

**Gunnedah Shire
Destination Management Plan
2015**

ACTION PLAN



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GUNNEDAH SHIRE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN, 2015

Prepared for
GUNNEDAH SHIRE COUNCIL

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Gunnedah's Annual Porchetta Festival

1. INTRODUCTION

The Gunnedah Shire Destination Management Plan (DMP) provides the direction and framework for taking Shire’s visitor economy forward over the next five years. The primary goal of this Plan is to increase visitor expenditure within the Shire, with resultant economic and social benefits for the Shire community. The visitor economy is a broader concept than the tourism industry, incorporating all businesses and activities that benefit, both directly and indirectly, from money spent by travellers. The visitor economy is recognised as major driver of economic growth, with growth in the visitor economy a strategic priority at both Federal and State Government levels. At the local level, growing the economy of Gunnedah Shire is one Council’s core priorities, with developing the visitor economy being one of the strategies adopted by Council to stimulate economic growth.

1.1 The Value of the Visitor Economy in Gunnedah Shire

The visitor economy is a significant part of the economic base of Gunnedah Shire. The Shire attracts an estimated 211,000 visitors per year¹, of whom 100,000 are overnight visitors (99,000 domestic and 1,000 international) staying one or more nights in the Shire and 111,000 are day trippers. Overnight visitors spend in the order of 267,000 nights in the Shire. Direct expenditure by visitors to the Shire is in the order of \$48 million per year, with overnight visitors spending an estimated \$33 million per year and day trippers \$15 million per year. Expenditure by visitors creates significant employment opportunities across a range of industry sectors.

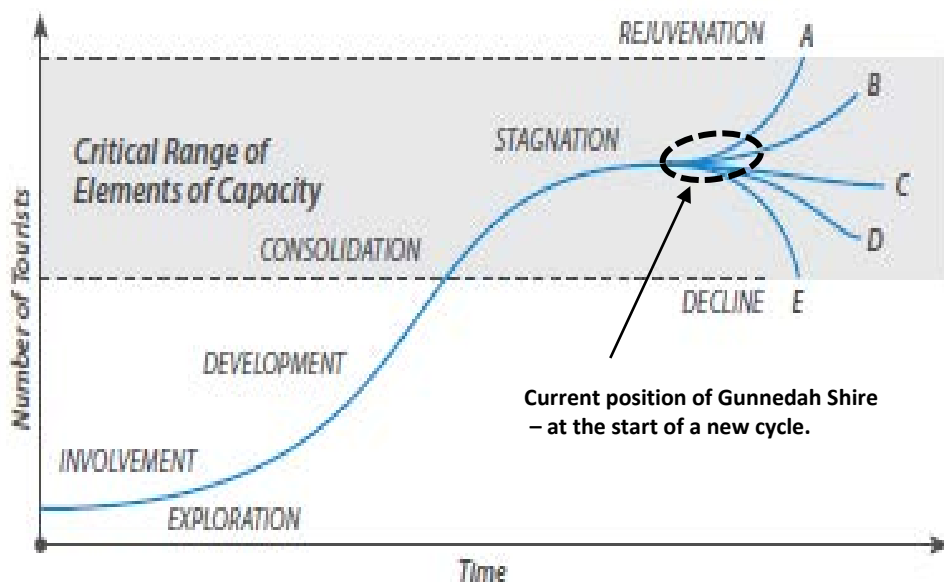
1.2 Destination Management

The National Long Term Tourism Strategy for Australia (2010) recognised that the future of tourism is dependent on providing ‘compelling and sustainable experiences’ to consumers. It also recognised that for Australia to move up the international tourism value chain and to remain competitive, required ‘innovation, continuous improvement and renewal’ of products, experiences and infrastructure. To facilitate this, the Commonwealth Government, in conjunction with the State Tourism Agencies, introduced the concept of destination management. Destination management involves integrating the planning, development, management and marketing of tourism destinations to support and facilitate growth in visitation.

At the regional and local level, Destination Management Plans (DMPs) are one of the tools being used to assess the lifecycle status of the destination, identify opportunities to build visitation, and assess the product and infrastructure development required realise these opportunities. Lifecycle status describes destinations as emerging, mature, declining or rejuvenating. The stages of destination development are summarised in Figure 1.1. At the stagnation stage, the options are to re-invent and/or rejuvenate the destination (A and B) – starting the cycle again; retain the status quo (C); or allow the destination to decline (D and E).

¹ Statistics in this section are taken from Destination NSW – Local Government Area Visitor Profile – Gunnedah Shire, YE September 2014.

Figure 1.1 Destination Lifecycle



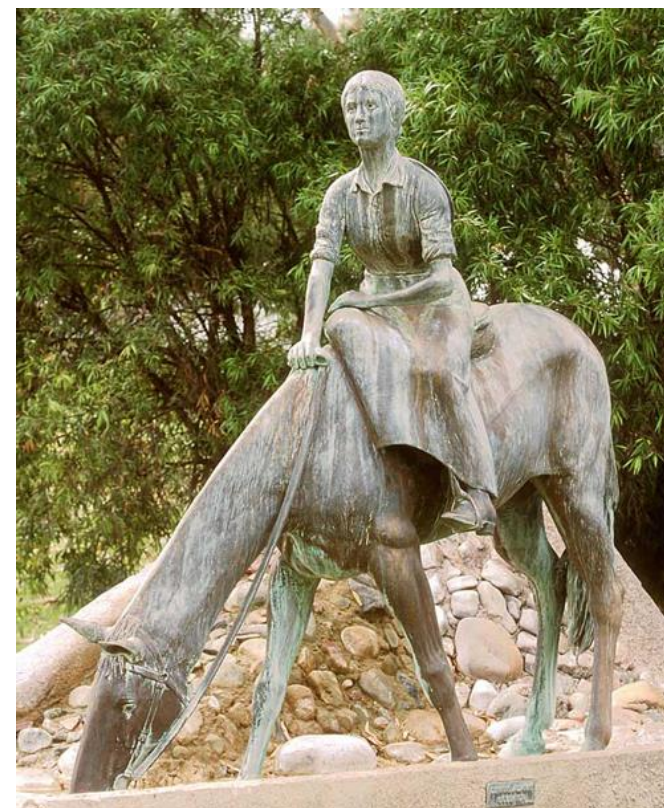
Until the last few years, Gunnedah Shire as a destination was relatively stagnant. With the development of new accommodation, the relocation of the Visitor Information Centre and the product development that is underway, Gunnedah Shire has moved into the rejuvenation phase with the start of a new cycle.

The preparation of the Gunnedah Shire DMP is part of the exploration stage of this new cycle. The emphasis over the next few years needs to be on product and infrastructure enhancement and development.

1.3 Purpose of the Gunnedah Shire Destination Management Plan (DMP)

The purpose of the Gunnedah Shire DMP is to provide the direction and framework for taking Shire’s visitor economy forward over the next five years. The primary goal of this Plan is to increase visitor expenditure within the Shire, with resultant economic and social benefits for the Shire community. To achieve this, the Plan focuses on:

- Identifying opportunities to strengthen and grow the Shire’s existing market base and diversify into new markets in order to deliver visitation year-round.
- Understanding the needs and expectations of visitors and ensuring that the infrastructure, facilities and services are in place within the Shire to meet these.
- Encouraging and facilitating the development of tourist attractions, accommodation, events and infrastructure within the Shire.
- Setting the directions for the marketing and promoting the Shire.
- Identifying priorities to ensure the most effective use of limited funds and resources.



Dorothea Mackellar Statue

1.4 Outcomes being Sought

The main outcomes being sought from the Gunnedah Shire Tourism Plan are:

- To deliver on Council's Strategic Objectives as articulated in the Gunnedah Shire Community Strategic Plan.
- A growing visitor economy that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.
- Increased appeal and competitiveness of Gunnedah Shire as a service centre and destination – in particular to build the Shire's attraction and activity base.
- Higher profile / increased awareness of Gunnedah Shire - from both a tourism and economic development perspective.
- Increased visitor satisfaction – providing quality experiences that deliver on the brand promise and core values of the area, and services that meet visitor needs and expectations.
- Retention and protection of the lifestyle, heritage, cultural, landscape and environmental assets that form the basis for tourism within the Shire.
- Increased public and private sector investment in appropriate and sustainable tourism products and facilities within the Shire.
- Increased skills and professionalism within the tourism sector, including improved customer service, more packaging and value-adding, and widespread adoption of web-based and digital technology for information dissemination and sales and marketing.

Growing visitation to the Shire will bring 'new' dollars into the local economy with these 'new' dollars having a multiplier effect, filtering through to most sectors. This will contribute to increasing the long term viability of local businesses and generate and sustain employment. Research undertaken by Tourism Research Australia in conjunction with the Australian Bureau of Statistics has found that the value created by tourism expenditure exceeds that of other major economic activities, with every dollar spent by the tourism sector generating an additional \$0.90 in value-add. In contrast the value-add spend for retail is \$0.70, mining is \$0.60 and health care and social assistance is \$0.50.



The Namoi River corridor is a popular camping site for the touring caravan and RV markets

1.5 Structure of the Gunnedah Destination Management Plan

The Gunnedah Shire DMP is presented in two volumes - Destination Analysis and the DMP Action Plan. The Destination Analysis provides information on:

- The planning framework.
- The markets attracted to the Shire and surrounding region and the changes that are occurring in the marketplace.
- The product base of the Shire – localities, attractions, activities, events and experiences.
- The infrastructure, facilities and services available to support the visitor economy.
- Product, infrastructure and market development opportunities.

The DMP Action Plan (this document) provides the strategies and actions needed to facilitate the co-ordination, development and marketing of the visitor economy within the Shire.

1.6 Abbreviations Used in this Plan

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
DMP	Destination Management Plan
DMS	Dorothea McKellar Society
DNSW	Destination NSW
GMSE	Gunnedah Motor Sports Enthusiasts
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council
LGA	Local Government Area
LK	Lake Keepit
MTB	Mountain Bike
NWLLS	North West Local Land Services
NPWS	National Parks & Wildlife Service
RDA	Regional Development Australia
RMS	Roads & Maritime Services
RTO	Regional Tourism Organisation
RV	Recreational Vehicle (eg motorhome, campervan)
TRA	Tourism Research Australia
VEAP	Visitor Economy Action Plan
VFR	Visiting Friends and Relatives



Stunning scenery – the Liverpool Plains at Curlewis

2. THE VISITOR ECONOMY IN GUNNEDAH SHIRE – OVERVIEW

2.1 Our Destination

Gunnedah Shire is a destination in its own right as well as a 'stop' on a longer touring trip and a service centre for Highway travellers. The primary markets attracted to the Shire are highway and touring traffic (including the caravan and RV markets), business and work-related travellers, regional residents, and people visiting friends and relatives. Secondary and markets include conference and meeting delegates, sporting and event attendees and coach tour groups. The Shire also attracts a range of special interest and activity based markets including water sports enthusiasts (Lake Keepit), motor sports enthusiasts, golfers, history enthusiasts / family historians, bird watchers, golfers, anglers, cyclists and people coming into town to participate in arts-based activities. In terms of travel 'mindsets', the products and experiences offered by Gunnedah Shire are an ideal 'fit' with the 'Wanderers' (primarily retirees) and 'Compatriot' (family) markets.

For more than a decade, Gunnedah Shire has been promoted as the 'Koala Capital of the World' – a place where travellers can see koalas in their natural habitat. Council also promotes the Shire as the 'Land of Opportunity' with rich agricultural land, extensive energy resources and a prosperous, thriving community. Gunnedah is also known 'Dorothea Mackellar Country' due to its strong links to Dorothea Mackellar and her poem 'My Country'. The promotion of the Shire focuses on lifestyle and family values – people having fun together while exploring the diversity of attractions on offer. Gunnedah is the home of AgQuip, Australia's premier agricultural field day, with this event attracting around 100,000 visitors and 3,000 exhibitors to Gunnedah.

The main attractions of the Shire include the stunning rural scenery, Lake Keepit and the Lake Keepit State Park, the Namoi River, Koalas, Rural Museum, and the recently opened, Boonalla Aboriginal Area. The Shire's five small villages each have something to offer. Mullaley is a small service centre, providing accommodation and visitor facilities for travellers arriving in the Shire from the west and south west. The Commercial Hotel at Curlewis is a local icon with the village also hosting a popular camp draft. Tambar Spring's claims to fame are the diprotodon skeleton found in the area and the first WW1 war memorial erected in Australia, while Breeza has an association with the bush ranger Ben Hall, and Carroll with Kibah Tic-Tic and Kibah Sandstone, well-known Olympic eventing horses.

Gunnedah Shire has a strong annual events sector, dominated by a diverse range of sporting events. The Shire has successfully hosted a range of regional, State and National sporting tournaments, with Gunnedah Shire being a popular location for motor sports, horse sports and gliding.

Gunnedah Shire has 32 commercial accommodation properties including 10 motels (213 rooms), 9 serviced apartment properties, 9 pub hotels, 3 caravan parks and a B&B. Gunnedah also runs a very popular home hosting program during Agquip. Gunnedah has a range of conference and meeting facilities, with the town's infrastructure ideally suited to conferences of up to 300 delegates.



Royal Hotel, Tambar Springs

2.2 Our Changing Personality

The ramping up of the resources sector in the Gunnedah Basin has resulted in an influx of new residents and businesses – the town and its personality are changing, making Gunnedah more appealing as a destination. These changes are encapsulated in the images used in the visitgunnedah website.

