continues to grow.

When Alan Smith, Chairman of the Central West Outback Qld Tourism Authority, approached RAPAD to support the implementation of the CWOQTA's tourism development plan, the Board and I identified the need, and went about finding ways in which we could help. Through the support of the Qld State Governments Remote Area Boards funding program, we were able to offer this support, which ensured the plan was put into action.

I would like to thank the Qld State Government, and the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, for their assistance in this regard and for their continuation of the RAB funding program. It is an important program that allows groups such as RAPAD to implement important economic development initiatives.

I also recognise Anita Clark who has undertaken the task of implementing the plans many actions.

The outcomes achieved from this project have and will continue to enhance the development of the regions tourism sector.

Yours Sincerely



Cr Rob Chandler

Chairman

Central Western Qld Remote Area Planning and Development Board



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PROJECT OVERVIEW

In late 2012, the Central West Outback Queensland Tourism Association was successful in receiving funding under the Queensland Government's Building Rural Communities Fund through Blueprint for the Bush. Funds were used to conduct a planning workshop with 29 tourism stakeholders resulting in the development of the CWOQTA Tourism Development Action Plan. The plan supports the recently developed Tourism Opportunities Plan for Queensland's Outback, Gulf and Western Downs (TOP) and Drive Tourism Strategy. The plan was released in November 2012.

RAPAD recognized the need to support the implementation of this plan and obtained funding to contract Anita Clark Tourism Services as Project Manager, responsible for the successful completion of the Key Actions for stage one.

In the completion of these actions, consultation and cooperation was sought from a range of industry contacts to include: local tourism operators, Indigenous representatives, Local and regional council tourism officers, CWOQTA, Tourism and Events Queensland, Tourism Australia, Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing, tourism distribution partners and industry specialists.



CWOQTA TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN GOALS & STRATEGIES

Goal 1

Ensure repeat visitation, attract new markets and extend length of stay through continual development and promotion of the drive experience

Strategies

- 1.1 Align touring route development and promotion with the overall Drive Strategy for Queensland
- 1.2 Expand distribution of themed routes and related products
- 1.3 Expand profile of regional accommodation, attractions, activities and events for the drive market
- 1.4 Expand profile of regional attractions for the fly/drive market
- 1.5 Ensure marketing and promotion of Central West events, experiences and regions is undertaken in a coordinated manner to maximize visitor expenditure on drive routes and short breaks
- 1.6 Identify gaps and opportunities for future accommodation development to support growth in drive, event and niche markets
- 1.7 Reinvigorate existing themes and develop new themes that promote unique town attributes
- 1.8 Reinvigorate local tourism products by leveraging the distinctive characters, stories and heroes synonymous with the region

Goal 2

Attract new tourism investment and product development opportunities through the targeted growth and promotion of niche experiences

Strategies

- 2.1 Develop an Events Strategy to enable further growth of 'hero events' and leverage local events
- 2.2 Develop a 'Paddocks to Plate' strategy, which will deliver visitor experiences around local product farms and facilities
- 2.3 Leverage a growing international market and a changing domestic market interested in Indigenous tourism activities currently not developed in Central West
- 2.4 Leverage a growing market for nature-based and ecotourism activities



IMPLEMENTATION OF STAGE ONE ACTIONS

An agreed number of specific, achievable actions were drawn up for Stage One completion within the project timeframe. A coordinated approach was undertaken for completion of these activities. Individual results were reliant on the level of participation by industry and regional stakeholders. See below list

- 1.1a Prepare summary of existing RACQ drive itineraries
- 1.1b Research and prepare new Central West drive itineraries in RACQ friendly format
- 1.2 Distribute new drive itineraries via trade and online channels
- 1.3a Conduct an audit and complete a checklist to ensure all regional attractions/activities/events are listed on RACQ 'Must Do's' and RACQ Discount Tickets & Events (ticketed product only)
- 1.3b Distribute more Central West tourism product via online channels
- 1.4 Increase Central West tourism product being distributed via Trade Wholesalers e.g. Flight Centre Global Product
- 1.5 Align with and support Central West marketing and promotional activities to OQTA Cooperative Domestic Opportunities Plan
- 1.6 Complete a desktop audit on existing Central West accommodation
- 1.7 Identify town themes (incorporate themes into Strategy 1.8)
- 1.8 Develop and arrange facilitation of Storytelling workshops in Central West region.
- 2.1a Compile and distribute a regional events calendar with procedures set in place for continual updates
- 2.1b Coordinate package development of events with tourism product and event drive trails
- 2.1c Cooperatively market and distribute event packages and drive itineraries
- 2.2 Complete a desktop audit of existing food tourism sector capacity for the Central West region.
- 2.3 Identify guidelines for developing the Indigenous experience in Central West. Incorporate new Indigenous stories into strategy 1.8
- 2.4a Prepare a toolkit for commercial operators for National Park activities that includes a register of Indigenous and natural heritage sites in the Central West region.



STAGE 1 ACTION PLAN RESULTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Action Task 1.1a, 1.1b, 1.2

These three tasks were all structured around increasing the exposure for self-drive itineraries in the Central West. Initial research focused on identifying what self-drive information was available for tourists from individual Visitor Information Centres, finding out how they are currently distributed and looking into affordable options for increasing exposure through new distribution channels.

Work was undertaken with Visitor Information Centres from Blackall, Tambo, Barcaldine, Winton and Longreach. Each of these Centres has some self-drive itineraries which are primarily distributed direct via their Visitor Information Centre. Some have links to their drives on their own websites.

Prior to this project, none were distributing their regional self-drive itineraries through RACQ Virtual Tourism Information Centres. The project target of 10 regional drive itineraries plus some bonus regional brochures have been converted to the RACQ online template and are being promoted via the RACQ website. The newly uploaded itineraries (shown below) may be viewed online at <http://tourism.racq.com.au/qld/outback>.



