

BRIGHTHOUSE

Narrogin Tourism Strategy

December 2019

Prepared for: Shire of Narrogin

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Executive Summary

This Narrogin Tourism Strategy maps out a pathway to meet expectations with sustainable tourism experiences that provide a compelling reason for people to visit and stay (longer) in Narrogin. Narrogin is heavily reliant on agriculture, like many other towns in the Wheatbelt. Diversification by way of development of tourism is beneficial not only to mitigate the risks of reliance on a single industry but also to enhance the sustainability of the agricultural industry through tourism add-ons such as farm-stays, farm gate sales, farm tours, and shearing demonstrations.

With 89% of visitors to the broader Australia's Golden Outback (AGO) tourism region being from within WA and a further 7% being Australian, it is unsurprising that the Narrogin Tourism Strategy focusses on low cost strategies to increase the number of visitors, duration of stay, and spend by the domestic nature-based experience seeker. Many of the proposed strategies will also improve appeal and visibility of Narrogin for the international market.

In line with the broader wheatbelt region, Narrogin's key advantages, from a tourism perspective, relate to people, nature, and heritage. It is one of the Wheatbelt's more easily accessible short drive destinations from Perth, offering an opportunity to leverage off this locational advantage. A short drive to experience country life!

An area steeped in history with significant biodiversity and natural surroundings, Narrogin offers tourists a unique opportunity to learn about unique flora and fauna as well as our important agricultural industry. As the rich offerings of the region were exposed during the research phase of this study, it became evident that there were fascinating and compelling stories just waiting to be told about the area and its people.

The smaller owner-operator accommodation options in Narrogin generally receive better reviews and ratings than the larger commercial establishments. An opportunity exists to highlight the region's character and stories to bring more of an experiential focus to some of the larger accommodation businesses to give them a better sense of place. Marketing should continue to actively promote the unique experiences at the smaller farm-stays and bed and breakfast style accommodation in the interim.

Growing Wheatbelt Tourism ¹reported the highest proportion of domestic visitor nights were spent in a caravan park, highlighting the need to ensure that caravan and camping facilities are in line with visitor expectations. The Narrogin caravan park receives mostly average ratings on review sites (TripAdvisor, Google reviews, and WikiCamps) and comments are made about ageing facilities and lack of shade. The development of appealing nature-based camping opportunities needs to be considered.

Local survey data collated by the Dryandra Country Visitor Centre (DCVC) showed that the top five activities visitors will or would do were (in order of ranking): shop, eat lunch at a café or restaurant, sightsee, camp, and hike/bushwalk.

With limited funding for employment of highly motivated visitor servicing staff at the DCVC to promote the tourism highlights of the region effectively, options for better harnessing new digital technology to send information may provide better marketing outcomes. Existing brochure collateral is excellent but needs to be expanded to include all destination attractions and experiences. The content could be easily digitised and offered online and via digital kiosks in the visitor centre. Information on the foxeslair.org website (and Facebook page) is comprehensive and showcases the unique diversity of flora and fauna of Narrogin. It is a great asset and content should be better utilised to encourage flora and fauna enthusiasts to visit Narrogin and stay longer through inclusion on the proposed new Dryandra Country Visitor Centre website.

Trails development (which is in various stages) will make a significant contribution, bringing together the towns' attractions, whilst adding more immersive depth to the Narrogin experience. An opportunity exists to focus more on the experience of visiting Narrogin, rather than just listing what to do. It is difficult for new tours and

¹ Wheatbelt Tourism Commission, September 2017

activities to prove viable in small country towns. This highlights the need to ensure existing activities and experiences can be fully leveraged to enhance the visitor experience. Currently no tours are listed, and options for providing interpretation and a “local perspective” are highly important.

The following tourism strategies are prioritised according to prospective visitors’ geographic, demographic, psychographic, and behavioural market segmentation criteria. Each proposed strategy was assessed by comparing the Total Potential Market and the Potential Serviceable Market (i.e., the market that could potentially be reached), with the Potentially Obtainable Market (i.e., the market most likely to be reached).

A further basis of assessment of the proposed strategies detailed below is the “low-hanging fruit” criterion, which recognises the current level of tourism destination development and the likelihood of achieving the desired outcomes over the short to medium term.

The building of major, iconic, new tourism infrastructure is not considered necessary or appropriate at this time, considering the current stage of Narrogin’s tourism destination development, due to the spread and natural appeal of its existing tourism product once enhanced.

1. Consider alternative options to the Dryandra Visitor Centre’s stand-alone “shopfront” operation for providing off-line distribution of visitor information and tourist collateral. Transition towards predominantly online delivery of tourist information, through an online tourism destination promotional strategy, which incorporates an outstanding, all-things encompassing tourism website, providing digitally based visitor information distribution and interaction, together with support through social media;
2. Leverage current tourist interest in the unique, natural landscapes and outdoor activities that are currently available in the area The Dryandra Woodlands, Foxes Lair and other local natural attractions including Yilminning Rock, the Barna Mia Nocturnal Sanctuary, Contine Hill, Toolibin Lake, Yornaning Dam, and Highbury Town have high appeal to the wider population demographic, especially those interested in connecting with nature to learn about the area’s natural landscape and fauna, or for healthy outdoor recreation. Improve wayfinding and interpretation at Narrogin Shire-controlled, natural landscape locations;
3. “Farmer for a Day” - Provide opportunities for visitors to immerse themselves in Narrogin (Country) life, including a Farmers’ market;
4. Identify and develop tourist experiences that cater to specific interests (e.g., wildflowers, bird spotting, nocturnal animal viewing, walk and mountain bike trails, including the proposed pump track at Gnarojin Park);
5. Connect visitors with Narrogin’s heritage and Aboriginal culture, through the proposed Gnarojin Park redevelopment and interpretive tours and cultural activities at appropriate locations and improve visitation and the visitor experience at identified community development project locations (e.g., Railway Dam, Archibald Park, and the Commonage);
6. Encourage development of niche accommodation product such as farm-stay, caravanning, and camping, including glamping (glamour camping) and upgrade of historic hotels;
7. Encourage the development of escorted and self-guided tours and periodic activities for special interest groups (e.g., art, photography, and/or astronomy groups; gliding; and competition cycling (Narrogin Velodrome));
8. Improve tourism network linkages with Tourism WA, Australia’s Golden Outback, and the towns and tourism attractions in the Southern Wheatbelt (e.g., Wave Rock and Kulin); and
9. Encourage and create new events to attract large groups of visitors.

Section I: Review of Current Situation

Overview

The Situation - Shire of Narrogin

Founded in 1892, the Shire of Narrogin is in the Wheatbelt and covers 1,619 square kilometres. The Shire has a population of approximately 5,160 people.²

Narrogin is the main town centre for the Shire and is home to the administration for the Shire of Narrogin as well as supporting infrastructure (hospital, aged care, etc.) for many of the surrounding towns.

At 190km from Perth, Narrogin is within the range for day visitors, but has potential to encourage visitors to extend their stay for a few days or more for a more immersive experience.



Source: Google Maps

Socio-Economic Profile of the Shire of Narrogin³

Demographic	Narrogin	Western Australia	Australia
People	5,162	2,474,410	23,401,892
Male	48.8%	50%	49.30%
Female	51.2%	50%	50.70%
Median age	40	36	38
Families	1,251	644,189	6,070,316
Average children per family for families with children	1.9	1.9	1.8
Average number of children for all families	0.7	0.8	0.8
All private dwellings	2,297	1,070,962	9,901,496
Average people per household	2.4	2.6	2.6
Median weekly household income	\$1,225	\$1,595	\$1,438
Median weekly income (personal)	\$635	\$724	\$662
Median monthly mortgage repayments	\$1,200	\$1,993	\$1,755
Median weekly rent	\$220	\$347	\$335
Unemployed	114	97,966	787,452
Unemployed %	2.21%	3.96%	3.36%
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	352	75,978	649,171
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people (%)	6.82%	3.07%	2.77%

Narrogin has a similar distribution of males and females to the state and national averages, with a similar family composition. Small-scale tourism (working from home) is particularly suited to families who are usually able to fit cleaning, administration, and guest servicing in around family commitments.

² https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/LGA56460

³ quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/LGA56460

The median age of Narrogin residents is slightly higher than the state and national averages, though not significantly enough to have an impact on potential for engagement in tourism activities. Relatively low unemployment suggests that tourism growth may be best targeted at those looking for a second job or additional income rather than the limited pool of currently unemployed persons. With relatively low weekly household income of \$1,225 (as compared to WA \$1,595 and Australia at \$1,438), supplemental income sources can make a dramatic difference to discretionary spending and comfort.

The cost of housing is relatively low with median monthly rent and mortgage repayments both significantly below the state and national averages. This would allow short-term rentals (through Airbnb and similar platforms) to be very competitively priced relative to other destinations.

Narrogin has an Aboriginal population of over 350 people in the Shire, which is nearly 7% of the population (as compared to 3% for WA and under 3% nationally). This suggests there is a good opportunity to explore the potential for sharing Aboriginal culture with visitors to the region.

With a thriving (but increasingly automated) agricultural sector, tourism has the opportunity to deliver synergistic benefits with the existing predominant economic activities through associated micro enterprises such as farm-stays, Airbnb, horsemanship demonstrations, shearing demonstrations, etc.

Image supplied courtesy of Tourism Western Australia



Demand and Visitation

Visitation - Australia's Golden Outback (AGO)

The AGO Tourism Region is vast and diverse, covering over half of Western Australia's land mass! Unfortunately, visitation statistics, even for this entire region, have questionable reliability due to small sample sizes. No reliable counts of visitors are available for Narrogin or other such small country towns in Western Australia; thus, we are forced to gain what insights we can from the broader regional survey data.

The Dryandra Country Visitor Centre has recently carried out a survey of visitor behaviour which is analysed later in this section. The information collected is extremely useful in understanding what visitors do once they are in Narrogin and the demographics of visitors, but the visitor behaviour survey does not provide an indication of the overall number of visitors to Narrogin.

Summary of visitors to AGO^{4 5}

	YE Dec 2012	YE Dec 2016	YE Dec 2017	% Change YE Dec 2017 v 2016	3 Year AAGR*	% Change YE Dec 2017 v 2012
Intrastate Visitors	629,000	987,800	963,400	-2.50%	-0.10%	53.2%
Interstate Visitors	83,000	145,700	80,400	-44.80%	-21.40%	-3.1%
International Visitors	43,000	57,900	41,200	-28.90%	-5.90%	-4.2%
Total Visitors	755,000	1,191,400	1,085,000	-8.90%	-2.50%	43.7%
Intrastate Nights	2,131,000	3,996,000	3,946,000	-1.20%	-1.60%	85.2%
Interstate Nights	527,000	871,700	857,000	-1.70%	-9.00%	62.6%
International Nights	997,700	900,700	491,600	-45.40%	-22.60%	-50.7%
Total Visitor Nights	3,655,700	5,768,400	5,294,600	-8.20%	-5.50%	44.8%

* AAGR – Annual Average Growth Rate

The table above shows visitation to the AGO region declined by over 8% YE Dec 2017 compared to YE Dec 2016 for both number of visitors and visitor nights. The most significant decline was for interstate visitors with relatively little change for Interstate visitor nights, showing fewer visitors came, but stayed longer in the region.

Over the three years there has been a decline in visitors and visitor nights across all segments (intrastate, interstate and international), though over the five years from 2012 to 2017, intrastate visitors show an increase of over 53% over the five years and an increase of over 85% in intrastate visitor nights for the same period. Small sample size and survey methodology must be considered with fluctuations in visitor numbers and nights.

Average Length of Stay in AGO⁶

International visitors had the highest average length of stay, likely accounting for working holiday makers (backpackers) who stay in Australia for 1-2 years on average. Many work for 88 days in regional areas to allow an extension on their visa.

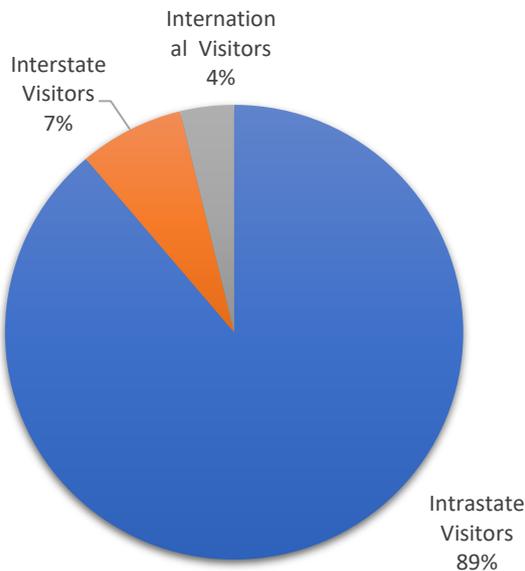
Average Length of Stay (Estimated nights)	YE Dec 2015/16/17
Intrastate	4.1
Interstate	7.8
International	15.2
All Visitors	5.0

⁴ Australia's Golden Outback 2017 Factsheet Produced Tourism WA - Strategy and Research April 2018

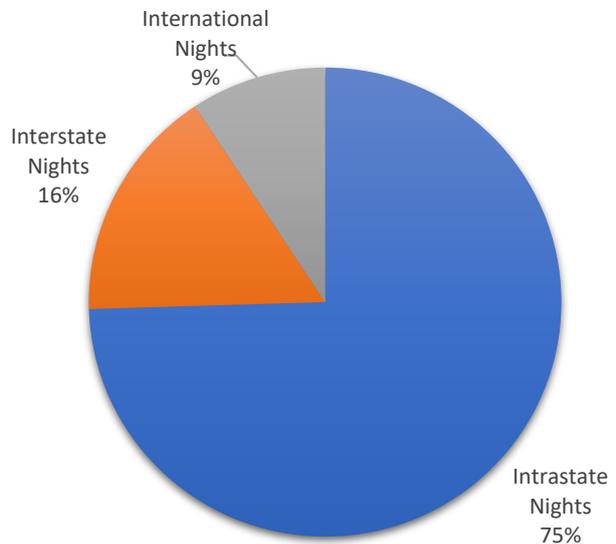
⁵ Australia's Golden Outback 2013 Factsheet Produced Tourism WA - Strategy and Research April 2014

⁶ Australia's Golden Outback 2017 Factsheet Produced Tourism WA - Strategy and Research April 2018

2017 Visitors to AGO



2017 Visitor Nights in AGO



89% of all visitors to the AGO region are intrastate visitors staying 75% of visitor nights.⁷

Top Five Local Government Areas (LGAs) Visited by Source Market⁸

	YE Dec 2015/16/17 Average Annual Visitors	YE Dec 2015/16/17
Estimated Intrastate Visitors		
Shire of Esperance	163,300	17%
City of Kalgoorlie/Boulder	137,400	14%
Shire of Leonora	91,100	9%
Shire of Ravensthorpe	56,300	6%
Shire of Coolgardie	50,400	5%
Estimated Interstate Visitors		
City of Kalgoorlie/Boulder	46,800	39%
Shire of Esperance	32,600	27%
Shire of Dundas	32,200	27%
Shire of Yilgarn	11,400	10%
Shire of Kondinin	10,200	9%
Estimated International Visitors		
Shire of Esperance	21,300	44%
City of Kalgoorlie/Boulder	12,100	25%
Shire of Kondinin	8,000	16%
Shire of Dundas	6,200	13%
Shire of Ravensthorpe	2,900	6%

The top two Local Government Areas visited for all source markets were Kalgoorlie and Esperance. Leonora was the third highest (for Intrastate) perhaps due to the high proportion of business travellers combined with opportunities for prospecting and fossicking.

⁷ Australia's Golden Outback 2017 Factsheet Produced Tourism WA - Strategy and Research April 2018

⁸ Australia's Golden Outback 2017 Factsheet Produced Tourism WA - Strategy and Research April 2018

Top Three Accommodation Choices in AGO YE Dec 2015/16/17⁹

Please note: Accommodation is a multiple response question. Totals may not add up to 100%. Base for % is from total estimated Intrastate, Interstate, and International visitor numbers to AGO

Estimated Intrastate Visitors	% Percent
Friend's or relative's property	24%
Hotel/resort/motel or motor inn	22%
Caravan or camping - non-commercial	19%
Estimated Interstate Visitors	
Hotel/resort/motel or motor inn	33%
Caravan park or commercial camping ground	16%
Friend's or relative's property	16%
Estimated International Visitors	
Hotel/resort/motel or motor inn	25%
Caravan park or commercial camping ground	23%
Friend's or relative's property	19%

Top Five Leisure Activities during Trip YE Dec 2015/16/17

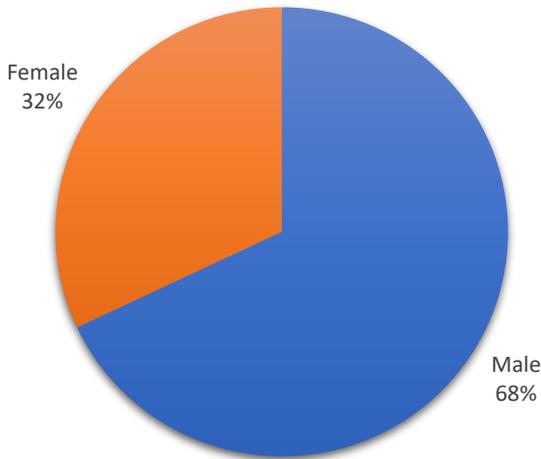
Estimated Intrastate Visitors	Average Ann. Visitors	%
Eat out / dine at a restaurant and/or cafe	363,300	37%
Visit friends & relatives	245,500	25%
Pubs, clubs, discos, etc.	188,000	19%
Sightseeing/looking around	171,200	18%
Go to the beach	135,600	14%
Estimated Interstate Visitors		
Eat out / dine at a restaurant and/or cafe	50,800	43%
Sightseeing/looking around	29,500	25%
Pubs, clubs, discos, etc.	20,700	17%
Go to the beach	17,300	15%
Bushwalking / rainforest walks	17,000	14%
Estimated International Visitors		
Eat out / dine at a restaurant and/or cafe	44,400	92%
Sightseeing/looking around	38,500	79%
Go to the beach	37,000	76%
Go shopping for pleasure	35,900	74%
Visit national parks / state parks	35,900	74%

Please note: Leisure Activities is a multiple response question. Totals may not add up to 100%. Base for % is from total estimated Intrastate, Interstate, and International visitor numbers to AGO. International visitors may have undertaken the activity in the region or elsewhere in Australia.

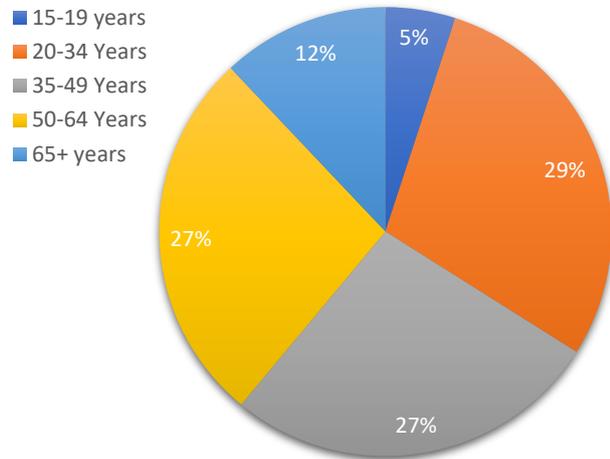
Western Australians Travelling To / Within AGO

Based on Visitor Numbers – Annual Average of 2015, 2016 & 2017

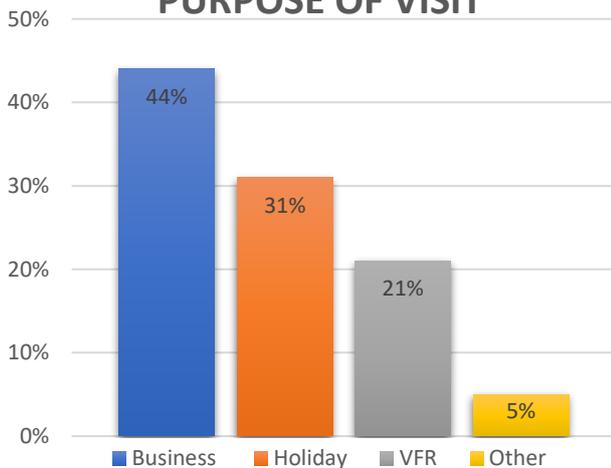
GENDER



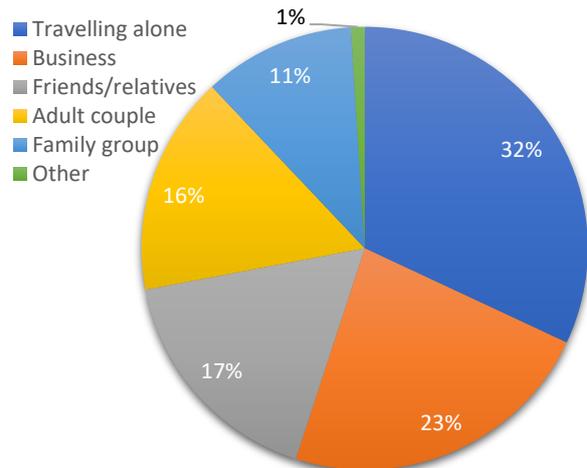
AGE



PURPOSE OF VISIT



TRAVEL PARTY



Most intrastate and interstate visitors to the AGO region were young (20-49-year-old) males travelling alone for business purposes. This differs from other tourism regions and source markets where holiday is more often the primary purpose.

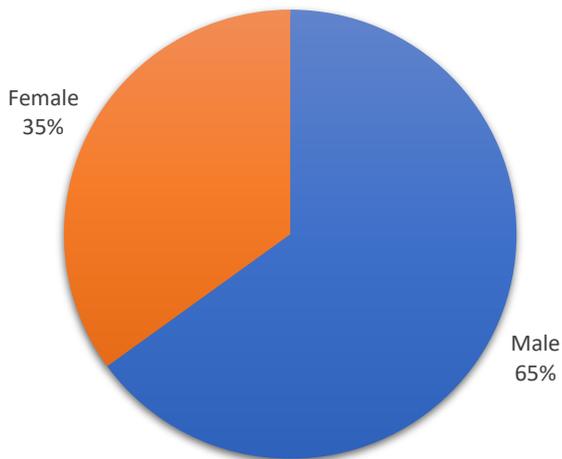
Business travellers often travel for a specific employment-related purpose and, thus, are not usually able to be persuaded to choose alternate destinations through targeted marketing or product development (other than more broadly through industry development). Thus, business travellers are not usually selected as a target market, unless they already have a “reason to visit” or one is likely to result from broader industry development strategies in a location.

Interstate Visitor Summary - Other Australians Travelling to AGO

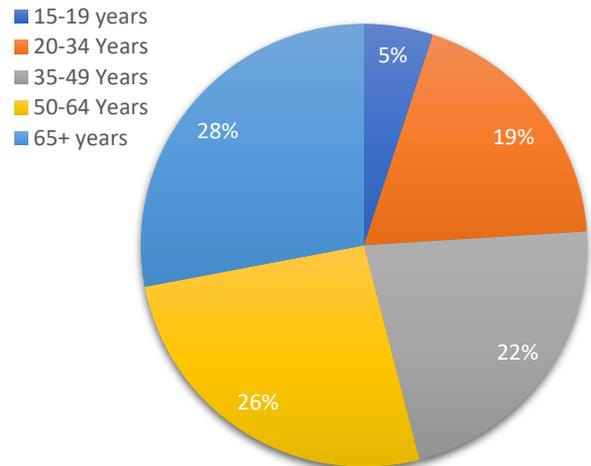
Based on Visitor Numbers – Annual Average of 2015, 2016, & 2017

Please note: Small sample size, caution should be used when reporting these estimates due to lower levels of reliability.

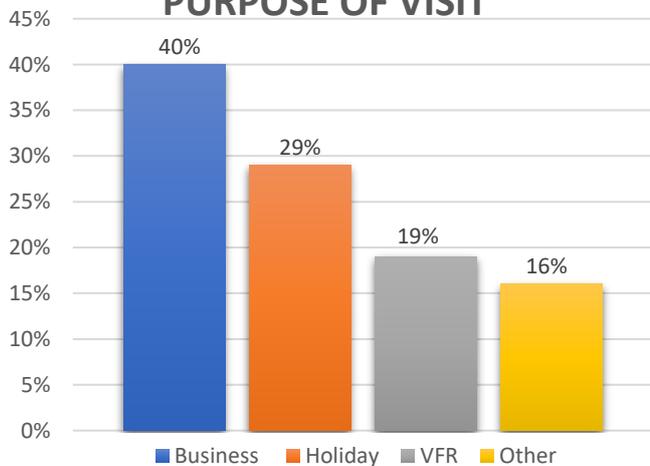
GENDER



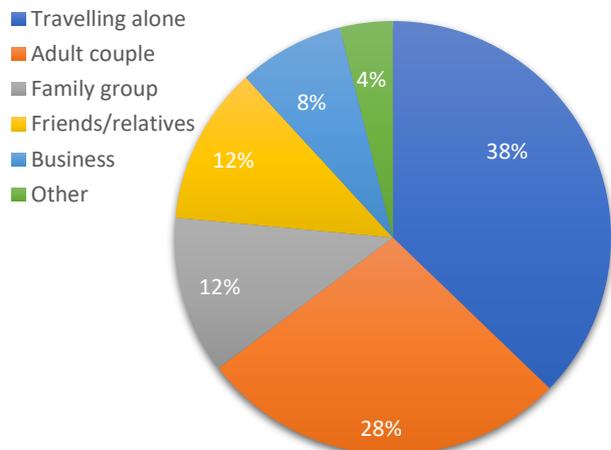
AGE



PURPOSE OF VISIT



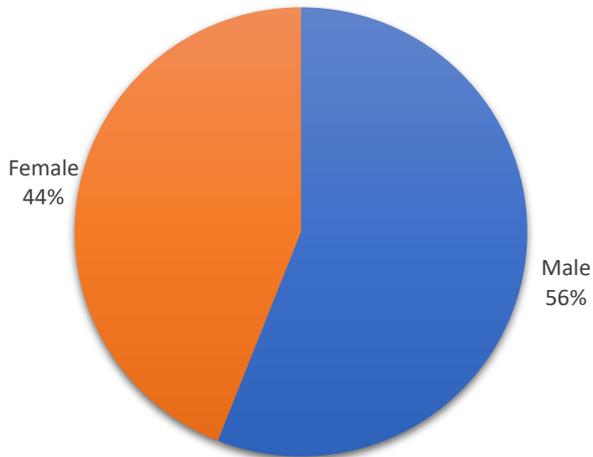
TRAVEL PARTY



International Visitor Summary - International Visitors Travelling to AGO

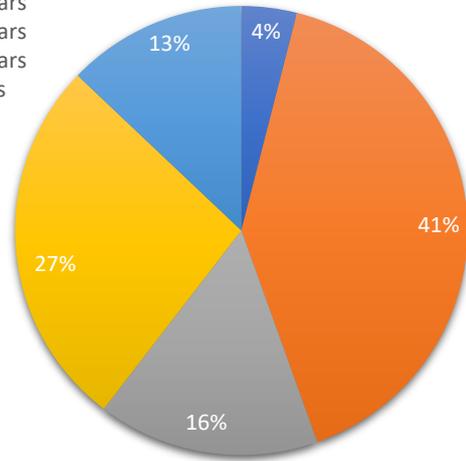
Based on Visitor Numbers – Annual Average of 2015, 2016 & 2017

GENDER

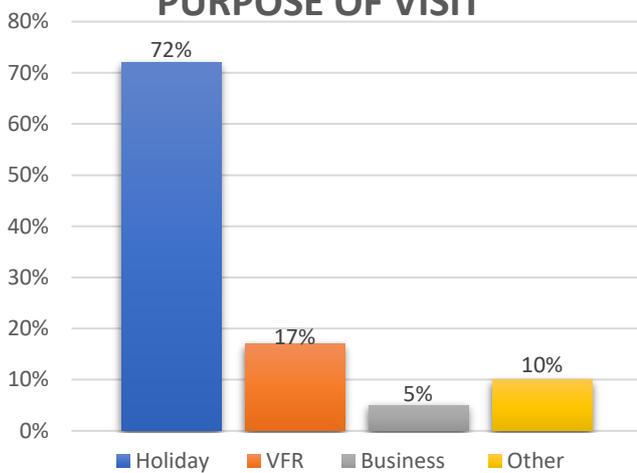


AGE

- 15-19 years
- 20-34 Years
- 35-49 Years
- 50-64 Years
- 65+ years

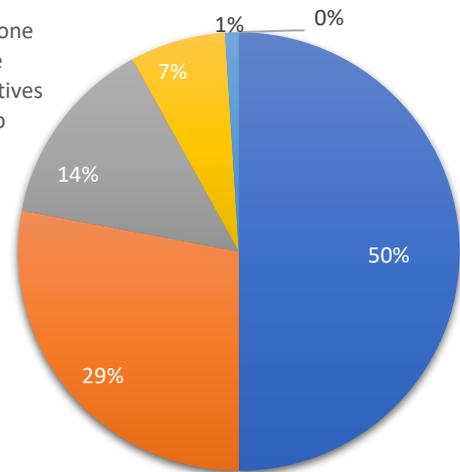


PURPOSE OF VISIT



TRAVEL PARTY

- Travelling alone
- Adult couple
- Friends/relatives
- Family group
- Business
- Other



Unlike intrastate and interstate visitors, the majority of international visitors to AGO came for a holiday and a significant majority were 20-34 years of age.