	Past	Emerging
Positioning	A small, traditional country town	A town on the move – vibrant, interesting, a lifestyle alternative
Personality	Staid, conservative, traditional Hard working & resilient	Welcoming, Inviting Active, Creative, Colourful, Passionate Connected and Caring – to our land, communities and environment Productive, Innovative
Feelings Engendered	Pretty, Clean and Tidy, Safe, Ordered Not much to do	This community cares. That looks like fun! - Let's get out and explore.
Our Offer	View koalas in the wild Our rural heritage – visit a museum Beautiful landscapes	Koalas – we are passionate about our koalas – protecting, caring and saving Creative – galleries, sculptures, performances, activities, events, eclectic interesting shops Our heritage - Lots of stories to tell Family fun – doing things together – dining, cycling, fishing, walking, exploring etc Beautiful, productive landscapes Be active - play, explore, participate, enjoy Country sophistication – boutique shopping, café culture, country pubs

2.3 Unique Selling Points

- Koalas – koala colonies – the ability to see koalas 'in the wild' around Gunnedah.
- Dorothea Mackellar connection / Isherwood Collection.
- Landscapes and landforms
- Boonalla Aboriginal Area
- Lake Keepit State Park



2.4 Product & Experience Snapshot – Our Offer

Koalas	Dorothea Mackellar – My Country	Creative – Arts & Culture	Kamilaroi heritage and culture	Lifestyle	Sport & Recreation	Unusual & Quirky
Koala colonies – Gunnedah & Curlewis Waterways Wildlife Park Habitat areas Climate Change Story Project Koala	Statue, MAAS Walk, Poetry Drive, Poetry Competition <u>Broader</u> Landscapes War Memorials Plains of Plenty	Galleries (3) Isherwood Collection Sculptures Workshops & Classes Cinema & film Performing Arts Poetry Eistedfodd Sunday Sessions	Red Chief Boonalla Aboriginal Area Cumbo Gunnerah Keeping Place History Sites & Landforms – Porcupine Hill, Wallaby Trap, Mullibah Lagoon etc.	Speciality Shopping Cafes Local produce Arts & Culture Outdoors Events & Activities	Motor sports Water sports Horse sports Dog Sports Gliding Cycling Tennis Parks & Reserves	Poetry Loos – Wolseley Park Diprotodon Mullaley Park – milestones and playground equipment of yester-year War Memorials

2.5 Opportunities

Opportunities to diversify and expand both the product and activity base of the Shire and the markets attracted include:

- Position and promote Gunnedah as a lifestyle destination – targeting regional residents and their visiting friends and relatives. Enhancing the presentation and vibrancy of the town will also attract the touring market and encourage highway travellers to stop and explore.
- Continuing to build the touring market, working with the Kamilaroi Highway Promotions Group to develop additional products and experiences along the Highway corridor and exploring opportunities to work with the LGAs along the Oxley Highway to position and promote the Oxley Highway as a touring route.
- Continuing to build the events market, concentrating on building the business events sector by targeting association conferences and regional meetings, workshops and seminars, and sporting events through working with event organisers to grow attendance, and improving venue infrastructure, promoting the venues for hire and bidding for sporting events.
- Diversifying and strengthening the koala experience – expanding the experience to tell the ‘story’ of the impact of climate change and severe weather events on the koala population and providing opportunities for visitors to ‘help’ save one of Australia’s icons.
- Building on the Dorothea Mackellar connection – in celebrating Mackellar’s life and poetry and in a very broad context across a number of experiences – appreciating the Shire’s landscapes, through visual arts, food production (the Plains of Plenty), war history, and ‘My Country’ from an Aboriginal perspective.

- Showcasing the Shire’s rich Aboriginal culture – positioning Gunnedah as a focal point for Kamilaroi cultural experiences within the NE-NW Regional and along the Kamilaroi and Oxley Highway corridors.
- Developing the Namoi River corridor through Gunnedah as a significant attraction and activity node.
- Capitalising on the assets in each of the villages to encourage travellers to stop and spend money in local businesses.
- Continuing to develop and promote Lake Keepit State Park as a visitor destination – upgrading existing facilities and expanding the range of facilities and services available.
- To use the Shire’s assets to build a range of special interest and activity-based markets – markets that will visit Gunnedah Shire specifically to undertake or participate in an activity.

2.6 Challenges

Challenges facing the Shire in further growing its visitor economy include:

- Responding to generational change within the market place – The ‘Seniors’ market which has traditionally been the primary market for the Shire is being replaced by the ‘Baby Boomer’ and ‘Generation X’ markets. These younger generations are more sophisticated and demanding than previous generations and far less tolerant of lower standard and/or tired and dated products, facilities and service. Travellers are fitter and more active, seeking to participate, engage and ‘do’ rather than just ‘look’. Some of the Shire’s attractions need to change to become more ‘active’ rather than ‘passive’.
- Keeping abreast of rapidly changing technology. While the internet is now the primary tool for sourcing travel information and trip planning, how consumers access the internet has changed significantly in recent years, with most searches now started on mobile devices (smart phones and tablets). In addition to downloading information, travellers are also increasingly uploading information while travelling – posting on social media, uploading photos and videos and contributing to travel review sites. At the same time, travellers are still using ‘traditional’ information and promotional sources – Visitor Information Centres, Visitor Guides, Maps, Directories, mainstream media etc. This has significant resource and cost implications for Council as the primary information provider in Gunnedah Shire. It also has implications for accommodation and attraction operators and event organisers, including the need to significantly improve their on-line presence and their digital skill sets.
- Gunnedah Shire is located off the major interstate Highways (New England and Newell), which carry the bulk of the long-haul visitor traffic through the Region. Gunnedah is largely dependent on travellers choosing to take the Kamilaroi and Oxley Highways to move across the region – decisions that are influenced by a number of factors including awareness of what the ‘route’ has to offer. Gunnedah Shire needs to sell both the ‘route’ and the Shire.
- Strong competition from other destinations. Within the NE-NW Region, most of the towns are competing for similar markets to Gunnedah, with Tamworth in particular being a major competitor for business and sporting events.

- Limited awareness in the marketplace of what Gunnedah Shire has to offer. Outside of the NE-NW Region, there appears to be limited recognition of Gunnedah's association with koalas and Lake Keepit.
- A decline in the koala population as a result of extreme weather events, rendering it increasingly difficult for Gunnedah to 'deliver' its 'view koalas in the wild' experience.
- Investment is needed in some of the attractions, facilities and infrastructure within the Shire to re-invigorate tired products and complete projects (eg the cycleway network).
- Fluctuations and uncertainty in the mining sector. Over the past few years strong demand for accommodation in Gunnedah from mine and infrastructure project workers has displaced other visitor markets. Contraction in the mining industry and the completion of a number of the major projects has resulted in declining demand for accommodation and increased occupancy rates. The outlook for the accommodation sector over the next few years will depend on whether the proposed Shenua Mine proceeds and, if so, where workers will be accommodated – Gunnedah, Tamworth and/or in the proposed 1,500 bed Civeo Village at Werris Creek. If workers are going to be accommodated in Gunnedah, then there is likely to be minimal opportunity to grow other markets requiring motel and serviced apartment accommodation. The focus will need to be on building the day visitor and the caravan / RV markets for Gunnedah. If Gunnedah is not going to attract these workers, then there will be spare capacity in the accommodation sector providing the opportunity to build the leisure, touring and event markets.
- Funding and resource constraints at Council level, with competing priorities for limited resources. The Gunnedah Shire Tourism Unit has a very limited budget for operations, marketing and promotion.



3. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

3.1 Our Vision

Gunnedah Shire will have a strong, diversified and sustainable visitor economy. It will be known for its stunning, productive landscapes, its natural wonders and dreamtime connections, all championed by a vibrant, welcoming community - an experience of panoramic sights, unique surprises, country flavours and engaging conversations!

A strong, diversified and sustainable visitor economy will be achieved by:

- Increasing the appeal of Gunnedah as a destination - progressively enhancing our presentation and improving and expanding the range of tourism attractions, activities, experiences, infrastructure and services available within our Shire.
- Protecting and preserving the natural, historic, cultural and lifestyle assets of the Shire which form the basis for visitation (ie the appeal of the destination) and influence with how visitors react to and bond with the Shire.
- Market development – focusing on growing and strengthening our primary markets (touring travellers, regional residents, business and sporting events) and secondary markets, developing special interest and activity based markets and encouraging highway and business and work related travellers to spend more money in the Shire. As part of this, understanding and meeting the changing needs and expectations of the market place.
- Continuing to expand and enhance Gunnedah Shire’s online presence, capitalising on emerging opportunities for digital and web-based information delivery, communicating with the market place, and marketing and promotion.
- Strong leadership and direction from Gunnedah Shire through its Tourism Unit, coupled with building and maintaining effective strategic partnerships, with all levels of Government, other LGAs and tourism organisations within the surrounding region and along the Highway / Touring route corridors, land management agencies, tourism and business operators and the Shire’s communities and community, sporting and land care organisations.
- Having the funds and resources available to build the product base, service visitors and effectively market and promote the Shire.

3.2 Core Product Themes

- Gunnedah – the Koala Capital of the World
- Dorothea Mackellar – My Country – celebrated through poetry, landscapes, visual arts and produce
- Lakes and Rivers – Lake Keepit, Namoi River + Goran Lake
- Gunnedah Lifestyle – shopping, dining, playing, celebrating
- Events

3.3 Strategies

The key strategies to achieve the objectives of the Tourism Plan are:

- Strategy 1 Develop the touring routes that feed into and through Gunnedah Shire and the strategic alliances needed to support these routes.
- Strategy 2 Strengthen Gunnedah and the villages as both destinations and service nodes.
- Strategy 3 Upgrade and expand the attraction and activity base of Gunnedah Shire.
- Strategy 4 Build the events sector – targeting business and sporting events.
- Strategy 5 Ensure that the infrastructure, facilities and services are in place to support the growth of the tourism sector.
- Strategy 6 Build and diversify the market base of the Shire.

3.4 Destination Development Priorities

The priority projects, activities and actions are:

Partnerships

- Continue to work cooperatively with the Kamilaroi Highway Promotions Group.
- Continue to build strategic relationships and partnerships with surrounding LGAs, Oxley Highway, Land Management Agencies, community and sporting organisations to develop product and experiences and build visitation.



Market Development

- Focus funds and resources on consolidating and building the Shire's primary target markets:
 - Touring markets - baby boomers and families
 - Regional resident (and their VFR) market
 - Events market – business (conferences and meetings) and sporting events.
- Capitalise on cost effective opportunities to build secondary markets:
 - Visiting friends and relatives
 - Rail tourism – targeting social groups
 - Specialist agricultural and technical tours
 - Car and Motorcycle Clubs
 - Special interest and activity based markets – cyclists, mountain bikers, water sports enthusiasts, horse sports enthusiasts, anglers, gliders, history enthusiasts, motor sports enthusiasts, golfers, bird watchers, arts groups.
- Put in place strategies to encourage highway travellers, business and work-related travellers and people attending events, to spend more within the Shire.



Product Development

The priority product development projects that will increase visitation, encourage travellers to stay longer and/or enhance the visitor experience are:

- Developing and promoting the touring routes that feed into Gunnedah Shire – Kamilaroi Highway, Oxley Highway and Black Stump Way.
- Place-making in Gunnedah - continued improvement of the presentation of the Gunnedah, focusing on the gateway arrivals points and main routes through Gunnedah, the town centre, Namoi river corridor, Wolseley Park and the Lookouts – connecting activity nodes, improving signage, activating the shopping centre through public art and activities and developing a regional playground in Wolseley Park.
- Place-making in the Villages – focusing on increasing the visibility and street appeal of the village businesses, ongoing improvements to the Parks and Reserves, improving signage and access to information and capitalising more effectively on points of interest.
- Strengthening and diversifying the koala experience – providing a ‘learning’ experience (habitat, impact of climate change etc), a ‘doing’ experience (koala spotting) and a ‘helping’ experience – providing options (eg Project Koala) for visitors to assist.
- Developing the Namoi River corridor through Gunnedah as a visitor activity node – for walking, cycling, picnicking, canoeing, camping, koala interpretation and spotting, bird watching, fishing etc – with a strong physical and visual link to the VIC and the town centre.
- Work with the Dorothea Mackellar theme in the broadest context – to link landscapes, arts, history, events and food / local produce – and build a strong and diverse arts and cultural ‘layer’ that adds to the vibrancy of Gunnedah and the Shire.
- Developing Aboriginal Cultural Tourism.

Sitting below these projects are a second tier of projects that would diversify the product and experience base of the Shire and impact locally on visitation, including:

Shire-wide

- Developing a number of scenic routes and themed and activity trails – koala, bird, fishing, canoe, walking, cycling, mountain biking etc.

Gunnedah

- Continuing to develop Pensioners Hill as an attraction for Gunnedah - improving the presentation and visibility of the entrance, and enhancing the interpretation.
- Continuing to develop Porcupine Hill as a visitor activity node – improving the presentation; upgrading and signposting the walking tracks and providing track head signage; improving interpretation and ‘story telling with links to the key themes – koalas, Dorothea Mackellar country, Aboriginal heritage and culture; and upgrading Anzac Road for hill climb events across a range of sports.
- Upgrading the Bindea Track, positioning it as a signature walk for Gunnedah.
- Enhancing the Wallaby Trap area and improving linkages to the cycleway network and to Porcupine Hill.
- Explore options for mountain bike trails (eg Porcupine Hill for down-hill tracks).
- Developing the Wandobah Reserve area – for horse events, walking and cycling, koala interpretation and spotting etc.
- Completing the cycleway along the River corridor and the link to the Blackjack Creek / Wandobah Reserve corridor cycleway – linking koala habitat and koala spotting locations.
- Capitalising more effectively on the Rural Museum – increasing its visibility and ‘street’ appeal, identifying and capitalising on a ‘wow’ factor / point(s) of difference and improving its web presence.
- Further developing and/or promoting Gunnedah’s motorsports and horse sports venues and events.

Curlewis

- Development and promotion of the Curlewis Sport and Recreation Ground as a venue and staging area for a variety of events.
- Promotion of Curlewis Common as a bird ‘hotspot’.

Carroll

- Developing cotton gin tours.
- Improving and signposting access to the Namoi River.