RACQ has a total membership reach of 1,207,882, including 28,000+ Queenslanders who have been members for 50 or more years. Their substantial membership base plus the range of online, print and direct marketing activities undertaken by RACQ throughout the year emphasizes the importance for Central West Tourism operators to maximize distribution opportunities through them.

The Action Plan strategies align with and support the promotional activities undertaken by OQTA, in particular, the RACQ/VTIC (Virtual Tourism Information Centre) partnership. The VTICs are hosted on the RACQ website, promoted on RACQ's Trip planner and promoted when members request maps, guides and tourism information. Organic growth is also anticipated via Google SEA activity and RACQ communications.




Action Tasks 1.3a, 1.3b, 1.5

Actions to expand the profile of regional accommodation, attractions, activities and events for the drive market centred around RACQ for attractions/activities/events and online booking/online travel agents for accommodation. OQTA and TEQ existing marketing strategies for growing online distribution were leveraged in the completion of these actions.

An audit was completed of the RACQ ticketed product distribution channel for Central West Product. Specifically this included RACQ's 'Must Do's' and RACQ Discount Tickets & Events.

RACQ 'Must Do's'

In celebration of Queensland's 150th birthday in 2009, RACQ launched 150 Must-Do's in Queensland to showcase 150 fabulous things to see and do around Queensland and provide visitors with an opportunity to share their opinion on what they thought was best. Several Central West operators have been included on this list and benefit from free RACQ promotion. Operators include Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame, Qantas Founders Museum, Waltzing Matilda Centre, Dinosaur Trackways at Lark Quarry, Artesian Country Tours, Tree of Knowledge and Australian Workers Heritage Centre. Unfortunately no new product can be added to this list.

 <p>HERITAGE / HISTORY</p>	<p>VOTED NUMBER</p> <p>9</p>	<h3>Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame & Qantas Founders Museum</h3> <p>Out here around the billabongs and under star-studded night skies, bush history slides up close to you, telling tales of bushrangers, shearers, stockmen and drovers. Be inspired by the Australian outback and the stories of the people who shaped our nation.</p> <p>Read more...</p>
 <p>ART / CULTURE</p>	<p>VOTED NUMBER</p> <p>17</p>	<h3>Waltzing Matilda Centre</h3> <p>The soft sounds of the outback echo around the quiet billabong as a fine mist rises from the water. A ghostly apparition appears. It's the swagman from Waltzing Matilda fame, telling his story of the song that was sung about him, the song that has become Australia's unofficial national anthem. The Billabong Courtyard transforms into a wonderful sound and light show as the fascinating story is told.</p> <p>Read more...</p>
 <p>HIDDEN TREASURES</p>	<p>VOTED NUMBER</p> <p>18</p>	<h3>Walk in the Footsteps of Dinosaurs</h3> <p>You are now about to embark on a prehistoric journey at Lark Quarry Dinosaur Trackways, following in the footsteps of those who roamed this Earth some 95 million years ago.</p> <p>Read more...</p>

RACQ Discount Tickets & Events

RACQ offer distribution opportunities to ticketed product under Discount Tickets & Events. RACQ members are offered savings if they purchase tickets via the RACQ online booking or through an RACQ Retail office.

Given that the RACQ membership is currently over 1 million, there are clear benefits in Central West operators distributing through this channel. As part of the implementation of this action, Central West operators were encouraged to participate in the Tourism and Events Queensland Product Managers day in June 2013 where appointments were made with suitable distributors (including RACQ).

Additionally, individual products were followed up by the Project Manager to encourage and assist them in contracting their product with RACQ with the goal to increase exposure for Central West products.

For the year 2013/14 a total of 9 individual products were promoted on RACQ Discount Tickets and Events. These included the Winton Gold Attraction Pass – featuring Waltzing Matilda Centre, Australian Age of Dinosaurs and Dinosaur Stampede at Lark Quarry; Outback Aussie Tours – Seven (7) Longreach and Winton Day tour products; Outback Festival 2013 Event Packages.

RACQ is currently loading 2014/15 rates for Outback Aussie Tours and Winton Gold Attraction Pass contracting is underway. Negotiations are continuing to contract additional Central West product and it is hoped to exceed the 2013/14 product displays. Outback Festival will list their 2015 event packages.

Products included in RACQ's discount tickets and events online distribution are also promoted via RACQ member E-Newsletters specifically Drive Travel, Road Ahead and Events & Entertainment – each with monthly distribution to their membership database.

Below is a list of the RACQ/VTIC partnership promotions which featured Central West product in 2013.

Drive Travel E-News: Apr 2013 Heartland Festival; June 2013 Visit Matilda Country

The Road Ahead: Apr/May 2013 Tree of Knowledge Festival; Jun/July 2013 Go West featuring Longreach, Barcaldine and Winton; Aug/Sep 2013 Outback Festival Winton

Events & Entertainment: Jan 2013 Outback Aussie Tours; May 2013 Tambo's 150 Celebrations; June 2013 Horse & Heritage Expo Longreach; July 2013 Outback Festival Winton; Aug 2013 Outback Festival Winton

These promotional activities resulted in 15,033 Page Views. Additionally members requested brochures via online and postal means. Of these brochures, 44 were posted, 3639 were downloaded and 886 had the pdf link emailed to them.

It would be hopeful that more Central West operators will sign up for 2014/15 and take advantage of the enormous distribution benefits available through RACQ to attract and grow the Drive Market.