Top Five International Markets Overnight Visitors Travelling in/to AGO

Please note: Base for % is from total estimated international visitor numbers to AGO

Average Annual Visitors	YE Dec 2015/16/17	YE Dec 2015/16/17 Percent
United Kingdom	8,800	18%
New Zealand	6,700	14%
Germany	5,800	12%
France	3,000	6%
USA	2,400	5%

Regional Dispersal – AGO

Tourism WA produces profiles for each of WA's key international markets based on data in Tourism Research Australia's International Visitor Survey. The 2018 Market Profiles showed the following source markets spent at least one night in Regional WA.

Regional Dispersal by Source Market for WA's Key International Markets 2018¹⁰

Source Market	Australia's North West	Australia's Coral Coast	Experience Perth	Australia's Golden Outback	Australia's South West
Switzerland	28%	46%	94%	24%	34%
Germany	25%	34%	93%	22%	29%
New Zealand	7%	6%	89%	7%	20%
China	0%	13%	97%	7%	18%
UK	4%	10%	96%	6%	25%
Hong Kong	2%	11%	97%	5%	19%
USA	7%	12%	94%	4%	23%
Singapore	0%	5%	96%	2%	30%
Indonesia	1%	3%	97%	2%	13%
Japan	2%	8%	96%	1%	10%
Malaysia	0%	3%	99%	1%	16%
India	0%	1%	97%	1%	11%

The source markets with the highest dispersal to the AGO tourism region are Switzerland, Germany, New Zealand, and China. Although the Swiss and Germans do not make up the top two international source markets by the number of visitors to AGO, they certainly appear to have a passion for getting out to the regions and are a worthwhile market to target! New Zealand and UK have higher visitor numbers, though there is still significant potential to increase their dispersal to AGO. China is showing an increasing propensity to travel to regional WA, as they become more experienced travellers and seek new travel destinations, positioning them as a worthwhile market to target.

Visitation – The Wheatbelt Region¹¹

According to the Growing Wheatbelt Tourism Strategy, there were approximately 676,700 international and domestic visitors in the year 2014, increased from approximately 666,846 visitors in 2013 and 605,700 visitors in 2012.

Domestic travellers over this period made up approximately 94% of total visitors, dominating the Wheatbelt's tourism market.

¹⁰ International Market Profiles 2018, Tourism WA. Downloaded from <https://www.tourism.wa.gov.au/Research-Reports/Facts-Profiles/Pages/International-Visitor-Profiles.aspx?1=2#/3/7/19>

¹¹ Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017-2020, Wheatbelt Development Commission. 2017. Their sources: ¹⁹ Unpublished 2013 visitation data from Tourism WA Tourism WA (2012), 'International and Domestic Visitor Number 2001 to 2012'

While domestic visitors continue to make up the majority of total visitors, these visitation rates continue to fluctuate according to global economic cycles such as the Global Financial Crisis of 2007-08, whereas international tourist numbers appear more stable.

Map of the Wheatbelt Region



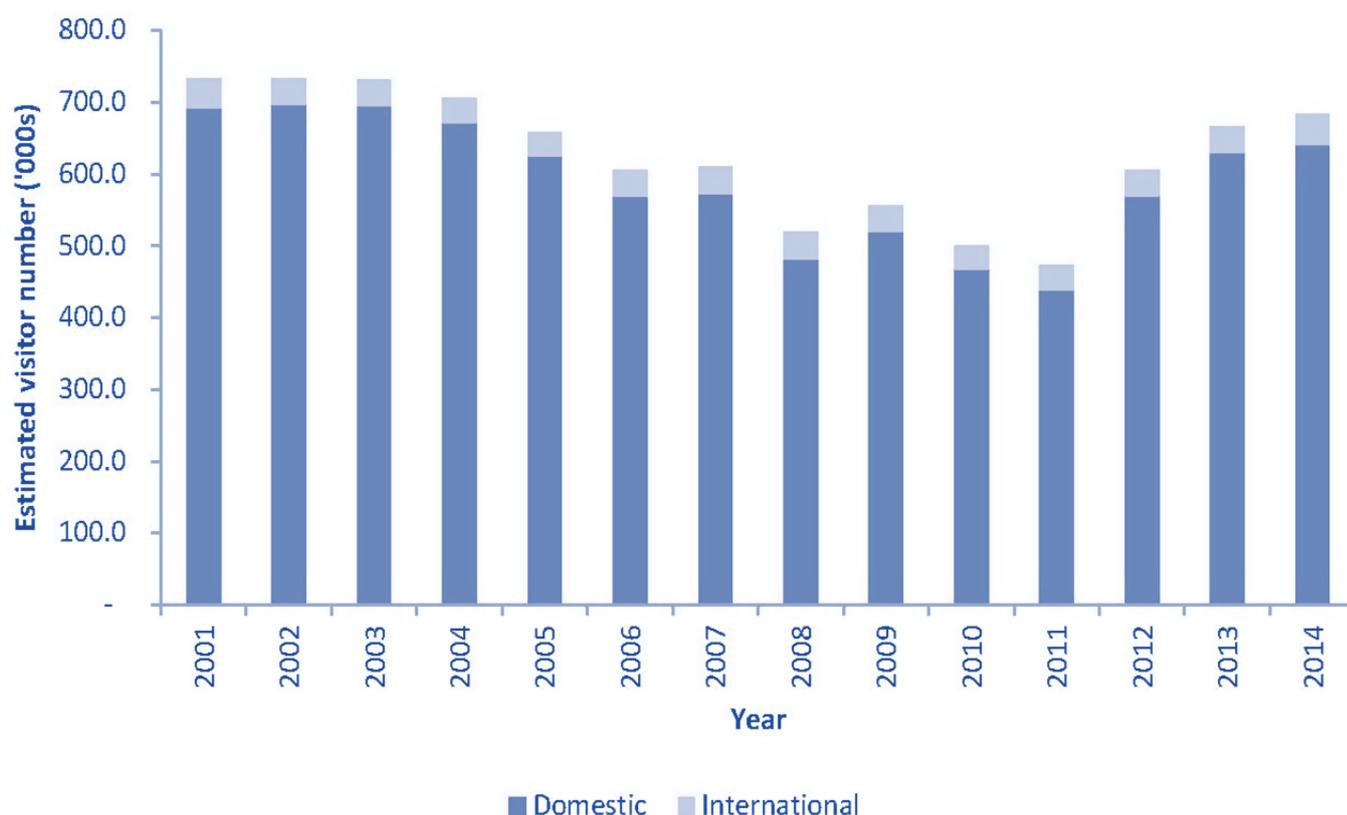
Source: Growing Wheatbelt Tourism Strategy¹²

Note: Within the Wheatbelt, three Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) operate:

- Experience Perth includes the Wheatbelt Shires of Beverley, Brookton, Chittering, Gingin, Goomalling, Northam, Toodyay, Victoria Plains (including New Norcia), Wandering, and York.
- Australia’s Coral Coast includes the one Wheatbelt Shire of Dandaragan.
- Australia’s Golden Outback includes all other 31 Wheatbelt LGAs outside of those in the Experience Perth and Australia’s Coral Coast regions.

¹² Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017-2020, Wheatbelt Development Commission. 2017. Their sources: ¹⁹ Unpublished 2013 visitation data from Tourism WA Tourism WA (2012), ‘International and Domestic Visitor Number 2001 to 2012’

Estimated visitors to the Wheatbelt (domestic and international)¹³



The Wheatbelt's many natural and heritage icons, its proximity to Perth and access via key state and federal road networks delivers annual visitor numbers of nearly 700,000.¹⁴

For the year ending 2014, the Wheatbelt had a comparatively low proportion of domestic (interstate and intrastate) and international visitors compared to the South West.

Approximately 8% of the overnight visitors in WA stayed in the Wheatbelt, compared to 23% of overnight visitors in WA who stayed in the South West. The proportion of total overnight visitors in WA who stayed in the Wheatbelt can be further broken down into:

- 8.9% of the state's **Intrastate** overnight visitors;
- 3.9% of the state's **Interstate** overnight visitors; and
- 4.9% of the state's **International** overnight visitors.

Of estimated visitor nights, less than 4% of total state nights are spent in the Wheatbelt; however, this is proportionate to:

- 4.6% of the state's Domestic total visitor nights; and
- 1.9% of the state's International total visitor nights.

¹³ Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017-2020, Wheatbelt Development Commission. 2017. [Source: Tourism WA Visitation Data]

¹⁴ Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017-2020, Wheatbelt Development Commission. 2017.

Estimated overnight visitor numbers and nights for the Wheatbelt, comparative to the South West and WA¹⁵

The table below shows the Wheatbelt had 2,265,700 visitor nights in the 2014/15 financial year and 75% of visitor nights were domestic visitors.

2014/2015	Wheatbelt	%	South West	%	WA	%
Estimated overnight visitors						
Intrastate	586,500	87%	1,739,500	88%	6,542,000	76%
Interstate	48,500	7%	113,000	6%	1,215,000	14%
International	41,200	6%	123,900	6%	827,000	10%
Total	676,700	100%	1,976,400	100%	8,584,000	100%
Estimated visitor nights						
Domestic	1,695,500	75%	5,708,000	78%	36,353,000	56%
International	570,200	25%	1,617,000	22%	28,593,000	44%
Total	2,265,700	100%	7,325,000	100%	64,946,000	100%

The highest proportion of domestic visitor nights were spent in a caravan park with 34% or 770,338 nights spent in commercial camping ground or non-commercial camping ground. As a result, this Growing Wheatbelt Tourism Strategy assumes the majority of visitors are self-drive and/or self-contained (caravans) with accommodation and meal preparation facilities.

The Strategy showed that while total overnight visitor numbers are comparatively lower than the South West, the Wheatbelt has experienced a comparatively higher increase in the total visitor number growth rate between 2011 and 2015.

A visitor number compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9.32% over the four-year period between 2011 and 2015 indicates a compound growth of approximately 9% per year; in comparison, the South West experienced a CAGR of 6.63% during the same timeframe. This indicates the Wheatbelt had a higher rate of visitor number growth than the South West, despite receiving fewer overnight visitors in total.¹⁶

Tourism Expenditure in the Wheatbelt

During the period of 2001-2012, the average tourism expenditure per year in the Wheatbelt was approximately \$202 million. During this period, total tourism expenditure was at its highest in 2012 at approximately \$239 million which was made up of:

- \$177.9 million from domestic visitors; and
- \$60.9 million from international visitors.

Tourism expenditure in the Wheatbelt for years 2011 and 2012¹⁷

	Total Visitors				Total Tourism Expenditure			
	2011		2012		2011		2012	
	Number	%	Number	%	\$m	%	\$m	%
Domestic	438,700	93	569,300	94	167.4	77	177.9	74
International	34,700	7	36,400	6	49.3	23	60.9	26
Total	473,400	100	605,700	100	216.7	100	238.8	100

Between 2001 and 2012, domestic visitor expenditure made up the majority of total expenditure; however, this continues to fluctuate according to global economic cycles. Meanwhile international visitor expenditure

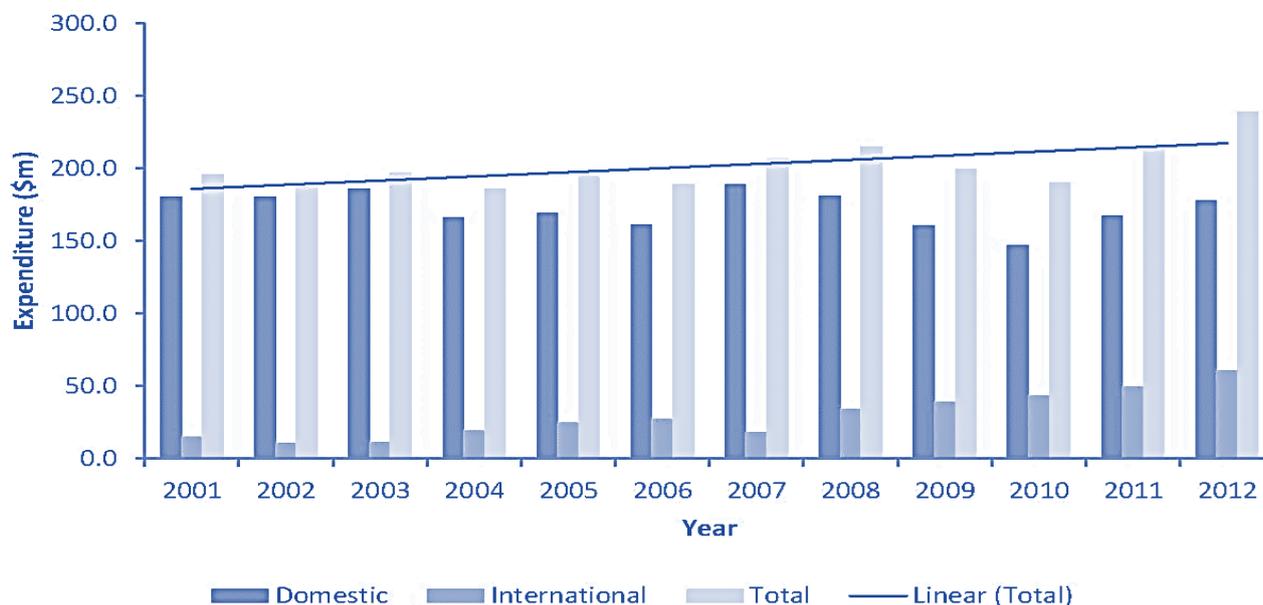
¹⁵ Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017-2020, their source: Tourism WA (2015) 'Wheatbelt Development Commission Area Overnight Visitor Fact Sheet YE 2014/15'

¹⁶ Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017-2020, Wheatbelt Development Commission. 2017.

¹⁷ Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017-2020, Wheatbelt Development Commission. 2017. Their source: Tourism WA and Department of Regional Development (2012)

quadrupled between 2001 and 2012, generating a greater proportion of the Region’s tourism income each year.¹⁸

Estimated Wheatbelt tourism expenditure 2001 to 2012 ¹⁹ [Source: Tourism WA and Department of Regional Development (2012)] ²⁰



Visitation Dryandra Woodland²¹

Perhaps the most reliable visitation estimates for Narrogin currently could be based on the visitation data collected by DBCA for nearby Dryandra Woodland.

Count	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Congelin Campground	5,964	6,616	7,217	8,020	9,225	6,337	6,337	13,437	12,841	15,738	20,597
Congelin Dam	2,839	2,996	3,720	7,931	3,498	2,258	2,258	2,258	2,258	5,133	7,622
Contine Hill East			800	720	2,693	522	522	522	522	1,062	3,228
Gnaala Mia Camp										10,319	14,437
Gura Road	2,537	3,960	2,568	1,892	1,734	1,178	1,178	1,178	1,178	1,178	1,178
Kawana Road Nth			700	890	1,904	1,904	1,904	1,904	1,904	1,904	1,904
Lol Gray										3,852	3,852
Tomingley Road E	13,625	13,336	18,756	10,184	12,746	10,330	10,330	22,899	19,009	17,096	20,003
Tomingley Road W	7,471	7,437	10,340	9,819	7,443	9,040	9,040	16,148	14,723	13,246	18,811
Visitation total	32,436	34,345	44,101	39,456	39,243	31,569	31,569	58,346	52,435	69,528	91,632

Note: Changes in collection methodology are indicated by separators in table above

Though changes to data collection methodology impact how this data can be interpreted, and it is vehicle movement counts rather than actual visits or number of visitors, it is interesting to note there has been nearly a threefold increase in visitation over the 10-year period from 2007/08 to 2017/18.

The visitation seasonality chart below shows a relatively even seasonal distribution for visitation to Dryandra Woodland with summer showing the lowest visitation, and the peaks occurring in three out of the four school

¹⁸ Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017-2020, Wheatbelt Development Commission. 2017.

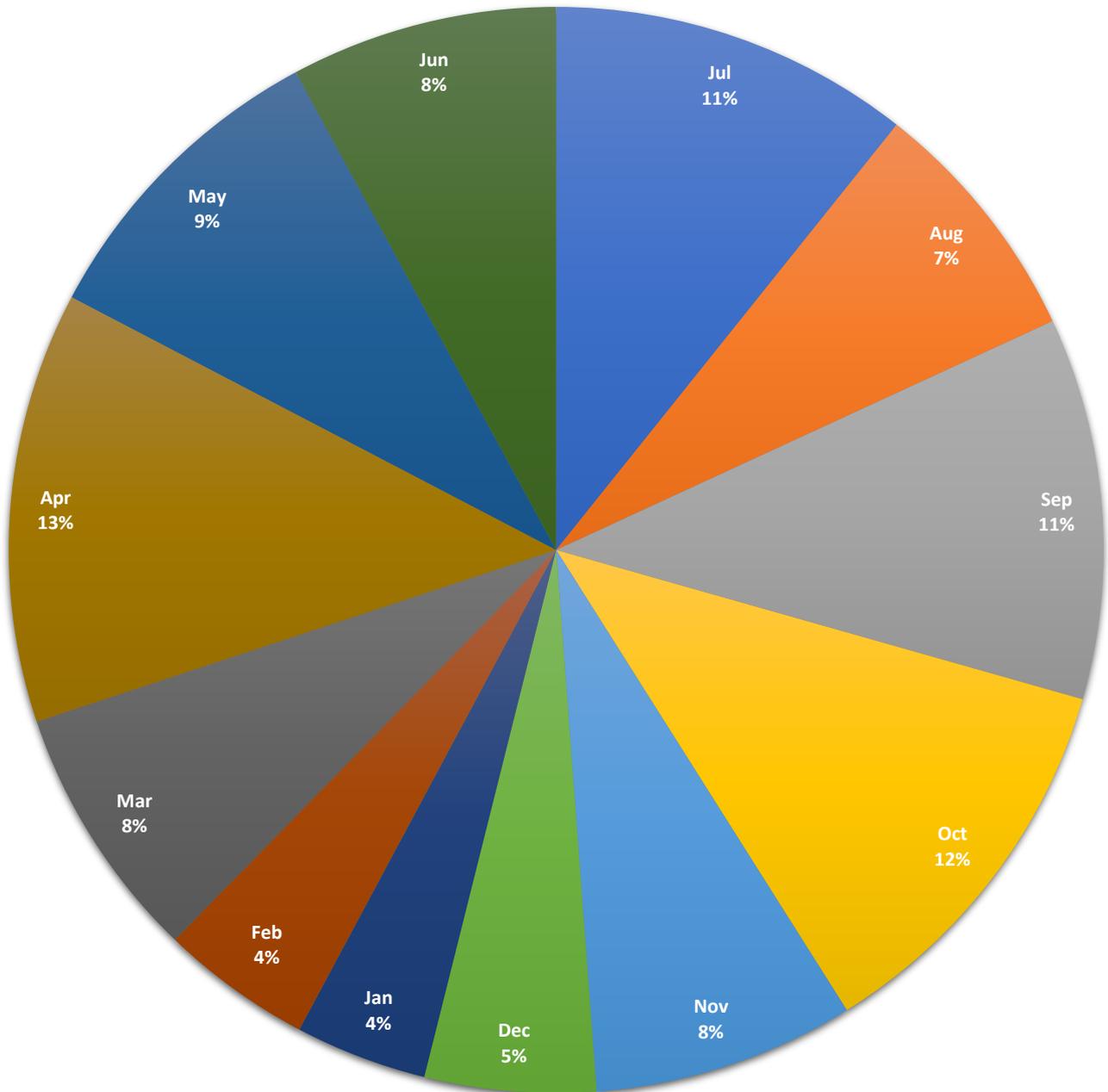
¹⁹ Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017-2020, Wheatbelt Development Commission. 2017. Their source: Tourism WA and Department of Regional Development (2012)

²⁰ Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017-2020, Wheatbelt Development Commission. 2017.

²¹ Data supplied via email 29/05/19 by Michael Tuffin - Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

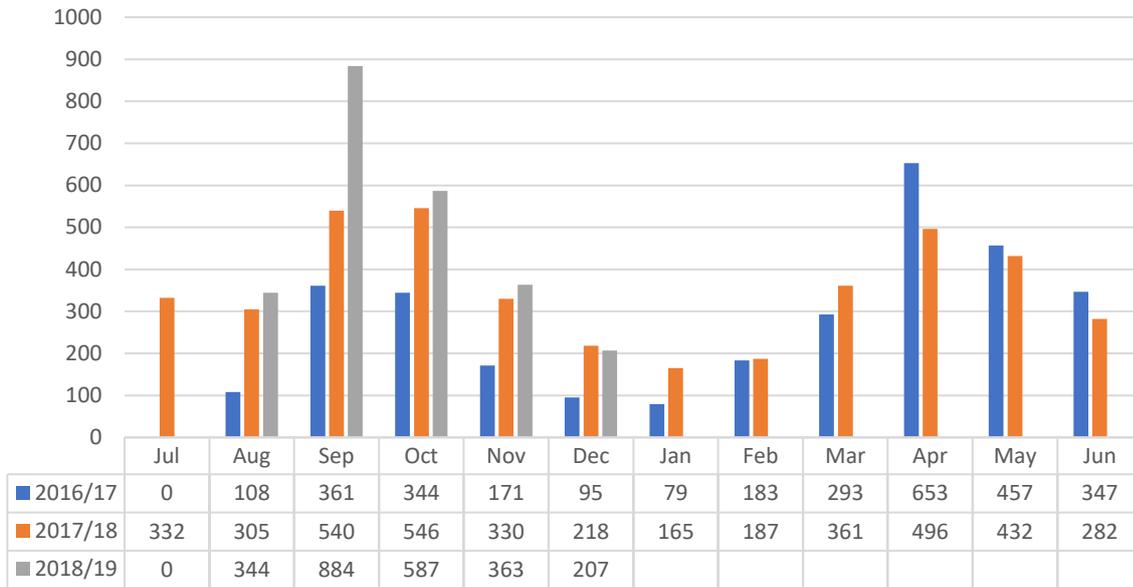
holiday periods (April, July, September/October). This contrasts with the South West where the peaks are more often found in the December/January school holidays.

Visitation Seasonality - Dryandra Woodland

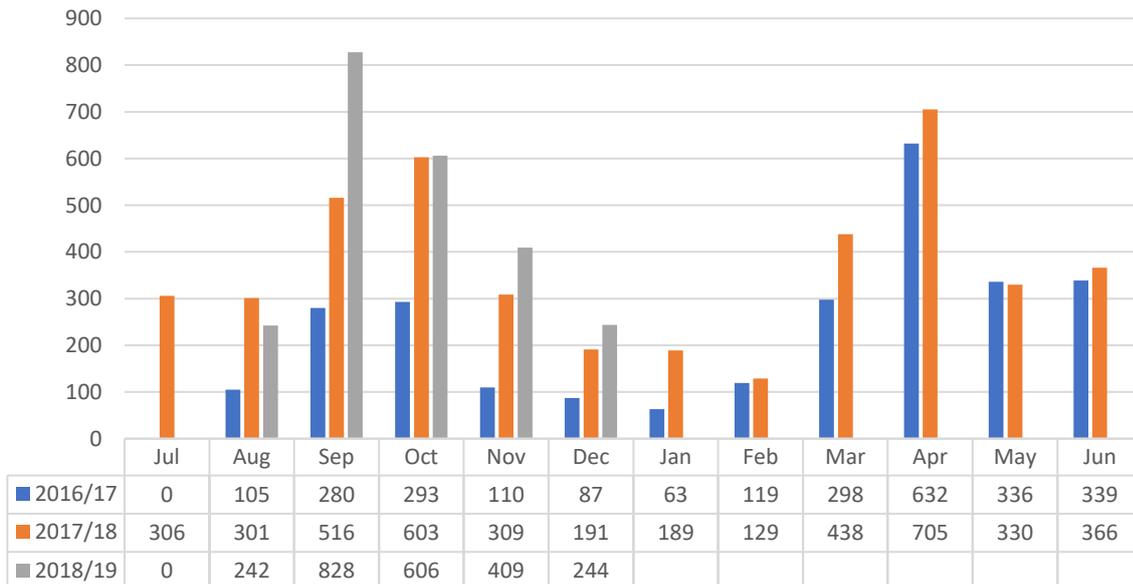


Similar trends are reflected in the vehicles entering the two campgrounds as show in the charts on the following page.