Mullaley

- Developing and promoting Mullaley Park as a ‘Park of Yester-year’ – collecting and showcasing memorabilia that is disappearing from playgrounds and road corridors.
- Exploring options to capitalise on sunflowers through sculpture, public art and mass plantings.

Tambar Springs

- Further developing the Diprotodon ‘story’ and experience.
- Exploring the potential to develop a ‘springs’ experience.
- Exploring options to provide access to Tambar Mountain – walking trail and possibly a mountain bike trail.

- Promoting Trinkey SCA as a bird ‘hotspot’ and for a range of activities and event.
- Establishing a scenic drive through the Mt Nombi area.

Infrastructure, Facilities and Services

Infrastructure, facility and service priorities to support and sustain growth of the visitor economy include:

Accommodation

- Encourage and facilitate improvements to and expansion of the accommodation base in Gunnedah and the Villages.
- Provide an area for caravans and RV vehicles in Curlewis.
- Work with accommodation operators to encourage them to improve their websites and digital presence, introduce on-line bookings and more effectively market and promote Gunnedah Shire (the destination) on their websites.
- Encourage operators to continually improve customer service standards.

Access

- Support the sealing of Grain Valley Road and the Boggabri – Manilla Road as feeder roads into the Shire.
- Improve access to the Namoi River in Gunnedah, Carroll and at Red Bank, and signpost river access points.
- As part of the re-routing of the Oxley Highway, ensure good visual links with the new route and the Gunnedah Shopping centre – defining shopping centre access points through landscaping, public art and signage.
- Provide access to views – explore options for low key viewing areas on the Kamilaroi Highway at Black Mountain (Breeza), Oxley Highway north of Carroll, Tambar Springs and other strategic locations. Identify a viewing area for when Goran Lake has water.

Signage

- Landscape / enhance the presentation of the Gunnedah town gateway entry signs (brick signs with the koala icon) and revitalise / revamp the Dorothea Mackellar signs.
- As part of the development of the re-routing of the Oxley Highway, update signage (including signage to the VIC and Gunnedah Tourist Park), particularly along Bloomfield Street.
- Sign-post Boonalla Aboriginal Area from the Gunnedah town centre and from the Boggabri-Manilla Road, with the entrance signposted from Kelvin Road.
- Signpost Lake Keepit from the Kamilaroi Highway – Oxley Highway Roundabout to the east of Gunnedah. Explore options with Lake Keepit to erect bill board signage for the State Park on the Kamilaroi Highway approaches to Gunnedah and on the Oxley Highway
- Erect blue icon service signs on the approaches to the villages.
- Progressively replace fingerboard facility signs with international icons.
- Provide caravan and long-rig parking signs in Gunnedah, including directional signs and signs designating the parking spaces.
- Ensure that walking, cycling and other trails are effectively signposted – including where needed, track head information, interpretative information and track markers.

Venues

- Continue to improve the Town Hall, Smithurst Hall and the Civic Precinct.
- Continue to improve the Gunnedah Showground through the implementation of the Masterplan.
- Resolve tenure issues with the Curlewis Sport and Recreation Ground, continue to improve facilities, allow camping, and promote the venue for external hire.
- Explore options for the use of the Tambar Springs Sports Ground as a staging area for possible events in the Trinkey State Conservation Area.
- Support the development of a function centre at Lake Keepit, and continue to promote the Park as a venue for water sports, mountain biking and gliding.
- Continue to upgrade 'Mount Porcupine' and promote as a hill climb venue for a range of motor, bicycle and other events.
- Work with operators of the motor sports venues to promote their venues and attract external hirers.

Visitor Facilities

- Continue to develop Wolseley Park as a visitor precinct – including the development of the proposed regional playground.

Information & Promotional Collateral & Services

- Explore options for a purpose-built VIC and koala interpretation centre in the Wolseley Park Precinct – medium to long term.
- Erect information directories at strategic locations throughout the Shire – Lions Toilet Block in Wandobah Reserve, Red Bank Rest Area, Lake Keepit, Breeza, Mullaley and Tambar Springs, with these signposted using the blue and yellow 'i' sign.
- Continue to improve the Shire's web and digital presence including the on-going development and enhancement of the visitgunnedah website, effective use of social media, development of Apps and improving Gunnedah Shire content on third party websites and Apps.
- Expand the range of information and promotional material available to support marketing and promotion, including producing information on koalas and koala spotting.
- Encourage on-going training in web, digital and social network media for Gunnedah Tourism staff, attraction and event operators and event organisers.
- Continue to acquire quality images, video footage and display material on the Shire with this material up-dated regularly. Incorporate video clips into the VisitGunnedah website and other relevant sites.

Telecommunications

- Advocate for the continued improvement of internet and mobile network coverage.

Marketing & Promotion

- Continue to improve and expand Gunnedah's marketing and promotional collateral.
- Ensure that Gunnedah is represented at strategic caravan, camping and lifestyle shows.
- Continue to market and promote as part of the Kamilaroi Highway Promotions Group.
- Explore options for cooperative development and marketing of the Oxley Highway and Black Stump Way touring routes.
- Develop and implement an on-line communications and marketing strategy, harnessing social media and user generated content.

4. STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

Strategy 1: Develop the touring routes that feed into and through Gunnedah Shire and the strategic alliances needed to support these routes.

Visitation in Gunnedah Shire is largely ‘drive-based’, with the majority of leisure travellers visiting Gunnedah as part of longer journey. Being located between the Newell and New England Highways with no exposure to either, Gunnedah is dependent on travellers choosing to take lesser known routes – the Kamilaroi Highway, Oxley Highway, Black Stump Way, and, for a very small proportion of travellers, the local roads coming across from Manilla via Lake Keepit or the Kelvin Valley. For travellers, particularly those who have the flexibility to wander and explore, decisions are made on what they perceive the route and the towns and localities along the routes can offer. The decision points to take the routes that lead into Gunnedah are often made at Dubbo (Black Stump Way), Willow Tree, Narrabri, Coonabarabran, Manilla and Tamworth. Awareness of the routes and access to information will influence decisions.

Objective

To increase the number of touring travellers coming into Gunnedah Shire.

Goals

- To significantly raise the profile of the Kamilaroi Highway, Oxley Highway and Black Stump Way as touring routes.
- To have quality information available on these touring routes at key ‘decision points’.
- For Gunnedah to be perceived as a preferred destination and service centre on these routes – a place that travellers plan to stop and explore.
- To open up new ‘channels’ through which Gunnedah can gain exposure to and communicate with the touring traveller market.

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
1.1	Kamilaroi Highway – continue to develop and market the Kamilaroi Highway as a touring route: from the Great Divide to the Great Outback.	1.1.1	Gunnedah Shire to continue to be actively involved in the Kamilaroi Highway Promotions Group.	Tourism Unit	Kamilaroi Highway Marketing Group
		1.1.2	Working with the LGAs along the route, progressively develop and strengthen the attraction and activity base including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Aboriginal experiences (as per the Kamilaroi Highway Aboriginal Product Scoping Study). • Promote the Namoi – Darling River as a core theme of the drive experience with the ‘river trail’ having a number of ‘strands’ – camping sites, fishing sites, bush walking, mountain bike and 4WD trails, bird watching trails and ‘spots’ as well as locations for canoeing (canoe trails) and using small powered boats. There are a multitude of stories that can be 		

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
			told along the River – Aboriginal, exploration and early pastoral history, droughts, floods, harnessing the water for agriculture, restoration of riverine habitat etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cluster the products and experiences available within the Highway corridor to appeal to specific market segments (eg travelling with kids), bushwalkers, anglers, bird-watchers, 4WD, artists of the Kamilaroi etc. 		
		1.1.3	Ensure that the Gunnedah Shire information on the Kamilaroi Highway website is up-to-date and comprehensive.		
		1.1.4	Encourage all motels and pubs in the Shire to list on the Kamilaroi Highway website.		
1.2	Oxley Highway	1.2.1	Explore the potential of working with LGAs along the Oxley Highway to develop and promote the Highway as touring route, similar in concept to the Kamilaroi Highway – with the priority being to develop a Highway website and a route map.	Tourism Unit	LGAs along the Oxley Highway
1.3	Black Stump Way	1.3.1	Explore with Warrumbungle Shire and the Coolah Development Group, the possibility of re-activating the Black Stump Way - possibly with a simple website + brochure-map.	Tourism Unit	Warrumbungle Tourism Unit, Coolah Development Group



Strategy 2 Strengthen Gunnedah and the villages as both destinations and service nodes.

Localities play a very significant role in the visitor economy both as destinations and service centres, with presentation and first impressions playing a major role in the decision to stop in or visit a locality. From a visitor perspective, the key areas that make an impression are the gateway entry points, routes through the area, appearance and presentation of the town centre, and the parks and gardens. The presentation of businesses, particularly in the smaller centres, is also critical to encouraging travellers to stop, with businesses that present as clean and vibrant more likely to attract patronage than those that appear dated, tired and/or run down. Presentation is also important for the local community, building pride and confidence in the area. It is also an attribute for people who are looking to relocate to and/or invest in the area, with tourism being an important driver of the ‘tree change’ process.

Objective

To encourage highway and touring travellers to stop, explore and spend money in Gunnedah and the villages.

Goals

- For Gunnedah and the villages:
 - To create strong and favourable first impressions as well as memorable, lasting impressions, with travellers stopping to take photographs and videos and for these to be posted on travel and social media sites.
 - To provide the infrastructure, facilities and services that visitors are seeking – with the Shire becoming a preferred place to stop.
- For local businesses to provide quality customer service – friendly, country hospitality – building repeat visitation and word-of-mouth / digital referrals.

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
Gunnedah – Positioning and promotion Gunnedah as a lifestyle centre – a great place to catch up with family and friends, an interesting and vibrant place to stop and explore.					
2.1	Continue to improve the presentation of the gateway arrival points and entry corridors.	2.1.1	Enhance the visual impact of the gateway entry signs – through landscaping, flags etc.	Council	
		2.1.2	Remove / replace tired and/or dated signs in the entry corridors, advertising signs.	Council	Sign owners, RMS
		2.1.3	Continue with corridor tree planting.	Council	Land Care
		2.1.4	Beautify Bloomfield Street and strengthen the links through landscaping and/or signage between Bloomfield Street and the shopping centre.	Council	RMS
2.2	Continue to improve the presentation of the Gunnedah shopping centre – introduce more colour and movement.	2.2.1	Encourage property owners to continue to improve and maintain their buildings.	Council	Chamber / Business Operators
		2.2.2	Encourage / inspire business owners to be creative with their window displays and merchandise mix.	Chamber	Business Operators

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
		2.2.3	Encourage on-street dining and trading.	Council	Chamber / Business Operators
		2.2.4	Explore options for 'attracting attention' and activating 'dead spots', blank walls and laneways – through public art, landscaping, signage.	Council	Chamber / Business Operators
		2.2.5	Use banners and flags to advertise events and activities.	Council	Event Organisers
2.3	Provide photo opportunity	2.3.1	Explore options for a koala sculpture(s) outside the VIC or in another visible, strategic location(s)	Tourism Unit	Two Rivers Arts
2.4	Update / improve signage	2.4.1	Undertake a signage audit, taking into consideration the re-routing of the Oxley Highway and the VIC's new location. Factors to be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage to the VIC • Facility signage – progressively changing to international icons • Directional signage to Boonalla Aboriginal Area and Lake Keepit from Gunnedah • Directional signage to local attractions – from the VIC • Signage to accommodation (particularly the tourist park) and to service stations. • Route and trail track heads and route markers. 	Tourism Unit / Council	RMS
2.5	Ensure that the town is caravan and long rig friendly	2.5.1	Provide and signpost dedicated caravan / long rig parking close to the VIC and signpost from the main traffic routes.	Council	RMS
		2.5.2	Ensure that dump points are signposted.	Council	
2.6	Continue to improve and expand the attraction base of Gunnedah to provide a diversity of things for visitors to see and do.	2.6.1	Continue to develop the riverside precinct, and establish a strong visual and physical link between this precinct and Wolseley Park – the VIC. (see Action 3.4)	Council	
		2.6.2	Strengthen and diversify the koala experience (see Action 3.2)	Tourism Unit / Council	
		2.6.3	Identify, signpost and interpret koala habitat areas and movement 'paths' around Gunnedah.	Council	Project Koala
		2.6.4	Continue to develop Wolseley Park as an activity node for both residents and visitors – including development of the proposed regional playground.	Council	
		2.6.5	Implement cycleway plan – with the priorities, being the river corridor and the connection to Blackjack Creek – Wandobah Reserve.	Council	
		2.6.6	Continue to improve local attractions (see Actions 3.7 - 3.11) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pensioners Hill • Porcupine Hill Reserve / (Mount Porcupine Hill Climb) • Wallaby Trap • Bindea Track • Wandobah Reserve • Rural Museum 	Council	Land Management and Community Groups, Red Chief Land Council, Rural Museum
2.7	Encourage business operators and their staff to excel in customer service.	2.7.1	Identify and address customer service issues.	Chamber	Tourism Unit
		2.7.2	PR campaign locally to start the conversation, possibly introducing a 'competition' to encourage quality service.	Chamber	Tourism Unit
The Villages – to encourage travellers to stop, explore and spend in the villages.					