Events & Entertainment

Winton Gold Attraction Pass

RACQ MEMBER OFFER: Members save 10 percent on the Winton Gold Attractions Pass, when pre-purchased from RACQ.*



Events & Entertainment

The Outback Festival, Winton

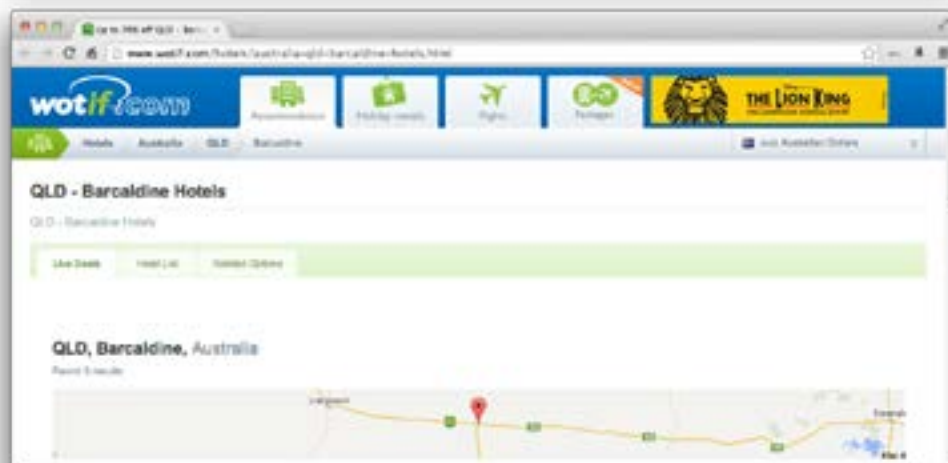
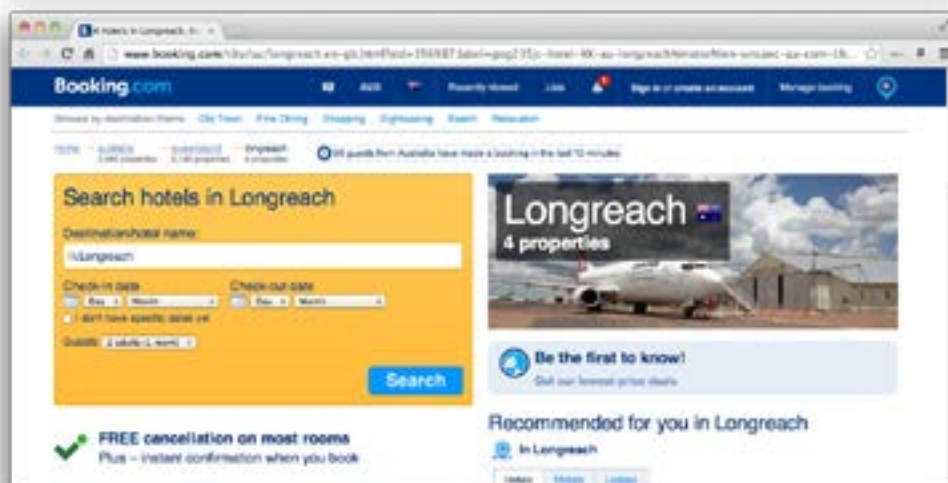
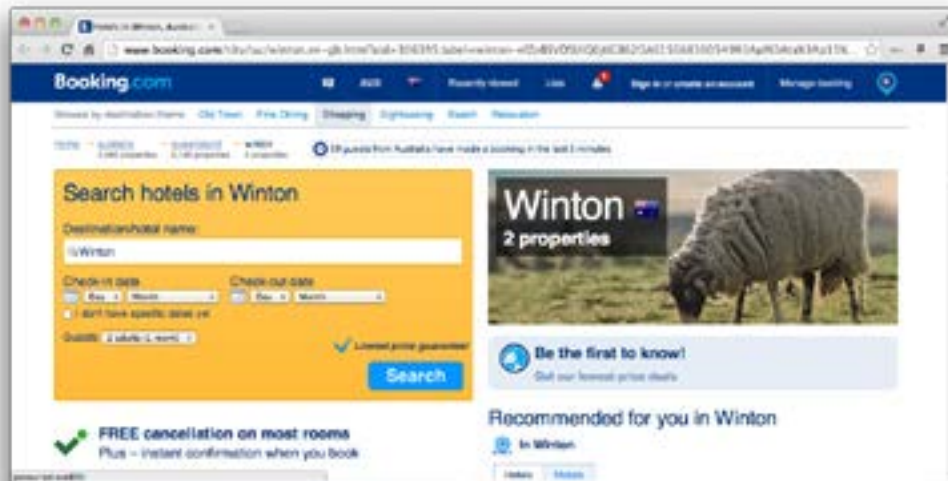
RACQ MEMBER OFFER: Members save 10 percent on tickets to the Outback Festival, Winton when pre-purchased from RACQ.*



Central West accommodation operators (particularly Longreach and Winton) have increased their online profile to include the following distribution channels:

- Adding a Book Now button to their own website
- Distributing through individual Online Travel Agents
- Working with a Channel Manager enabling them to distribute through a huge selection of online travel agents, corporate agents, and website distributors.

The strategy to grow online distribution for accommodation operators remains a major focus for OQTA and TEQ, with many operators benefiting from the free Digital Coaching services.