Vehicles Entering Congelin Campground



Vehicles Entering Gnaala Mia Campground



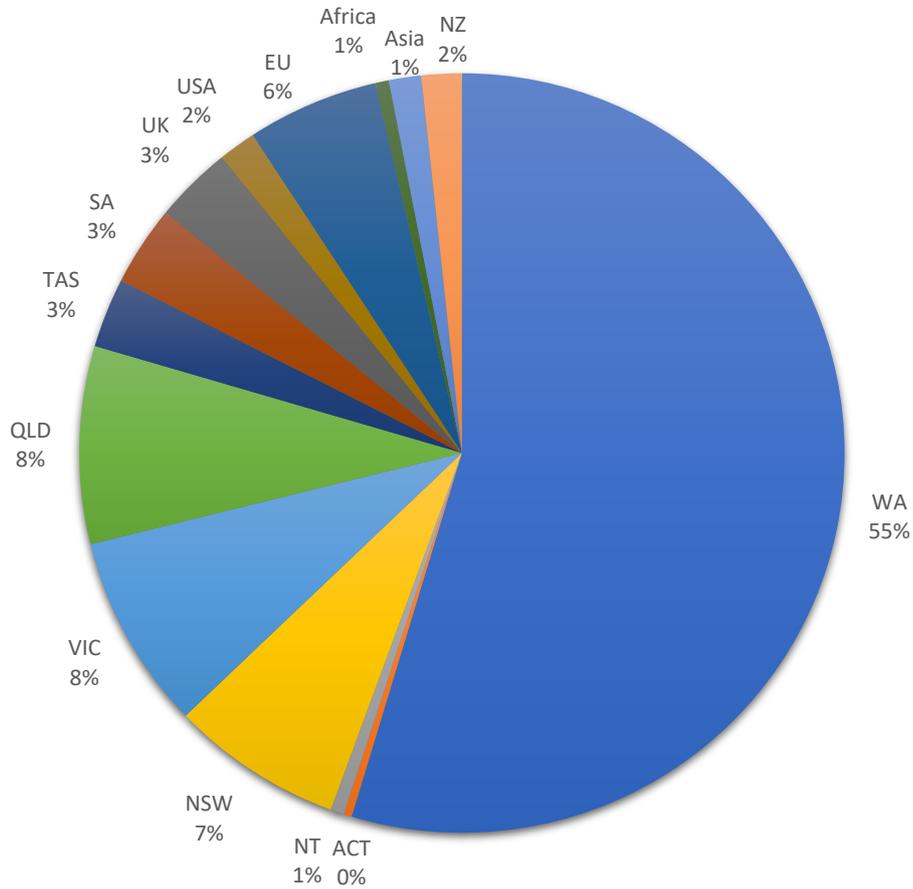
Seasonality trends for Dryandra Woodland will likely smooth out the overall seasonality of visitation to Narrogin, though collection of data for seasonality of visitation to Narrogin outside of Dryandra Woodland is not currently available. This information should be sought from tourism operators (even if just anecdotally) to assess what strategies are needed to improve the seasonal distribution of visitors.

There is solid annual growth in vehicle entries into the two campgrounds. It is assumed collection methodology (or closure of the campgrounds) caused the zero entries for July in 2016 and 2018 for both campgrounds.

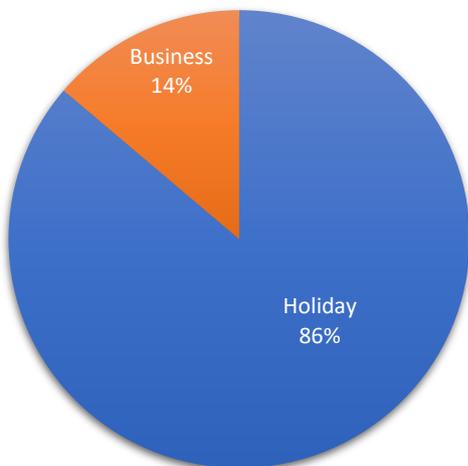
Visitor Behaviour Study²²– Dryandra Country

The Dryandra Country Visitor Centre collected data from visitors to identify demographics and visitor behaviour whilst in the region. The charts below represent the approximately 880 responses that had been input as at July 2019.

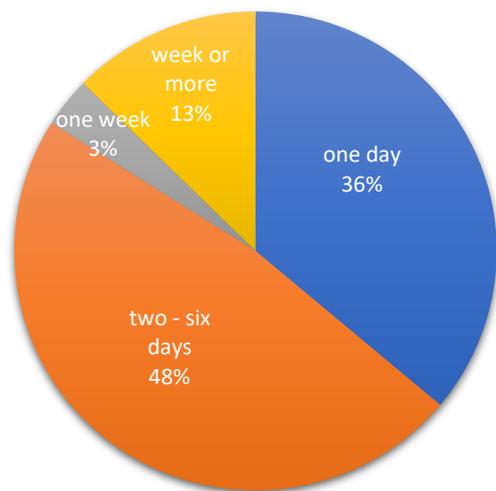
Origin



Purpose of Visit

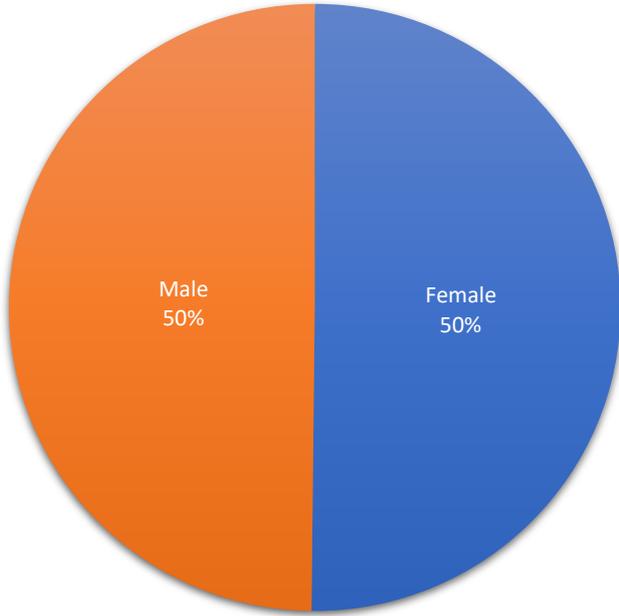


Length of Stay

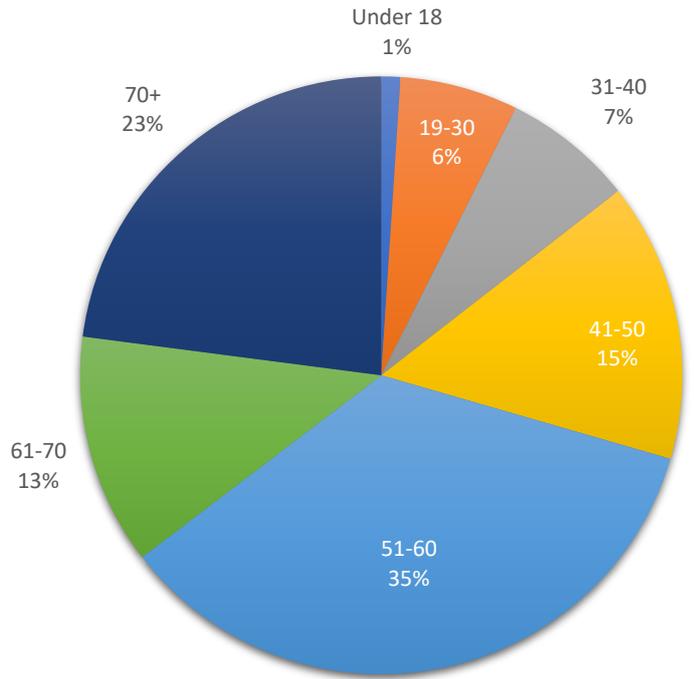


²² Dryandra country Visitor Centre Visitor Behaviour Study Data – analysed by Brighthouse

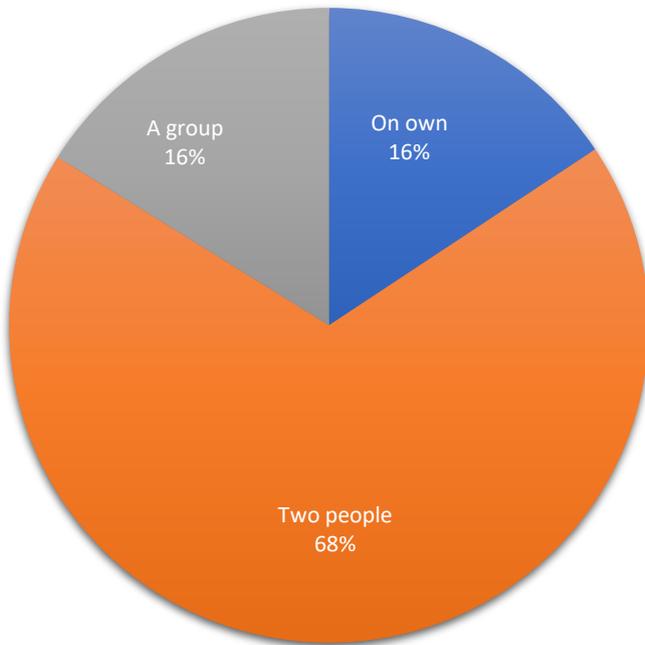
Gender



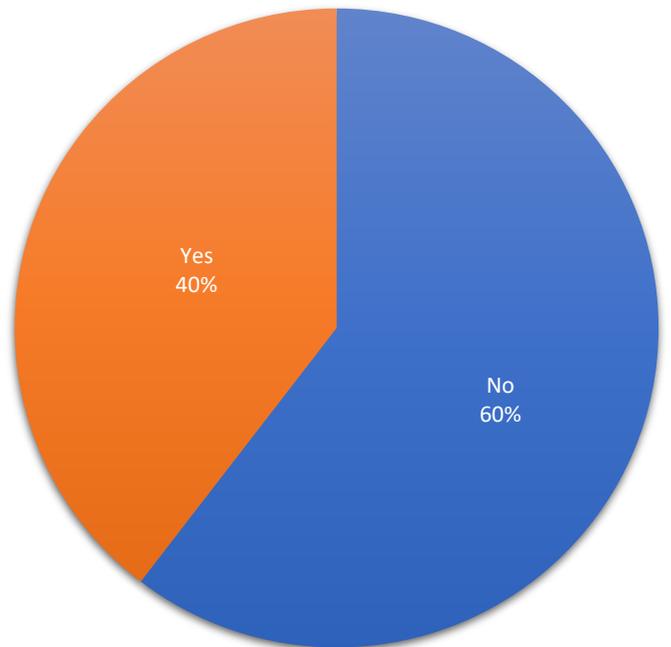
Age (years)



Group Size



Returning Visit



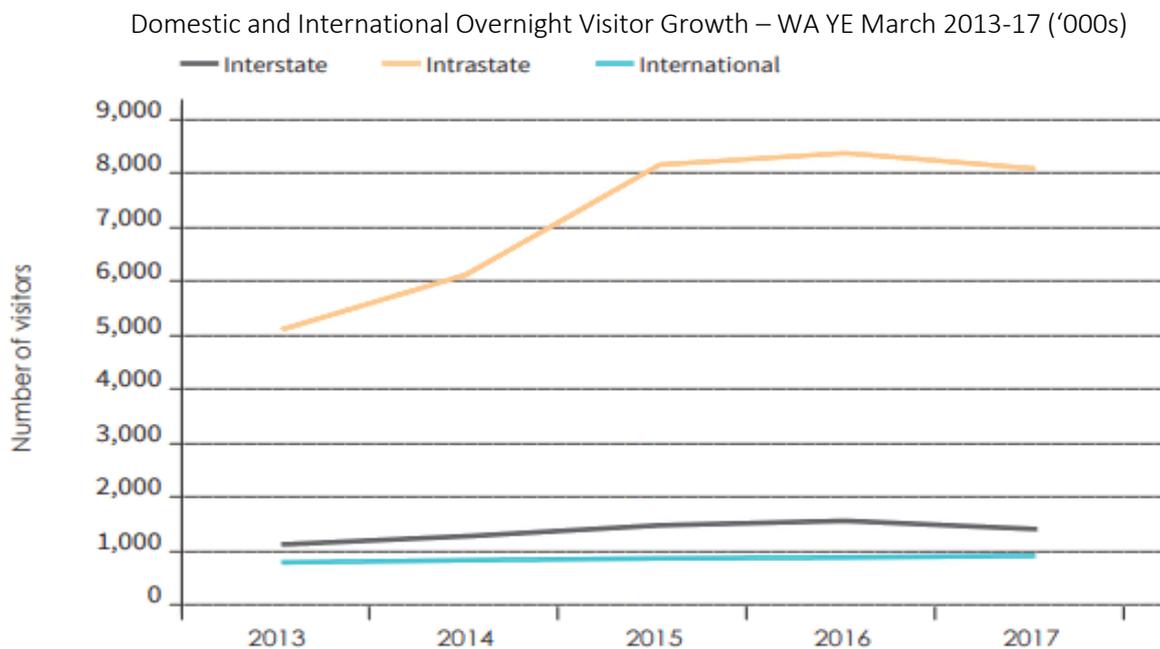
Target Markets

In line with the broader Wheatbelt region, Narrogin’s key advantages from a tourism perspective relate to people, nature, and heritage. It is one of the Wheatbelt’s more easily accessible short-drive destinations from Perth, offering an opportunity to leverage off this locational advantage.... A short drive to experience country life!

The self-drive touring market is one of Australia’s most lucrative tourism markets. In 2012, a total of 3.7 million domestic and international touring visitors spent 42.8 million nights travelling Australia.²³ On the whole, they enjoy nature-based, learning and education, and food and wine experiences and, as domestic markets go, have similar spend patterns to other domestic segments. This is a large group and includes two main sub-groups: 1) domestic and international self-drive holiday travellers with caravans, camper vans, and camping equipment; and 2) those without caravans, camper vans, or camping equipment, including budget-conscious travellers.

Research by the Caravan, RV, and Accommodation Industry of Australia (CRVA) found families comprise 58% of the total market. While senior travellers (mainly retirees and over 65 years of age) comprise 24%, 11% were young couples aged between 25 and 40 years and 7% were travellers between 41 and 65 years. The findings highlight the importance of the family segment to the industry.

With domestic visitation consistently comprising over 90% of visitors to the Wheatbelt, Australian’s are the most significant target market for Narrogin. The FACTBase Bulletin 55 (August 2017) identified that “In 2015–16 Australian residents made 88.9 million domestic overnight trips – the equivalent of more than 4.5 trips for each Australian resident aged 15 and over Most (69%) of these trips were intrastate, and, as a result, the economic contribution of intrastate travel was higher than that of interstate travel: \$31.9 billion compared to \$27.1 billion. However, growth in interstate travel, which increased 8.0%, exceeded growth in intrastate travel, up 6.4% over the 2015-16 period²⁴



Data Source: TWA, 2017; TWA, 2017a

In the coming five years, domestic overnight trips in Australia are predicted to increase 3.5% per annum to reach 105.7 million trips. Over the same period, nights are expected to grow 3.0% per annum to 380.5 million nights, while spend could increase 4.9% per annum to reach \$74.9 billion. It is predicted that growth in visitor

²³ 2013- TRA – Profiling Australia’s Tourism Visitor Segments

²⁴ Tourism Research Australia 2017

nights will be driven by business trips, which are anticipated to increase 5.0% per annum to 85.7 million nights, and holiday trips, which are projected to increase 2.7% per annum to 160.3 million nights²⁵.

Narrogin's Alignment with Key Target Markets

An area steeped in history with significant biodiversity and natural surroundings, Narrogin offers tourists a unique opportunity to learn about unique flora and fauna as well as our important agricultural industry. As the rich offerings of the region were exposed during the research phase of this study, it became evident that there were fascinating and compelling stories just waiting to be told about the area and its people.

The broad target market for tourism resides with "Experience Seekers," especially those whose interests are aligned with heritage and cultural learning, nature-based tourism, and educational-experiential travel.

In 2017, Tourism WA introduced a new domestic segmentation model,²⁶ which sought to identify personality traits of visitors as it considered existing audiences (e.g., Experience Seekers) had become too broad to effectively target consumers through some media channels.

The aim was to understand the Australian travelling population's holiday attitudes, behaviours, and current perceptions of WA. Latent class analysis was undertaken to divide the population into segments based on their holiday behaviour and needs and to build out a detailed and comprehensive profile of each segment covering psychographics, demographics, and, importantly, detailed technology usage, and media behaviours and attitudes. The new segments are identified as:

- Escape and Connect
- Bright Lights
- Off the Beaten Track
- Family Fun
- Relax and Unwind
- Culture Vultures

Three of the above visitor profiles were considered appropriate to Narrogin's Experience Seeker visitor segment definition – Escape and Connect, Off the Beaten Track, and Family Fun. The personality, demographics, key themes, holiday needs, and behaviour of these segments are consistent with the visitor audience this strategy proposes to target.

The broad Experience Seekers group also comprises several sub-groups, differentiated by their mode of travel.

Those who self-drive in private or hire vehicles are regarded as being primary targets. Other travellers utilising tour coaches are secondary target markets, but with limited resources available, it is proposed that the tourism strategy is initially focussed on self-drive experience seekers.

It is important that the individual components comprising this broad target market definition are identified and that specific actionable plans are attributed to each of the segments. Significant crossover exists between the individual components. For instance, the caravanning and camping market segment has been identified as an important sector for Narrogin. However, within that segment are various sub-segments, including families, grey nomads, and backpackers.

The self-drive (non-caravanning and camping) market segment may also include those three categories as well as others – business travellers for example. The non-caravanning self-drive segment will generally seek

²⁵ Davis, G. (2017) Sizing Tourism in Western Australia, FACTBase Bulletin 55, The University of Western Australia and the Committee for Perth, Perth.

²⁶

<https://www.tourism.wa.gov.au/Publications%20Library/Research%20and%20reports/CDP%202017%20reports/Tourism%20WA%20Domestic%20Segmentation%20COMPLETE.pdf>

accommodation in hotels, motels, bed and breakfast establishments, and farm-stays. However, some will choose cabin accommodation in caravan parks.

It is essential that the Narrogin tourism strategy and action plan address the similarities as well as the differences between the various sub-segments.

Events are an opportunity to raise awareness and interest amongst the target market segments and to incubate other secondary segment, such as coach travellers, provided an event is of such significance that it justifies the effort in reaching those market segments. Regional events, such as the annual Deniliquin Ute Muster, Nannup Flower and Garden Festival, and Boddington Rodeo, have proven to very successful and could be replicated in Narrogin, subject to identifying an appropriate theme.

Target Market Trends

The Renaissance of Rural/Regional Tourism and Experiential Travel^{27 28}

- The stresses of urban living and disconnection from the natural environment creates a desire for city residents to escape from the “pressure cooker” of city living. It is important to keep in mind that 70% of Australians live in cities with population greater than 500,000 people; this is the market seeking escape from the urban pressure.
- Rural locations offer an opportunity to re-engage with a simpler, quieter way of life that offers rest and relaxation. Demand has been fuelled by a media looking for the latest “new thing.”
- Green issues have also raised the attractiveness of rural experiences as ecologically sustainable tourism.
- A move toward short-break holidays is fuelling three-five-day getaways to country destinations
- Gen X and Y and even Baby Boomers have an increased interest in outdoor recreation, eco-tourism, and special interest tourism. Individualism drives a need for unique experiences, and rural tourism, with its diversity of offerings, can satisfy this need.
- Australians have an increased interest in history; rural areas are often caches of heritage left by settlers who moved outwards from the first settlements, be it buildings or “old railway towns” in the case of Narrogin.
- Rural and country areas are perceived as being “healthier,” offering fresher air, cleaner water, and the opportunity for outdoor recreation.
- There appears to be an increasing desire for authentic experiences, including interaction with local people. Rural tourism is REAL (Rewarding, Enriches the spirit, provides Adventure and Learning). Authenticity is believed to be found in genuine country experiences and lifestyles.

Visitors to Regional Australia, 2011 to 2016



²⁷ Sykes, K.W. 2011 – The Growing Rural Tourism Industry; a Survey in the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand

²⁸ 2014- Heritage Council of WA Presentation – Heritage Tourism Opportunities in WA

Australian Social and Generational Travel Trends

Visitors to AGO are strongly influenced by niche visitor interests such as history, nature, and culture. Older Western Australian’s are one of the key target markets for Narrogin, and, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, “The Australian population is ageing, with older Australians a growing proportion of the total population. In 2017, 15% of Australians (3.8 million) were aged 65 and over; this proportion is projected to grow steadily over the coming decades.”²⁹

Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y	Generation Z
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby Boomers were the ‘Hippies’ and ‘Yuppies’, and were raised by the ‘Builders’ (born 1924-1945) • Born post war in an optimistic and stable world • Our broadest age cohort • Many are retiring or are semi-retired. • Most have had stable jobs, have a comfortable “nest egg” and discretionary income from savings or super. • Among Australia’s largest travelling group, especially on extended self-drive holidays • Many want to explore the country they’ve grown up in but have never travelled throughout extensively. • A significant proportion own caravans or RVs and stay in caravan parks on their trip • Many are indulging in costly international trips to places they’ve only dreamt of; cruises to Asia-Pacific, the Rhine, Caribbean, US, & Canada 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They were raised by the early Baby Boomers • Born into a world witnessing a trend toward divorce and economic/job uncertainty • Born between 1965 and 1980. • Characterised as individualists and skeptical of authority • Most are married or, have been and have children aged 10-17 • Love to travel and have travelled more extensively and frequently than their parents, but now are more cost conscious than the BBs, with a mortgage and all the attendant costs of a partner and children, even if separated. • Recent CVRA research actually identifies this group among the largest users of caravan park accommodation • At the same time they’ve fully leveraged the strong Aussie \$ and plethora of low-cost Asian airlines to the family on cheap package trips especially to South East Asia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also called ‘Millennials’ they were raised by late Baby Boomers • Born between 1981 and 1994. • Grew up in a world of inter-regional conflicts • Witnessed 1st digital technologies; internet, email (SMS) • Optimistic, tech-comfortable, globally aware and style-conscious • Keen travel “Explorers” and seek experiences. • Many of the youngest have taken their first independent trip, often the Bali package with mates. Especially if they are West Australians. • Older Gen Y’s, may have travelled extensively – for many they are yet to have children, so even if married dual incomes, allowing room to spend. • May have a mortgage but with rates in the last 5 years at their lowest in history they can still travel. • Their “Explorer” nature has led many lived and worked overseas for a period, especially post <u>university</u>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also known as ‘Digital Natives’, they are being raised by Generation X • Most commonly agreed to be born between 1995 and 2010. • Born into a world facing challenges such as terrorism and environmental concerns • Witnessed widespread use of electronic gadgets and digital technologies like the Internet and social networking sites • Characterised as tech-savvy, globally connected (in the virtual world), flexible and smarter, and tolerant of diverse culture. • The eldest are perhaps taking a gap year after school to travel and work taking at least an annual overseas (given current affordability) in South East Asia.

²⁹ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/older-people/older-australia-at-a-glance/contents/demographics-of-older-australians>. Downloaded 1/7/2019

Australian travellers' preferences are changing

A changing social and economic environment is also responsible for a shift in the way tourists purchase travel products. An examination of key global trends is equally important to consider when looking at product distribution – both currently and what is required to maintain a competitive advantage in the future.³⁰

Demography - The number of healthy and active seniors with higher disposable incomes is growing; in turn, this group will demand quality, convenience, security, easy transportation, relaxing entertainment facilities, one-person products, and an emphasis on comfort when buying tourism products. They will also increase their demand for luxury, special products, and short-term breaks, and winter sun holidays.

Health - Likewise, the number of health-conscious travellers are demanding “healthy” destinations. For the tourism industry, the trends point to a decrease in the demand for sun-holidays and a rise in active/activity holidays coupled with an increased desire for wellness and a connection to nature.

Awareness and Education – The average level of education is increasing and with this, an increase in the demand for special products, such as arts, culture, and history components in package tours as well as self-organised holidays. Because travellers are better educated and more aware of their surroundings, the methods in which a potential tourism destination needs to communicate information to this segment of the population will need to be more creative.

Experiential Travel - More sophisticated consumers, with higher levels of education and awareness as discussed above, want their travel to deliver new and interesting “experiences,” rather than simply sights and facts. They want to explore the unique, the exotic, and the unexpected places and experiences that evoke emotion and inspire exploration and engagement.

Transportation – The advent of low-cost carriers means that destinations that are available for easy, short breaks will increase, along with “budget” cruises.

What is clear from the research above is that contemporary Australians, across all age groups, have become what Tourism Australia defines as “Experience Seekers.” They have similarities across many aspects of their lives, what they desire from their holidays, and across different age cohorts. However, the differences must be recognised to successfully reach the various groups that make up Experience Seekers. For example, Baby Boomers are relaxed, financially secure, comfortable, and keen to try new travel experiences, Generation Xers have already travelled far more than their parents ever did when they were in their 20/30s and, while families and mortgages motivate them to seek good value-for-money travel, they are avid travellers and seek new experiences when they travel.

Gen Y, many of whom have already spent a couple of years living and working overseas, are globally aware and technologically savvy. While the newcomers Generation Z, the eldest of whom, are just breaking out on that first or second free independent travel venture, are “digital natives.” For both this cohort and Gen Y:

A strong, consistent, omni-channel digital destination image and presence is the key to gaining interest, desire, and, finally, take action to visit a destination.

Travel Planning and Booking

The Internet is increasingly being utilised as a planning tool, but not so much as a source of inspiration. People often decide where they want to go and then use the power of online search engines to help plan and purchase products. Furthermore, the Internet has resulted in more independent information gathering by travellers. According to IBIS World’s Online Travel Bookings - Australia Market Research Report (February 2019), the Online Travel Bookings industry has grown strongly over the past five years with annual growth of 21.7% from 2014 to 2019. The rise of online purchasing channels has disrupted the tourism supply chain, increasing the choices available to consumers. Consumers are increasingly integrating Internet and mobile

³⁰ Tourism Trends in Australia, Tourism Research Australia, September 2012

connectivity into their everyday lives and are becoming more comfortable booking travel online. In addition, Australians have travelled more regularly over the past five years, both domestically and abroad.

The Online Travel Bookings industry is in the growth phase of its life cycle. Industry value added, a measure of the industry's contribution to the overall economy, is forecast to grow at an annualised 16.5% over the 10 years through 2023-24. The industry is expected to significantly outperform projected real GDP growth of 2.7% over the same period, which is characteristic of a growing industry.