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners	
2.8	Promote the facilities and services available in the villages	2.8.1	Erect blue and white facility (icon) signs on the approaches to the villages.	Council	RMS	
2.9	Encourage General Store / PO operators to improve the visibility and street appeal of their business	2.9.1	Work with General Store operators – providing examples of how to increase visibility, catch the traveller’s attention and increase street appeal.	Tourism Unit	Store Managers	
		2.9.2	Ensure that there are no regulatory barriers to creative approaches.	Council		
2.10	Breeza – position Breeza as the southern gateway to the Shire.	2.10.1	Explore options for erecting an eye-catching, vibrant, ‘Welcome to Gunnedah Shire’ sign in the Breeza district			
		2.10.2	Provide an information directory in the Park that orientates visitors and introduces the key themes and products. Ensure that the directory is signposted using the blue and yellow ‘i’ icon on advanced warning and directional signs.	Council	RMS	
		2.10.3	Determine the future of the Ben Hall Wall – refurbished, replaced or removed. If the Wall is to be retained, use the back of the Wall for ‘story telling’ and/or featuring points of interest – and update signage.	Council	Breeza Community	
		2.10.4	Explore possibility of developing a viewing area at Black Mountain.	Council / RMS		
		2.10.5	If the proposed coal mines are visible from Breeza, explore the possibility of establishing a viewing area with interpretation, or information on mining in Breeza Park.	Council	Breeza Community, Shenua / BHP	
2.11	Curlewis – capitalise more effectively on the assets available in Curlewis, with the village becoming a ‘point of interest’ and service provider on the Kamilaroi Highway.	2.11.1	Continue to improve the Sport and Recreation Ground as a staging area and venue for events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolve land tenure issues • Remove disused buildings and infrastructure and clean-up area. • Progressively upgrade facilities. • Explore options for providing a primitive camp ground (eg Boggabri Showground) • Promote the Ground as a venue for horse and other events. 	Council	Curlewis Community / Camp Draft Association	
			2.11.2	Explore the possibility of creating a ‘point of interest’ in Curlewis by restoring the heritage signs on the buildings in Railway and Goran Streets – signs of yester year.	Curlewis Community	Tourism Unit Two Rivers Arts
			2.11.3	Position and promote the Curlewis Common as a bird ‘hot spot’ along the Kamilaroi Highway.	Tourism Unit	Kamilaroi Highway Promotions Group
			2.11.4	Explore the possibility of promoting the Curlewis – Tambar Springs Road as a bird route, linking the Curlewis Common, Goran Lake and the Trinkey SCA.	Tourism Unit	Kamilaroi Highway Promotions Group
			2.11.5	Include Curlewis as part of the koala ‘story’ and ‘experience’ offered by Gunnedah Shire.	Tourism Unit	Curlewis Community
			2.11.6	Encourage additional visitor accommodation in Curlewis.	Council	
			2.11.7	Explore options for increasing the appeal and use of the reserve in Goran Street – between Railway and Pike Streets – for public art, picnic facilities and possibly primitive camping for caravans and RV vehicles (close to the Hotel and shop) – if camping is not possible at the Showground.	Tourism Unit / Council	Curlewis Community
			2.11.8	Develop / promote a scenic loop (for motorists and cyclists) from Gunnedah to Curlewis, incorporating lunch in the village - Commercial Hotel and General Store	Tourism Unit	Commercial Hotel / General Store operators

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
2.12	Carroll	2.12.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve access to the Namoi River in Carrol and signpost river access points. Explore potential of a canoe trail from Carroll to Gunnedah. 	Council	Carroll Community
		2.12.2	Encourage and promote farm gate stalls	Council	Carroll Community
		2.12.3	Explore opportunities for tours of the Carroll Cotton Gin	Tourism Unit	Cotton Gin Operator
2.13	Mullaley – position Mullaley as the western gateway to the Shire	2.13.1	Erect eye-catching ‘Welcome to Gunnedah Shire’ signs on the western edge of Mullaley	Council	
		2.13.2	Provide information directories at Mullaley Park and the PO Hotel Caravan Park, and ensure that the directory in the Park is well signposted using the blue and yellow ‘i’ icon	Council	PO Hotel Operator
		2.13.3	Explore options for developing Mullaley Park as a ‘Park of Yester Year’ with more ‘old fashioned’ playground equipment, a milestone collection, and other heritage items that are disappearing from Australian Road corridors	Council / Tourism Unit	Mullaley Community
		2.13.4	Explore options for capitalising on the sunflower ‘branding’ – through public art and/or strategic plantings	Mullaley Community	Council Two Rivers Arts
		2.13.5	Explore options to promote Mullaley as the ‘Home of Lively Linseed’	Tourism Unit	Lively Linseed
2.14	Tambar Springs – diprotodon country – the south western gateway to the Shire.	2.14.1	Erect eye-catching ‘Welcome to Gunnedah Shire’ signs on the southern edge of Tambar Springs.	Council	
		2.14.2	Provide an information directory near Memorial Park (or other strategic location), with this well signposted using the blue and yellow ‘i’ icon.	Council	Tambar Springs Community
		2.14.3	Formalise and signpost viewing areas where travellers can take in the views of the Plains.	Council	Tambar Springs Community, RMS
		2.14.4	Continue to develop the Diprotodon experience – providing information on the dig and the skeleton	Tambar Springs Community	Australian Museum
		2.14.5	Develop a feature / walk around the spring in the TSR.	Tambar Springs Community	Tourism Unit
		2.14.6	Encourage the painting / refurbishment of the weatherboard cottages.	Tambar Springs Community	
		2.14.7	Explore options for village-wide coordinated feature planting to bring more colour into the village and create a point of interest.	Tambar Springs Community	
		2.14.8	Explore opportunities to provide a walking track to the top of Tambar Mountain.	Tambar Springs Community	Council
		2.14.9	Develop and promote a scenic drive through the Mount Nombi area	Council	
		2.14.10	Develop and promote Trinkey SCA as an attraction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote as a bird ‘hot spot’ and a wildflower viewing area. Promote the Curlewis-Tambar Springs road as a bird route – capitalise on Goran Lake when it has water. Improve signage at the SCA entry points. Provide maps / information on the Forest – available from local businesses Identify opportunities to use the SCA for events and activities, with the Tambar Springs Sports Ground potentially used for event staging. 	Tourism Unit	NPWS

Strategy 3: Upgrade and expand the attraction and activity base of Gunnedah Shire.

The attraction and activity base of Gunnedah Shire forms the backbone of the tourism industry. Attractions and activities have a major influence on trip behaviour, providing a reason to visit the area and/or encouraging visitors to stay longer. Over the next 5 years, the focus for Gunnedah Shire will be on:

- Strengthening and diversifying the koala experience – providing a ‘learning’ experience (habitat, impact of climate change etc), a ‘doing’ experience (koala spotting) and a ‘helping’ experience – providing options (eg Project Koala) for visitors to assist.
- Developing the Namoi River corridor through Gunnedah as a visitor activity node – for walking, cycling, picnicking, canoeing, camping, koala interpretation and spotting, bird watching, fishing etc – with a strong physical and visual link to the VIC and the town centre.
- Working with the Dorothea Mackellar theme in the broadest context – to link landscapes, arts, history, events and food / local produce – and build a strong and diverse arts and cultural ‘layer’ that adds to the vibrancy of Gunnedah and the Shire.
- Developing Aboriginal Cultural Tourism.

Objectives

- To reinforce Gunnedah Shire’s positioning as the ‘Koala Capital of the World’.
- To increase the appeal and profile of Gunnedah Shire – creating a desire and intention to visit.
- To provide more activities and experiences – to encourage travellers to stay longer in the Shire.
- To use the Shire’s attractions, assets and facilities to build special interest and activity based markets.

Goals

- Ongoing protection and preservation of the Shire’s environmental, heritage and cultural assets and identity, to ensure long term sustainability of the tourism industry.
- A higher profile and awareness of the attraction and activity base of Gunnedah Shire within the marketplace.
- An expanded range of high profile ‘signature’ or ‘must do’ attractions and activities - particularly those targeted to special interest and activity-based market segments.
- A strong ‘second tier’ of attractions, (sitting below the signature attractions – to encourage travellers to spend more time within the Shire.
- Growth in destination-based visitation – visitors coming into the Shire to pursue an interest or undertake an activity.
- Increased investment by State Government Agencies into the assets that they own and/or manage within Gunnedah Shire and surrounding region.

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
Protect key assets – landscapes, landforms, heritage and cultural					
3.1	Protect and preserve key assets – significant landscapes and landforms and heritage and cultural sites.	3.1.1	Ensure that the assets that are part of the attraction base of the Shire and underpin the tourism industry, are recognised and protected in local and regional strategies and environmental plans and taken into consideration in planning assessments (eg Environmental Impact Statements)	Council	Planning Authorities.

Actions	Key Tasks	Coordinator	Partners
Enhance and Strengthen the Shire's Key Attractions / Unique Selling Points			
3.2	<p>'Koala Capital of the World' – Expand and strengthen the koala experience.</p>	Tourism Unit / Council	Project Koala North West Local Land Services (NWLLS) Waterways Wildlife Park Gunnedah and Curlewis Communities
	<p>3.2.1 Koalas are a strong point of difference for Gunnedah, with the sighting of a koala being a 'wow' experience for all visitors. Rather than move away from promoting koalas, Gunnedah needs to re-invent the experience, to move from just 'viewing' to 'learning' and 'helping'. This is in-line with market trends where visitors are increasing looking for 'learning' and 'immersion activities and experiences.</p> <p>The experience needs to be expanded to tell the 'story' of the impact of climate change and severe weather events on the koala habitat and population. There is considerable interest in climate change and the impact on the koalas is a visible example – Climate changes is real, it is happening now and it is threatening a much-loved Australian icon. Linking this with Project Koala and other initiatives will provide visitors with tangible 'actions' that they can undertake to help.</p>		
	<p>3.2.2 Develop the koala interpretative themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koalas – their characteristics, behaviour, food etc – utilising the information being developed by North West Local Land Services • How to spot a koala in the wild – identifying the koala habitat areas and movement corridors in Gunnedah, plus information on where and what to look for. • The impact of climate change / severe weather events on koalas – utilising the research that has been undertaken and the various television stories that have been produced (eg ABC Catalyst). • Initiatives to 'save the Koala' – Project Koala and other initiatives, and how visitors can help 		
	<p>3.2.3 Develop an interpretative display in the VIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital screen / touch screen to provide information – on each of the themes • Print information – on koalas, habitat, where and how to spot • Provide information on Project Koala • Call to action – how visitors can help – eg donate, merchandise, buy a tree, buy a koala / leaf etc and hang it on a public art structure (eg the 'Love Lock' type example) 		
	<p>3.2.4 Develop an App on how to spot koalas. Include audio on koala sounds.</p>		
	<p>3.2.5 Continue to encourage residents to notify the VIC of koala sightings.</p>		
	<p>3.2.6 Explore opportunities for setting up a koala website – similar in concept to the NPWS 'wild about whales' website – possibly in conjunction with Port Macquarie and Warrumbungles (Oxley Highway corridor)</p>		
	<p>3.2.7 Develop the 'koala spotting' experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify accessible koala habitat / koala corridor areas – focusing on areas that have a number of attributes that appeal to visitors (ie strengthen the overall appeal of existing attractions – Namoi River precinct, Blackjack Creek – Wandobah Reserve, Porcupine Hill Reserve, Curlewis. 		

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify locations where koalas are frequently sighted at night (a night time activity for guests). Endeavour to link habitat areas with walking and cycling trails – showcase habitat regeneration / land care projects. Develop and implement signage strategy to identify koala habitat areas. Provide interpretative signage at track heads / key localities. 		
		3.2.8	Explore options for a public art project(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Koala sculpture(s) outside the VIC and/or in other strategic location. Incorporating a ‘koala’ theme into the proposed Wolseley Park Playground – a point of difference / photo opportunity. Sculptures as part of the gateway arrival points in Gunnedah. 		
		3.2.9	Include the Waterways Wildlife Park as part of the viewing and learning experience.		
		3.2.10	Assess the feasibility of establishing a standalone VIC – Koala Interpretative Centre in the Wolseley Park Precinct (medium – long term).		
		3.2.11	Explore the possibility of conducting an annual ‘Koala Count’ of ‘Habitat / Tree Planting Day’ as a community event		
3.3	Dorothea Mackellar – Celebrating the poetry, sentiment and the landscapes, colours and passions of ‘My Country’.	3.3.1	Continue to develop and promote the Dorothea Mackellar precinct as an attraction and activity node in Gunnedah – promoting the statue, MAAS walk and the Isherwood collection, with this linked to the Poetry Drive.	Tourism Unit / Council	Dorothea McKellar Society (DMS)
		3.3.2	Promote the Mackellar collection in the Water Tower Museum and sculpture at Pensioner’s Hill.	Tourism Unit	DMS Water Tower Museum
		3.3.3	Explore the possibility of a ‘My Country’ themed art event – celebrating the landscapes and colours of the Shire – through painting, photography, short films, quilting etc,	Tourism Unit / Council	DMS Two Rivers Arts
		3.3.4	Identify viewing areas at strategic locations, where travellers can stop, appreciate and photograph the country side.	Council	RMS
		3.3.5	Explore options for travellers to take photos of the landscaped / beauty of Gunnedah Shire and post them to the Visit Gunnedah website.	Tourism Unit	
		3.3.6	Explore the potential to weave Mackellar’s views on war, her poetry and the adoption of the poetry as part of national pride, with the various war memorials throughout the Shire.	Tourism Unit / Council	DMS
3.4	Namoi River Precinct – develop the river precinct as an attraction and activity node for Gunnedah.	3.4.1	Continue to upgrade the river foreshore precinct, extending the shared walking and cycling pathway along the river foreshore and to link with other cycleways and habitat areas.	Council	
		3.4.2	Develop a strong physical and visual link between the River corridor and Wolseley Park / VIC.	Council	
		3.4.3	Formulate an interpretative and public art strategy for the River corridor – weaving together the significance of the river corridor as koala habitat, the lifeblood of Aboriginal life pre white settlement, the history of Gunnedah, flooding history and the Riverine environment.	Council	NWLLS Red Chief Local Aboriginal Land Council (RCLALC) and Aboriginal community