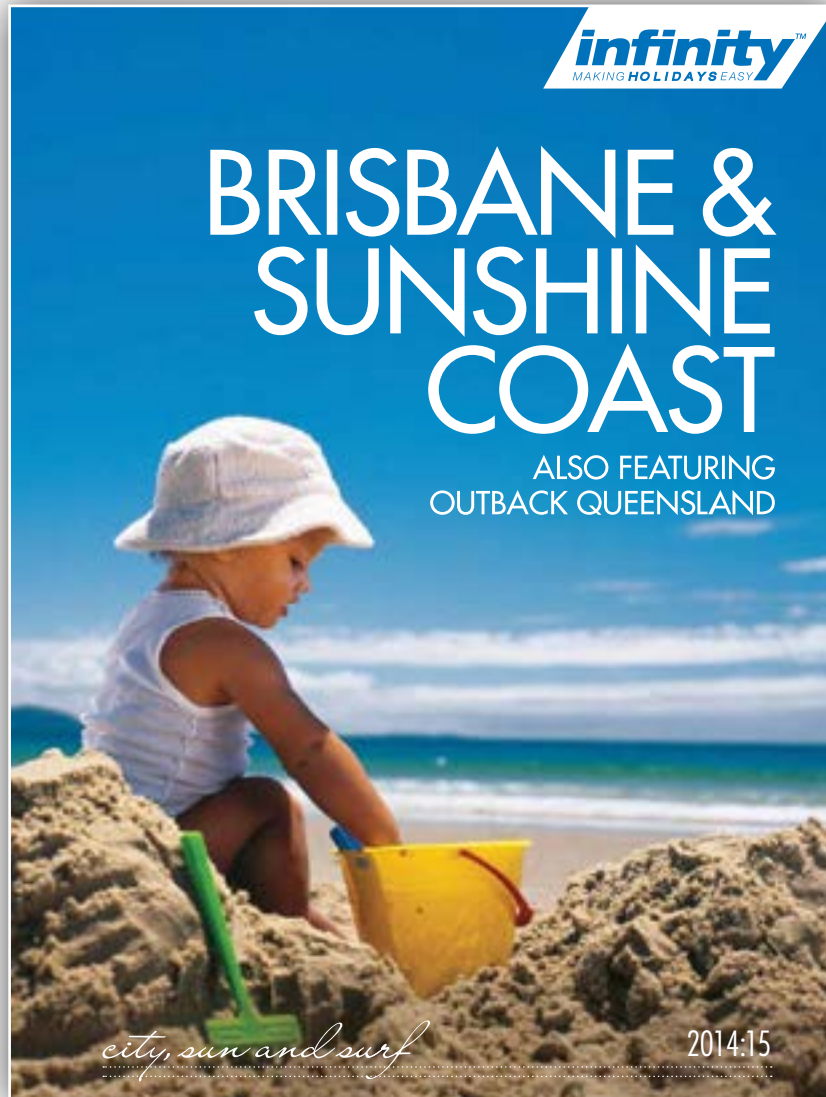


Action Task 1.4, 1.5

A total of nine (9) Central West operators are now contracted with Flight Centre Global Product for wholesale distribution via the Infinity Holidays program. TEQ agreed to provide marketing support for three pages in the 2014/15 Infinity Holidays brochure. Outback Aussie Tours purchased another full page, bringing the total number of pages to four for Outback Queensland tourism product distributed nationally. The Infinity Holidays brochure will retain premium shelf space for 12 months across the global Flight Centre Retail network to include Flight Centre Agencies, Escape Travel, Student Flights and Travel Associates.

View brochure featuring Outback Queensland here

<http://viewer.zmags.com/publication/053e2be7#/053e2be7/1>



This is a major achievement of the CWOQTA Tourism Development Action Plan. The strategy for a coordinated approach to contracting with wholesaler Infinity Holidays enabled the region to be represented at the TEQ/Infinity Holidays Queensland on Tour Trade show in New Zealand (February 2014) – a fantastic outcome.



NEW ZEALAND'S LARGEST TRAVEL SHOW



OUTBACK QUEENSLAND

Longreach

Albert Park Motor Inn ✓✓✓✓

INCLUDES 5 nights accommodation.
BONUS 10% discount voucher for Oasis Restaurant.
Airfares are additional

from **\$425*** pp

Queen Room 01 Apr-30 Nov 14	Twin	Extra Night	Single	Extra Night
	\$425*	\$85*	\$743*	\$149*

Winton

North Gregory Hotel ✓✓✓

INCLUDES 5 nights accommodation & airport transfers.
Airfares are additional

from **\$319*** pp

Standard Room 01 Apr-30 Nov 14	Twin	Extra Night	Single	Extra Night
	\$319*	\$64*	\$637*	\$127*

Kinnon & Co. Experience



Gallop along an outback dirt track in a fully-laden Cobb & Co Stage Coach on the multi award winning Kinnon & Co. Experience. Retrace the steps of Cobb & co by travelling the original mail route between Longreach & Windorah. More than just a river cruise, watch the sunset while cruising the historic Thomson Belle Paddlewheeler or Thomson Princess Riverboat.

from \$185*

pp
*airfares are additional

INCLUDES Gallop thru the Scrub tour includes - 45 minute stagecoach ride with commentary, Australian Classic Movie & Harry Redford Old Time Tent Show & Thomson River Cruise includes - Paddlewheeler & Riverboat Sunset Cruise & NEW Sound & Light Show plus dinner.

Kinnon & Co. Experience 01 Apr-31 Oct 14	Adult	Child
	\$185*	\$115*

The Great Aussie Outback Air Tour



The ultimate Australian Outback Bush Adventure in air-conditioned comfort, with leather seats & full meal service at 20,000ft. Follow the milk run route of central Queensland from Brisbane to Cairns stopping off at typically country towns, where you can immerse yourself in the warm Outback hospitality.

from \$2015*

pp
*international airfares are additional

INCLUDES Return airfares from Brisbane to Cairns, 4 nights accommodation, 4 day tours plus 1 breakfast, 1 lunch & 1 dinner.

ITINERARY Brisbane – Birdsville (1 night) – Charleville (2 nights) – Mt Isa (1 night) – Cairns.