Industry participation has also grown significantly over the past five years. Potential entrants have taken the opportunity to capture the emerging online segment of travel bookings, especially as Internet penetration rates have risen and online shopping has become increasingly integrated into consumers' lives.³¹

Due to the mobile nature of travel, smartphones and tablets have become the key tools used by travellers from the start (e.g., searching for a new destination to visit) to the finish of their journey (e.g., posting reviews and on social media sites).

The SaleCycle Blog collated trends in the digital travel space summarising the following points:

- Although mobile apps and bookings are increasing significantly, desktop remains the most popular option for making travel bookings in US and Europe, a report from EyeForTravel³² shows 77% of German travel bookings were made on a desktop, 72% for the US and 65% for UK.
- With more than 325 million monthly users, Tripadvisor can influence a lot of online travel purchases. Travel customers who visit Tripadvisor are also more likely to take time over research, with more than 80% taking more than four weeks to complete a purchase.
- Booking.com is now the most popular travel site worldwide, with more than 443 million monthly visitors in May 2018.³³

Already, many of the traditional Internet travel service providers have free mobile apps including TripAdvisor, Travelocity, Booking.com, Expedia, Lastminute.com, and many more. They have seen the move towards mobile Internet use increasing and away from desktop research and have been quick to establish their footprint in the new space.

*Peer-to-Peer Travel*³⁴

Recent developments in online commerce and social media have made sharing travel services easier, leading to new business models involving peer-to-peer options. Peer-to-peer property rental (also known as person-to-person home rental) is the process whereby an existing house owner makes their house or an empty room available for others to rent for short periods of time as an alternative form of accommodation.

Peer-to-peer property rental is a form of peer-to-peer renting, an aspect of the so-called “sharing economy” that has largely been facilitated on online and social media.

Older retiree travellers especially seek low cost travel options and the sharing economy offers opportunities at lower prices than ever before.

Online peer-to-peer rental accommodation offerings have become more numerous and diverse and include;

- Airbnb
- HomeAway
- 9flats
- HouseTrip
- Roomorama
- Wimdu

³¹ Online Travel Bookings - Australia Market Research Report, IBIS World 2019.

³² The SaleCycle Blog (blog.salecycle.com/stats/digital-trends-travel-industry-12-fascinating-stats/) downloaded 18/06/2019

³³ The SaleCycle Blog (blog.salecycle.com/stats/digital-trends-travel-industry-12-fascinating-stats/) downloaded 18/06/2019

³⁴ 2014-World Travel Organisation – Global Travel Trends Report and Grail Research 2013 Gen Y and Z Profiles

There are also tours, guide services, and unique travel experiences offered by sites such as Touristlink and Vayable where travellers can get in touch with local residents.

These sites offer particular benefits to operators of micro business and those looking for a supplemental income where demand will not support fully fledged tourism enterprises. Though the established tourism industry is not generally supportive due to the competitive threats, if done fairly, it can add great diversity and deliver additional business and benefits for the broader tourism, retail, and hospitality industry.

Image supplied courtesy of Tourism Western Australia



Tourism Audit

An audit of the existing supply of tourism infrastructure, experiences, and services lays the groundwork for the gap analysis and assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Accommodation Options in Narrogin

The following accommodation options were listed on Trip Advisor as of 17 May 2019:

Narrogin Motel

Trip Advisor Rating 3.5 Stars from 47 reviews

56 Williams Rd, Narrogin, Western Australia, Australia

Sample review "friendly staff at the Narrogin Motel. The rooms are large..."

Albert Facey Motel

Trip Advisor Rating 4 Stars from 65 reviews

78 Williams Rd, Narrogin, Western Australia, Australia

Sample review "... have never been disappointed."

Bella's Country Place

Trip Advisor Rating 4.5 Stars from 34 reviews

46 Herald St, Narrogin, Western Australia, Australia

Sample review "...stay here again should we be in or near to Narrogin"

Duke of York Hotel

Trip Advisor Rating 3.5 Stars from 32 reviews

Federal Street, Narrogin, Western Australia, Australia

Sample review "... if we returned to Narrogin would definitely stay here rather than the..."

New Cornwall Hotel

Not yet rated on Trip Advisor

12 Doney St, Narrogin

Chuckem Farmstay and B&B

Trip Advisor Rating 5 Stars from 4 reviews

1481 Tarwonga Road, Narrogin, Western Australia, Australia

Sample review "Perched on a hill near Narrogin, this is a lovely place to stay."

Eden Valley Farmstay

Trip Advisor Rating 4 Stars from 5 reviews

3733 Williams-Kondinin Road, Narrogin, Western Australia, Australia

Sample review "Very private with beautiful views of the farm already booked for our return trip."

Narrogin Caravan Park

Trip Advisor Rating 3 Stars from 1 review

Narrogin Caravan Park 80 Williams Rd, Narrogin, Western Australia, Australia

Free Camping

Free camping is reportedly available at Downderry Wines (for anyone who purchases their wine). There are also free 72-hour RV Camping Sites at Narrogin town centre and Highbury.

Dryandra Woodland

Though technically not located in the Shire of Narrogin, a range of accommodation and camping options are available inside the Dryandra Woodland. As these are particularly relevant to Narrogin, they are listed below:

Site	Number of Camp Sites	Status	Campground Category	Fees
Congelin Campground	12	Open	Standard	Camp Fee - Basic
Gnaala Mia Campground	18	Open	Standard	Camp Fee - Facility

Lions Dryandra Woodland Village

Leased land within the National Park with basic accommodation, including:

- Six large three-bedroom cottages – sleep 8 to 10 people in each
- Two small one-bedroom cottages – sleeps two people in each
- Currawong Complex – sleeps up to 56 people in four large dormitory rooms

Accommodation Options Rating/Competitive Edge

The smaller owner operator accommodation options generally receive better reviews and ratings than the larger commercial establishments.

The enjoyment of the “accommodation experience” is noted in many of the reviews of the smaller farm-stays. The larger establishments whilst receiving predominantly positive reviews appear to deliver more functional accommodation rather than the experiential accommodation provided by the smaller micro businesses.

Albert Facey Motel has better reviews than the other larger commercial hotels, with comments on comfort, cleanliness, and convenience.

There is an opportunity to highlight the regions character and stories to bring more of an experiential focus to some of the larger accommodation businesses to give them a better sense of place. Marketing should continue to actively promote the unique experiences at the smaller farm-stays and bed and breakfast style accommodation in the interim.

The caravan park receives mostly average ratings on review sites (TripAdvisor, Google reviews, and WikiCamps) and comments are made about ageing facilities and lack of shade. The service and cleanliness are generally rated high and there is a significant number of comments stating how pleased visitors were with the \$10 vouchers to spend in town. Currently plans are underway to construct two cottages with two bedrooms in each and wheelchair access.

Given the extreme importance of the self-drive market to Narrogin and the broader Wheatbelt region, upgrades to the existing caravan park, together with the development of appealing nature-based camping opportunities needs to be considered.

Visitor Information Sources - Information and Marketing

There are a range of sources for information about Narrogin, these are summarised below.

Tourism WA

The Narrogin listing on the Tourism WA website focusses on Dryandra Woodland (flora and fauna) and town heritage and architecture. It mentions Yilliminning Rock and provides a summary of accommodation types. It has one heritage image of the town hall.

www.westernaustralia.com/en/Destination/Narrogin

AGO

The AGO website listing for Narrogin focusses on Dryandra Woodland (flora and fauna). It also mentions Foxes Lair, Old Court House Museum, Wildflowers, the Visitor Centre and the town's gardens, parks, and buildings, and the leisure complex. It provides a summary of accommodation types and has a video and image of Dryandra Woodland wildlife.

www.australiasgoldenoutback.com/destination/narrogin

Shire of Narrogin Website

The Shire website links to www.dryandratourism.org.au, www.foxeslair.org and has a paragraph and image about Yilliminning Rock.

<https://www.narrogin.wa.gov.au/home.aspx>

Dryandra Tourism Website

Dryandra Woodland Tourism (see below under activities and attractions) has general information about things to do in Narrogin, together with information about Dryandra Woodland, Foxes Lair, and other local tourist attractions.

www.dryandratourism.org.au

Aussies Towns Website

The Aussie Towns website has a wealth of information about Narrogin's key attractions but does not include information on any commercial tourism operations. It is well laid out and comprehensive, especially with regards to the various nature-based and heritage attractions.

<http://www.aussietowns.com.au/town/narrogin-wa>

Foxes Lair Website

The Foxes Lair Website (and Facebook page) has a significant amount of detailed information about the flora and fauna of Foxes Lair and beyond. It also has a section on things to do and a wealth of educational content.

Though not written from a marketing point perspective, it is a highly valuable resource for nature-based tourism promotion of the region's attributes along with some very descriptive and high-quality images of flora and fauna.

The Facebook page is frequently updated with flora and fauna sightings by the moderator (page owner) and others from within the Narrogin community.

www.foxeslair.org

The information on the foxeslair.org website (and Facebook page) is comprehensive and showcases the unique diversity of flora and fauna of Narrogin. It is a great asset and could be utilised to encourage flora and fauna enthusiasts to visit Narrogin and stay for longer.

Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) Website

The DBCA website has some information about the Dryandra Woodland including location, walk trails, opening hours, and key features as well as a few images and details of where to stay in the national park.

<https://parks.dpaw.wa.gov.au/park/dryandra-woodland>

Trip Advisor

Trip Advisor has user-generated images and content about Narrogin. The images are not particularly marketing focussed and could be improved. The Things to Do listed are: Dryandra Woodland, Dourderry Wines, Yilliminning Rock, Narrogin Old Court House Museum, Dryandra Country Visitor Centre, and Foxes Lair.

Mobile Apps

No mobile apps were evident for the DCVC, walk trails, wildflowers, or other tourism attractions in the region.

https://www.tripadvisor.com.au/Tourism-g495070-Narrogin_Western_Australia-Vacations.html



Tourism Marketing Tools and Collateral

The Shires of Narrogin, Cuballing, and Wickepin jointly established the Dryandra Country Visitor Centre (DCVC) to promote tourism attractions, and, in particular, the Dryandra Woodlands. A commendable joint initiative, the DCVC is the single “go-to” place for information about the Dryandra Woodland and other local tourist attractions. Wickepin has since withdrawn financial support for the DCVC to concentrate on its own separate tourism marketing.

Like many regional visitor centres, the DCVC competes with many other financial demands on its sponsors budget for funding. Consequently, it is underfunded and underresourced to undertake the enormous task of marketing an emerging tourism region.

The DCVC has a full-time manager who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the DCVC, supervision of volunteers, networking with local tourism businesses and other tourism organisations and promotion of the region’s tourism attractions. Under the current manager, the DCVC has produced some excellent collateral on specific events and locations in the area.

A recently produced DL-size card, entitled “Narrogin in 2 Days” has proven very popular at the DCVC and at other AGO regional visitor centres, where it has been distributed.

A series of colour, A3, folded brochures have been produced by the DCVC, in conjunction with the local volunteer group, Friends of Foxes Lair. These brochures are part of a family of descriptive brochures, which concentrate on natural attractions, including Contine Hill, Barna Mia Nocturnal Animal Sanctuary, Yornaning Dam, and Foxes Lair, as well as Lol Gray Lookout and Railway Dam.



The content on this collateral is excellent and could be repackaged onto the DCVC website to serve “tech-savvy” travellers who will download digital versions or view on the website via their mobile devices. Inclusion of QR codes is highly desirable on all printed collateral, social media, websites, and interpretive signage, so that information-hungry tourists can save and view digital versions of the information.

It was noted upon visiting the DCVC on several occasions that the volunteers did not appear to be skilled at delivering tourist information, and visitors to the DCVC were, therefore, not provided with the information they sought. One option may be to install a flat, touchscreen, interactive kiosk, at the DCVC, which would provide current tourist information and wayfinding.

Visitor Information Sources Rating/Competitive Edge

The current Dryandra tourism website serves to promote the area and gives a brief overview of activities and accommodation in Narrogin. The website could be improved with better images and more information on the range of tourist experiences available in the region and more of a call to action. The inclusion of a blog with “insider” information about things to do and interesting “tourism-related stories” would enable the tourism highlights of Narrogin, Cuballing, and the Dryandra Woodlands to be described in a user-friendly format.

Activities, Attractions and Events

As identified in the section above, the main tourism marketing website for Narrogin is www.dryandratourism.org.au. The following things to do in Narrogin are listed on the website:

Nature-based Exploration and Wildlife

- Foxes Lair Nature Park (walking, flora, and fauna spotting)
- Barna Mia Nocturnal Animal Sanctuary (sanctuary for marsupials) – Dryandra Woodlands.
- Wowollong Pool, Highbury (no information on website about what to do there but birdwatching appears to be a highlight)

Trails

- Railway Dam (walking, flora, and fauna spotting)
- Yilliminning Rock (hike with a spectacular view and a geocache with a review published that comments on litter in the area)

History and Heritage

- Old Courthouse Museum (“an eclectic mix of historical memorabilia, photos, and locally produced object d’art”)

Indigenous Experiences

- Gnarojin Park (walk or ride the 1.5km Centenary Pathway, playground, artwork, the Noongar Dreaming Site, and the new skate park)

Attractions and Things to Do

- Dowerry Wines (cellar door, tastings, restaurant)
- Narrogin Regional Leisure Centre (indoor heated pool with an observation bridge, kid’s waterfalls, gymnasium, and sports courts)
- Narrogin Gliding Club (Air Experience Flight on weekends)

Key attraction in focus: Dryandra Woodland

Dryandra Woodland is one of the prime places in the AGO region for viewing native wildlife. Although the numbat is probably Dryandra's best-known inhabitant, woylies, tammar wallabies, brushtail possums, tawny frogmouths, kangaroos, and wallabies are regularly seen on night spotlighting tours of Dryandra. More than 100 species of birds live in the area, including the mound-building Mallee fowl.

Tours and Transport

- None listed

Events

- Narrogin Race and Pace (Thoroughbred and harness racing)
- The Narrogin Agricultural Show (fireworks, rides, animals, show bags in October)
- Revheads (car enthusiast event in November each year)

Rating/Competitive Edge – Activities, Attractions and Events

Trails tourism, which is in various stages of development, will make a significant contribution, bringing together the town's attractions whilst adding more immersive depth to the Narrogin experience. There is an opportunity to focus more on the experience of visiting Narrogin, rather than just listing what there is to do.

It is difficult for new tours and activities to prove viable in small country towns, this highlights the need to ensure existing activities and experience can be fully leveraged to enhance the visitor experience. There are currently no tours listed, and options for providing interpretation and a 'local perspective' are highly important.

Amenities

Narrogin is well serviced with ATM/banking, post office, medical facilities, public toilets, pubs, restaurants, sporting facilities, signage, a visitor centre, churches, and two supermarkets - Coles and Narrogin Fresh, the latter being more of a gourmet deli and quite a regional highlight (though not currently mentioned on the tourism websites).

Narrogin has adequate mobile phone coverage in the town centre and at most of the central amenities/attractions.

Restaurants such as the Narrogin Motel's Homestead licenced restaurant reportedly closes on most long weekends (for the entire weekend not just the public holiday). This may impact negatively on the visitor experience, as visitors have expectations of hospitality providers being open for business at peak holiday periods. Alternative restaurants including the Duke Hotel and the Cornwall Hotel have more reliable opening hours and serve Indian and European cuisine. The Cornwall Hotel has also recently renovated its rooms.

Rating/Competitive Edge - Amenities

Amenities do not usually add significantly to the visitor appeal, though they certainly result in bad reviews and low repeat visitation if they do not meet the needs of visitors. Apparently, the current amenities in Narrogin meet expectations with no reviews indicating otherwise.

Training in how to meet visitor expectations in terms of trading hours may be beneficial.

Retail

The Narrogin Chamber of Commerce lists the following retailers in Narrogin:

- Belvedere Nursery
- Best Office Systems & Supplies
- Betta Home Living – Narrogin
- Caltex Service Station Narrogin
- Coles Narrogin
- J & D Lifestyle Home and Gift
- Knightline Computers
- Liquor Barons Narrogin
- Narrogin Carpet Court
- Narrogin Fresh
- Narrogin Furnishings
- Narrogin GasworX
- Narrogin Newsagency
- Narrogin Nursery Cafe & Gallery
- Narrogin Petals and Blooms
- Narrogin Pumps Solar & Spraying
- Narrogin Toyworld
- Parrys Narrogin
- Patch N Paint for Pleasure
- RJ Smith Engineering
- Sportspower Narrogin
- Steelo's Guns & Outdoors
- Thing A Me Bobs
- Three Farmers Foods

Rating/Competitive Edge – Retail

Most of the retailers listed are not focussed towards tourists. This is not surprising, given the relatively small number of visitors. Souvenirs are sold at the Dryandra Visitor Centre which is likely sufficient to meet demand. There may be an opportunity for some existing retailers to promote quintessentially Australian merchandise to visitors, and to retain and promote country style ambience and service.

Hospitality

Trip Advisor list the following hospitality venues in Narrogin:

- Duke of York Hotel - Trip Advisor Rating 4.5 Stars from 50 reviews, Bar/Pub. Sample review "A good ole pub" 12/05/2019.
- New Cornwell Hotel, Bar, Grill, Pub, Diner
- Narrogin Nursery, Cafe & Gallery - Trip Advisor Rating 4 Stars from 19 reviews. \$ Cafe Australian. Sample review "Coffee and cake delight" 11/01/2019.
- Narrogin Takeaway & Cafe Bar - Trip Advisor Rating 4.5 Stars from 7 reviews. Sample review "Good home cooking in pleasant surrounds" 02/12/2018.
- Narrogin Fruit & Veg - Trip Advisor Rating 4.5 Stars from 5 reviews. Deli. Sample review "Best Coffee in Town" 26/12/2018
- The Homestead Restaurant - Trip Advisor Rating 4 Stars from 3 reviews. Sample review "Lovely food at a reasonable cost" 22/03/2019
- Snack Shack - Trip Advisor Rating 4 Stars from 1 review
- Chicken Treat - Trip Advisor Rating 2.5 Stars from 10 reviews

Not listed on TripAdvisor:

- The Shire advises that there is a new Chinese restaurant opening in July 2019
- All Day Cafe
- Lazy Daze Cafe has closed, but a new café business is going into the site

Rating/Competitive Edge –Hospitality

As with retail, most of the hospitality providers listed are not focussed towards tourists. There may be an opportunity for some existing venues to promote quintessentially Australian food and theming to visitors, and to retain and promote country style ambience, food, and service.

Most reviews were positive, indicating a generally satisfactory level of quality, though there are some comments about the value for money which indicate pricing may need to be reviewed in line with other similar destinations (rather than based on other operators in the same town).

Access

Narrogin is a regional road transport hub with heavy haulage routes surrounding the town. Though not part of significant touring driver routes, it is well connected to Perth by sealed roads and highways. The Narrogin Airstrip is five kilometres from the town though there are no regular passenger aircraft flying into Narrogin.

Rating/Competitive Edge - Access

Originally set up as a railway town, Narrogin is not on a major drive route. This has several challenges from a tourism perspective due to not having a significant amount of passing traffic, and it highlights the need to have sufficient promotion and product appeal to encourage people to drive there as a destination or deviate from their route to specifically visit. It is a short drive from the popular Dryandra Woodland, which is an important tourism drawcard.

Awareness

Awareness of most Wheatbelt towns by tourists is relatively low, and Narrogin is no exception. Dryandra Woodland has some awareness amongst wildlife enthusiasts, though is not nationally or internationally well known.

Rating/Competitive Edge Awareness

Significant marketing spends (or attention from high-level social media influencers) is the most common way to quickly raise awareness. This can result in unsustainable peaks in demand.

Narrogin has an opportunity to take a more niche-focussed approach to building awareness by better communicating interesting aspects of Narrogin's nature, culture, and heritage to past and potential visitors with a demonstrated interest.

Administration, Skills and Labour

According to the Shire of Narrogin's Prospectus, health, education, and State and Federal Government agencies are the biggest employers in the town, attracting teaching and support staff in schools, nursing, and administrative staff in the regional hospital and public service work within the numerous government agencies that service Narrogin. Farming support industries also provide jobs for many of Narrogin's residents, while the agricultural industry offers employment opportunities in the wider region.

Of Narrogin residents aged 15 years and over, only 10.4% have achieved a bachelor's degree or above, as compared to 20.5% and 22% for Western Australia and Australia respectively; 12.8% reported having completed Year 12 as their highest level of educational attainment as compared to 16% of Western Australians; and 10.6% had completed only up to Year 9 or below as compared to 5.9% for WA. The most common occupations in Narrogin included Technicians and Trades Workers 17.7%, Professionals 17.0%, Labourers 14.0%, Community and Personal Service Workers 13.5%, and Managers 10.3%.³⁵ It is worth noting that the ABS Census Data is based on self-assessment of employment classification, thus some may categorise themselves as professionals for example, where they may be more appropriately classed as Managers if using a more consistent criteria or if based on educational status.

This is broadly in line with Western Australia and Australia, indicating a similarly skilled though slightly less educated population. The Shire appears highly proactive with administration, project management, and

³⁵ Census 2016 downloaded from https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC51083 downloaded 17/5/19

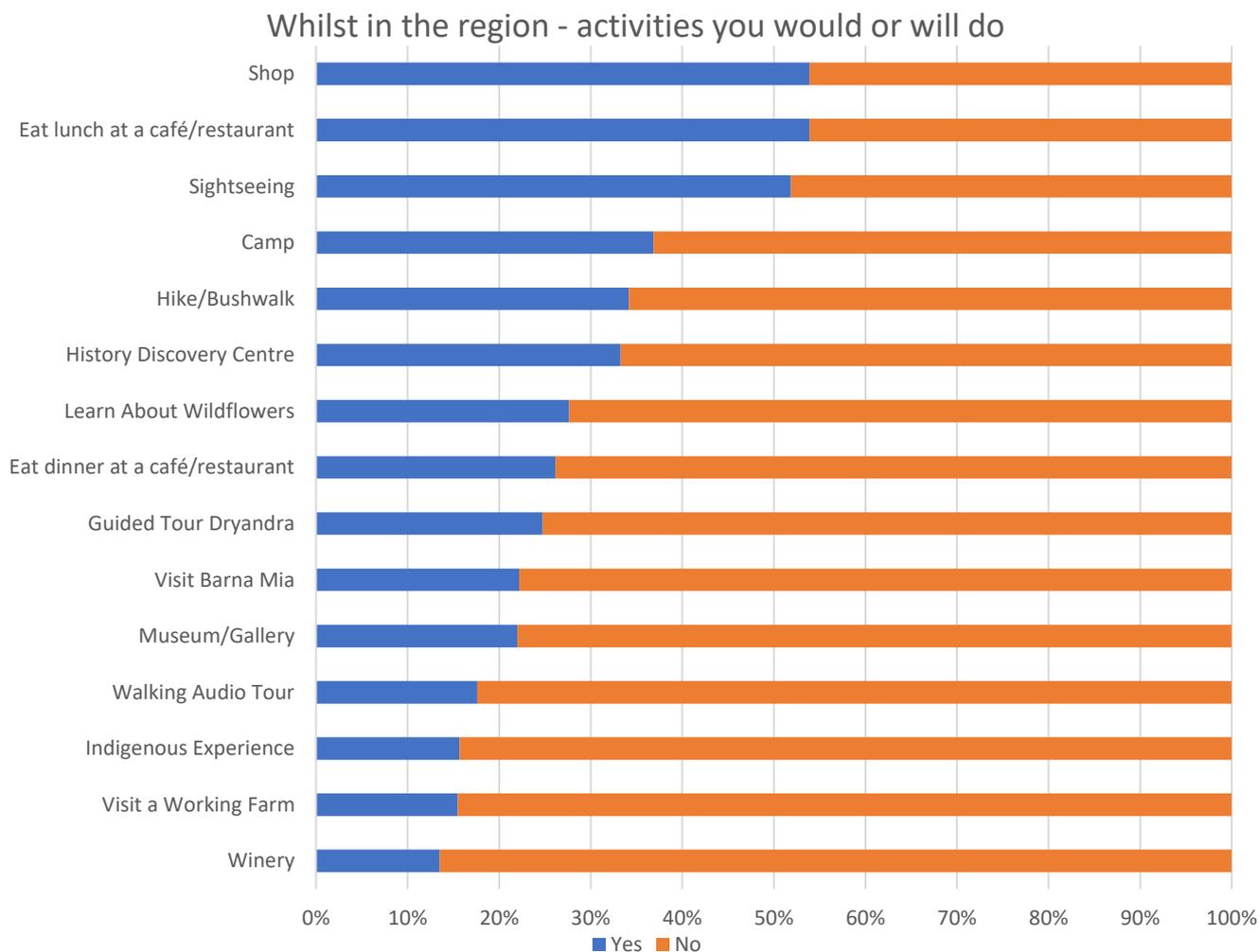
marketing with several projects underway or with funding committed. They have a very comprehensive website with resident businesses describing Narrogin as a “flourishing regional centre” (as quoted in the business profile published on the Shire website).

Rating/Competitive Edge Administration, Skills and Labour

Though the census reports over 25% of the population being in professional or managerial roles, the Shire is investing in a traineeship position to improve availability of trained administrative staff. Administrative skills, business acumen, and customer service skills are critical for the growth and development of a strong tourism industry, and Tourism Council WA and others could be engaged to assist with building business acumen and tourism administrative skills in the workforce.

Visitor Participation in the Regions Tourism Offerings³⁶

The Dryandra Country Visitor Centre collected survey data to identify what activities visitors proposed to participate in (or would participate in if available). The chart below represents the intentions of approximately 880 respondents as at July 2019:



³⁶ Dryandra country Visitor Centre Visitor Behaviour Study Data (information analysed by Brighthouse)

SWOT Analysis

Strengths (Current)

- Resident population of people with a passion for their town
- Unique and fascinating history, packed with stories waiting to be told
- A real Australian country town, only two hour's drive from Perth
- Rich heritage
- Walk Trails Master Plan recently endorsed by Council
- CBD Interpretative Signage (project underway)
- Shire of Narrogin Mountain Bike Trail and Pump Track Feasibility Study nearing completion
- Shire of Narrogin Gnarojin Park Masterplan recently endorsed by Council
- Colour Palette and Style Guide developed and to go to Council for endorsement soon
- Shire of Narrogin Public Art Strategy & Masterplan recently endorsed by Council
- Foxes Lair
- Proximity to Dryandra Woodland
- Easy get-away from city life for Perth residents (and visitors to Perth)
- Excellent road network
- RV friendly (with free camping options)
- Detailed interpretive information compiled and available online (foxeslair.org)
- Wildlife spotting and wildflowers
- Active art community and Arts Narrogin organisation, which brings significant art and cultural experiences to the region with an art gallery and regular exhibitions

Weaknesses (Current)

- Very limited availability of relevant tourism data to assist with planning, growth metrics, and feasibility assessments
- Not located on a major tourist drive trail
- Most significant nearby attraction – Dryandra Woodland is largely located outside the Shire, impacting on ability to direct visitors into Narrogin town centre
- Very low awareness of Narrogin as a place to explore
- Lack of activities (and no guided tours at all) in the Shire compared to some of the more tourism-focused Shires
- Limited tourism flair and appeal of hotel/motel accommodation (fit outdated and in need of refurbishments according to reviews online)
- Limited capacity in smaller accommodation businesses and unable to support growth in existing markets or new markets such as coach/bus tours, high-end visitors or short-stay holiday makers
- Mainly drive-through visitation limiting tourist interaction to day trips or single night stays
- Some licenced restaurants are closed on most long weekends (for the entire weekend not just the public holiday)
- Low visitor expenditure
- Local population's poor perception of the importance of tourism – main focus on agriculture
- Limited (not Thursdays) bus service from Perth
- RV Dump Point management by DCVC, and the facility is often not available when required by RV tourists. Watercorp Regulation is cited as the reason for the dump point being locked, However, RV tourist quote many other regional locations, which do not lock the dump points.