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
					Two Rivers Arts
		3.4.4	Identify river access points – in Gunnedah, Carroll, and from the Oxley and Kamilaroi Highways and sign-post these points.	Council	RMS
		3.4.5	Develop bird, fishing and canoe trails – as part of the developing product locally and as part of the Kamilaroi Highway product development.	Tourism Unit	Kamilaroi Highway Marketing Group
		3.4.6	Prepare a Master Plan / Plan of Management for Cushan’s Reserve, recognising the potential of this area for a range of passive recreational opportunities, and potentially for camping / caravanning.	Council	
		3.4.7	Improve access to the River at the Redbank Rest Area – including formalising and stabilising the track and weed and litter removal.	Council	NWLLS Land Care
3.5	Aboriginal Heritage and Culture	3.5.1	<p>Gunnedah has a rich Aboriginal heritage and a range of historic and cultural assets and ‘stories. There is the potential to bring these assets together, in an coordinated manner to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an insight into the history and culture of the Gunn-e-daar people and the Kamilaroi Nation – past and present – there are a multitude of locations around Gunnedah where different parts of the ‘story’ can be told eg Cumbo Gunnerah Gallery, the summer camp at Mullabah Lagoon, Boonalla and other caves for winter, the use of the wallaby trap for hunting etc. • Explore the landforms and landscapes of the Gunnedah Region, from an Aboriginal perspective – their names, significance, and the role they played – a theme strand of ‘My Country. • Celebrate contemporary Aboriginal Artists and art programs and activities (eg mourning caps, possum cloak). 	Aboriginal Community Red Chief LALC & other Groups	Council / Tourism Unit NPWS
		3.5.2	<p>Position and promote the Boonalla Aboriginal Area as a must see attraction for Gunnedah and the surrounding Region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise a professional photo shoot of the area – focusing on the cave, views from the ridge, visitor facilities, bush walking, family-based mountain biking along the fire trails, wildlife and birds. • Host a famil to the area for Tourism Managers / VIC staff from the surrounding region. • Feature as an iconic attraction in the Kamilaroi Highway promotion. • Ensure that information on the area is available from VICs in the surrounding region and at Lake Keepit. • Promote the area for Aboriginal heritage, the landforms (cave and views), picnicking, bushwalking, recreational mountain-biking, bird watching and wildflower viewing. • Effectively signpost the Area from Gunnedah and the Boggabri-Manilla Road 	Tourism Unit / Council	NPWS Co-Management Group
3.6	Lake Keepit – a great destination year-round	3.6.1	Continue to improve the facilities and expand the range of activities available at Lake Keepit, including redeveloping the café / kiosk, establishing a function centre and developing mountain-bike trails.	State Parks	

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
		3.6.2	Establish good communication links between the Tourism Unit and the Park Manager	Tourism Unit	Lake Keepit (LK) Park Manager
		3.6.3	Raise the profile of Lake Keepit on the Visit Gunnedah website – providing it with its own page and updating the web-link for the Park (Inland Waters Holiday Parks site)	Tourism Unit	LK Park Manager
		3.6.4	Sign post Lake Keepit from the Kamilaroi- Oxley Highway roundabout in Gunnedah and include on the RMS distance signs along the Oxley Highway.	Council / RMS	State Parks
		3.6.5	In conjunction with Tamworth Regional Council, provide an information directory at the Lake promoting attractions and activities in the surrounding region. Ensure that the Gunnedah Visitors Guide is available at the Park.	Tourism Unit	Tamworth Tourism Unit State Parks
		3.6.6	List events held at lake Keepit on the VisitGunnedah website and promote locally. Also list Gunnedah events on the Inland Waters State Park Site – for Lake Keepit.	Tourism Unit	LK Park Manager / State Parks
		3.6.7	Work with the Park Managers to promote the Lake and Park as a venue for a range of activities and events (including horse activities) and identify and target footloose events suitable for the Park.	Tourism Unit	LK Park Manager
		3.6.8	List and promote the ‘Try Gliding’ program on the Visit Gunnedah website.	Tourism Unit	LK Soaring Club
		3.6.9	Promote the Park to visitors from the city and international visitors as a place to see kangaroos ‘in the wild’.	Tourism Unit	State Parks
Continue to improve and strengthen the existing attraction base in Gunnedah (for the villages, see the actions included in Strategy 2).					
3.7	Pensioner’s Hill	3.7.1	Improve the visibility and attractiveness of the entrance to Pensioner’s Hill: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large eye-catching sign on the gate • Formalise the parking • Relocate / screen the garbage tins • Possibly provide a sculpture in the parking area or right at the entrance • Landscape the entry area to soften the brick structures and enhance ‘first impressions, • Utilise the sides of the brick building for public art / interpretation. 	Council	
		3.7.2	Improve interpretative signage, particularly at the entrance, and remove / replace out of date signage.	Council	
		3.7.3	Improve the Aboriginal totem pole area with interpretation and a walking track to enable the poles to be viewed.	Council	Aboriginal Community
		3.7.4	Manage the tree planting to ensure that the view from the Hill will not be obscured when the trees mature.	Council / Land Care.	
		3.7.5	Identify the location for a loop walking track through the area being revegetated (future added activity in the reserve).	Council / Land Care.	
		3.7.6	Establish a small viewing area at the end of Lloyd Road, possibly with a seat to watch the sunsets. Ensure that the view is not built out.	Council	
3.8	Porcupine Hill	3.8.1	Clean-up and progressively improve the presentation of the Porcupine Hill Lookout area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove litter and weeds • Replace damaged signs • Improve interpretation – introducing / consolidating the key themes 	Council	Land Care

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trim / remove trees to retain views 		
		3.8.2	Develop and promote Porcupine Hill for bushwalking. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade the Bindea Track and promote as a 'signature' walk for Gunnedah. Provide track head signage in key locations (including at the lookout) and ensure that the track is well marked. Improve the other walking tracks on the Reserve - Explore options for connecting / rationalising the network of tracks on the reserve – formalising / naming them – eg Koala walk through the koala habit area, the Wallaby Trap walk, wildflower walk etc. 	Council	
		3.8.3	Continue to develop and promote ' Mount Porcupine ' as a 'hill climb' suitable for a range of sports – including car and motor cycle sports, drifters, cycling, running events. Organise community fun runs / walks to promote the venue.	Council	Gunnedah Motor Sports Enthusiasts (GMSE)
		3.8.9	Explore options for developing mountain bike trails – Cross Country and Down Hill within the Reserve.	Council	MTB Clubs
3.9	Wallaby Trap	3.9.1	Improve the experience at the Wallaby Trap area as part of the development of Aboriginal heritage and cultural experiences.	Red Chief LALC	
3.10	Wandobah Reserve Blackjack Creek corridor	3.10.1	Position the Lions Club Rest area as a service node on the cycleway network around Gunnedah, linking the rest area to the Blackjack Creek cycleway with this connecting to the riverside precinct. Also extend the shared pathway to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Rural Museum – Brickworks (information on the production process and cracking of the kilns), and the solar system model, Pensioner's Hill (park and explore – walk or ride). 	Council	
		3.10.2	Signpost the area as part of the koala habitat.	Council	
		3.10.3	Provide an information directory at the Rest Area – including local and regional information, top 10 things to do in Gunnedah, cycle way map and, koala habitat map and interpretation.	Tourism Unit / Council	
		3.10.4	Undertake 'feature' planting in the Reserve (eg flowering shrubs, koala trees, bird trees) with the view to these plantings becoming an attraction as they mature and/or part of the 'koala' story – habitat regeneration. Plan for a walking / interpretative trail through this area.	Council	Land Care
		3.10.5	Assess the feasibility of developing a cross country eventing course (horses) as per the Showground Plan of Management.	Council	Equestrian Groups
3.11	Rural Museum	3.11.1	Increase the visibility and enhance the external presentation of the Museum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repaint / replace the advanced warning signs. Erect a large directional tourist sign on the Highway at the entry to the Museum (Western side of the Oxley Highway pointing into the entrance). Encourage the Museum to improve its external presentation – providing a 'wow' factor that attracts interest and creates a sense of anticipation – 'this is worth looking at'. 	Rural Museum	Council, RMS
		3.11.2	Undertake a competitive assessment of local history / rural museums in country NSW and identify the Rural Museum's competitive strengths – what makes it unique or different, what does it have that is 'rare' or 'usual', what is the compelling reason for travellers to stop and	Rural Museum,	Tourism Unit

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
			visit. Once the unique selling points are identified, these need to be featured prominently in the marketing and promotion of the Museum.		
		3.11.3	Restructure the Gunnedah Museum’s website, giving equal coverage to both the Water Tower and Rural Museums, with both Museums and their opening hours featured in the header. It is also important to feature the collections and provide images of both Museums. If this is not possible, develop a separate website for the Rural Museum.	Museums	
Develop and promote new products and experiences					
3.12	Industry Tours	3.12.1	Explore options for industry and/or coach tours, and/or a Gunnedah on Display, Open Day, providing access to businesses and industries that are not accessible to the public: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Namoi Brickworks • Grain Mills - Namoi Flour Mills and the Whole Grain Milling Company • Feed Mills – Paradise Farms and Prydes Easifeed • Gunnedah Leather Processors • Namoi Gold – olive grove, press and bottling plant • Carroll Cotton Gin • Coal Mine and Coal Washery • Agricultural properties – broadacre farms, irrigated farms, orchard etc 	Tourism Unit	Business operators
		3.12.2	Promote the Gunnedah Sale Yard sales to visitors – many travellers will never have experienced a sale.	Tourism Unit	
3.13	Gunnedah Food & Produce	3.13.1	Provide information on the food production in the Gunnedah Basin – short video on display in the VIC as well information on the crops of the Liverpool Plains – in print and App format.	Tourism Unit	Liverpool Plains Tourism Unit
		3.13.2	Promote Gunnedah produce and local – Plains of Plenty, Namoi Meats (sausages) and Doyle Meats (Gunnedah Pork), farm gate outlets at Carroll (seasonal) and other businesses that sell / feature local produce.	Tourism Unit	Provedores
		3.13.3	Explore opportunities to gain exposure in the regional press for the cafes and other eateries in Gunnedah.	Tourism Unit	Business owners
		3.13.4	Encourage any local hotels that offer quality / innovative dining to enter the ‘Good Food Pub guide – Schooner Awards’. Include pub dining / beer gardens as part of Gunnedah’s country lifestyle.	Tourism Unit	Hoteliers
		3.13.5	Encourage Gunnedah producers to participate in food and wine development activities and marketing and promotion at the regional and State level.	Tourism Unit	Local producers
		3.13.6	Continue to grow Porchetta and position and promote as a signature food event for the NE-NW Region.	Porchetta Committee	Tourism Unit
		3.13.7	Explore options for providing a ‘food’ experience in October (or potentially move the date of Porchetta) to feature in the SMH Good Food Month – Regional events	Tourism Unit	Event organisers
3.14	Scenic Drives	3.14.1	Develop a number of scenic drives / touring itineraries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gunnedah – Curlewis circuit • Gunnedah – Boonalla – Boggabri – Gunnedah circuit incorporating Boonalla Aboriginal Area, Dripping Rock, Barbers Lagoon and Gins Leap, 	Tourism Unit / Council	

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake Keepit to Gunnedah via Kelvin and return via Orange Grove Road or Oxley Highway. • Mt Nombi Circuit 		
3.15	Adventure & Outdoor Activities - 'Package' and promote the outdoors and adventure based products and events in the Shire	3.15.1	Cycling – identify and promote opportunities for recreational and road cycling. For road cycling, identify training 'loops' (10, 30, 50, 100, 200km) radiating from Gunnedah. (see Victorian High Country as an example. Include the BMX track at Lake Keepit as a recreational / family activity.	Tourism Unit Council	Cycling Clubs / enthusiasts LK Park Manager
		3.15.2	Mountain biking – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of mountain bike trails at Lake Keepit. • Explore options for the development of down hill and cross country trails in Porcupine Hill Reserve and/or other localities around Gunnedah. • Promote Boonalla Aboriginal Area and Trinkey SCA as off-road places to ride for recreational / family activities. • Explore the possibility of establishing a riverside track eg from Gunnedah through to Blue Vale Road or Gulligal Lagoon. 	Tourism Unit Council	MTB Club LK Park Manager NPWS
		3.15.3	Fishing - Produce a fishing map for Gunnedah Shire, possibly as part of a fishing map for the Kamilaroi Highway. Feature Lake Keepit as well as access points, areas suitable for using fishing canoes, and camping areas along the Namoi River.	Tourism Unit	Fishing Club NWLLS LK Park Manager
		3.15.4	Walking – Bushwalking - Promote walking / bushwalking and wildflower viewing in the Shire – Must do walks – Bindea Track / Porcupine Hill Reserve, Boonalla Aboriginal Area. Develop additional walking experiences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riverside Walk / Koala habitat walks • Lake Keepit State Park • Trinkey SCA • Tambar Mountain 	Tourism Unit / Council	NWLLS LK Park Manager NPWS Land Care
		3.15.5	Canoeing - Produce a canoe map for Gunnedah Shire, possibly as part of canoe trails for the Kamilaroi Highway.	Tourism Unit	NWLLS LK Park Manager Kamilaroi Group
		3.15.6	Water Sports – Ensure that Lake Keepit is listed on popular boating and water sports websites, and explore opportunities to harness user generated content, blogs etc to raise the profile of the area.	Tourism Unit	LK Park Manager
		3.15.7	Bird Watching - Compile bird species lists and develop and promote bird 'hot spots; and bird trails - including the Curlew Common, Goran Lake (ephemeral), Trinkey SCA, Namoi River corridor	Tourism Unit	Bird Watching groups & enthusiasts
		3.15.8	Air Sports – promote the 'Try Gliding' program offered by the Lake Keepit Soaring Club, and the 'learn to glide / fly' programs offered by the Soaring Club and the Gunnedah Aero Club respectively.	Tourism Unit	Gunnedah Aero Club, LK Soaring Club
		3.15.9	Horse Sports	Tourism Unit	Horse Groups Venue Managers

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote areas in the Shire suitable for staging and conducting social, horse and pony club rides and carriage/driving activities – including Lake Keepit, Curlewis, Trinkey SCA – Tambar Springs. Assess the feasibility of developing additional equestrian sports facilities in Gunnedah – event course and under-cover dressage arena and improving the stables at the Gunnedah Showground (as per the Plan of Management). Work with horse groups within the Shire to grow their events, increasing participant and spectator numbers. Identify and target footloose equestrian events that could be held in Gunnedah Shire. 		
		3.15.10	<p>Motor Sports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local car and motor cycle clubs to grow their events, increasing participant and spectator numbers. Continue to upgrade motor sports venues – Mount Porcupine, Airport Identify opportunities for other motor sports to be conducted in the Shire – eg rally sprint. Identify and target footloose motor sports events and activities that could be hosted in Gunnedah. Market and promote the motor sports venues to car and motorcycle clubs (external hire) 	Council Tourism Unit	GMSE Gunnedah Motor Cycle Club Speedway Go Karting Motor Sports enthusiasts
3.16	Arts Trail, Programs and Activities	3.16.1	Link the galleries, Pensioners Hill and the various sculptures around town into an 'arts trail'.	Tourism Unit	Two Rivers Arts
		3.16.2	Explore options (eg PR and data base marketing) for raising the profile of art exhibitions and activities held in Gunnedah.	Tourism Unit	Two Rivers Arts North West Arts
		3.16.3	Explore options for packaging and promoting the arts workshops regionally and potentially into the Hunter and Central Coast areas.	Tourism Unit	Workshop organisers



Strategy 4: Build the events sector – targeting business and sporting events.