5 days/4 nights 07 Apr-07 Aug, 11 Aug-30 Nov 14	Adult
	\$2015*



TRAVEL EXPO

NEW ZEALAND'S LARGEST TRAVEL SHOW

OUTBACK QUEENSLAND

Outback Getaway

5 nights



from **\$1129**^{*} pp
*airfares are additional

INCLUDES 6 days/5 nights Outback Getaway with 4 breakfasts, 1 lunch & 3 dinners.

HIGHLIGHTS Drover's Sunset Cruise on the Thomson River, Legends & Larrikins live dinner show, a visit to the historic Qantas Founders Museum & visit the Australian Age of Dinosaurs & the Waltzing Matilda Centre.

6 days/5 nights

Twin

Departs: 16 Apr, 07 May, 14 May, 11 Jun, 16 Jul, 23 Jul 14

\$1129*

Legendary Longreach & Winton

5 nights



from **\$1879**^{*} pp
*airfares are additional

INCLUDES 6 days/5 nights Legendary Longreach & Winton with 4 breakfasts, 4 lunches & 5 dinners.

HIGHLIGHTS Experience the unique hospitality of local sheep & cattle stations, special guided tour of the Qantas hanger with a jet tour & sunset drinks & exclusive dining experience at the Qantas Founders Museum & Australian Age of Dinosaurs.

6 days/5 nights

Twin

Departs: 23 Apr, 21 May, 18 Jun, 30 Jul 14

\$1879*

infinity
HOLIDAYS

logo to come

Terms & Conditions: Prices are correct as at 10 Feb 14 & are subject to change without notice. All prices are based on payment by cash or EFTPOS only. Sales Period: 15-28 Feb 14 only, unless otherwise stated or sold out earlier. Packages are land only & airfares will be at an additional cost. Blackout dates & seasonal surcharges may apply depending on date of travel. North Gregory Hotel: Airport transfers are to/from Winton Airport. Kinnon & Co Tours: Child policy is 5-14 years. Tours are flexible & can do over multiple days. Skytrans: International Airfares will be at an additional cost. Tour departs Brisbane on Monday at 9am. Pre & Post accommodation if required will be at an additional cost. Outback Aussie Tours: Pre & Post accommodation if required will be at an additional cost. Accommodation: If included, all accommodation is based on twin share unless otherwise stated. Accommodation star rating is based on Infinity Holidays ratings & is a guide only to the overall quality of the property. For full terms & conditions please refer to your Infinity Holidays Brochure.

Action Task 1.6

A desktop audit for existing accommodation capacity has been completed for Central West accommodation to include the regions of Barcaldine, Barcoo, Blackall-Tambo, Longreach and Winton. Specialist group accommodation e.g. dormitories, non-commercial camping grounds and non-powered camping sites have not been included on this list.

Accommodation included in the audit was divided into commercial accommodation properties (hotels, motels and self-contained) and commercial caravan parks (cabins/powering sites).

Capacity results identified a total of 220 hotel rooms (ensuite and shared), 433 motel rooms and 90 self-contained cabins/units/houses from a total of 53 commercial accommodation properties. Of the properties that had official AAA ratings, the majority are 3 – 3.5 star with two 4 star properties.

The research also identified a total capacity of 114 cabins and 758 powered sites from a total of 20 commercial caravan parks.

A break-up of the individual town accommodation and capacity is shown below:

Region	Town	Hotel (H) Motel (M) Self-Contained (S/C)				Caravan Parks		
		No. of properties	No. of rooms or SC cabins/units/houses			No. of properties	No. of cabins/ powered sites	
			H	M	SC		C	P
Barcaldine	Alpha	1		10		1	17	30
	Aramac	2	10			1		32
	Barcaldine	12	40	76	26	3	20	113
	Jericho	1	8					
	Muttaburra	1		4		1		12
Blackall-Tambo	Blackall	6	7	54	6	2	7	12
	Tambo	3	21	23		2	3	34
Barcoo	Jundah	1	8			1		14
	Stonehenge	1	8			1		8
	Windorah	2	10		9	1		36
Longreach	Longreach	11	20	200	40	2	47	258
	Isisford	2	20					
	Ilfracombe	1	6			1	6	60
	Yaraka	1	4			1		3
Winton	Winton	8	58	66	9	3	14	146
Total		53	220	433	90	20	114	758

Legend: Hotel (H); Motel (M); Self-Contained (SC); Cabin (C); Powered site (P)

According to the Tourism Australia Research Central West Visitor Profile (2010) the majority of existing visitors to the central west are over 54 years, retired older retired (in the older non-working life stage), and are self-drive.

A growing market is the tour and packaged market, particularly in Longreach and Winton. Anecdotal evidence from discussions with existing tour operators, wholesalers and tourism bodies, suggests that in order to attract a new higher spend market, consideration needs to be made for the development of higher standard accommodation, Bed and Breakfast hosted accommodation and authentic station stays. Additionally, there is an identified need for more accommodation options to support regional events

A full accommodation study future needs analysis is recommended for the Central West to be able to identify the investment opportunities for new accommodation in the Central West, which will appeal to a higher spend market.

Action Tasks 1.7, 1.8

A Storytelling Workshop was held in Longreach on Thursday 06 March, 2014. Initial rsvp's totalled 22 with representatives from Barcoo Regional Council (2); Barcaldine Regional Council (3); Longreach Regional Council (2); Winton Regional Council (1); Stockman's Hall of Fame (2); Qantas Founders Museum (2); Australian Age of Dinosaurs (1); Outback Aussie Tours (2); Kinnon & Co (2); Indigenous creative operator (1); Longreach Motor Inn (1); Albert Park Motor Inn, Longreach (1); North Gregory Hotel, Winton (2); Blackall/Tambo Regional Council (1). Overall a good cross section of interested Central West participants. Of the original 22 rsvps there was an actual attendance of 13 on the day.