Opportunities (Future)

- Define the “Big Idea” or “Narrogin Brand Promise.” Everything must flow from this: the strategy/strategies, selected target visitor groups, the tactics, and executions with which we will reach these potential visitors. It must be something that clearly differentiates Narrogin from anywhere else in the AGO region and Wheatbelt. It must be easily understood, memorable, and enticing to the potential visitor.
- Define key target visitor segments, including evaluating the potential of the two segments Tourism Research Australia defines as “experience” and “adventure” seekers. Add to key segments - traditional self-drive segments such as families with children, active seniors, and grey nomads.
- Enhance access and wayfinding as part of the trail strategy.
- Develop enhanced cross-regional links and collaboration, for example, the potential development of a Dome café could open up opportunities for inclusion in a regional Dome trail linking Northam, Narrogin, and Katanning, seeking inclusion in the Public Silo Art Trail (<https://www.publicsilotrail.com/about/>).
- Budget for quality interpretative signage at sites, that use real (quirky, unusual, and interesting) stories of people and the places they helped to build. Consider utilising location-based mobile technology options.

The response we want from each site/attraction is that the visitor feels they have spent their time in a worthwhile way and connected with the culture and people of Narrogin and that this experience has been enjoyable, stimulating, interactive, and fun. If we get this right, their “word-of-mouth” stories back home will spread the same consistent, enticing, and unique impressions of the region among their peers.

- Develop new experiences and attractions to increase length of stay and add to the appeal mix, such as guided walking tours (flora, fauna, culture, and history), and work with existing farm-stay operations to help them brainstorm and consider how they could add more of their story and character to their offer.
- Improve service delivery at DCVC, by incorporation digital delivery of information (interactive wayfinding and tourist information delivery kiosk) and drive for recruitment of volunteers with acceptance of value of tourism and amenable to service delivery training.
- Develop DCVC website to provide current, interesting tourism information that excites potential tourist markets to the unique experiences available in the region.
- Redevelop the Caravan Park to a high standard and aim to add eco-accommodation experiences to accommodation inventory.
- Enhance and promote farm-stay tourism and other opportunities to “experience country life” in Narrogin.
- Encourage the development of Aboriginal cultural tours and/or interpretation.
- Leverage off “RV-Friendly Town” status [via CMCA].
- Encourage bloggers and social media influencers to get their Aussie Groove on in Narrogin and tell the story of this quintessentially Australian country town online!

Threats (Future)

- Continued decline of tourism visitor numbers to the broader AGO region will intensify competition for market share.
- Continued low international airfares will reduce relative price competitiveness of regional Australia for both intra and interstate visitors (Australians choosing to holiday overseas).
- Increased tourism marketing efforts from other regional destinations whose core industries are in decline places competitive pressures on all small towns.
- Significant increases in visitor numbers may impact environmental sustainability and the underlying character of Narrogin as a town.
- Investors are unable to source sufficient local area tourism information to enable them to make informed private investment decisions.
- Reliance on volunteers for visitor servicing due to inadequate funds available for paid staffing.

Competing Destinations

Though it could be argued that all destinations within a 2-3-hour drive are competing destinations, it is hard to compete with the highly tourism-focussed coastal destinations of the South West. Thus, for the purposes of profiling competing destinations, we will focus on those most likely to impact on Narrogin, namely, Williams and Cuballing, which also, to a greater or lesser degree, target visitors to Dryandra Woodland and the established iconic inland destination of Kalgoorlie.

Williams

Tourism Proposition

(based on information sourced from AGO website)

The Wheatbelt town of Williams is noted for its magnificent display of roses in the main street over the summer and well into the cooler months.

Visit the Jesse Martin Museum. This unique collection of memorabilia from the Williams district (and others) has been compiled by passionate local farmer, Jesse Martin. The project began in 1976, with the building of a replica inn, complete with original fittings, and has grown to encompass a general store and other replica buildings as well as farm machinery.

Follow the Williams Heritage Trail. Developed by the Williams Historical Society, Williams District High School and Williams Shire Council, the trail explores early settlement areas. It has two sections: a 1km walk around the townsite and a 35km scenic drive to Quindanning.

Check out the Williams Woolshed. This innovative, interactive, and interpretive tourism complex represents “a wool story.” The Williams Woolshed showcases sheep shearing; regional wines, food, and art educational programs; and wool products. The Williams Woolshed also houses the local visitor centre.

Located on the banks of the picturesque Williams River, Lions Park is a pleasant spot for a barbecue or picnic for travellers and locals. Take a relaxing walk or cycle on the cycleway that begins at the Shell Roadhouse and runs along the river.

Strengths (relative to Narrogin)

Williams has a range of accommodation options as well as a caravan park, which are all well rated. Williams is home to the very popular Wool Shed Café, art gallery, and shops as well as a heritage trail, museum, and river cycle way.

Williams also market itself in terms of its proximity to the Dryandra Woodland. It is well serviced by a range of cafes and restaurants which appear to have a dedicated following. Williams is closer to Perth (160km) than Narrogin (192km).

Weaknesses (relative to Narrogin)

It is further from Dryandra Woodland than Narrogin. Narrogin has more choice of accommodation and restaurants as well as a greater range of amenities due in part to having a progressive Shire and in part to having a larger population.

Both towns have similar heritage and agricultural focus in their marketing.

Cuballing

Tourism Proposition

(based on information sourced from AGO website)

Situated on the Great Southern Highway, Cuballing is a two-and-a-half-hours' drive southeast of Perth. The town has many lovely buildings dating from the early 1900s including the newly restored Cuballing Tavern, Post Office, and Agricultural Hall.

Take a picnic lunch to Yornaning Dam and watch for the waterbirds that inhabit the dam or take a stroll along the natural trails that meander through the bushland. Or take a day trip to Dryandra Woodland, the largest remaining woodland area in the Wheatbelt. Dryandra Woodland is a great place for walking, camping, and seeing wildlife.

Strengths (relative to Narrogin)

The majority of the Dryandra Woodland (including the Barna Mia Nocturnal Wildlife Experience) is located in the Shire of Cuballing giving them more opportunities to leverage this drawcard asset to encourage tourists into their town site. They do not yet appear to be strongly leveraging this, other than through their support of the Dryandra Country Visitor Centre.

Weaknesses (relative to Narrogin)

Cuballing has not yet developed any real tourism infrastructure.

Other than Dryandra Woodland, there are just two things to do listed for Cuballing on the Dryandra Country Visitor Centre website, being Yornaning Dam and the Equestrian Centre, which has an Olympic-standard arena.

There are two accommodation options listed (outside of the National Park), one being a rustic campsite and the other a house to rent. Neither have a website or any details.

The popular Cuballing Tavern is not listed on the Dryandra region website as a place to stay in Cuballing. No restaurants, hotels, or cafes are listed in Cuballing.



Kalgoorlie

Tourism Proposition

(based on information sourced from AGO website)

Kalgoorlie-Boulder, or Kalgoorlie as it is more commonly known, is the hub of the Western Australian Goldfields and the largest city in the Australian Outback. From wild beginnings as a gold rush town full of fortune-seekers, it has grown into a bustling cosmopolitan twin city with a distinctive character. And being just an hour's flight or a day's drive/train journey from Perth, it is a popular tourist destination.

As rich in history as it is in gold, the city has an impressive array of heritage buildings, including the magnificent Kalgoorlie Town Hall, Boulder Town Hall, and St Mary's Church, as well as grand hotels, outback pubs, shop fronts, and private homes. A visit to Hannans North Tourist Mine will also offer a fascinating insight into the area's colourful past. And beyond the city, eerie ghost towns tell the story of early gold prospecting dreams that have long been abandoned.

In contrast, Kalgoorlie has a thriving nightlife and a wide variety of modern tourist attractions, shops, and leisure facilities. In fact, the city has more restaurants and hotels per capita than any other regional centre in Western Australia and plays host to many of the region's biggest events.

Strengths (relative to Narrogin)

A wide range of tourism attractions and well-developed tourist infrastructure including a wide range of amenities, cafes, restaurants, bars, and an infamous red-light district.

Rich with history, surrounded by ghost towns and with iconic awareness, Kalgoorlie has a thriving tourism industry. It is also on the major east to west drive route and is a good stopover distance on the way to or from Perth.

It is well connected with flights and trains also.

Weaknesses (relative to Narrogin)

Kalgoorlie is a 6.5-hour drive from Perth making it too far for a weekend or day trip. Kalgoorlie is often visited as a stopover for people travelling from East to West (or vice versa) across Australia.

As a larger city, it lacks the small town feel of Narrogin.

The red-light district and dominant mining culture and presence may negatively impact on appeal for some visitor markets.

Kalgoorlie has suffered some negative press on the social issues which may compromise the perceived safety for visitors.

Competitive Environment Assessment

The above-listed locations present more of an opportunity for Narrogin's Tourism than a threat. There is already a significant amount of tourism cooperation between Narrogin, Cuballing, and, to a lesser extent, Williams, which is targeting a different market. Kalgoorlie is regarded as a potential tourist "feeder" to Narrogin as are other local towns and attractions such as Wagin and Hyden (Wave Rock).

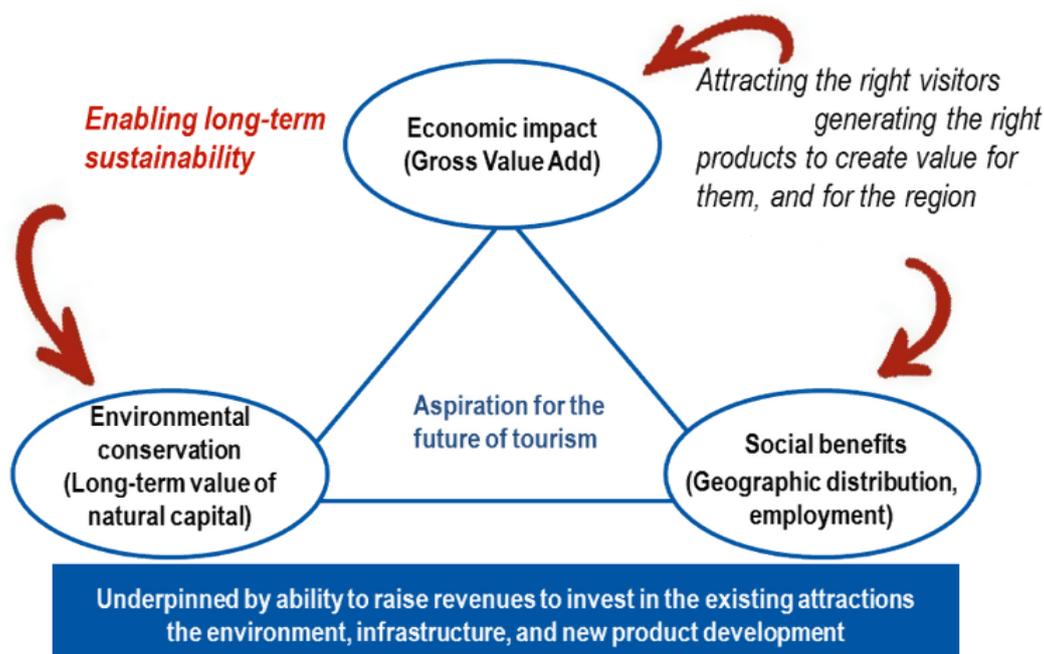
The main competition for Narrogin Tourism is from towns and tourism attraction locations outside the AGO region.

Section II: Strategic Tourism Planning & Alignment

Overview

The first step to developing an effective tourism strategy is to define the Shire of Narrogin’s aspirations for tourism over the next decade and beyond, which are:

- Preserving the natural environment
- Ensuring visitors contribute to the Shire’s economy
- Reducing impacts of seasonality on visitation to the town
- Improving duration of stay (and therefore, increasing spend) in the Shire
- Creating business and employment opportunities through tourism



A triple-bottom-line approach to destination planning and management is required, where economic, social, and environmental benefits for the Shire of Narrogin are considered equally in developing best-practice outcomes.

The Shire of Narrogin’s Vision is to be “A leading regional economic driver and a socially interactive and inclusive community.” The Strategic Shire Plan was recently published for public comment See: [https://www.narrogin.wa.gov.au/documents/642/minor-review-of-strategic-community-plan-2017-2027-\(closes-6-july-2019\).](https://www.narrogin.wa.gov.au/documents/642/minor-review-of-strategic-community-plan-2017-2027-(closes-6-july-2019).)³⁷

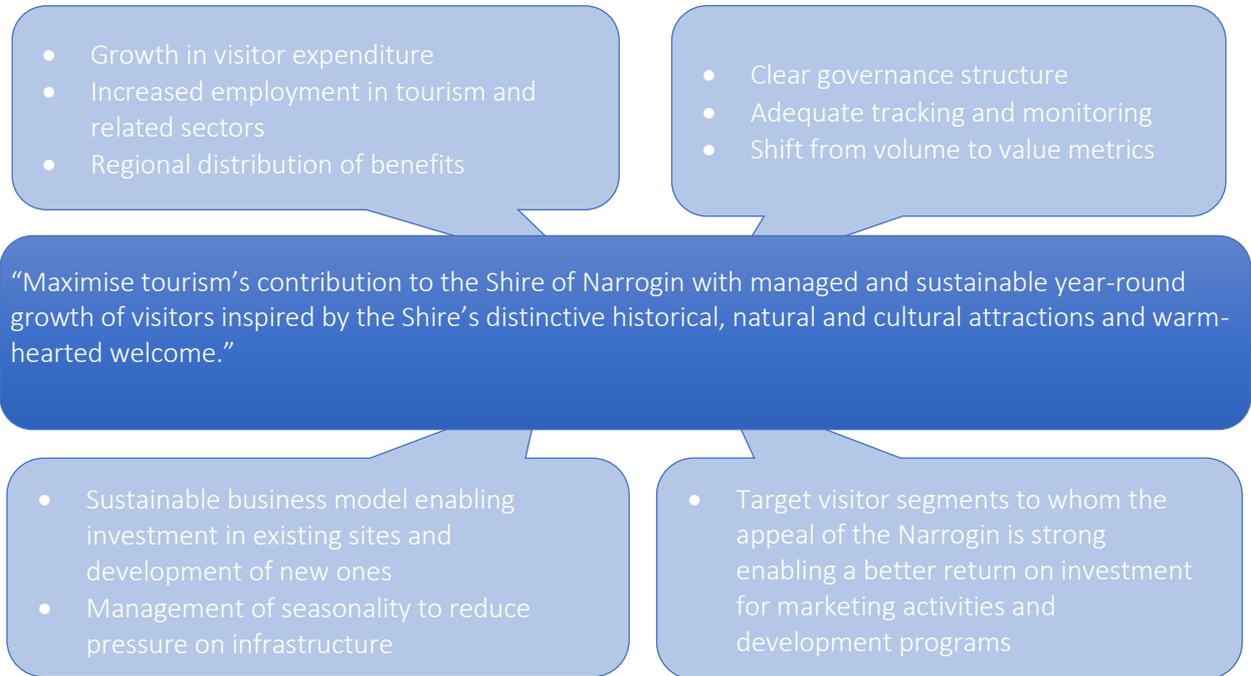
The vision is focussed on maximising value. As part of this process, the words of the vision statement need to be translated into specific objectives with measurable targets, so that the entity with overall responsibility for delivering the vision can drive action and assess progress against defined milestones.

Performance measurement is critical to testing the validity of agreed plans and actions. As measurement is the precursor to necessary change, it is important that the only measures that are reported are those that can lead to change.

³⁷ https://www.narrogin.wa.gov.au/Profiles/narrogin/Assets/ClientData/Document-Centre/General_Publications/FCE0027_Strategic_Plan_2017-27_Snapshot.pdf

Strategic Tourism Planning Outcomes

The strategic planning outcomes sought through the development of the Shire of Narrogin’s Tourism Strategy are defined as follows:



Tourism in the Shire of Narrogin

Narrogin suffers from many of the key tourism development impediments, common to other Shires in the Wheatbelt region. These include:

- Lack of development of the sub-regional strategy for coordinated tourism development across other nearby Shires (i.e., Williams and Cuballing) to leverage off combined strengths and attraction bundling.
- Low population density – making the viability of amenities businesses (retail, cafes, etc.) challenging.
- Narrogin’s economic reliance on agriculture and community services with little further economic diversification.
- Wheatbelt towns typically have a very small number of existing tourism operators and a lack of understanding of the benefits of the tourism industry within the wider community.
- Due to the small numbers of tourism industry operators, local government has to step in and play a significant role in delivering visitor facilities and services. In areas with a more developed tourism industry, visitor servicing and destination promotions can be substantially funded through membership dues, partnership promotions and fees for participation.
- Shire resources are often stretched, leaving them unable to provide time, resources, and expertise to attract tourism investment; hence, like many Shires across WA, there has been limited development of new tourism business, corporate ventures, or commercial operations in Narrogin.

The Value and Benefit of Developing the Tourism Industry in Narrogin

The Wheatbelt has historically been heavily reliant on the agriculture and mining sectors and, as a result, the Region’s commodity economy is highly influenced by seasonal variation and market prices and is susceptible to currency fluctuations. Tourism in the Wheatbelt has the potential to diversify economic growth and development and increase jobs in the Region.

Narrogin is heavily reliant on agriculture, as are many other towns in the Wheatbelt. Diversification by way of development of tourism is beneficial to not only mitigate the risks of reliance on a single industry but also enhance the sustainability of the agricultural industry through tourism add-on’s such as farm-stays, farm gate sales, farm tours, shearing demonstrations, etc.

The need to diversify and the benefits of tourism is widely recognised in various local and regional strategies. The Wheatbelt Regional Investment Blueprint (2015) identifies:

*A diversified and adaptive economic base building on the Wheatbelt’s assets and aligned to State, National and International opportunity.*³⁸

Whilst the Growing Wheatbelt Tourism Strategy reports that Narrogin was in the top four highest numbers of tourist-related jobs in the Wheatbelt region (behind Northam) with 110 people employed, it does caution that the data may not be an accurate representation of direct tourism employment due to source data limitations. In Appendix 4 of the same strategy, the following data is supplied for Tourism Related Employment Statistics³⁹:

	Average Total Employment	% Tourism Employment	No. Tourism Jobs	Average Total Employment	% Tourism Employment	No. Tourism Jobs
Region/LGA	2001	2001	2001	2014 / 2015	2014 / 2015	2014 / 2015
Wheatbelt	38,605	3.0	1,153	35,691	4.4	1,560
Narrogin (S)	558	1.3	7	2,368	4.6	110
Narrogin (T)	2,549	4.3	109	1,943	-	-

The Growing Wheatbelt Tourism Strategy identifies that the tourism industry is important to the Wheatbelt region for two reasons:

-
- 1. It presents an opportunity to diversify the economy and drive both revenue and job growth, particularly in high amenity areas; and*
 - 2. The underpinning infrastructure that supports tourism also enhances community amenity and liveability. The latter is critical in addressing workforce attraction, a priority for the Wheatbelt.*⁴⁰
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³⁸ Wheatbelt Regional Investment Blueprint (2015)

³⁹ Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017-2020, Wheatbelt Development Commission. 2017.

⁴⁰ Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017-2020, Wheatbelt Development Commission. 2017.



Strategic Alignment of Tourism in the Shire of Narrogin

The 2020 State Tourism Strategy

The Wheatbelt Development Commission's "Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017-2020" strategy provides a regional strategic response to the 2020 State Tourism Strategy and the seven outcome areas developed by Tourism Western Australia. It highlights where Regional Development can make the most effective contribution:

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| 1. Brand | 4. Asian markets | 7. Indigenous |
| 2. Infrastructure | 5. Events | |
| 3. Business travel | 6. Regional travel | |

Tourism WA Goals:

- Tourism enabling infrastructure in regional WA
- Australia's best regional events calendar
- Improved caravan, camping, and self-drive experiences
- Extraordinary regional experiences, including nature-based, adventure based, and food and wine
- Regional Goal: Increase average estimated visitor nights and maintain the number of overnight visitors ⁴¹

Role of Regional Development

According to "Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017-2020" strategy, the contribution of Regional Development will be in the areas of industry and infrastructure development; however, destination marketing will continue to be provided by Tourism WA and the regional tourism associations. The key elements of the regional development contribution in Western Australia will be:

- Infrastructure Development: Support of a network of iconic and core attractors to regional WA. This can link to a variety of nature-based experiences and build upon the strategic advantage of the Region regarding Aboriginal tourism, camping and caravanning, and nature-based and marine opportunities.
- Events Support: Development of a network of regional events that can leverage visitation and length of stay as a primary objective and related sector investment as a secondary objective, for example, food and wine events. This recognises the important link the 2020 State Tourism strategy makes to business visitation and the opportunity to link to regional trade delegations.
- Industry Development: Assist regional industry to collaborate and develop packaged holiday options, targeting national and international market sectors with an emphasis on wholesaling and web-based packaging at a regional and inter-regional level. Regional Development can assist industry to take up market ready programs, especially regarding Asian visitor market opportunities and better prepare for growth in overseas market visitation through improved tourism packaging.⁴²

The Shire of Narrogin's Strategic Community Plan 2017-2027

The Shire of Narrogin's Strategic Community Plan's vision is: A leading regional economic driver and a socially interactive and inclusive community.⁴³ The economic goals are identified as:

Economic Goals:

- Support growth and progress, locally and regionally...

Growth in revenue opportunities

- Attract new industry, business, investment and encourage diversity whilst encouraging growth of local business
- Promote Narrogin and the Region
- Promote Narrogin's health and aged services including aged housing

⁴¹ Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017-2020, Wheatbelt Development Commission. 2017.

⁴² Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017-2020, Wheatbelt Development Commission. 2017.

⁴³ https://www.narrogin.wa.gov.au/Profiles/narrogin/Assets/ClientData/Document-Centre/General_Publications/FCEO027_Strategic_Plan_2017-27_Snapshot.pdf

Increased Tourism

- Promote and develop tourism and maintain local attractions

An effective well-maintained transport network

- Maintain and improve road network in line with resource capacity
- Review and implement the Airport Master Plan

Agriculture opportunities maintained and developed

- Support development of agricultural services

The strategies that underpin the tourism plan are highlighted above; these are:

- Attract new industry, business, investment and encourage diversity whilst encouraging growth of local business
- Promote Narrogin and the region
- Promote and develop tourism and maintain local attractions

Australia's Golden Outback Destination Development Strategy 2007-2017

The AGO's development strategy identifies the following priorities for the area:⁴⁴

- Access into Dryandra Woodland - Investigate upgrading the access road to Dryandra Woodland. Comment on status: Advice received from DEC is that it is not feasible to seal the access road as this would have a detrimental effect on wildlife. Complete sealing of Congelin Road is, however, viewed as necessary.
- Improved accommodation - Develop appropriate accommodation that caters to self-drive and coach tours within in Williams and Narrogin, including 4-star, self-contained accommodation.
- Dryandra Wilderness Lodge - Investigate the opportunity to further enhance the accommodation at the Lion's Dryandra Village and Pumphrey's Homestead. Comment on status: DEC have included in the revised Dryandra Management Plan a strategy to an area for powered caravan bays. Tourism WA also made a submission to DEC to include under section 12.2 the development of further cabins.
- Dryandra Woodland activities - Examine the establishment of regional and Indigenous tours and daytime activities.
- Dryandra Woodland - Determine the development/further improvement of signage and entry facilities statements.
- Section 3, Williams - Darkin & Williams to Narrogin Rail Trail – with the initiative of developing a world class rail trail from Darkin to Williams that walkers, cyclists and riders can enjoy with a view to also creating a loop to link the Williams section through to Narrogin. Advice at time of this report preparation is that the proposed rail line is highly aspirational and considered to be a very long-term goal.

Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017 – 2020 Strategy

The Wheatbelt Development Commissions "Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017 – 2020 Strategy" identified several initiatives to drive industry growth and jobs over the short and long term. The aim of their strategy is to focus on those initiatives that will:

- Enhance access, amenity, and activity around four Wheatbelt tourism first-tier icons:
 1. New Norcia
 2. The Pinnacles
 3. Wave Rock
 4. Wildflowers
- Connect and enhance the numerous second-tier tourist attractions such as:
 - Self-drive trails
 - Events of international and national significance (aviation, motorsports, equestrian, water-based, etc.)
 - Heritage locations (Avon Valley, Aboriginal heritage experiences, museums, etc.)
- Utilise digital capacity to access and grow markets and enhance visitor experience to increase the length of stay
- Drive collaboration, training, and cultural and environmental awareness across industry to achieve economies of scale and targeted market penetration.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ AGO Destination Development Strategy 2007 – 2017 Downloaded from www.parliament.wa.gov.au

⁴⁵ Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017-2020, Wheatbelt Development Commission. 2017.