Events form part of the attraction and activity base of the Shire and a significant generator of weekend visitation. Locally they are also part of the cultural and social fabric of the area, providing an opportunity to bring visitors and residents together, ‘tell the stories’, and create memorable experiences. For visitors, events provide a reason to visit – they are essentially a ‘call to action’ that generates publicity and focuses attention on the area. Events can be a key driver in the economic, social and cultural development of an area and play a role in the ‘tree change’ process.

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
Provide a framework that facilitates and supports events.					
4.1	Formulate an events policy	4.1.1	Develop an events policy that sets the framework for Council sponsorship and support of events and sets parameters for the allocation of limited funds and resources.	Council	
4.2	Provide a positive regulatory environment	4.2.1	Ensure that the provisions of the Gunnedah Shire LEP, Plans of Management and other planning instruments allow for events, particularly in recreational reserves, and permit temporary structures and event-related facilities and services.	Council	
4.3	Policies & Procedures	4.3.1	If not in place, develop policies and procedures relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When is a DA required? - and the process involved. • When are traffic management / parking plans required? • Road closures – procedures • Temporary event signage – pre event advertising and during the event. • Temporary event parking. • Hire terms and conditions for Council venues and facilities. 	Council	
4.4	Develop a venue data base and guide	4.4.1	Build on the work already undertaken in developing the Conference Directory to develop a comprehensive venue data base and guide. This should include all venues, facilities and areas which could be hired / used for events, including the AgQuip Site, indoor spaces, sports grounds and sporting facilities, showgrounds, race tracks, polo fields, camp draft arenas, motor sports venues, waterbodies, airport and parks and reserves. Information needs to be collated on the type of activities that the venue is suitable for, facilities available, capacity, power and water supply, lighting, fencing – security, any specific rules / regulations, contact details etc.	Tourism Unit	Venue operators
4.5	Internal coordination	4.5.1	Ensure that all event enquiries are directed to a nominated Council Officer with this position supported by an internal communications protocol to ‘streamline’ the approval process.	Council	
4.6	Events Calendar	4.6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to maintain a comprehensive events calendar. • Promote the calendar to the community – encouraging event organisers and sporting groups to list their event on the calendar, and for people thinking about organising an event – to check the calendar and talk to the VIC before finalising dates. • Provide a link to the calendar from Council’s website and include a ‘what’s on this week’ on the home page of Council’s website. • Encourage accommodation operators to include a link to the events website from their property website and to promote events on their home page. 	Tourism Unit	Accommodation and attraction operators

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
Increase the number of signature events for the Shire					
4.7	Build local events into regional events	4.7.1	Assess whether local events have the potential to be 'grown' into signature events for the Shire and if so, work with the organisers to formulate and implement a growth strategy / business plan	Tourism Unit	Event organisers
Build the Business Events Sector – targeting Association Conferences up to 300 delegates and Regional Meetings.					
4.8	Ensure that venues in Gunnedah are competitive	4.8.1	Upgrade the Town Hall and Civic Precinct to provide conference and meeting facilities that are competitive with other similar size centres in Regional NSW.	Council	
4.9	Continue to improve the Conference and Wedding Guides	4.9.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that capacity information is specified for all venues. • Provide floorplans and room dimensions of the main venues. • Provide links to venue websites and encourage all venue operators to include images of the venue on their website. 	Tourism Unit	Venue and business operators
4.10	Generate Business Leads	4.10.1	<p>Identify business events that Gunnedah could potentially bid for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a Business Event development initiative by encouraging local businesses and organisations to provide information on potential leads, make introductions and act as a 'host' to bring conferences, meetings and functions to Gunnedah Shire. • Undertake internet and media searches for conferences held in regional locations (eg search for 'conferences Tamworth – to see what organisations have met in Tamworth) • Internet searches of existing data bases and directories including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government and Business Association Directory - www.business.gov.au (contacts & directories link) - Australian Agricultural Directory www.aglinks.com.au 	Tourism Unit	Chamber Local organisations
4.11	Increase the number of business events held in Gunnedah.	4.11.1	<p>Target, through direct marketing and the bid process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Association conferences of up to 300 delegates, focusing on conferences that use budget-mid range venues and have a 'connection' with industries, activities and/or organisations in Gunnedah. • Regional meetings and training seminars – Government, corporate, franchises • Business / Industry / Sporting functions and awards • Exhibitions 	Tourism Unit	Venue operators
		4.11.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Fairfax Group to identify potential events and activities that could be held on the AgQuip site 	Tourism Unit	Fairfax Group
Build the Sporting Events Sector – endeavouring to increase participation and spectators at existing events, developing new events, and attracting 'foot loose' events to the Shire.					
4.12	Build the Sports Tourism Market	4.12.1	Encourage and work with local clubs and associations to bid to host regional, state and national events.	Tourism Unit	Sporting Clubs & Associations
		4.12.2	Assist event organisers, clubs and associations to grow their events, and to introduce additional events where feasible.	Tourism Unit	
		4.12.3	Ensure that the Shire's sporting venues are listed in the State and National Association directories, and where relevant promote the venues that are available for hire.	Tourism Unit	Sporting Clubs & Associations

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
		4.12.4	Direct market venues that are available for hire, to clubs, associations and commercial event promoters.	Tourism Unit	Sporting Clubs & Associations
4.13	Improve and expand facilities for horse events.	4.13.1	Progressively upgrade the Gunnedah Showground as per the recommendations of the Showground Masterplan.	Council	Showground Users
		4.13.2	Explore the feasibility of establishing an eventing course in Wandobah Reserve and a covered dressage arena at the Showground.	Council	Horse Groups
		4.13.3	Explore with the Gunnedah Jockey Club and the Polo Club, opportunities for increased use of their venues for a range of horse sports and other activities.	Tourism Unit / Council	Venue operators
		4.13.4	Position and promote the Curlewis Sport and Recreation Ground as a venue for horse and livestock events, and a staging area for social rides. This will require resolving land tenure issues and some improvements to the Ground.	Council	Curlewis Camp Draft Association & other groups
		4.13.5	Assess the potential for holding horse events / social rides in the Tambar Springs / Trinkey State Conservation Area area, using the Tambar Springs Sports Ground as a staging area.	Tourism Unit	Horse Groups
4.14	Grow the motor sports sector	4.14.1	Explore options for growing the 'Week of Speed' to increase both participation and spectator numbers.	Council	GMSE and other participants
		4.14.2	Work with clubs, associations and venue owners to build the profile of Gunnedah as a destination for motor sports, to bid for State and National titles and to market and promote the venues for hire by external groups.	Tourism Unit / Council	GMSE Gunnedah Motorcycle Club Speedway Kart Club Motoring enthusiast
		4.14.3	Promote Gunnedah Airport as a venue for motor sports. Seek grant funding to purchase timing equipment and potentially to extend the length of the strip.	Council	GMSE Tamworth Car Club
		4.14.4	Continue to upgrade Apex Drive to establish 'Mount Porcupine' as a premier hill climb venue for a range of users – cars, motorcycles, cycling, drift trikes, fun runs etc.	Council	GMSE and other potential users
		4.14.5	Explore options for increasing the use of the Go Kart Track, including use of the track for other activities such as track cycling and remote controlled car racing.	Council	Kart Club
		4.14.6	Assess the feasibility of hosting rally sprint events on the gravel roads within the Shire and/or in Trinkey State Conservation Area.	Council	GMSE and potential users
Encourage event attendees to spend money within the Shire					
4.15	Provide attendees with information on the Shire	4.15.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage event organisers to set up a web site / web page / facebook page for the event, and include a link to the Visit Gunnedah website on this page. 	Tourism Unit	Event organisers
		4.15.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide event organisers with lists of accommodation properties and eateries, to send out / attach to their event information / entry form. Also encourage them to include the visit Gunnedah website address on all their correspondence and in the event program. 	Tourism Unit	Event organisers
		4.15.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For larger events – set up an information display (manned or unmanned) at the event. 	Tourism Unit	
		4.15.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For smaller events, provide the Gunnedah Visitor Guide for distribution to attendees (eg brochure stand at the entry or near the kiosk). 	Tourism Unit	

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
4.16	Provide opportunities and incentives to encourage event attendees to spend while in the Shire.	4.16.1	Introduce initiatives to encourage event attendees to spend money in the Shire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shopping passports – with vouchers and offers • Attraction admission vouchers – discount or value add • Dining Vouchers – value add offers 	Tourism Unit	Event Organisers
Ensure that events are effectively marketed and promoted					
4.17	Raise awareness of the events held in Gunnedah	4.17.1	Actively promote the events calendar – locally and regionally	Tourism Unit	
		4.17.2	Gunnedah VIC to send out a weekly / monthly 'what's on' e.blast to local and regional media, accommodation operators and other interested parties.	Tourism Unit	
		4.17.3	Encourage event organisers to develop attendee data bases and possibly a newsletter for direct marketing of next year's events.	Tourism Unit	Event Organisers
		4.17.4	Explore with Tourism Manager's from surrounding LGAs / Region opportunities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop event circuits / tours (eg NW veterans' golf tour – moving from one tournament to the next). - Develop electronic data bases of attendees to events – for example people who participated in fishing competitions, and then compiling a fishing event calendar for the region and sending it out to everyone on the data base, with a reminder email prior to each individual event. 	Tourism Unit	Tourism Units – surrounding LGAs
		4.17.5	Explore opportunities for encouraging user generated content – encouraging attendees to post photos and comments on social media etc.	Tourism Unit	Event Organisers



Strategy 5 Ensure that the infrastructure, facilities and services are in place to support the growth of the tourism sector.

Objectives

- To provide the infrastructure, facilities and services needed to support and facilitate the growth in visitation in Gunnedah Shire.
- To ensure that the infrastructure, facilities and services provided meets user needs and expectations.

Goals

- Accommodation properties upgraded and meeting the needs and expectations of visitors – including having an effective internet presence (including real time bookings for accommodation properties).
- To meet the information needs of consumers and travellers – providing access to comprehensive, accurate information on-line, in print and within the Shire.
- Comprehensive and effective signage throughout the Shire that contributes positively to the image of the area and enables visitors to find their way around.
- To ensure that parks, reserves, amenities are clean and well maintained and provide visitors with a quality experience.
- A network of inter-connected cycleways and walking tracks, which showcase the Gunnedah area and encourage travellers to explore and stay longer in the Shire.

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
Accommodation – ensure that the accommodation available within the Shire is responsive to the needs and expectations of the changing marketplace.					
5.1	Improve and expand the accommodation base of the Shire	5.1.1	Encourage operators / owners to upgrade their properties, providing information on changing market needs and expectations as well as case studies of successful upgrades.	Tourism Unit	Accommodation operators
		5.1.2	Encourage the development of accommodation in Curlewis	Council	Curlewis Community
		5.1.3	Explore options for primitive camping at Cushman’s Reserve.	Council	
5.2	Continue to improve facilities and infrastructure for the touring caravan and motorhome market	5.2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the establishment of a primitive camping area at Curlewis – in the Sport and Recreation Ground and/or close to the Hotel and General store. • Improve directional signage to the Gunnedah Tourist Park. • Ensure that there are designated caravan / long rig parking spaces available in the Gunnedah town centre close to the VIC and that these spaces are effectively signposted (directional signposting through the town centre). 	Council	
5.3	Continue to improve the on-line presence of accommodation properties	5.3.1	Encourage Accommodation operators to make more effective use of web-based and digital marketing including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updating their own websites to be semantic search and mobile responsive and incorporate real time booking facilities and quality images as well as information on Gunnedah (link to down-load the brochure) and events held in the town. • Listing on the higher profile accommodation booking websites. • Claiming their ‘my business’ page on Google • Encouraging guests to review their property on both Trip Advisor and Google Review 	Tourism Unit	Accommodation operators