As part of the preparation for the workshop, the facilitator toured a selection of Central West hero attractions in the two days prior to the workshop. These included Stockman's Hall of Fame, Qantas Founders Museum, Australian Age of Dinosaurs and Waltzing Matilda Centre. These visits ensured relevancy and context in the delivery content that was appreciated by course participants. Also in the weeks preceding the workshop, various participants provided access to content which could be incorporated into the workshop delivery.

A workbook was developed specifically for this workshop, titled 'What's Your Story'. There was a good mix of activities, discussions and media used to deliver course material. Specific activities for identifying town themes were included in the workshop. There was very good group interaction and interest demonstrated throughout the day.

Suzanne Thompson participated in the workshop contributing with Indigenous stories and also updating participants on her current Indigenous experience projects for the Central West region and beyond including some planned workshops which are themed around the traditional art styles used in the Central West area.

A total of 13 course evaluation forms were completed and summarised. All 13 participants rated both the course content and presenter skills between 8 and 10 (Rating scale 10 = Excellent; 0 = Very poor). Below are some additional comments listed by participants as the most helpful part of the workshop.

- Realising the importance of the Take Home Message when presenting your story
- Theme construction
- Structure in presenting written media
- Interpretive writing info
- The material was relevant to what I am doing. Really enjoyed – gained a lot from workshop – hope I can implement
- Information structure/wording. Even though we do not have an attraction, it was very useful and fun
- Explaining how to write and layout of text on websites. If there could be a course that could help us with creative writing in print format that would be good
- Interpretive writing



Action Tasks 2.1a, 2.1b, 2.1c

All 2014 Outback Queensland events for the Central West have now been loaded to the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse. These events, once listed with ATDW, are then distributed to multiple online channels to include Queensland Holidays and Tourism Australia.

It is a condition of OQTA membership and Regional Event funding that events have current information listed on ATDW, so this remains the best method of ensuring continual updates occur. Events currently listed with ATDW below:

Event Name	Region	Date/s 2014/15	Itinerary on adventureoutback.com.au
Tree of Knowledge Festival	Barcaldine	2 to 4 May 2014	6 Day/5 Night ex BNE
Harry Redford Cattle Drive	Barcaldine	2 to 24 May 2014	6 Day/5 Night ex BNE
Blackall Heartland Festival	Blackall Tambo	23 May to 1 Jun 2014	3 Day/2 Night ex BNE
Isisford Wool & Sheep Show	Longreach	24 May 2014	
Tambo Racing 150 year Celebrations Carnival	Blackall Tambo	29 May to 1 Jun 2014	
Ilfracombe Speed Shears	Longreach	31 May 2014	
Winton Auto Spectacular 1/8 Mile Drag	Winton	14 Jun 2014	
Alpha Races	Barcaldine	21 Jun 2014	
The Vision Splendid Outback Film Festival	Winton	27 Jun to 6 Jul 2014	
Outback Horse and Heritage Expo	Longreach	24 to 26 Jul 2014	4 Day/3 Night ex BNE
Shockwave	Blackall-Tambo	2 to 3 Aug 2014	
Corfield Races and Quickshears	Winton	2 to 3 Aug 2014	
National Bronco Branding Championships	Barcoo	16 to 17 Aug 2014	
Longreach Yellowbelly Fishing Classic	Longreach	29 to 31 Aug 2014	
Windorah Yabby Races	Barcoo	4 Sep 2014	4 Day/3 Night ex BNE
Outback October Fest	Barcoo	3 to 5 Oct 2014	
Outback Festival (Bi Annual)	Winton	22 to 26 Sep 2015	7 Day/6 Night ex BNE
Outback Trailblazer	Various	19 to 26 Apr 2015	

Tourism and Events Queensland and OQTA have developed suggested event itineraries for a selection of these events in conjunction with their Outback Eventures campaign. It is recommended that events each develop their own suggested itineraries for their target market drive groups and distribute them via their own website, adventureoutback.com.au and via RACQ VTIC.



New tool for event promotion

ATDW have just finalised work on a new Widget, which will effectively allow individual regions to easily and cost effectively draw specific ATDW product. E.g. Winton Shire Council could set up this Widget on their site to draw only events in the Central West region. There is potential for all online Central West tourism businesses to add the Widget to their websites – ensuring wider distribution of Central West events and event itineraries (if listed on Journeys). The widget is due to be released this month and several Central West operators will be targeted to trial it.

The onus for updating the ATDW listing is still with the individual operators. OQTA undertake the big job of ensuring all events update their listing on an annual basis. Given that a good amount of chasing is still required by OQTA to achieve this update, there is evidence that many events still do not fully understand the benefits of ATDW distribution and the potential promotional opportunities.

Event Packaging

Event Packages were developed for Winton's Outback Festival for 2013 with some very positive results including achieving just over \$50,000 in pre-sold tickets and packages. Tent City and Festival Campsite packages were developed and distributed via the event's new online booking system, RACQ Travel, Qld Rail Travel and Infinity Holidays. Additionally, a range of new regional RACQ drive itineraries developed as part of the CWOQTA Tourism Development Action Plan were drawn onto the Event website and marketed to Event visitors.