From the above list, the initiatives that have relevance to the Narrogin Tourism Strategy are:

- Wildflowers (a first-tier icon)
- Self-drive trails
- Events – foster further development of Narrogin Gliding Club aviation event, cycling event at the Narrogin Velodrome and Narrogin College of Agriculture Open Day
- Heritage locations (Aboriginal (Gnarojin Park), heritage experiences (historic CBD Walk), railway history (including railway buildings and yard, railway dam), museums, etc.)
- Utilise digital capacity to access and grow markets and enhance visitor experience to increase the length of stay.
- Drive collaboration, training, and cultural and environmental awareness across industry to achieve economies of scale and targeted market penetration.⁴⁶

The Growing Wheatbelt Tourism Strategy made the following recommendations relevant to Narrogin’s tourism product and infrastructure gaps⁴⁷:

Recommendation	Outcome	Priority	Timeframe	Responsibility
Wheatbelt South Icon Development	Dryandra signage, access road, camping amenity including glamping, interpretation, nature playground	High	Long-term	DPAW Shire of Narrogin AGO Australia’s South West SWDC PDC
Exploring Country and Sharing Culture	Identify reserves in need of improved amenity and Aboriginal culture interpretation	Med	Short-term	WAITOC DPAW Local Operators
Digital Streamlining	Overarching digital platform promotes destinations, experiences, and events, potentially utilising the new Wheatbelt Way app when launched - Digital platform promoted on regional entry statement signage	High	Short-term	NewTravel NEWROC Central Wheatbelt Visitor Centre Heartlands WA
Heritage Storytelling	Aboriginal cultural stories digitised - Wheatbelt light show	Med	Short-term	WAITOC DPAW Local Operators
Tourism Investment Prospectus	- Wheatbelt tourism investment prospectus developed	Med	Short-term	WA Open for Business Tourism WA
Glamping Operator Identification	- Glamping operator matched to a DPAW site through the DPAW-Tourism WA Nature Bank Program - Private investment	High	Short-term	DPIRD DPAW Tourism WA
High in Nature Trail Link	- Identified Wheatbelt South icon linked to DPAW’s High in Nature Trail	High	Long-term	DPAW Shire of Narrogin AGO Australia’s South West SWDC Peel DC
Events Trail	- Coordinated events keep visitors for longer - Event promotion digitised via Heartlands WA online portal	High	Short-term	Heartlands WA NewTravel
Regional Trail Links	- Wheatbelt linked to other regions (Peel, South West, Great Southern, Goldfields Esperance, Midwest) via trails	High	Short-term	DPAW Mandurah and Peel Tourism Organisation

⁴⁶ Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017-2020, Wheatbelt Development Commission. 2017.

⁴⁷ Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017-2020, Wheatbelt Development Commission. 2017.

Recommendation	Outcome	Priority	Timeframe	Responsibility
				Australia's South West AGO
Bike Trails	- Recreational mountain bike trails identified and developed - Mountain bike trail links Wheatbelt with Peel (i.e., Wandering to Dwellingup)	High	Short-term	DPAW Australia's South West AGO
Map and Gap Analysis	- All Wheatbelt trails are identified, mapped, and analysed - Trails set out according to stopping needs of visitors	High	Short-term	Heartlands WA DPAW Relevant ROCs
Adventure Trails Art Trails	- Adventure sports trail identified (e.g., sky diving, gliding, ballooning) - Geopark and geocache trails developed - Wheatbelt Science Trail completed - Artbelt Trail implemented (originated by Dalwallinu Visitor Centre)	High	Short-term	Various
Wheatbelt Wildflowers Trails	- Seasonality creates a sense of urgency, scarcity, and uniqueness to the product - Coordinated showcasing of wildflowers in Wheatbelt towns - Granite Loop Wildflower Trail	High	Short-term	DPAW Wheatbelt LGAs
Wheatbelt Way	- Wheatbelt Way app launched - Pilot project (that could be rolled out to other sub-regional tourism destinations) identified to upskill industry operators in customer service, quality standards and tourism offerings	High	Short-term	NewTravel
Holistic Approach for Wheatbelt Tourism	- Sub-regions work together with the RTOs to deliver a whole of region approach to tourism development, bring stakeholders together and market Wheatbelt tourism destinations in keeping with state tourism boundaries.	High	Med-term	NewTravel Merredin VC RoeROC Avon Tourism RTOs Heartlands WA Thought Leaders' Network
Governance Restructure	- Critical mass and sub-regional focus achieved around key tourism zones	High	Long-term	Tourism WA RTOs Wheatbelt Tourism Groups LGAs
LGA Visitor Services	- State tourism industry delivers workshops to upskill	Med	Med-term	Wheatbelt LGAs Tourism WA RTOs
Thought Leaders' Network	- Network of leading industry operators in the Wheatbelt support and grow tourism	Med	Med-term	RAC Dome WBN Heartlands WA
Mentorships	- Tourism mentors for Aboriginal tourism product providers and new tourism businesses.	Med	Med-term	SBDC WAITOC
Stronger Stakeholder Relationships	- Networks and communication between local tourism organisations, RTOs, Tourism WA, DPAW and LGAs developed and strengthened by a Wheatbelt-wide regional leadership organisation - Tourism WA, Tourism Council and RTOs educated on Wheatbelt tourism	Med	Short-term	Tourism WA Tourism Council RTOs DPAW LGAs

Recommendation	Outcome	Priority	Timeframe	Responsibility
Local Tourism Buy-In	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pilot project identified to enable both non-tourism and tourism businesses to actively promote local product and understand the value the tourism industry brings to the Region - Natural marketing system developed through advocacy - Cross promotion between sub-regions and between local tourism products, services, and events providers 	Med	Med-term	WBN Heartlands WA Wheatbelt Tourism Organisations
Tourism Friendly Toolkit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Audit tool created for tourism friendly communities and rolled out in sub-regions in need 	Med	Med-term	Heartlands WA Wheatbelt LGAs Wheatbelt Tourism Organisations
Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consistent and quality data at a regional level that accurately reflects overnight and day tripper numbers, visitor expenditure, and visitor social and economic demographics 	High	Short-term	Tourism WA ABS Wheatbelt Tourism Organisations
Upskilling for new markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Industry operators are supported and upskilled to supply products and services at the required levels for different markets - Training in cultural awareness for businesses aiming to attract Asian (especially Chinese and Japanese) visitors to ensure a good reputation with wholesalers and Asian travel agents 	Med	Med-term	Industry Operators Tourism WA RTOs



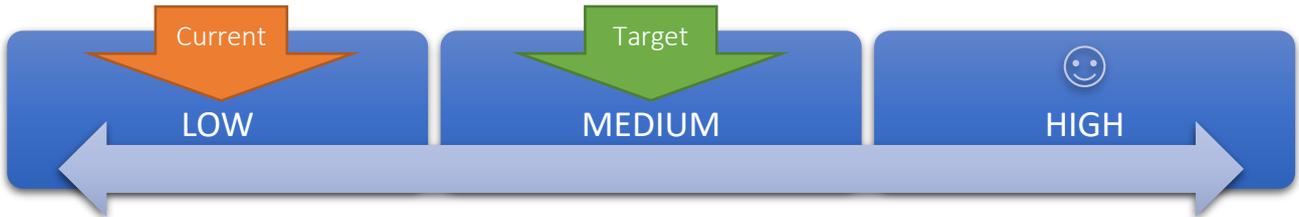
Image supplied courtesy of Tourism Western Australia

Gap Analysis

Narrogin’s identified tourism gaps are analysed below:

Consumer Awareness

Statistical data and anecdotal evidence suggest that there is low awareness of Narrogin's tourism attractions. It is unrealistic, given budget considerations, to target high consumer awareness (relative to other iconic Western Australian tourism towns such as Margaret River and Broome), though there is scope to increase awareness especially amongst niche markets.



Perceptions of Narrogin as a Tourism Destination

General perception of Narrogin is that of a large agricultural service centre in the Central South Wheatbelt region, which hosts many government departments and agencies.

Awareness of Narrogin as a tourist destination is low and an image of the destination is most likely unformed.

In many ways, the lack of pre-conception is positive as it presents a blank canvas to develop the destination brand.



Competitive Set and Stay Duration

AGO covers a wide variety of destinations, from Esperance’s beaches, to the Wheatbelt with its agricultural heritage and the iconic Wave Rock, to Mount Augustus in the North, and, of course, Kalgoorlie/Boulder, names synonymous with gold. Our objective is to entice people to stay longer in Narrogin and tour for a minimum of 1-3 days.

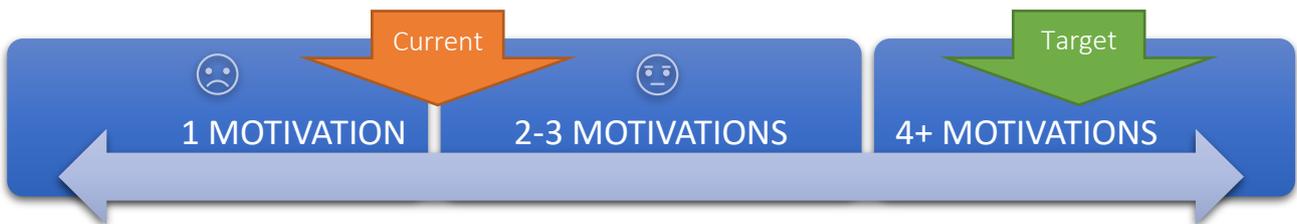
Wheatbelt towns like Northam, Toodyay, or even York largely attract Perth day-trippers/weekenders and they are perhaps considered the closest competitors with the larger of these towns perhaps giving the impression there is more to see, with a greater variety of accommodation types.



Key Motivations to Visit

Rural/regional holidays are broadly segmented according to key motivations that put the destination on travel itineraries and wish lists, including Food and/or Wine, Village/Historic Charm, Beachy/Carefree, Hiking/Active Nature, Indulgence, Special Interest/Activity, etc.

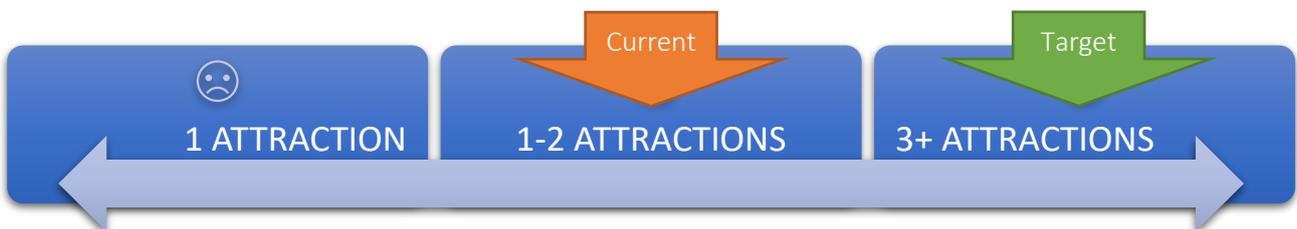
These are not mutually exclusive, and a destination can excel in one motivation while successfully appealing to a variety of other target groups. To encourage an increased number of visitors and duration of stay, multiple motivations are desirable.



Consumer Value Drivers

The value drivers are what makes a destination uniquely appealing.

Type and choice of accommodation, prevalence and range of food and drink, convenient amenities, evidence of civic pride/care and maintenance, a choice of activities, and a unique experience or attraction are all important markers of a rural/regional destination’s desirability.



Reputation and Profile

The Shire of Narrogin’s greatest barrier to attracting tourism is its “invisibility.” Even the Dryandra Woodland as the area’s most prominent feature, does not register on the tourist’s destination map.

Thus, building awareness of the Shire’s unique point of difference is the first step.

Without awareness, there can be no visitor interest/desire to visit, or ultimately action (i.e., commitment to visit and explore).

Historically, large marketing budgets were required to improve visibility via mass marketing; with the increased influence of social media and user-generated content, reputation is now just as important as big marketing budgets.



Addressing the Gaps

- Start with the basics; build awareness and interest in the Shire's key natural assets - Dryandra Woodland and Foxes Lair, then expand the tourism product over time.
- Target the two key market segments of Experience Seekers and Adventure Seekers by identifying how the predominant interests of each segment can be served by the Tourism product available in the Shire of Narrogin and surrounds.
- Promote interests that can be served and experiences to be delivered, instead of locations (e.g., promote walk trails, wildflowers, unique flora and fauna, nocturnal animals, and birdlife, rather than the actual Foxes Lair and Dryandra Woodlands locations).
- Upgrade the delivery of tourist information through better digital delivery focus.
- Build awareness of the region's tourism attributes through selective marketing of Narrogin's natural attractions, culture, and heritage to visitors who have a demonstrated interest in these experiential aspects.
- Leverage established events, tourist drive trails, towns, and attractions within close proximity.
- Identify and promote the unique natural environment of the Dryandra Woodland, Foxes Lair, and other key landscape features.
- Highlight the uniqueness and diversity of the area's flora and fauna, including the nocturnal animals, birdlife, and wildflowers.
- Develop walk and leisure bike trails through the natural landscapes, enabling tourists to access and enjoy.
- Improve the range and frequency of events.
- Identify opportunities for new and existing accommodation providers to develop appropriate tourist accommodation close to high-potential tourist attractions (e.g., eco-chalets, glamping).
- Improve facilities and accommodation supply for the caravan and camping, budget drive-stay market, and backpackers.
- Establish additional farm experiences and farm-stay options.
- Create an awareness in the community of the importance of tourism to the local economy (jobs, skills, small business incubation). That is, an overarching tourism culture.
- Facilitate and fast-track approvals for tourism businesses (cut red tape).



Image supplied courtesy of Tourism Western Australia

Enablers of success

Destination Management	Product Development	Infrastructure Development	Build Awareness of the Region	Industry Development and Support
<p>The development of a sustainable tourism industry in the region is unlikely to happen organically without a strategic and coordinated approach to destination management.</p> <p>A destination management approach will provide a platform for managing and implementing the key tourism strategy whilst bringing together the public art, trails, and parks strategies. Such an approach integrates the Shire of Narrogin with key stakeholders, the community and partner organisations.</p> <p>Destination management needs to be driven by an appropriate resource with the responsibility to implement the tourism strategy and support local industry. In the short term, leadership is required by the Shire of Narrogin to provide this resource.</p>	<p>Tourism development must be product led. A long-term increase in visitation is not achievable without significant cohesive product development.</p> <p>In the short term, the development of micro enterprises adding to the diversity and appeal of the destination will build awareness.</p> <p>In the longer term one or more, state-significant or “signature experiences” that leverage off the strengths and unique attributes of the locality should be considered.</p> <p>These signature experiences need to have sufficient pulling power to attract overnight visitors from Perth. The Shire can play a lead role in developing the signature experience. It will be a catalyst for additional product development and overall vibrancy.</p>	<p>Infrastructure Improvements are required to enhance the visitor experience and support the demand created by product development and the signature attraction.</p> <p>Signage, streetscaping, accommodation, visitor information, amenities and services, such as food and beverage, and events are also critical.</p> <p>Investment is required from both the private and public sector to ensure sufficient awareness of the services that are available for visitors.</p> <p>Incentives and support should be provided to help generate private sector investment.</p>	<p>Except for Dryandra Woodlands, awareness of Narrogin as a tourism destination is low.</p> <p>Promotion of the region is required as products are developed to give an impression that the products will provide a quality visitor experience. In the first instance a marketing strategy is required.</p> <p>This must outline how resources dedicated to marketing will be used to promote the district. It is envisaged that this promotion should focus on the visitor experience and use partnerships with other organisations, such as Tourism WA, AGO, Wheatbelt Development Commission, etc. to assist with the promotion.</p> <p>Facilitation and support by the Shire to potential tourism product developers is essential. Given the likely limitations for financial resources to be allocated to marketing, a focus on partnerships, public relations, and online marketing is likely to be central.</p>	<p>In the medium to long term the success of the Narrogin tourism destination is dependent on the participation of the local community and business.</p> <p>Without private industry support tourism will not reach its full potential. However, training and other support is required to increase private industry participating in tourism.</p> <p>Industry development will empower private industry to undertake investment and innovative product development to provide an enhanced visitor experience.</p> <p>The community must embrace and support this direction and be united in its drive to develop a sustainable tourism industry.</p>

The Five A's of Tourism

The following diagrams demonstrate a) the current tourism destination situation under the 5 A's of Tourism Assessment and b) the proposed actions to achieve improvement:

CURRENT SITUATION



ASPIRATIONS FOR TOURISM GROWTH



Section III – Narrogin Tourism Strategy

Goals and Aspirations

Tourism goals, objectives, and measurement

Goal	Objective	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
Maximise tourism’s contribution to the whole of the Shire of Narrogin.”	Maximise benefits of tourism to the Narrogin economy	Gross Value Add (GVA) of tourism sector (Average daily spends x length of stay + multiplier factor) Increase in employment in tourism sector
	Increase total spend (by increasing visitation and duration of stay) of travellers	Percentage growth in visitor numbers and visitor spend in the region
“...with managed and sustainable, year-round growth of visitors...”	Reduce seasonality of tourist arrivals. Aim to continuously improve visitor experience at key sites. Ensure sustainability of natural attractions.	Increased visitation in off-peak months Short self-completion satisfaction surveys handed out to guests checking out of their accommodation indicate satisfaction (or better) with their experience. Questions need to relate back to the strategy. Reports indicate site sustainability maintained
“Inspired by the Shire’s unique Natural heritage and cultural attractions and warm-hearted welcome.”	Grow share of target segments in total visitor population (refine segmentation strategy if consistent results from non-target segments are higher than target segments)	% growth of visitors from target segments Average visitor satisfaction comparison of target and non-target segments
	Improve mix of visitors towards those who contribute most	Average spend per visitor in target segments vs non-target segments Average stay length per visitor in target segments vs non-target segments Consistent refining of segmentation to include more profitable (yield) segments Questionnaire to local business (bi-annual) indicates improvement in traffic and revenue generation

The mid- and long-term scenario for the Shire of Narrogin’s commercial tourism operations will be dependent on achieving the short-term goals. There are insufficient visitor numbers currently to justify the risks associated with large-scale infrastructure investment in the short term, and the returns would likely be insufficient to prove viable.

A staged approach to implementation will see the delivery of low-cost high return on investment strategies in the short term. The higher capital cost initiatives are planned for the longer term, once traction has been gained in tourism growth following successful implementation of the smaller-scale investments and actions.

Short-term goals and aspirations

- Determine the Strategic Tourism Vision for Narrogin.
- Identify a clear communications objective.
- Develop a brand (theme) reflective of a consistent unique sales proposition which can be sustainably delivered, both now and in the future.
- Set and prioritise tourism goals (low hanging fruit).
- Radically improve and integrate communication of existing tourism attractions (via website, social media and offline) to generate better awareness of Narrogin’s unique tourism offering.
- Consider options for raising funds for tourism initiatives, including tourism and community development grants to public funding of activities by organisations such as Friends of Foxes Lair via Go-Fund-Me or similar platforms.

- Install a touch screen, landscape, interactive tourist information kiosk at the Dryandra Visitor Centre to deliver high-quality, branded digital experiences of Narrogin’s tourism product and wayfinding using interactive map applications.
- Incrementally improve wayfinding and interpretation of tourism attractions at the sites.
- Capture the stories and character of the “people and place” and integrate into the tourism offering.
- Utilise existing near- and wider-located tourism attractions to present to a broader section of interests. For example, promote Narrogin’s proximity to other towns with recognised and successful events (e.g., Wagin). Also, take “ownership” of surrounding tourism attractions such as Yilminning Rock, Barna Mia, Contine Hill, Toolibin Lake, Yornaning Dam, and Highbury Town in terms of promoting Narrogin’s tourism assets, as these are low- or no-cost attractions (to the Shire).
- Engage the local community by highlighting the benefits of tourism.
- Engage local experts and advocates in the development of the tourism industry (Shire-sponsored Tourism Committee).
- Collate enhanced interpretive materials on Narrogin’s trails, nature, culture, and heritage
- Encourage the development of new micro- and small-scale businesses, tourism accommodation, attractions, and experiences (volunteer services or as an add-on to an existing business).
- Incorporate into the range of Narrogin tourism product those community-building projects, such as the extended CBD walk, upgrade of Gnarojin Park, street art, etc.
- Look to engage WAITOC and Tourism Council WA to deliver tourism workshops in the region for small businesses and individuals who are interested in participating in the tourism industry.

Medium-term goals and aspirations

- Deliver incremental growth in visitor nights (and total expenditure).
- Improve awareness of the tourism potential of Narrogin.
- Attract new events.
- Transition the Dryandra Visitor Centre into a more sustainable operation, with a critical analysis of how to affect the delivery of tourist information from a physical shop-front presence to mainly online. Consider incorporating off-line service delivery to tourist-dependant local businesses (e.g., the caravan park, a fuel station, or the prospective Dome Hotel).
- Improve tourism product that appeals to drive-stay market (e.g., existing caravan park, new campground, and glamping facility at a suitable near-location such as in an enhanced Foxes Lair/Archibald Park/Railway Dam integrated precinct or at the Yilminning Rock location).
- Encourage private sector to develop other tourism product,

Long-term goals and aspirations

- Develop an iconic tourism attraction in Narrogin (e.g., 2- or 3-day festival event, with multiple key themes – produce markets, accompanied walk tours, cycle events (Velodrome endurance competition, mountain bike time trial).
- Develop a nature-based low-cost (low facility) campground at Foxes Lair or Railway Dam/Archibald Park.

An increase to the length of visitor stay in the Wheatbelt will add value to existing tourism product, increase expenditure in the region and drive jobs growth for an emerging industry.

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Key Themes

The following key themes will underpin the strategy for engaging, attracting, and retaining visitors:



Tourism Development Scenarios

The future mid-term and long-term scenarios for the Shire of Narrogin commercial tourism operations, are outlined below with consideration given to potential growth visitor markets, infrastructure and product development, and industry skills requirements and development.

Scenario	Growth visitor markets	Infrastructure and product development	Industry skills requirements and development
Short-Term	Awareness of Narrogin as an appealing overnight destination for 1+ nights for intrastate self-drive visitors – predominantly families and older Western Australians.	Enhancement and consistent branding/theming of existing infrastructure and amenities. Improve tourism information services delivery (Visitor Centre).	Understanding of the value and benefits of tourism and tourism expectations. Social media and digital.
Mid-Term	Awareness of Narrogin as an appealing overnight destination for 2+ nights for Intrastate and Interstate self-drive visitors, including families, young adults, and older Australians.	Further enhancement of interpretation, wayfinding, trails, and art. Development of new micro and small tourist businesses and infrastructure. Shire to transition from online-offline tourism information services delivery to fully online, with backup from private sector bricks and mortar tourist businesses for distribution of collateral.	Tourism business skills (planning, start up, operations, and ongoing management). Customer service and meeting expectations.
Long Term	Awareness of Narrogin as an appealing overnight destination for 2+ nights for intrastate, Interstate, and International (including Asia) self-drive and package tours/tour groups.	Development of new iconic experiences including tourism retail/food and beverage and nature-based camping in the Shire boundary. Development of themed events, in conjunction with clubs, organisations and private sector.	Understanding of the tourism supply chain and integration with Tourism WA and Tourism Australia. Medium- to large-scale project feasibility assessments.

Strategic Tourism Vision – Destination Narrogin

A strategic tourism vision that clearly articulates what can be achieved for Narrogin is:

Meet expectations with sustainable tourism experiences that provide a compelling reason to visit and stay (longer) in Narrogin.

Communications Objective

Capture and communicate the opportunity to experience the unique natural attractions and a taste of “real” country life in Narrogin, embracing the character of the people, discovering the fascinating history, and exploring the wonders of nature.

The ‘Feelings’ Evoked

The Wheatbelt Development Commission developed a diagram as a compilation of words, feelings and descriptions elicited from Wheatbelt tourism industry stakeholders during meetings held for the drafting of their Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017-2020 Strategy.⁴⁹

This has distinct alignment to the ideal “feelings” associated with the Experience Narrogin brand:



Branding

There are benefits of creating a consistent brand across the Shire and its tourism experiences. The existing Shire branding is highly appealing and well suited to translating across all the tourism branding and signage with minimal positioning alterations as per the following:

Tag line: Experience Narrogin: Love the (country) life



⁴⁹ Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017-2020, Wheatbelt Development Commission. 2017.



Strategic Tourism Framework

The priority tourism strategies proposed are centred around leveraging Narrogin’s competitive strengths. Each is prioritised, according to potential contribution to destination development, resource intensity, viability, and risk. In recognition of Narrogin’s current level of tourism destination development, the proposed strategies are directed towards the “low hanging fruit,” those that can be reasonably achieved in the short to medium term, within the Shire’s budget.

The strategies below are designed to provide Narrogin with a framework for development as a highly desirable, regional tourism destination. The five priority strategies described in detail below have been proposed primarily because they have the potential to attract large numbers of high-value tourists.

Some of the projects considered were deemed to be principally community projects, with tourism appeal, such as the CBD heritage walk trail or the proposed upgrade of Gnarojin Park, which does not diminish their value in any respect. However, under the assessment criteria of high visitor attraction, they do not rate as highly, as stand-alone projects, as the ten primary tourism attraction projects identified.

Potential tourism infrastructure projects, such as the proposed mountain bike trail network pump track, are highly desirable, provided they appeal to the identified tourism market segments and not specialised groups.

Other opportunities for tourism infrastructure development were considered, including the potential repurposing of Archibald Park as a water playground and tourism accommodation facility. However, it is unlikely that such a development would be commercially viable in the short to medium term, or until other initiatives ensure that Narrogin is recognised as a tourism destination.

The following tourism strategies are prioritised under the “low-hanging fruit” and market segmentation assessment measures:

1. Consider alternative options to the Dryandra Visitor Centre’s stand-alone “shopfront” operation for providing off-line distribution of visitor information and tourist collateral. Transition towards predominantly online delivery of tourist information through an online tourism destination promotional strategy, incorporating an outstanding, all-things tourism encompassing website, providing digitally based visitor information distribution and interaction, together with support through social media.
2. Leverage current tourist interest in the unique, natural landscapes and outdoor activities that are currently available in the area The Dryandra Woodlands, Foxes Lair, and other local natural attractions including Yilminning Rock, the Barna Mia Nocturnal Sanctuary, Contine Hill, Toolibin Lake, Yornaning Dam, and Highbury Town have high appeal to the wider population demographic, especially those interested in

connecting with nature to learn about the area's natural landscape and fauna or for healthy outdoor recreation. Improve wayfinding and interpretation at Narrogin Shire-controlled, natural landscape locations.

3. "Farmer for a Day" - Provide opportunities for visitors to immerse themselves in Narrogin (country) life, including a farmers' market.
4. Identify and develop tourist experiences that cater to specific interests (e.g., wildflowers, bird spotting, nocturnal animal viewing, and walk and mountain bike trails, including the proposed pump track at Gnarojin Park).
5. Connect visitors with Narrogin's heritage and Aboriginal culture through the proposed Gnarojin Park redevelopment, interpretive tours and cultural activities at appropriate locations, and improved visitor experience at identified community development project locations (e.g., Railway Dam, Archibald Park, and the Commonage).
6. Encourage development of niche accommodation product such as farm-stay, caravanning, and camping (including glamping) and upgrade of historic hotels.
7. Encourage the development of escorted and self-guided tours and periodic activities for special interest groups (e.g., art, photography, and/or astronomy groups, gliding and competition cycling (Narrogin Velodrome)).
8. Improve tourism network linkages with Tourism WA, Australia's Golden Outback, and the towns and tourism attractions in the Southern Wheatbelt (e.g., Wave Rock and Kulin).
9. Encourage and create new events to attract large groups of visitors.