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining and enhancing their listing on the DNSW State Tourism Data Warehouse data base • Utilising free / low cost listings on tourism and third party websites • Utilising web-based resource material on DNSW and Tourism Australia websites 		
		5.3.2	Encourage operators to improve their property images on their websites – explore whether there is interest amongst operators to jointly fund a professional photo-shoot.	Tourism Unit	Accommodation operators
		5.3.3	Provide text content and images on Gunnedah that accommodation properties can include on their websites.	Tourism Unit	Accommodation operators
		5.3.3	Explore options with Inland NSW RTO and/or other service providers to run workshops on digital marketing for operators (both attractions and accommodation)	Tourism Unit	Inland RTO, DNSW
5.4	Encourage improvements to customer service levels	5.4.1	Keep operators informed of any training programs and industry briefing workshops being held throughout the Region as well as the training resources available on-line.	Tourism Unit	
Visitor Information Services – continue to expand and improve information services					
5.5	Continue to improve Gunnedah Shire’s internet and digital presence	5.5.1	Continue to improve and expand the visit Gunnedah website and ensure that it is optimised to respond to searches for the Shire’s main attraction and events and for each of the villages.	Tourism Unit	
		5.5.2	Update and expand Gunnedah Shire content on the Kamilaroi Highway website	Tourism Unit	
		5.5.3	Review Gunnedah Shire content on third party tourism and travel websites and Apps and update / improve content and images where possible.	Tourism Unit	
		5.5.4	Endeavour to list / feature Gunnedah Shire product / experiences on special interest and activity based sites (eg motor sports, water sports, horse sports, canoeing, camping etc).	Tourism Unit	
		5.5.5	Ensure that google analytical and other tracking tools are activated and use these tools to monitor and assess level of interest and trends.	Tourism Unit	
		5.5.6	Encourage accommodation operators and event organisers to include a link to the visitgunnedah website from their websites and/or a link to download the Gunnedah Visitor Guide.	Tourism Unit	Accommodation & attraction operators Event organisers
		5.5.7	Encourage accommodation operators to publicise the visitgunnedah website in each guest room. (eg provide a small koala pop-up with the website address)	Tourism Unit	Accommodation operators Event organisers
5.6	Use social media to communicate with consumers	5.6.1	Establish visitgunnedah facebook and twitter pages and use these to communicate with potential travellers and ‘drive’ interest to the visitgunnedah website.	Tourism Unit	
		5.6.2	Continue to use Council’s facebook and twitter pages to communicate with local residents.	Tourism Unit	
		5.6.3	Develop and progressively build consumer data bases to be used for direct marketing, promotional offers etc.	Tourism Unit	
5.7	Endeavour to harness user generated content	5.7.1	Use the ‘selfie’ to generate publicity for Gunnedah - explore options for providing ‘photo’ opportunities – eg a big koala – with visitors encouraged to hash tag Gunnedah.	Tourism Unit	
		5.7.2	Explore options for using travel blog sites.	Tourism Unit	
5.8	Increase the range of information available on the Shire	5.8.1	Progressively develop a range of information sheets to supplement the information provided in the Visitor Guide. Ensure that the information sheets are downloadable from the visitgunnedah website. Suggested sheets include:	Tourism Unit	

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koala Facts / How to spot a Koala • Crops of Gunnedah Shire / Liverpool Plains • Cycling and Mountain-biking • Fishing • Things to do with Children • Travelling with Pets • Picnic areas and playgrounds • Produce and providores. • Scenic drives 		
5.9	Ensure information is available within the villages and at strategic locations throughout the Shire	5.9.1	Erect information directories in the Villages and other strategic locations – eg Lake Keepit State Park, Redbank, Lions’ Toilet block in the Wandobah Reserve.	Tourism Unit Council	
		5.9.2	Encourage all accommodation and attraction operators and businesses within the Villages to display and distribute the Gunnedah Visitor Guide.	Tourism Unit	Village business operators
		5.9.3	Provide ‘pop-up’ manned or unmanned information displays at events, conferences etc.	Tourism Unit	
5.10	Address the future of the VIC.	5.10.1	Explore the feasibility of establishing a joint VIC – Koala Interpretation Centre within the town centre. Identify potential sites, develop concept plans and seek funding.	Tourism Unit / Council	NWLLS Project Koala
Road Infrastructure					
5.11	Recognise that road infrastructure will influence visitation levels and travel patterns.	5.11.1	Ensure that implications for tourism are assessed in developing road construction and maintenance programs and priorities.	Council	RMS
5.12	Work towards sealing strategic roads that feed into the Shire.	5.12.1	From a tourism perspective the priorities are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grain Valley Road between Mullaley and Boggabri (RR7709) • Boggabri – Manilla Road – and the Kelvin Road link 	Council	RMS RDA Adjoining Councils
5.13	‘Mount Porcupine’	5.13.1	Continue to upgrade Anzac Drive to enable Porcupine Hill to be used for hill climb events (see Action 3.8),	Council	GMSE+ potential users
5.14	Provide viewing areas.	5.14.1	Develop viewing areas at strategic locations, where travellers can stop, appreciate and photograph the country side.	Council	RMS
Walking and Cycling Infrastructure					
5.15	Continue to expand the cycleway network	5.15.1	Continue to implement the cycleway strategy. From a tourism perspective, the priority projects are the cycleway along the Namoi River, with this connecting to the VIC / Wolseley Park and to the Blackjack Creek cycleway.	Council	
		5.15.2	Connect the Lions Rest Area in Wandobah Reserve to the Blackjack cycleway. Also connect the rest area, along the Oxley Highway to the Rural Museum and solar system model.	Council	
5.16	Develop walking trails	5.16.1	Upgrade the Bindea Track as a signature walk for Gunnedah.	Council	Land Care
		5.16.2	Develop walking tracks within Cushan’s Reserve.	Council	Land Care
		5.16.3	Explore possibility of establishing a walking track up Tambar Mountain.	Council	Tambar Springs Community

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
Signage - Ensure that signage is effective and contributes positively to the image of the area					
5.17	Update directional and facility signage within Gunnedah town centre	5.17.1	As part of the re-routing of the Oxley Highway, review and update directional and facility signage in Gunnedah.	Council	RMS
		5.17.2	With the changed traffic patterns, ensure that the VIC is effectively signposted from all arrival points.	Council	RMS
5.18	Continue to improve directional signage	5.18.1	Progressively improve directional signage throughout the Shire, including providing directional signage from the Kamilaroi Highway to Lake Keepit and to Boonalla Aboriginal Area.	Council	RMS
		5.18.2	Improve directional signage to Gunnedah Tourist Park.	Council	RMS
		5.18.3	Signpost the access points to the Namoi River.	Council	
		5.18.4	Ensure that directional markers are in place for the town tour, Poets Drive and other scenic routes as they are developed.	Council	
		5.18.5	Provide advanced warning signs (using the yellow and blue 'i' signs) to information directories erected in the villages and other locations.	Council	
5.19	Provide services signs at the entry to the villages.	5.19.1	Provide service signs – using international icons – on the approaches to the Villages.	Council	RMS
5.20	Improve signage in the gateway entry corridors into Gunnedah	5.20.1	Enhance the visual impact of the brick gateway entry signs in Gunnedah – possibly through landscaping.	Council	
		5.20.2	Remove / replace tired and /or dated signs.	Council	Sign owners
		5.20.3	Replace the 'tired' Dorothea Mackellar signs with more contemporary and vibrant signs.	Council	DMS
5.21	Event Signage	5.21.1	Explore options for providing event signage on all approaches into Gunnedah.	Tourism Unit	
5.22	Update facility signs	5.22.1	Progressively replace fingerboard facility signs with international symbols.	Council	
5.23	Develop koala habitat signage	5.23.1	As part of developing the koala experience, develop signs that identify koala habitat and koala corridors – for Gunnedah and Curlewis.	Tourism Unit Council	Project Koala
5.24	Ensure walking trails and cycleways are effectively signposted	5.24.1	Provide track-head / orientation signage at key locations on walking trails and cycleways – including signage at Porcupine Hill, Namoi River precinct, Wandobah Reserve and Blackjack Creek corridor.	Council	
		5.24.2	Provide trail / route markers were needed.	Council	
		5.24.3	If road cycling routes are established – provide cycle warning signs as needed.	Council	
5.25	Continue to improve interpretative signage	5.25.1	Progressively replace damaged signs at Porcupine Hill.	Council	
		5.25.2	Improve the entrance and interpretative signage at Pensioners Hill	Council	
		5.25.3	Provide interpretative signage along the Namoi River corridor.	Council	NWLLS
Continue to improve facilities in parks & reserves					
5.26	Ensure that the parks, gardens and reserves that are visually prominent and/or are used by visitors, are well presented and maintained	5.26.1	Continue to maintain and improve the presentation of parks, gardens and reserves, both to enhance the visual impact and appeal of the locality and to encourage travellers to stop.	Council	

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
5.27	Develop a park(or parks) with a 'difference' / 'wow' factor	5.27.1	Develop the proposed regional playground in Wolseley Park.	Council	
		5.27.2	Develop the park at Mullaley as a 'quirky' park of yester-year, building on the playground equipment and milestones that are already in place.	Council	Mullaley Community
Public Toilets					
5.28	Continue to provide and maintain public toilets in strategic locations.	5.28.1	Ensure that public toilets throughout the Shire are effectively cleaned and maintained, and signposted using the international facility symbols.	Council	
Telecommunications - Travellers are travelling with a range of digital devices that require mobile network coverage. They are also increasingly seeking localities with free WiFi access. Demand for Wifi access will increase in-line with Tablet and Smart Phone ownership.					
5.29	Improve mobile and broadband services within the Shire	5.29.1	Continue to advocate for improved mobile and broadband coverage throughout the Shire	Council	Business & Community Groups
		5.29.2	Promote free Wifi locations to travellers	Tourism Unit	
		5.29.3	In the accommodation directory, include information on availability of broadband / wifi at each of the accommodation properties within the Shire.	Tourism Unit	Accommodation operators



Campers, Gunnedah Showground
 Photo: Namoi Valley Independent

Strategy 6 Build and diversify the market base of the Shire

Gunnedah Shire needs to continue to build visitation and diversify its market base. The focus will depend in part on the availability of motel and serviced apartment accommodation as a result of significant fluctuations in demand from the mining sector and related infrastructure projects. During periods of high demand, the marketing needs to focus on building markets that do not require motel accommodation - the touring caravan and motorhome markets and the day visitor markets – regional residents and passing highway traffic for the transit stop. These markets will generate expenditure for local businesses. Gunnedah also needs to build weekend visitation (Friday and Saturday nights) by focusing on building the sporting and community events markets. Outside of the peak accommodation demand times, Gunnedah needs to be attracting the touring by car market, group markets and business and sporting events.

Objectives

- To grow visitation to Gunnedah Shire.
- To build weekend visitation.
- To broaden the market base so that the accommodation sector to reduce the dependency on the mining sector.
- To increase the yield from visitation.
- To spread visitation throughout the Shire, to provide benefits for the villages.

Goals

- Increased visitation to and visitor expenditure in Gunnedah and villages.
- High accommodation occupancy rates – year round, both mid-week and weekend.
- Increased utilisation of facilities and assets – eg The Town Hall; motor, horse and other sports venues; Gunnedah Showground
- Increased awareness Gunnedah Shire within the marketplace.

Directions

- Focus funds and resources on consolidating and building the Shire’s primary target markets:
 - Touring markets - baby boomers and families
 - Regional resident (and their VFR) market
 - Events market – business (conferences and meetings) and sporting events.
- Capitalise on cost effective opportunities to build secondary markets:
 - Visiting friends and relatives
 - Rail tourism – targeting social groups
 - Specialist agricultural and technical tours
 - Car and Motorcycle Clubs

- Special interest and activity based markets – cyclists, mountain bikers, water sports enthusiasts, anglers, gliders, history enthusiasts, motor sports enthusiasts, golfers, bird watchers, arts groups.
- Put in place strategies to encourage highway travellers, business and work-related travellers and people attending events, to spend more within the Shire.

Market development will also take into account the structural and generational changes that are occurring in the marketplace, namely:

- Baby Boomers followed by Generation X will be the primary markets for Gunnedah Shire over the next 20 years.
- Baby Boomers and Generation X are more sophisticated and demanding than their predecessors, and far less tolerant of low standard accommodation and poor customer service.
- Gunnedah Shire’s products and experiences are best suited to the Wanderer (touring /retirees) and Compatriot (family) markets.
- The online environment is becoming increasingly important at all stages of travel – it is the primary tool used to source information and a significant tool in purchasing accommodation.
- The market is increasingly looking to ‘do’ and ‘experience’ rather than just ‘look’ - fitness based activities and lifestyle need to feature prominently in promotional material.

The product and infrastructure development needed to support and sustain growth in visitation is addressed in Strategies 2 to 5. Additional market development and marketing initiatives are given below.