As a result of the successful packaging of Outback Festival, other events are now actively looking into packaging their event. Specifically, the Harry Redford Cattle Drive in Barcaldine is currently working on building a new event website with online ticketing. They have also engaged a tourism consultant to assist them in developing a range of packages which can be marketed with their 2015 event.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the website for Winton's Outback Festival. The URL is www.outbackfestival.org/accommodation/packagesdeals.html. The page features a header with the festival name 'OUTBACK FESTIVAL' in large, stylized letters, the location 'winton • queensland • australia', and the dates '22nd to 26th September, 2015'. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for HOME, ABOUT US, EVENTS, NEWS & MEDIA, GET INVOLVED, VISITOR INFORMATION, ACCOMMODATION & PACKAGES, GALLERY, MEDIA/WORK, and CONTACT US. The main content area is titled 'RAIL AND ACCOMMODATION PACKAGES' and includes a sub-header 'Make the most of your Outback Adventure and join the overnight Spirit of the Outback rail journey to Longreach with a two-hour coach connection to Winton.' The itinerary is listed as follows:

- Tuesday 24 September**
Depart Brisbane on the Spirit of the Outback Rail Journey.
- Wednesday 25 September**
 - Arrive Longreach then transfer by coach to Winton
 - 5 nights Club Paterson Tent City accommodation
 - IN 25 SEP - OUT 30 SEP
- Monday 30 September**
 - Depart Winton for an early coach transfer to Longreach
 - Join the Spirit of the Outback Rail Journey to Brisbane
 - Tuesday 01 October
 - Arrive Brisbane

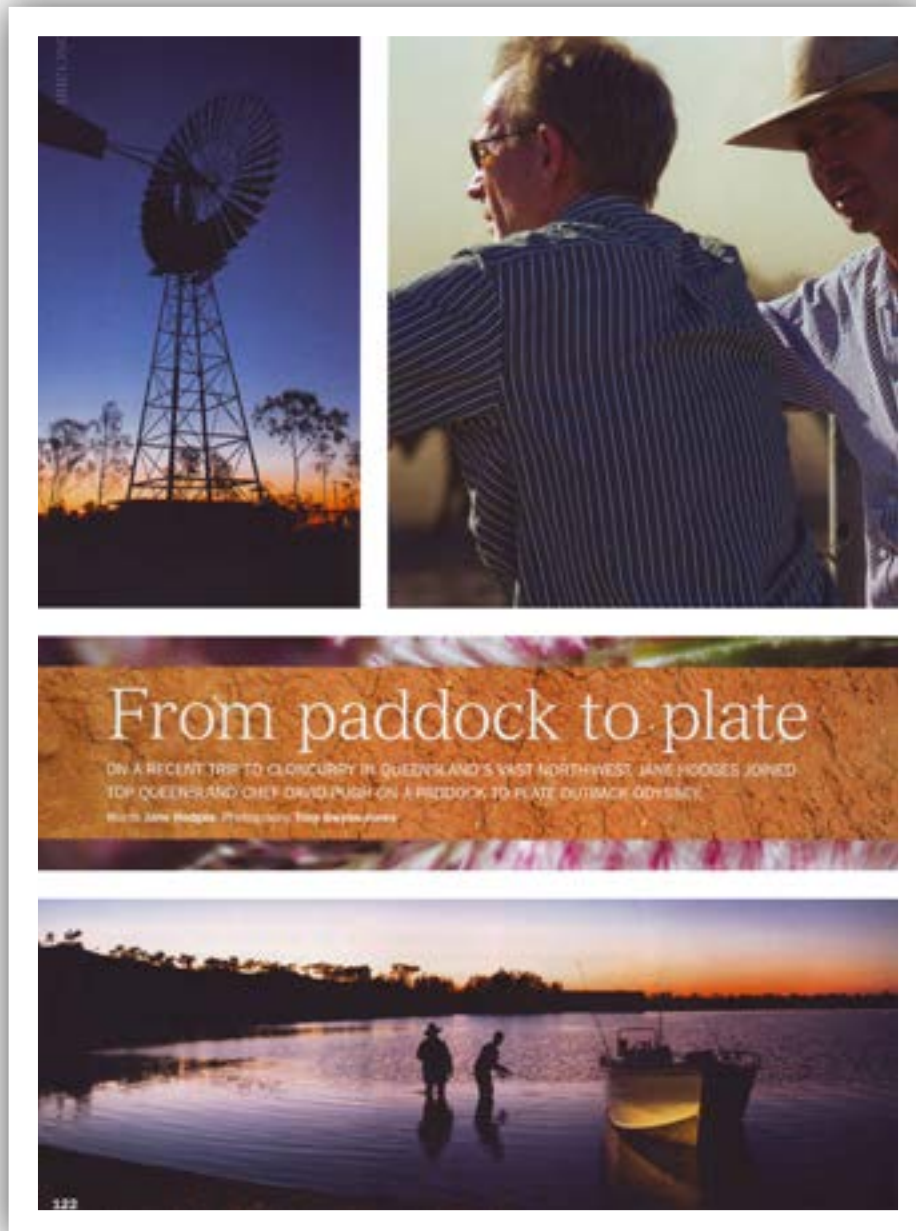
Bookings/Enquiries: Contact Queensland Rail Travel - Ph: 1800 627 455

At the bottom of the page, there is contact information: Mobile: 0429 896 140, Phone/Fax: (07) 4437 1518, Email: outbackfest@hiblog.com, and the slogan 'WINTON'S OUTBACK - "It's larger than life"'. Copyright information for 2013 and the website developer, Graphics Factory for Outback Festival Inc., are also present.

Action Task 2.2

A desktop audit to determine the existing capacity/potential for food tourism activities in the Central West has been completed. The audit has resulted in a list of 93 operators from the food sector to include retail outlets, restaurants, producers and processors. Owing to the small number of producers within the Central and Far West regions, assistance was sought from Morgan Gronold, Trade & Investment Queensland. Morgan was able to supply a list of potential producers from other outback regions to supplement the database (included in the total 93 operators).

He also provided a copy of an article from Selector magazine titled 'From Paddock to Plate' – David Pugh's Outback Odyssey – a useful resource for Phase 2 of this Action.