These strategies are detailed in the following strategy sections:



Strategy 1 – Conduct a Visitor Information Services Review

- Undertake a cost benefit analysis of the current visitor centre operation, to ascertain whether the physical distribution of tourist information can be achieved more sustainably through alternative options.
- Develop an exceptional tourism destination promotional package, incorporating an outstanding, all-encompassing website, digital visitor information distribution, social media, and visitor-interest and activity-based collateral.
- Call for Expressions of Interest from local tourism-related businesses, for the provision of off-line visitor services and delivery of tourist information.

Dryandra Country Visitor Centre

The Shire of Narrogin operates the Dryandra Country Visitor Centre (DCVC), which is partially supported by a financial contribution from the Shire of Cuballing. The DCVC is well located in a high-traffic site on the corner of Park and Fairway Streets near the centre of Narrogin.

Observation of the centre's operation during opening hours over three separate occasions in September 2019 indicated that the visitation to the visitor centre is low, which is of particular note considering the time of observation was during the peak wildflower season.

The DCVC premises are attractive, and the layout includes racking for tourist collateral and shelving containing gift items and souvenirs. At the time of each of the consultant visits, the public area was staffed by a sole volunteer. Quality of the interaction (as a visitor) with the visitor servicing volunteer varied on each occasion, from helpful and obliging (1) to a general lack of tourist product knowledge (2) and total disinterest (1).

The manager of DCVC is generally located in an office in the rear of the building, which is separated from the main visitor area. This is not ideal, considering the inconsistency of knowledge and customer service skills demonstrated by the public-facing visitor servicing personnel. The manager appears to be knowledgeable about the area's tourism potential, passionate about building Narrogin's profile as a tourism destination, and has strong graphic design skills, based on recent collateral produced and the described activities undertaken.

The impression gained from the few visits to the DCVC is that it is under-resourced and not delivering the necessary tourist information and visitor experience to meet or exceed expectations under the current model. In common with many regional visitor centres, the financial support provided by the Shire of Narrogin (and Shire of Cuballing) to its visitor centre is substantial. Therefore, it is obligatory for this strategy to examine the priorities for the Shire's tourist destination information delivery. The many options for both off-line and online tourist destination information delivery include:

Face-to-face interaction

- Dedicated visitor centres
- Co-located facilities, such as CRC offices
- Outsourced - contracted private sector, tourism-associated businesses
- Outreach kiosks - may or may not involve operating from a building. The information service is "roving" and moves to areas of high traffic according to demand.

Contact centre services

- Phone and email communication

Internet-based

- Website
- Mobile Apps
- Live chat

- Automated information kiosks, with QR code accessed tourism collateral

A recent report for the Victoria Tourism Industry Council (Visitor Information Centre Summit 2016) provided a model for the provision and distribution of visitor information.⁵⁰ The report referenced research and case studies for visitor information delivery, which generally supported the Tourism WA publication - The Future of Visitor Centres in WA, Haeberlin Consulting 2014.

The key findings from the assessment of the DCVC and visitor information distribution research relevant to the DCVC are:

- The top three features that visitors look for in a visitor centre (VC) are:
 - a. knowledgeable, professional staff, skilled in customer service;
 - b. unbiased and authoritative information; and
 - c. regional displays and stories.
- There is widespread variance among stakeholders regarding the importance of visitor centres and their current performance.
- Potential to partner with relevant local tourism businesses, to deliver face-to-face visitor services, in place of the present DCVC.
- The current resources and skills of the DCVC personnel may be more effectively engaged in production of online content and collateral, event promotion, and networking with tourism organisations and local tourism businesses. The role would be more akin to a tourism development manager than a visitor centre manager.
- The impact of technology on visitor centres is unlikely to be terminal in the short term but is critical to understand that VC services are of decreasing relevance to visitor needs and to manage the transition from off-line to online.
- The current volume of online access for tourist information and transactions confirms the critical importance of an effective and user-friendly web presence that incorporates contemporary design, adaptable layout, programmable aspirational content, and state-of-art digital infrastructure.
- Strong on-line & on-site transaction trend suggests there may be potential for a viable commercial model to underpin service delivery; however, much competition comes from the commercial sector.
- Create a beacon to the region – natural resources, regional produce, culture, events, and hospitality.
- Focus on maintaining currency and relevance – what is on, today, tonight, right now.
- Maintain clear and consistent branding across all channels.
- Traditional maps & brochures to be integrated with digital technology.

All research indicates the financial necessity for visitor information services to transition from traditions face-to-face, stand-alone visitor centres to a more online-centric visitor information servicing model.

The current website for the DCVC provides a considerable amount of information about the area. However, the grouping of information is based around locations rather than visitor interests and activities. Therefore, finding information is less intuitive than it could be and requires more navigation. Links to other websites contain local information, including the Parks and Wildlife's Dryandra Woodland website and the extensive, privately maintained Foxes Lair website.

It is generally accepted that for authenticity, a tourism destination website must display all local attractions and tourism businesses. However, many visitor centres operate on a paid subscription basis and do not display information for non-member businesses. It is important that visitor centre websites, directories, and other collateral describing tourist product for their area are totally inclusive, or they risk losing integrity.

The "Friends of Foxes Lair" organisation is operated by a group of knowledgeable and passionate volunteers, led by local resident, Doug Sawkins, who are active in maintaining the site and, on many occasions, interacting

⁵⁰ A model for the provision and distribution of visitor information, Sandwalk Partners 2016

with visitors. Considering its limited resources, the organisation provides a good service to the Shire of Narrogin's tourism.

The Foxes Lair website has a wealth of information about the locality, including its geology and history, things to do, and what to see as well as an excellent blog. It contains an enormous photo library and is supported by Instagram and Facebook pages. The Foxes Lair online promotion is managed by Doug Sawkins, an extremely passionate advocate for Foxes Lair and Narrogin Tourism. It is understood that Doug has also provided images and content for much of the tourist collateral distributed by the DCVC.

There is a concern that if the existing Friends of Foxes Lair group is disbanded or Doug Sawkins retires from his role as the primary organiser and no longer maintains the Foxes Lair website, this important resource and much local tourist information may no longer be available to visitors.

Develop New Narrogin Tourism Website

As a matter of high priority, the Dryandra Visitor Centre should develop a new, high-quality website for the promotion of the tourism destination. The website will become the single go-to tourism destination information source for Narrogin and the surrounding area.

The new website will need to incorporate, with the approval of the current owners, all relevant content from Park's and Wildlife's Dryandra Woodland website, Australia's Golden Outback (regarding Southern Wheatbelt tourism attractions), tourism content from the Shire's of Narrogin and Cuballing's websites and, most importantly, the Foxes Lair website.

It is not intended that the new DCVC website replace any of the above-mentioned websites, but to supplement them as the primary tourist destination website.

The proposed website must maintain up-to-date content for everything about tourism in Narrogin, including (seasonal) what to do, what to see, tourist accommodation, events, and more. Therefore, it is essential that it is constructed on a robust, reputable, and easy-to-operate platform. The website must be designed for mobile application as well as computer access.

The key to retaining high search engine rankings is fresh content that aligns with the intent of the website. This is often partially achieved by maintaining a blog, to which news items are frequently posted. The blog posts can include historical or current "stories" of people and places, upcoming events, or any other items of interest. Quality images for posts and throughout the website are important, and a photo gallery is good for website visitor retention.

To help maintain currency, the website may also draw from pages operated by the DCVC on social media platforms, such as Instagram and Facebook, or even from the relevant social media pages of third parties (e.g., the Foxes Lair Instagram pages).

The DCVC would also maintain social media pages to support and promote the tourist destination and point to the website. Blog posts on the proposed new DCVC can be automatically posted on the DCVC's social media pages, preventing time-consuming reposting.

To illustrate the style and content of the proposed website, Bighthouse Consultants has developed an example site, <https://dryandratourism.squarespace.com> (Password **vip**), which demonstrates the clean appealing features and a portion of the proposed website Home (Welcome) page. The demonstration website is supported by three separate blog databases that feed content into the News, Events, and the What to See and Do sections.

The following images display a portion of the proposed website Home (Welcome) page.

WELCOME WHERE TO STAY WHAT TO DO NEWS CONTACT



9881 2064



FOXES LAIR NATURE PARK

Foxes Lair is a bushland reserve in the town of Narrogin WA that has walking tracks, picnic areas, and a wide array of winter wildflowers, landscapes, birds and wildlife.

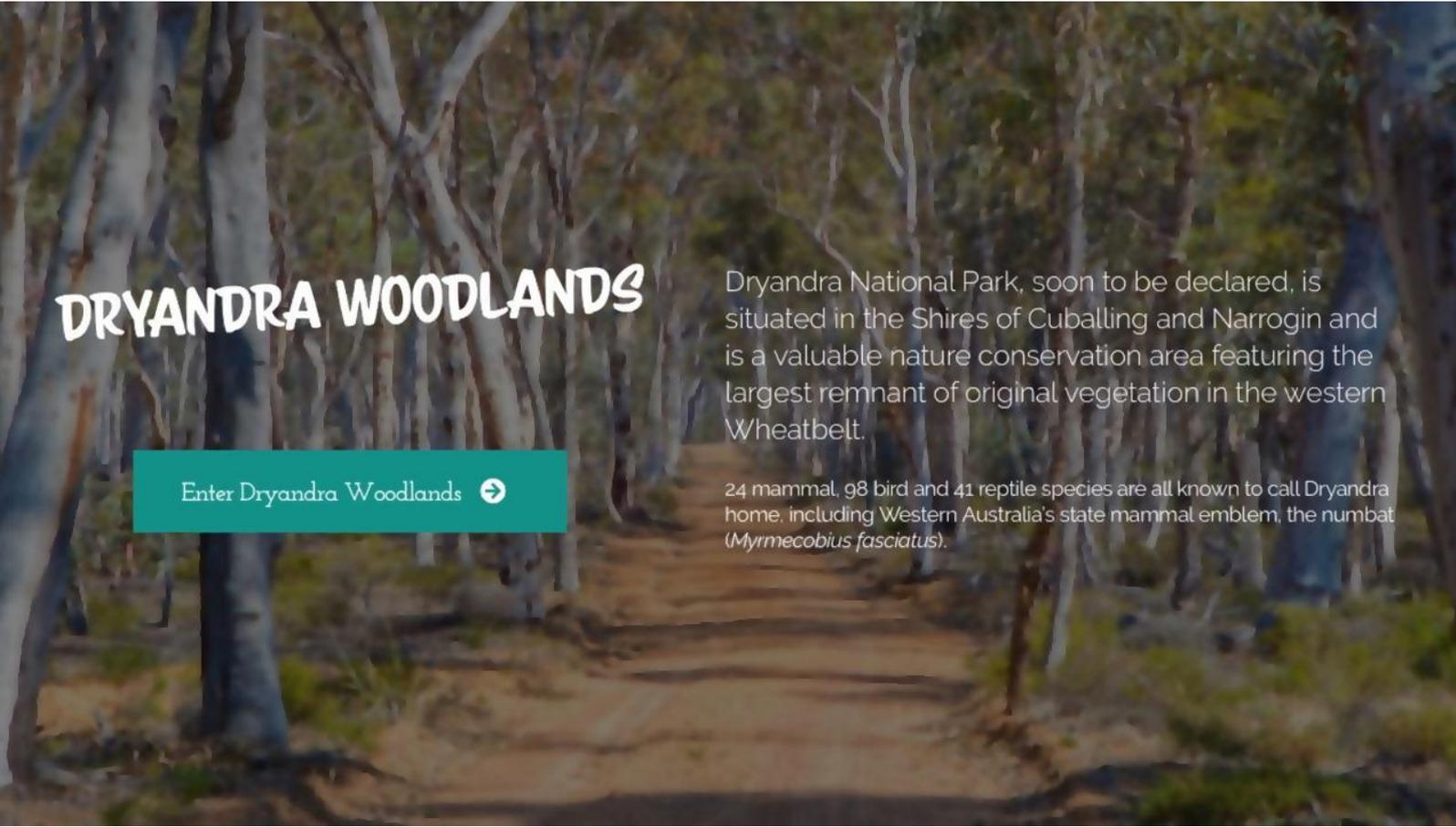
Explore Foxes Lair

What to see & do

From sensational seasonal wildflowers to Dryandra's wild woodlands and the flora & fauna of Foxes Lair, there is plenty on offer.

More to see





DRYANDRA WOODLANDS

Enter Dryandra Woodlands [➔](#)

Dryandra National Park, soon to be declared, is situated in the Shires of Cuballing and Narrogin and is a valuable nature conservation area featuring the largest remnant of original vegetation in the western Wheatbelt.

24 mammal, 98 bird and 41 reptile species are all known to call Dryandra home, including Western Australia's state mammal emblem, the numbat (*Myrmecobius fasciatus*).

NEWS & EVENTS

From our blog...



Sep 17, 2019
Mosquito trapping orchids of Foxes Lair



Sep 17, 2019
Fire breaks built by trees

From our calendar...



Narrogin Speedway
Narrogin Speedway



Narrogin Community Garden
Farmers Market

Get the latest news and events notifications first!

Custom Information Directory, Touch Screen Kiosks

Tourists like to make well-informed decisions before choosing which attractions and activities to visit. Seeing previews of places with a lot of images, videos, and maps really helps this decision making.

In situations where staff may not be knowledgeable about the tourism destination, trained in customer service, or overwhelmed with visitors, less than satisfactory direct communication with each tourist can occur. Easy-to-use touch screens and kiosks can be the best solution to getting the right information to each tourist who walks through the door of the visitor centre.

Designed for use in visitor centres, reception areas, and public spaces, 42-inch (1.1 metre) commercial touchscreen kiosks clearly present a directory, advertising, and wayfinding information. The carefully considered angle in a kiosk's design intuitively indicates to the users that it is an interactive touch screen and not just a passive display.



The kiosks present dynamic information on attractions, trails, historic places, events, and activities and have an easy-to-use software interface, for keeping information up to date. Tourist collateral including trail maps can also be displayed and downloaded to visitors' mobile devices through scanning a QR Code with the mobile phone's camera.

The cost of a touch screen kiosk, including software and training is approximately \$8,000.00.

Mobile Apps

Mobile apps are an extension of a destination website and can also provide users with several additional features.

The built-in GPS on mobile devices allows users to unlock different tours and information at each point of the tour using location services.

Augmented Reality (AR) connects physical spaces and locations to digital media loaded to the App's database.

The purpose is to interconnect real places with digital media through engaging means. The app educates, entertains, and informs while being fun and engaging to use.

For instance, on a displayed trail map (e.g., Foxes Lair), various points of interest may be designated by a marker. By hovering over the marker, a full description of the location will be displayed, including images. This would be especially useful for identifying wildflowers, significant trees, birds, and animals.

Mobile Apps provide the ability for a destination to “push” notification messages about the destination to travellers driving within a predetermined distance of the location.

Mobile Apps provide tourism destinations with a wealth of knowledge about their markets and tourist profiles. Over time, they can provide tourism managers with important data on traveller's movements and expenditure, which can aid planning and destination marketing.

Stand-alone mobile apps can be costly to develop. However, there are several travel app platforms, such as Everythere, which allows tourist destinations to present visitor information specific to the area, including what-to-do, what-to-see, and where-to-stay. Subscribing to a travel app may be a good alternative to the DCVC producing a stand-alone tourism app.

Producing a mobile app should not be the highest priority; however, it should be considered as a means of capturing, retaining, and distributing important information, such as flora and fauna at Foxes Lair, that, otherwise, may be lost over time.

Online Engagement Platform

Online engagement platforms create a dedicated online space for community and visitor engagement. Local, state, and federal governments around the world are getting more people involved in planning projects, strategic development, and community consultations through online engagement. Bringing the conversation online, government organisations can broaden their audience for a more complete sampling of public opinion.



By empowering stakeholders with an easy and secure way to participate online, organisations build community capacity and improve planning outcomes as a whole.

Online engagement platforms enable local government to:

Listen

Use a combination of forums, polls, surveys, maps, and other tools to host and encourage conversations and interaction.

Inform

Communicate project updates and key perspectives through newsletters, blogs, social, and rich media content.

Measure

Advanced analytics and reporting deliver actionable insights and data-driven evidence for better decisions.

Build Community

Capture participant information and develop user profiles and target communications for more meaningful interaction.

While local government may approach a set of issues in a certain way, they may not always be able to see the related issues that may be less visible but equally, if not more, important to the local community and visitors. Opening the conversation up can allow these underlying priorities and experiences to come to the forefront and inform better decisions for all involved. This can mean looking beyond the survey.

Engaging online allows for a wider, more diverse range of views, which provides new, relevant knowledge to contribute to decision making. Unpacking issues in greater detail, it paints a clearer picture of what the community wants and pertinent local issues. With tools and opportunities for a more collaborative, deeper dialogue, digital engagement fosters trust and unearths underlying tensions around issues and competing priorities for stakeholders.

Where traditional, face-to-face engagement has limited participants, online community engagement enables more people to have their say at their convenience. A dedicated digital engagement space beyond the limitations of social media – with strident measures of data security that combat increasing community mistrust of social media – ensures everyone has safe access to make meaningful contributions to issues impacting their everyday life.

Online engagement in the planning stages of a project can facilitate more focussed outcomes. It can also minimise budgets that confront geographical confines particular to face-to-face engagement. And, unlike traditional engagement methods, it provides unparalleled opportunities to dive deeper into conversations beyond the immediate issue at hand. It also brings diverse groups together, including hard-to-reach communities, providing access to often neglected perspectives and bringing marginalised voices into the conversation.

An example of the use of an online engagement platform for stakeholder collaboration is the City of Launceston's Tomorrow Together engagement campaign: <https://www.bangthetable.com/blog/staff-pick-city-of-launceston-tomorrow-together/>



get involved with...

Tomorrow Together

Strategy 2 – Enhance Narrogin’s Natural Experiences

- Promote Narrogin’s abundance of soft-adventure, nature-based experiences as its key tourism destination features by utilising the high tourist recognition of Dryandra Woodland and the region’s unique flora, fauna, and geoscience features. Key attributes to be conveyed are the profusion and diversity of wildflowers and birdlife, the ease of access for self-guided tours, the hidden “stories” behind the area’s landscapes and vegetation (e.g., the trees that that create the gravelly, lateritic soils), and the ease of access for self-guided tours.
- Develop Foxes Lair as a centrepiece of Narrogin’s Natural Experiences by improving and upgrading facilities, amenities, wayfinding, and interpretation at the site; and targeting the appropriate, large traveller segments identified in the three WA Tourism Domestic Market Segmentation – Escape and Connect, Off the Beaten Track, and Family Fun.
- Develop a viewing area at Foxes Lair for Astrotourists.
- Plan to add other natural locations, such as Railway Dam and Yilminning Rock, which are located on Narrogin Shire-controlled land, by gradually improving access, wayfinding, and amenities to make them more accessible and interesting.
- Leverage the proximity of the Dryandra Woodlands nature conservation area (currently 92,000 annual visitors), which features the largest remnant of original vegetation in the Western Wheatbelt, an amazing collection of mammal, bird, and reptile species, and Barna Mia, a predator-proof animal sanctuary in the heart of Dryandra, where Western Australia’s state mammal emblem, the numbat, and other nocturnal animals can be seen.

Interpretive Shelter at Dryandra Reserve



The Natural Attractions of Narrogin and the Dryandra Country

Natural Landscapes

Narrogin is blessed with several nearby, unique natural landscapes, which include the Dryandra Woodland, Foxes Lair, and Yilminning Rock.

While some of these locations are on Shire of Narrogin controlled land, the greater area of the region's natural estate is administered by DBCA (Parks and Wildlife). This provides Narrogin with a natural tourism asset, for which it has no commitment to ongoing maintenance cost.

The DBCA's Two-Year Action Plan for Nature-Based Tourism in Western Australia 2019 and 2020, provides an ambitious framework to improve nature-based tourism in regional and remote WA. It does not mention the Dryandra Country amongst those destinations where it hopes to increase tourist visitation. Nevertheless, visitation to the Dryandra Reserve for 2018 totalled 96,000, according to the DBCA statistics.

Pointing the Way to Narrogin's Unique Natural Assets

More and more tourists are attracted to experiential travel within environmental landscapes, learning about the purity of nature, culture, and history. Geo-tourism, a multi-interest form of nature-based tourism, incorporates ecotourism and interesting geoscience features in a didactic and entertaining way. Geo-tourism goes beyond flora and fauna and explores the temporal and spatial dimensions of the landscape and skies.

Promoting the geoscience features of natural landscapes, rather than just the scenic beauty, will generate inquisitiveness amongst target markets and provide a clear position to the tourism destination, which distinguishes it from similar competitive destinations.

Example -The Woylie's Significance to Sandalwood Regeneration

The role a small marsupial, the Woylie *Bettongia Penicillata*, might play in the recruitment and regeneration of Western Australian sandalwood *Santalum spicatum* through its seed caching behaviour was investigated. To determine the fate of the seeds, cotton thread was attached to the seeds and the trail followed. A total of 25 seed caches were located. All the seeds were found in separate caches, which was consistent with scatter-hoarding behaviour.

Significantly more seedlings and saplings grew away from sandalwood trees at sites where woylies were present than at sites with no woylies.

These findings strongly suggest that **little seed dispersal or regeneration of sandalwood occurs in the absence of woylies**. Through scatter-hoarding, woylies have the potential to disperse and cache sandalwood seeds away from the source and significantly alter the subsequent regeneration of sandalwood. Furthermore, by caching seeds large distances away from a source, woylies could modify the distribution of sandalwood in an area.



Furthermore, the more interpretive information provided online and at the sites, the more time will be spent by tourists enjoying the learning experience. Ultimately, this will result in return visitation or overnight stays.

Developing a geo-tourism strategy, that incorporates, placemaking (a multifaceted approach to the planning, design, and management of public spaces) and wayfinding (branding promotion, interpretation, signage, maps, and directional devices) to point tourists to the existing locations and experiences that many visitors already enjoy.

It requires the team to examine Narrogin from a visitor's perspective, understanding why people currently travel there, and using this data to design information and clues to help guide new visitors to the tourist destination and improve their experience once they arrive. The key to visitor satisfaction is access to information, which enhances understanding and improves enjoyment of the experience.

Improve visitation and visitor experience at Gnarojin Park, Railway Dam, and Dryandra Reserve

Enhancing visitor amenities to facilitate longer stays and maximising the enjoyment of existing tourism assets including Gnarojin Park, Railway Dam, and Dryandra Reserve is a priority.

The Railway Dam Management Plan (2018) was compiled primarily to protect and enhance the conservation values of the Railway Dam Reserve by encouraging sustainable use of the reserve for recreation, education, and eco-tourism purposes. The plan identifies the following existing infrastructure at the site:

- A small carpark area;
- Historical interpretive signage;
- Railway Immigrant Camp memorial;
- Two picnic benches with non-gas barbeque facilities;
- Signs stating no swimming;
- A bridge across the two dams, a small access bridge off Mokine Road and a small bridge at Archibald Park;
- A network of historical drains and weirs leading into the dam;
- Archibald Park - a historical jet boat park;
- A geocache;
- Vehicle tracks created by 4WD; and
- Two walking trails created by a community member.⁵¹

The plan states that local community members have created trails within the reserve and that these trails are currently used by locals for the purposes of dog walking, cycling, trail biking, and 4WD use. It recommends a range conservation actions to protect the environmental sustainability of the reserve as well as of measures to improve the use and amenity of the reserve.



The main recommendation with an impact on the reserve's tourism potential is for signage to be erected "with maps of the designated walking trails at the carpark area and in various locations along the walking trail. This signage should encourage visitors to stick to the designated paths. It is also recommended to have educational signage along the path for the purposes of identifying native plant species and native fauna. The historical drainage network at Railway Dam is illustrated on the sign at the carpark entry; however, a new sign at the location of the old weir/separator area may be of interest to visitors and pedestrians and explain the wider function and history of the reserve"⁵²

The tourism-related actions recommended by the plan include:

⁵¹ Railway Dam Reserve 20939 Management Plan Prepared for the Shire of Narrogin, December 2018 by 360 Environmental Pty Ltd

⁵² Railway Dam Reserve 20939 Management Plan Prepared for the Shire of Narrogin, December 2018 by 360 Environmental Pty Ltd

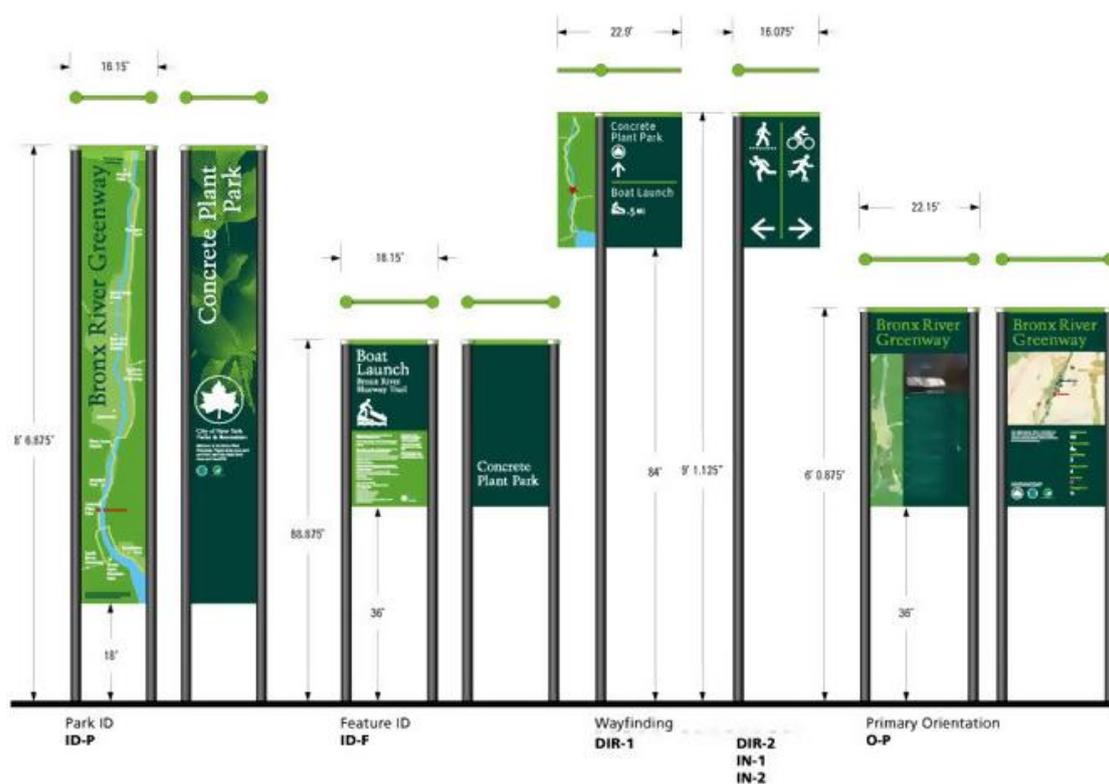
- Formalise the two existing walking trails (Archibald Park Walk and Dam Walk) by installing maps and signage prohibiting visitors to walk off the tracks.
- Develop a design for parking/picnic area.
- Apply for funding for parking/picnic area/walk trail upgrade and rehabilitation of bare areas.
- Provide more bins around carpark and picnic area and a dog waste bag dispenser.
- Expand carpark area to allow for more cars.
- Install interpretive signage identifying native flora and fauna (e.g., turtles) for visitors.
- Install interpretive signage at the location of the historical weir/seperator drainage area.
- The plan also notes that there is opportunity to rehabilitate Archibald Park (a secondary dam/water feature) to provide a more diverse wetland-type habitat.