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
Consolidate and build the Shire’s primary markets – Touring Travellers, Regional Residents and Event Attendees					
Highway and Touring Traffic – Encourage highway and touring traffic to stop in Gunnedah Shire (to be read in conjunction with Strategy 1)					
6.1	Engage with potential travellers at the trip planning stage.	6.1.1	Continue to enhance and expand Gunnedah Shire’s on-line and digital presence (see Action 5.5)	Tourism Unit	
		6.1.2	Continue to exhibit, both independently and as part of touring routes and product clusters, at consumer and travel shows, particularly the caravan and camping shows	Tourism Unit	
		6.1.3	Participate in cooperative marketing activities that generate publicity for Gunnedah Shire / Touring Routes / NE-NW Region and ‘drive’ enquiries to websites that provide information on and/or link to the visitgunnedah site.	Tourism Unit	
		6.1.4	Continue to respond quickly to emails requesting information on the Shire.	Tourism Unit	
		6.1.5	Encourage accommodation and attraction operators and event organisers to promote Gunnedah as part of their marketing, including have a link to the visitgunnedah on their website and/or facilities to download the Gunnedah Visitor Guide and other information sheets.	Tourism Unit	Accommodation & Attraction operators Event organisers
6.2	Capitalise on the importance of Maps as trip planning and promotional tools.	6.2.1	Identify and evaluate the main maps used by travellers to the area. Where possible, improve the information on Gunnedah Shire on these maps.	Tourism Unit	
		6.2.2	Working with Tourism Managers / Councils located along the touring routes that feed into the Shire, explore opportunities to produce touring maps for the Kamilaroi Highway, Oxley Highway and Black Stump Way.	Tourism Unit	Corridor LGAs

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
		6.2.3	Use maps as the basis for information / promotional collateral to support the trails and scenic drives developed in the Shire.	Tourism Unit	
		6.2.4	Design maps and brochures that can be readily used in conjunction with GPS systems.	Tourism Unit	
6.3	Raise the profile of shopping and dining opportunities within the Shire.	6.3.1	Work with the Chamber and business owners to raise the profile of the shopping and dining experiences in the Shire, including generating PR coverage.	Tourism Unit	Chambers Business Operators
Regional Residents – continue to build the Regional Resident Market, positioning Gunnedah as a lifestyle centre for regional residents and their visitors.					
6.4	<p>Regional Residents - Continue to grow the regional market – focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positioning Gunnedah as a lifestyle centre – a place to relax, enjoy and ‘reconnect’. - Attracting residents to sporting and other events. - Positioning Gunnedah as a day out destination for social groups. - Bringing residents into Gunnedah for special interest activities. 	6.4.1	<p>Continue to raise the profile of Gunnedah within the Region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use PR marketing to place stories in the regional media. • Place articles about the different activities on offer in the Shire in the local and regional media. In the lead-up to school holidays local papers often have a feature article and discount coupons. • Produce a 'holiday activities' guide that can be distributed regionally - in shopping centres, through libraries, schools, pre-schools etc. • Establish Gunnedah Tourism social media sites and build facebook and twitter communities. • Use both the Gunnedah Tourism and Council social media sites as one of the ways of communicating with the regional media (journalists are increasingly using social media sites to generate ideas for stories). • Explore opportunities to advertise in television and print media (funds permitting). • Adopt the 'Inverell Promotions Model' – which involved coordinating television advertising by local businesses and Inverell Tourism to ensure that Inverell is regularly 'in the press / on television' in one form or another. 	Tourism Unit	
		6.4.2	<p>Target and direct market Gunnedah to social groups within the surrounding region – those that organise day and short trips including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mothers groups and playgroups – potential mid week market attracted by the parks and reserves, cafes, cinema deals, etc. • Retirement homes – often have their own mini buses. • Disability groups and service providers – excursions and day trips. • Walking clubs and groups. • Probus / View Clubs and organisations. • Social clubs and groups within Licensed Clubs. • Cycling groups, including BUGs. • Social golf groups. • Car and motorcycle clubs. <p>These groups (and others) can generally be easily identified from Council Community Directories.</p>	Tourism Unit	Chamber

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
		6.4.3	Work with the Chamber and attraction and business operators to provide promotional / value-add offers to regional residents – eg offers to bring their VFR to Gunnedah, promotional offers to people coming into Gunnedah for sporting or other events.	Tourism Unit	Chamber
		6.4.4	Encourage the Chamber / business community to undertake targeted retail promotions – eg 'Girls Day out'.	Tourism Unit	Chamber
		6.4.5	Promote the arts-based activities and workshops held in Gunnedah, including direct marketing to arts based groups within the Region	Tourism Unit	Workshop / Program organisers
Continue to grow event-based visitation focusing on business and sporting events – See Strategy 4.					
Capitalise on cost effective opportunities to build secondary markets					
6.5	Visiting Friends & Relatives – Encourage local and regional residents to show their visitors around the Shire, and encourage visitors to visit to attend events.	6.5.1	Advise local and regional media about events and activities happening in Gunnedah.	Tourism Unit	
		6.5.2	Use Council's and Tourism (proposed) social media sites, and where relevant, the Mayor's Column to ensure that residents are aware of activities happening in the Shire and to provide them with ideas on what to do with visiting friends and relatives.	Tourism Unit	
		6.5.3	Work with the Chamber, attraction and business operators to provide promotional / value-add offers to local and regional residents who bring their out-of-area VFR guests.	Tourism Unit	Chamber Business operators
6.6	Rail Tour Groups – build a rail tour market	6.6.1	Explore with NSW TrainLink, opportunities to list Gunnedah as a country NSW destination.	Tourism Unit	NSW TrainLink
		6.6.2	Work with local accommodation operators to develop rail-accommodation-tour packages, targeted to seniors groups (Sydney, Central Coast and Hunter Regions) and walking groups (Hunter Valley) that can use their rail concession cards to access Gunnedah.	Tourism Unit	Accommodation operators
6.7	Specialist Agriculture and Industry Tours	6.7.1	Explore opportunities for agricultural and mining activities in Gunnedah to be included in specialist industrial and agricultural tours – for both the domestic and international markets.	Tourism Unit	
6.8	Car and Motorcycle Clubs	6.8.1	Working with motorsports venues and accommodation properties, develop packages and itineraries suitable for car, motorcycle and motor sports clubs. Target these clubs through PR and direct marketing.	Tourism Unit	Motorsports Clubs & venues
6.9	Grow Special Interest and Activity based markets.	6.9.1	Use the Shire's assets and facilities to grow special interest and activity based markets – clubs, individuals and social groups - targeting these groups primarily through direct marketing online and PR in specialist publications and on specialist websites. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arts groups - Walking groups - Bird watchers - Anglers - Motor sports enthusiasts - Water sports enthusiasts - Horse riders and horse sports enthusiasts - Golfers - Bowlers - Cyclists / Mountain bikers - Canoe / Kayakers - Historical associations 	Tourism Unit	Relevant community and sporting groups

Actions		Key Tasks		Coordinator	Partners
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family historians - Recreational Flying / Learn to Fly / Gliding <p>Basically, the same approach can be used to grow the different special interest markets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the activities, attractions, facilities and/or services available in the Shire and surrounding region that the market is likely to be interested in. • Package these into itineraries and products. • Use the internet to identify associations, clubs, event organisers etc – develop a data base. • Direct marketing to clubs and associations. • Conduct follow-up calls. • Support the direct marketing with public relations marketing – seeking to place articles in relevant magazines, newsletters and websites. • List on free directories and websites relevant to the interest / activity. • Include pertinent information on the tourism website and seek links to relevant activity based sites. 		
6.10	Build the coach tour market - <i>This will be dependent on the willingness of accommodation operators agreeing to accept group bookings.</i>	6.10.1	Build the Day Tour Coach Market - explore opportunities to include Gunnedah product (including access to agricultural enterprises) in itineraries of coach companies that regularly bring tours into the North West Region.	Tourism Unit	Attraction operators
		6.10.2	<p>Overnight Market - The coach tour market generally has an 18-24 month lead in and will require significant investment in time plus a budget to advertise. Accommodation properties will need to be able to guarantee 20-25 rooms, primarily mid-week and prepared to take pencil bookings 1-2 years out. The yield from the coach tour market will be less than from business and work-related travellers. Before the Gunnedah Tourism Unit invests in building the overnight coach tour market it will need to secure commitment from operators who wish to be involved.</p> <p>Actions to build this market include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing tour itineraries – both in Gunnedah and with surrounding LGAs. • Producing a Coach Tour Manual with suggested touring itineraries and special packages / offers – eg during cotton season a tour of the Carroll Cotton Gin. • Listing Gunnedah Shire / products with the coach tour wholesaler companies. • Building a data base of coach companies that organise tours as well as groups that regularly charter coaches – as the basis for direct marketing to these organisations. • For the initial start-up, joining the Australian Bus and Coach Operators Association, exhibiting at their events and placing articles and advertisements in their journal and newsletters. 	Tourism Unit	Accommodation & Attraction operators

Actions	Key Tasks	Coordinator	Partners
Encourage business and work-related travellers to spend more within the Shire.			
6.11 Business & Work Related Travellers - Encourage business and work-related travellers to spend more time and money in the Shire.	6.11.1 Work with Lake Keepit State Park and other operators to provide ‘packages’ for weekends and school holidays that encourages workers to bring their families to visit the Shire rather than them returning home.	Tourism Unit	LK Park Manager Operators
	6.11.2 Ensure that the Gunnedah dining guide is available in all accommodation rooms and from places that have a high level of visitation) and that guide is identified by search engines for people googling places to eat in Gunnedah.	Tourism Unit	
	6.11.3 Explore with the mining companies, the opportunity to display the Gunnedah Visitors Guide and possibly a tear-off map of the LGA in the office / reception area where workers & visitors sign-in.	Tourism Unit	Mining Companies
	6.11.4 Endeavour to provide access to visitor information on Gunnedah Shire at the Civeo Villages throughout the Region (this should be undertaken in conjunction with Narrabri and Liverpool Plains VICs so brochures from all areas are available)	Tourism Unit	Civeo
	6.11.5 Explore the possibility of taking the Civeo Village Managers and key staff who have contact with visitors, on a familiarisation tour of the attractions and activities within the surrounding area – again working with Narrabri and Liverpool Plains Tourism Managers.	Tourism Unit	Civeo
	6.11.6 Explore opportunities to have information on Gunnedah Shire on display at Tamworth Airport and at the rental vehicle companies in Tamworth and Gunnedah.	Tourism Unit	
	6.11.7 Encourage the Chamber / business operators to develop loyalty and incentive programs to encourage business and work-related travellers to spend money in the Shire.	Tourism Unit	Chamber Business operators



5. MARKETING & PROMOTION

Marketing & Promotion

Product and infrastructure development in Gunnedah Shire needs to be supported by effective marketing and promotion. The main marketing and promotional activities undertaken by Council's Tourism Unit are:

- Cooperative marketing as part of the Kamilaroi Highway Promotions Group.
- Production of the Visitor Guides (main expense).
- Development and maintenance of the Visit Gunnedah website.
- Participation in trade and consumer shows, including caravan, camping and lifestyle shows.
- Print advertising (minimal due to cost).

To be effective there is a need for Gunnedah to expand its market development and marketing and promotional activities, working in conjunction with LGAs within the surrounding region and along the highway and touring route corridors. Recommended marketing and promotional activities include:

Activity	Rational	Budget
Photo Library expansion	Gunnedah's photo library is relatively limited with many of the photos being dated. The photo library needs to be significantly revamped and updated with the focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capturing the changing personality of Gunnedah (see Section 2.2), focusing on lifestyle. • 'Reconnecting' and 'doing' – showing people spending time together having fun and reconnecting, as well as showcasing the broad range of activities that can be undertaken in Gunnedah. • Quality vibrant images that showcase the diversity of Gunnedah – with the market increasingly viewing images as part of on-line 'micro minute' searches looking for inspiration, it is essential that Gunnedah populates the internet with quality, attention-capturing images of Gunnedah. • Having a variety of quality images available that can be used by local operators and business to strengthen their on-line and print media presence as well as by the travel media, bloggers etc. 	\$ 5,000 pa
Video Clips	With the strong trend to viewing You Tube and film clips as part of researching and booking travel, Gunnedah needs a series of short video clips to populate its Visit Gunnedah website, to use as part of its social media campaigns and to provide input in App development.	\$15,000 film shoot \$3,000 pa to expand
Cooperative Marketing	It is far more effective for Gunnedah Shire to pool its marketing dollars with surrounding LGAs to significantly increase the market reach and penetration and reduce the load on limited resources. The suggested budget required to participate in these initiatives is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kamilaroi Highway – membership + website + brochure + marketing activities 	\$ 7,500 pa

Activity	Rational	Budget
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tamworth Capital of Country Campaign – buy-in Trade and Consumer Shows – mix of attendance and representation (minimum of 5 / year) 	\$ 2,000 pa <u>\$15,000 pa</u> \$24,500 pa
Visiting Journalist Programs	DNSW and the Inland RTO organise famils for domestic and international journalists across all media. LGAs have the opportunity to 'buy-into' these programs, hosting journalists for a number of days, while they research and prepare stories on the area. Gunnedah would benefit significantly from participating in these programs, with the resultant media exposure more than covering the cost of hosting.	\$ 4,000 pa
Online and Social Media Campaigns	Gunnedah Shire needs to continue maintain and upgrade the Visit Gunnedah website and populate third party websites with Gunnedah content. This needs to be supported by social media communication and campaigns, blogging and on-line newsletters and e.blasts. While there is a cost in maintaining the website, most of the supporting activities can be undertaken in-house by the Tourism Unit (provided staff resources are available).	\$ 5,000 pa to maintain and continue to enhance the Visit Gunnedah website
Branded Collateral & Souvenirs	The Gunnedah VIC sells a limited range of promotional merchandise and souvenirs. The current purchase budget is \$5,000 per annum. This restricts the range of goods that can be purchased and restricts the volume that can be purchased which in turn increases the purchase cost. Increasing the budget to \$10,000 per annum would increase the range of products that could be offered and for some items, increase in order size which reduces the purchase (and transport) cost	\$10,000 pa

Product and Market Development

There are a number of initiatives arising out of the DMP that will need to be funded. In addition, there is a need to update and expand tourism and interpretative signage within the Shire, with the Tourism Unit funded to undertake this. Suggested budgets are:

Activity	Activities	Budget
Restructure and expand the 'koala' offering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with NWLLS, Project Koala and other groups, develop the 'Koala' Story – what is to be told and how it is to be told – on line, within the VIC and in the habitat areas around Gunnedah and Curlewis. Develop information and promotional collateral – online, print and digital media Erect interpretative signage. 	\$20,000 <u>\$15,000</u> \$35,000
Develop and promote the Oxley Highway as a touring route and work with Port Macquarie and Warrumbungle Shires as part of marketing	This would be undertaken cooperatively with Councils along the route. Preliminary discussions have been held with the Tourism Managers at Port Macquarie and Warrumbungle. Development would require initial investment in a website, brochure, map and display material (eg to take to consumer shows) with the commitment being similar in both cost and resources to the involvement in the Kamilaroi Highway Promotions Group.	\$ 5,000 - \$7,500 pa

Activity	Activities	Budget
Pop-up Initiatives around Gunnedah	As part of activating and repositioning the Gunnedah town centre, building visitation and generating publicity, the Tourism Unit is looking to run a number of 'pop up activities' (eg pop-up craze maze).	\$20,000 pa
Improvements to Tourism and Interpretative Signage.	There is a need to improve and expand tourism signage and provide information directories at the main activity nodes throughout the LGA. Signage is expensive to produce and erect.	\$40,000 pa until all signage issues are addressed.