Given the growing demand for food and wine as part of the travel experience, Tourism Australia has recently launched its new Food and Wine positioning 'Restaurant Australia.' There are a number of social media initiatives open to food and wine experience operators which should be explored by Central West members interested in leveraging promotion from this campaign. <http://restaurant.australia.com/>

Action Task 2.3

A set of guidelines for developing Indigenous experiences in the Central West has been researched and compiled for tourism operators (Aboriginal and non Aboriginal). These guidelines include the following steps:

- Research existing Indigenous Tourism Concepts and Case Studies
- Review relevant Aboriginal Protocols
- Obtain assistance from Trade & Government Organisations
- Consult and engage with the local Aboriginal Community
- Obtain Agreements in writing
- Learn potential product goals

Whilst researching these Guidelines, the following Organisations/Contacts were consulted:

- Outback Queensland Tourism Association (OQTA)
- Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ)
- Tourism Australia (TA)
- NT Tourism
- Destination NSW
- IBA (Indigenous Business Australia)
- Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs (DATSIMA)
- Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC)
- Australian Council for the Arts
- Australian Copyright Council
- Queensland South Native Title Services
- Suzanne Thompson, Aboriginal business owner and Community representative

In the development of these Guidelines, consultations were held with Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) to enquire about the Queensland Indigenous Strategy, which they are in the process of re-writing. Priorities for these Guidelines have focused on incorporating Indigenous experiences into mainstream tourism. These priorities are in line with current TEQ and TA Indigenous strategies.

A draft version of the Guidelines document has been completed and is pending feedback from the Central West stakeholders.



Action Task 2.4a

Tour operators play an important role both in the promotion of our national parks and in encouraging visitors to value and enjoy them. Most tour operators have access to a considerable client base. Tour operators refresh their product on a yearly basis and are always on the lookout for new itinerary ideas. The downside of new itinerary planning is the time involved in researching new locations, attractions and activities.

The new commercial operator toolkit has been devised with the goal of simplifying the planning process, saving the operator time and growing tourism activities in the Central West Queensland Parks. Specifically, the toolkit aims to encourage group activities in the Central West Queensland Parks to include:

- School Excursions – day & overnight camping visits including Ranger talks, bush walks and educational activities
- Group Tours – general group tour visits including Ranger talks, bush walks and self-catered meal (e.g. morning/afternoon tea or lunch)
- Events – day and evening special events which will involve bringing in entertainment, music, lighting, staging equipment, hospitality equipment, seating, portable toilets etc.

The Central West Queensland Parks toolkit includes:

- Access guidelines and permit information for day and overnight activities (including camping permits)
- Location map for Central West Parks
- Snapshot of experiences in Central West Parks
- Fact sheets for nine of the 13 Central West Parks which are accessible by road to include: Bladensburg National Park; Lark Quarry Conservation Park; Combo Waterhole Conservation Park; Diamantina National Park; Munga-Thirri National Park; Idalia National Park; Welford National Park; Lochern National Park; Forest Den National Park
- Helpful links to relevant tourism and park management authorities

An online version of the toolkit will be emailed to a database of group tour planners and coach operators before 30 June 2014.



SUMMARY

Stage one completion of the CWOQTA Tourism Development Action Plan has benefited from a collaborated approach to grow exposure for the region and to develop strategies for new visitor experiences by Central West members.

By aligning actions with OQTA cooperative marketing activities, the Central West operators benefited from increased promotion of their products and regional itineraries through the RACQ/VTIC (Virtual Tourism Information Centre) partnership. The challenge for Central West operators now is to maintain the momentum and continue to expand product distribution, specifically themed drive itineraries.

The strategy of taking a regional approach to contracting nine Central West tourism products with wholesaler Infinity Holidays exceeded expectations. TEQ recognised the potential benefits in finally having depth of Outback Qld product in a global distributor program. Their brochure support with Infinity Holidays and subsequent TEQ/Infinity Holidays Queensland on Tour Trade show in New Zealand has opened up new opportunities for the Central West region for attracting more International visitors. Additionally, this program has increased opportunity for Fly/Drive packaging of the region.

Maximising the visitor expenditure and increasing length of stay continues to be an important strategy for TEQ and OQTA's Eventure's campaign. Actions to coordinate packaging and distribution of Winton's Outback Festival proved a positive case study for other events to follow.

Central West operators recognize the new market opportunities in developing new visitor experiences. Underpinning the product development has been the need to improve how their stories are told. The first Storytelling workshop was well received by all attendees keen to identify stories and refine themes to target new markets including the Education market.

The development of new Indigenous tourism experiences in partnership with mainstream tourism operators is a strategy supported by TA and TEQ and which underpins the new Guidelines for Indigenous experiences in the Central West. Opportunities exist to build in new Indigenous experiences e.g. bush tucker walks and workshops into mainstream tours and events. There are operators already working on these activities for 2015. These smaller experience developments may provide support for future developments around the many significant sites where current issues related to access and protection have stalled progress.

Indigenous experiences and National Park activities partner well in attracting new visitor markets. Initial target markets of school groups, traditional group travel and events are expected to grow following the distribution of the new Central West Queensland Parks Toolkit for commercial operators. There is potential for greater support from TEQ/OQTA in targeting this market due to the current push for the Outback Queensland Education Subsidy curriculum links. A new itinerary, which features Bladensburg National Park has been included in the new Outback Education Handbook. Leveraging any new event activities in Central West Queensland Parks from the current Outback Eventures campaign would be a good strategy.

Some excellent results have been achieved through the implementation of Stage One of the CWOQTA Tourism Development Action Plan. There is a real momentum happening amongst operators, local government associations and key industry bodies with a clear focus on growing distribution and improving the visitor experience.