The actions identified will all help to conserve and better utilise an appealing asset with natural and heritage values that is well located in the Narrogin Town Centre. This has the potential to add to the visitor experience and is, thus, included in the Tourism Strategy recommendations.

The signage and trail development recommendations and development of Gnarojin Park for an improved visitor experience is covered in Transplan’s Shire of Narrogin Draft Walk Trails Master Plan and explored in more detail from a tourism perspective under the Aboriginal Culture and Walk Trails section in this strategy. Although not investigated in Transplan’s Shire of Narrogin Draft Walk Trails Master Plan, it is recommended to investigate the feasibility of a transient or pop-up cafe at Gnarojin Park, Railway Dam, and/or Dryandra Reserve to draw and hold visitors and provide an enhanced visitor experience. This would encourage visitors to stay longer inside these locations while providing for an enhanced visitor experience. A café van could be a good start to test the market, with more permanent infrastructure being planned once demand has been determined. This would ideally be located near existing or proposed toilets and picnic facilities.

Wayfinding

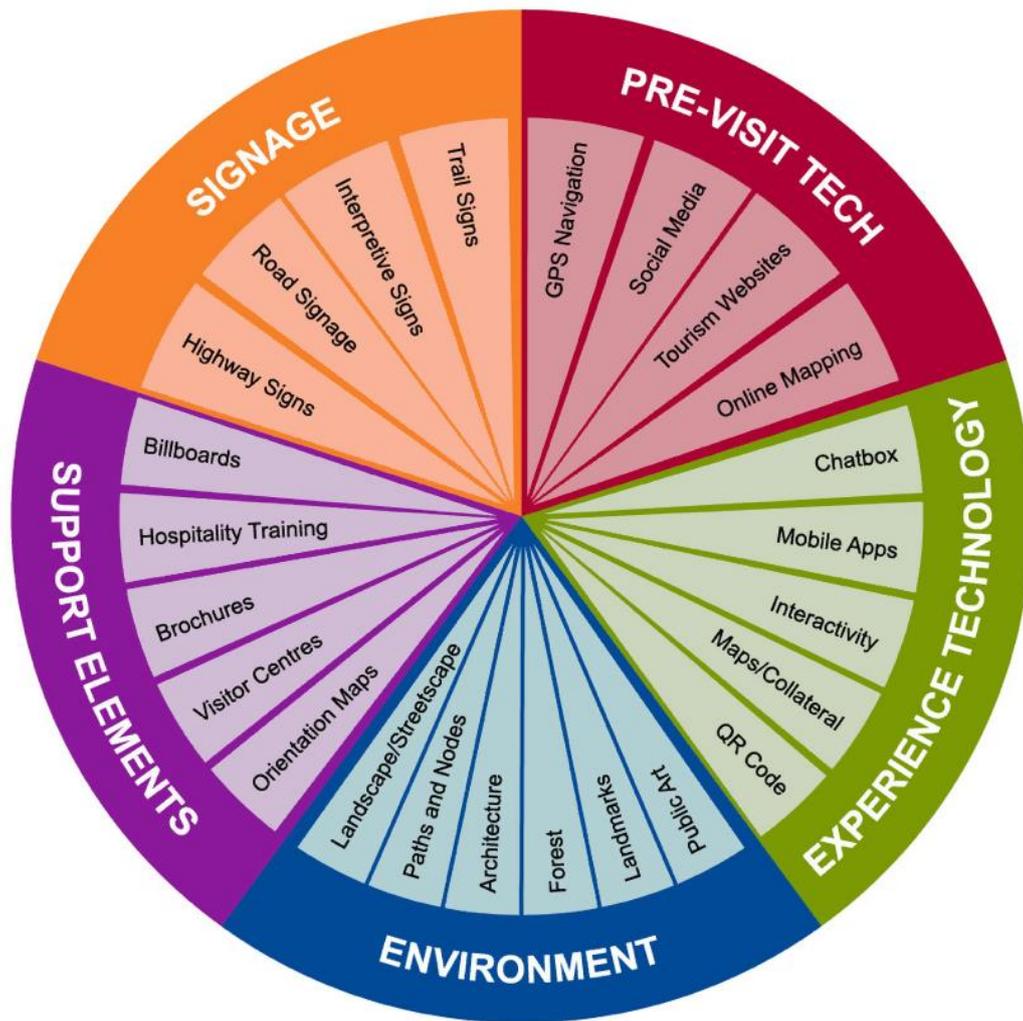
Tourism wayfinding, in this strategy, refers to the information system that guides people around and through Narrogin and enhances their ability to navigate and understand the environment. It is much more than interpretive signs. It is understanding traveller’s needs during their visit, “the consumer journey,” as part of strategy to help visitors navigate their way easily around the Shire to the attractions, accommodation, amenities, events, and all else the location has to offer.



It is a way of looking at an environment and organising the visual and verbal cues within the local environment to help people access the areas they need, and it incorporates:

- Branding
- Signage
- Maps
- Printed collateral, including brochures
- Interpretation kiosks
- Video and virtual reality
- GPS navigational devices
- Smartphone messaging
- QR codes
- Websites and Mobile apps

Elements of Wayfinding



Symbols can contribute simplicity, clarity, distinguishability, memorability, and personality to a wayfinding system.

Car hire companies, government agencies (Department of Sport and Recreation, Parks and Wildlife), and membership organisations, such as RAC, are also distributors of wayfinding material. It is important for the Shire to foster relationships with potential partners and maintain the supply of wayfinding material to them (paper-based collateral or electronic).

Its purpose is to provide a systematic network of directional signs to guide the traveling public from major highway gateways to key civic, cultural, regional, and commercial destinations using the minimum number of signs.

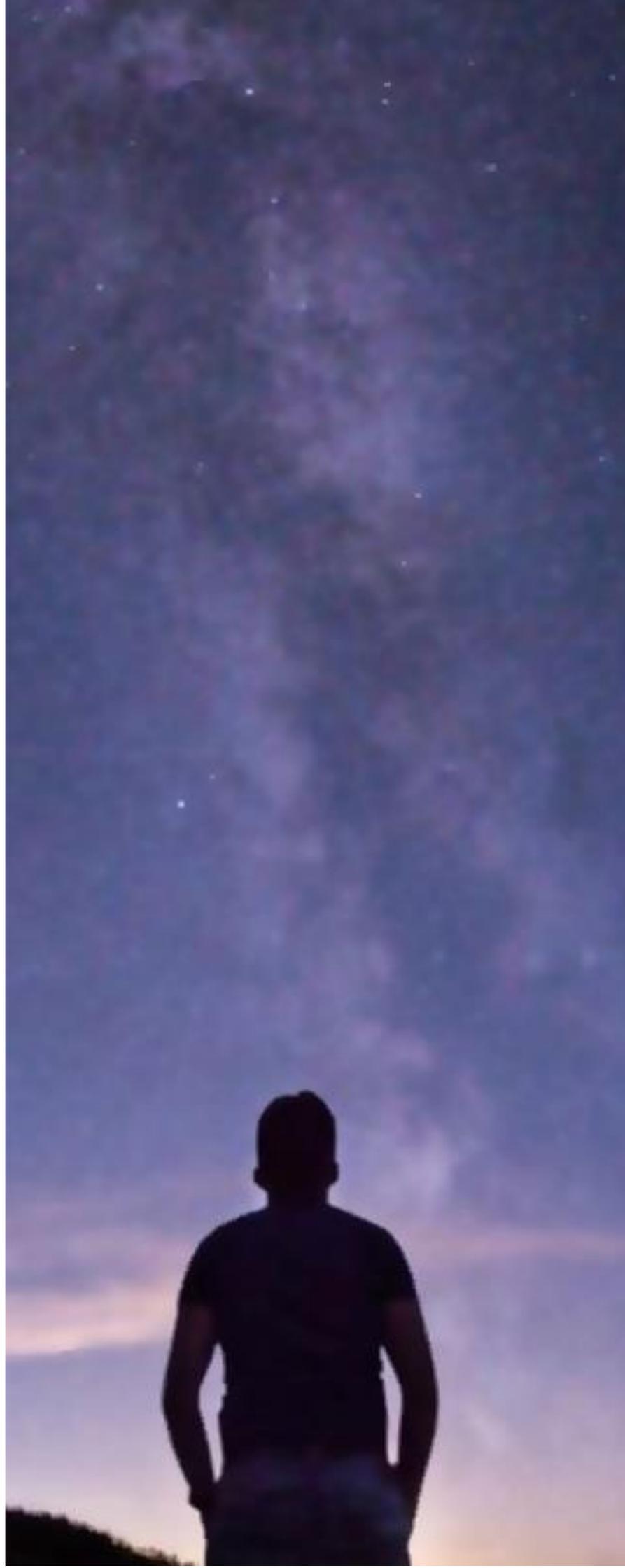
Astrotourism

Potentially complementing the geo-tourism opportunities described above is the Astrotourism phenomenon, which is gaining impetus throughout regional Western Australia. Western Australia is perfectly placed to become the stargazing capital of the world and grow an Astrotourism economy across the State.

WA has many comparative advantages that make it an ideal destination to access a pristine dark night sky where the Milky Way Galaxy can be seen in its true and original form. People now travel to see a dark night sky just as they travel to see other icons such as the Great Barrier Reef, the Amazon Rainforest, or Antarctica. A dark night sky has become a rarity and cannot be seen everywhere.

Crucially, from an economic standpoint, the single most important thing about dark-sky tourism is that it necessitates one or more overnight stays. Astrotourism is an all-year-round activity that will increase visitor numbers at traditionally off-peak tourism times. Although peak seasons, such as wildflowers, will always see a spike in visitor numbers for regional WA, Astrotourism can generate a more regular flow of visitors throughout the year. As such, Astrotourism will provide a longer and more sustained period of tourism activity that, consequently, will generate a more consistent cash flow for regional businesses and service providers.⁵³

⁵³ Astrotourism Western Australia, Strategic Plan 2019-2023.



Strategy 3 – Farmer for a Day

- Provide opportunities for visitors to immerse themselves in Narrogin’s farming heritage - Love the (Country) Life.
- Encourage and facilitate regular weekend Farmers’ Produce Markets.
- Allow rural properties to develop small-scale cabin, glamping, and caravanning and camping facilities to attract city-dwellers to experience the country life.

Narrogin a Town Rich in Agricultural Heritage

The first settlers in the area were sheep herders who had followed water courses and selected property suitable for grazing. The area was settled in the 1860s and 1870s when pastoralists moved and settled in isolated outposts. The population was so scattered that they had no incentive to establish a town.

Narrogin was officially declared a town in June 1897 and was gazetted as a municipality on 13 April 1906. The early years of settlement were hard, with farmers relying on sandalwood cutting and the bark from Mallee trees (used as a tanning agent) to compensate for poor returns from wheat and sheep.

The arrival of the Great Southern Railway in July 1889 initiated the first hint of a town. Narrogin was connected to six separate railway destinations – York, Wagin, Collie, Wickiepin, Kulin, and Boddington. Narrogin remained a major rail centre until the late 1970s when competition from road transport saw a reduction in the railway’s workforce.

Narrogin’s previous role as a major railway junction has acted as an attractor for agricultural service industries as well as government departments and agencies. The town has accumulated significant public infrastructure – mainly in the health and education areas. This infrastructure serves as the base for the modern regional centre and diverse agricultural and horticultural economy that Narrogin has become today.

Giving City Dwellers a Taste of Country Life

An overarching theme of experiencing country life, albeit short term, will resonate with Narrogin’s target market and provide an enhanced visitor experience, meeting the visitor expectation of the “Narrogin Brand” and highlighting the unique character of the town and its people.

Urban dwellers seek holiday experiences that allow them to slow down and immerse themselves in alternate lifestyles to recharge and rejuvenate. Narrogin is well placed to provide an easily accessible option to “try out” the lifestyle of regional country townspeople which could be summarised in the communications as “Farmer for a day.”

There are several aspects of daily life that people living in the countryside take for granted but offer a unique and enjoyable visitor experience for people who have spent little time in regional Australia.



The Shire of Narrogin's Business Prospectus identifies that "there are many opportunities for diversification within the agricultural industry, particularly in niche product markets. This could include deer, alpaca, or goat farms and olive groves. High intensity agriculture such as feed lots and chicken farms are also new business options. Viticulture presents a potential growth industry in the region with the climate suited to grape vines."⁵⁴ Tourism would complement many of the aforementioned niche products with farm gate/cellar door and other related experiences adding to the viability of these enterprises.

Country farmers' markets are also a big drawcard and have been instrumental in activating other rural and regional towns. Supporting efforts in expanding the existing farmers' market, attracting new stall holders, expanding the scope with a well-managed strategic focus, and working towards a viable weekly event, heavily supported by Shire marketing, could draw visitors to Narrogin and encourage them to stay longer to secure some fresh produce and unique gifts to take home.

In the longer term, a private investor could be encouraged to investigate the feasibility of a unique mixed retail and hospitality venue similar to the Williams Woolshed, but uniquely Narrogin (for example, Railway or farming themed). This could incorporate market stalls or pop-up shops or similar to support the development of tourism retail through micro enterprise and cottage industry.

A future option may be the development of the historic Railway Storage Shed into a Farmers' market venue, which could be opened according to demand, initially weekly but hopefully extended to 3-4 days a week over time. The benefit of indoor markets extends well beyond weatherproofing, with the ability to host more permanent facilities (e.g., food and beverage area and shared container chillers for the farm produce sellers).

Opportunities to stay on farms either in purpose-built cabins, bed and breakfast style, or simply through letting out a spare room on Airbnb is a low-risk way to increase the variety of appealing accommodation experiences. Offering supplemental tours and rural experiences, such as tractor rides, shearing demonstrations, fruit picking, animal feeding, etc., would further enhance the visitor experience. Although many of these experiences would not generate sufficient income to be viable as standalone tourism enterprises, they do offer opportunities for existing tourism businesses to value add, or for people employed in other industries to generate a supplemental income.

⁵⁴ Business Prospectus, The Shire of Narrogin. Downloaded from https://www.narrogin.wa.gov.au/profiles/narrogin/assets/clientdata/document-centre/general_publications/narrogin_prospectus.pdf 19/6/19

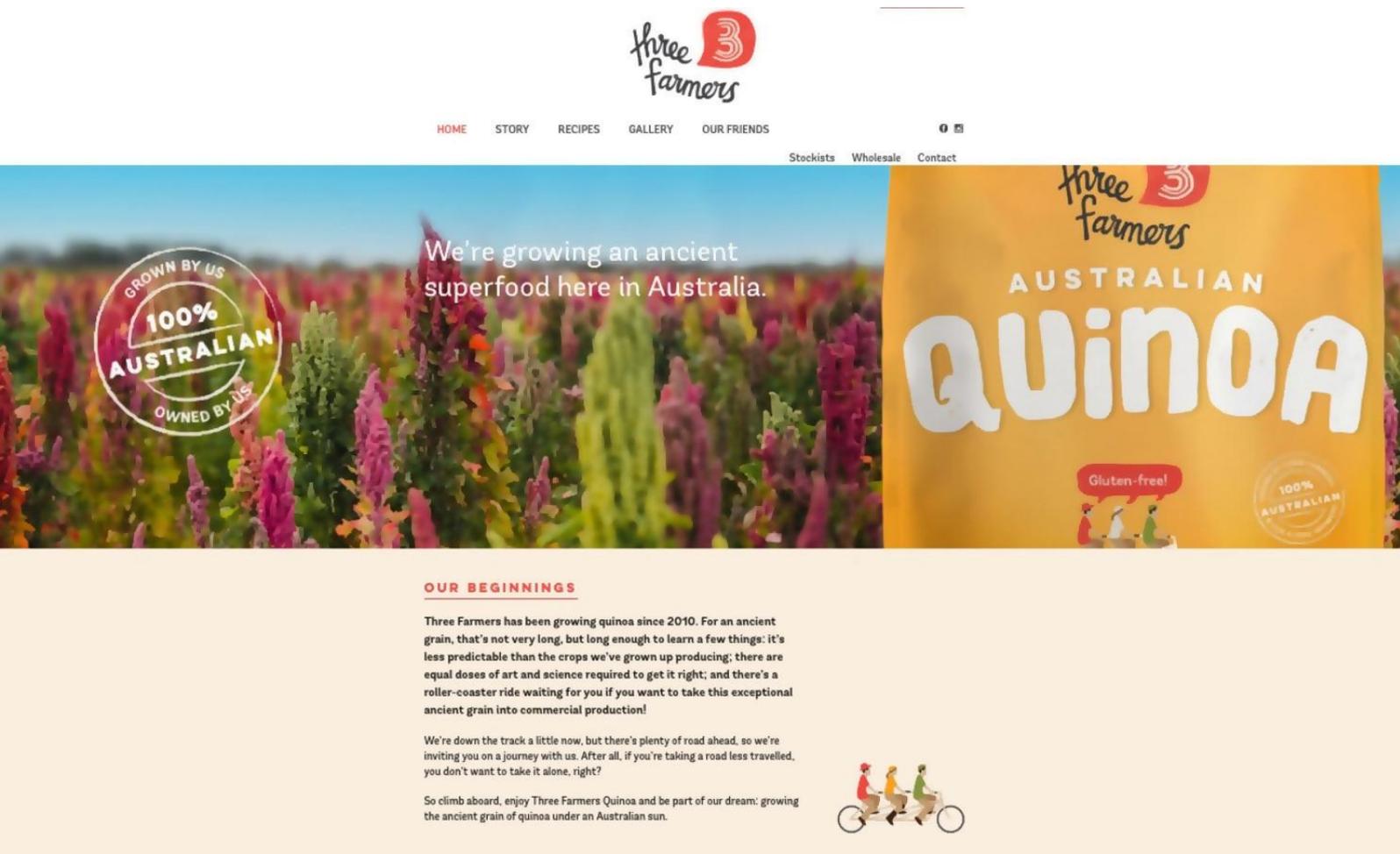
The Shire’s role is primarily to highlight the opportunities and facilitate a clear regulatory path to ensure that barriers to providing enhanced tourism experiences in the Shire are not prohibitive.

The visitor centre will initially remain as a critical marketing channel for local produce. It is vitally important to ensure marketing costs for micro-tourism enterprises are in line with potential tourism revenues (to make sure it is worthwhile for businesses to venture into tourism). Offering farm businesses the opportunity to display and market their products and services for short periods in rotation via the visitor centre free of charge or at a subsidised cost, will help to highlight a broader array of attractions and experiences on offer in Narrogin.

The visitor centre’s website could also play a role in helping incubate fledgling farm businesses, including produce offerings (through a Narrogin Marketplace extension to the proposed new website), farm experiences and farm accommodation. The website could also facilitate online bookings for the micro tourist accommodation businesses, together with the other more established accommodations in the town.

The aim is to ensure visibility of all the region’s tourism products, including farm-based contributions, is maximised and presented in a consistent and compelling way via detailed information, videos, and attractive images showcasing the region on the website and ideally shared across social media.

A Best-Practice Example of Narrogin's Entrepreneurial Farming Community



Strategy 4 – Identify and Cater for Niche Visitor Interests

- Identify and develop tourist experiences that cater to specific niche interests (e.g., wildflowers, bird spotting, and nocturnal animal viewing, walk and mountain bike trails, (including the proposed pump track at Gnarojin Park).
- Take ownership of activities and interests of prospective visitors to the area and add them to Narrogin’s tourism portfolio. Add each activity to the What-to-do and What-to-see pages of the new website and distribute via social media.
- Create online and printed collateral for each major interest and activity (e.g., nocturnal animals, trails, wildflowers, farm-stay, camping, etc., rather than locations, other than for Narrogin’s iconic attractions such as Foxes Lair and Yilminning Rock.
- Encourage viewers to download and print trail maps and other collateral from the website and social media, requiring registration as a prerequisite - name, email address, or mobile phone number; postcode (for future marketing and statistical purposes); and provide a voucher pack for goods and services discounts (provided by participating local businesses).

Narrogin’s Tourism Destination Development Relies on Visitors’ Interests and Experiences

At a time when many other regional centres are following a trails strategy that appeals to high-end and competitive trail users, an opportunity exists for Narrogin to develop trails more suited to the larger market identified earlier here in Narrogin’s Experience Seeker profile. Such trails are less demanding for users and are sought for the features found along the trails with interpretation and enjoyment of the natural environment being the primary focus for the trail walker or leisure cyclist.

Thus, trails defined around interests and experiences such as wildflowers and birdlife, will have a following of their own and reduce the need to compete with adventure single-use trails in other locations. Steering away from competitive and adventure cycling trails provides opportunities for multi-use trails to be available for walkers, cyclists, families, and nature enthusiasts without the increased pressures of conflicting needs and safety concerns.

Develop “Soft” Walk and Bike Trails and Add Enjoyable Experiences to Enhance Narrogin’s Unique Flora and Fauna.

The concept is to cluster experiences together with engaging trails, appropriate amenities, and enlightening information. Trails are areas that pass through or have a strong connection to the natural or cultural landscape. Trails are areas that provide an opportunity for the community to experience recreational, health & wellbeing, environmental, economic, and/or cultural enrichment through the interaction with the environment. This includes:

- Areas used for active and passive pursuits;
- Land trails (e.g., walking, off-road/rail trails, cycling, mountain biking, equestrian);
- Trails within urban and rural settings;
- Defined (or formally recognised) and undefined (social) trails;
- Areas used for motorised and non-motorised activities; and
- Areas managed on behalf of the community by local government and/or Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. In some situations, trails may also pass through areas of privately owned land.

Impact of a Successful Trail Town Program⁵⁵

- **CREATES** economic growth;
- **GROWS** local business and creates jobs;

⁵⁵ The Trail Town Program - The Progress Fund, Pennsylvania, USA

- **COMPOUNDS** the trail's economic potential as it turns a simple day excursion into a short- to long-term overnight stay destination;
- **IMPROVES** infrastructure in regional areas opening doors to new ventures and opportunities for businesses and the community; and
- **PROTECTS** the trails and surrounding nature through dedicated maintenance and conservation efforts... built right, it is enduring.

Implementation of the Shire of Narrogin Draft Walk Trails Master Plan (2019) is a key component of the Narrogin Tourism Strategy, and it is important that the two strategies align to give a clear direction to trail development, providing for community health and wellbeing whilst also deriving maximum benefit for the fledgling tourism industry.

Trails Planning and Development by the Shire of Narrogin will also be informed by the following key publications and strategies:

Western Australian Strategic Trails Blueprint 2017-2021

Developed by: Department of Sport and Recreation

Key points: Full strategy dedicated to trails development in Western Australia

Two Year Action Plan for Tourism Western Australia - 2018 and 2019

Developed by: Tourism Western Australia

Key points:

Point #1: "We will attract more people, more often to regional Western Australia"

Point #2: We will facilitate new tourism experiences in regional Western Australia by: *Focusing on trails*. We will assist with the development and marketing of mountain bike trails, food and wine trails, and others identified for niche audiences across Western Australia.

The State Government Strategy for Tourism in Western Australia 2020

Developed by: Tourism Western Australia

Key points: "Regional Travel" Section 4.6: Increase regional visitors through government strategies to:

- a) Tourism support infrastructure in regional WA
- b) Australia's best regional events calendar
- c) Improved caravan, camping, and self-drive experiences
- d) Extraordinary regional experiences, including nature-based, culinary, and cruise shipping

The Narrogin Draft Walk Trails Master Plan notes that "it is crucial that the suite of trails reflect the quintessential character of the area – its natural assets, its Aboriginal history, its pioneers, its heritage and culture, the traditional farming practices and new agricultural enterprises."⁵⁶ This is aligned with the strategic tourism direction for Narrogin and will be a critical component of the successful implementation of the tourism strategy.

The existing nature trails identified in the Narrogin Draft Walk Trails Master Plan (2019) are as follows:

Nature Trails

⁵⁶ The Shire of Narrogin Draft Walk Trails Master Plan, Transplan Pty Ltd. 2019.

- Breakaway Walk Trail (Foxes Lair)
- Banksia Walk Trail (Foxes Lair)
- Valley Walk Trail (Foxes Lair)
- Clay Pit Walk Trail (Foxes Lair)
- Granite Walk Trail including Arboretum Walk (Foxes Lair)
- Archibald Park Walk Trail (Railway Dam)
- Railway Dam Walk Trail (Railway Dam)
- Narrogin Recreation Trail (Gnarojin Park)
- Centenary Pathway (Gnarojin Park)

Trail Development Priorities

The Master Plan identifies three key trail projects that will each result in creating improved tourism assets for the Shire of Narrogin. These projects, especially Project 1, Foxes Lair, will deliver the most immediate and strategically significant tourism benefits and is, thus, considered one of the higher priorities for implementation of the Narrogin Tourism Strategy. The three projects are described in the Narrogin Draft Walk Trails Master Plan as follows:

Project 1: Foxes Lair Trails Upgrade Project

Foxes Lair is a remarkable piece of bushland, situated on Narrogin's doorstep. Considerable effort by the Friends of Foxes Lair (often with very limited financial resources) has seen a range of walk trails developed within the area. Most of the existing trails are well formed, with only minor trail surfacing improvements required (erosion control and refurbishment of steps).

The overall intention is to make the trails more easily navigable. This will be achieved by removing all existing trail directional markers and replacing them with Australian Standard and uniformly designed signs on steel posts.



The installation of interpretive panels along each trail will provide an educational experience for all users, be they local residents, day trippers, tourists, or people holidaying longer in Narrogin.

Project 2: Railway Dam Trails Upgrade Project

Two short walk trails exist within the Railway Dam reserve and appear well used by local people. However, to increase usage and enjoyment several improvements and upgrading of the trail surface are recommended.

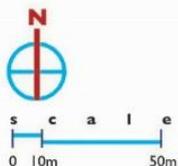
The range of improvements include the replacement of informal directional signage with Australian Standard and uniformly designed signs on steel posts; the installation of interpretive signage and filling of parts of the trails to raise them above a typical flood level. Realignment of the Archibald Park Trail is also proposed.

Project 3: Gnarojin Park Trail Upgrade Project

Gnarojin Park has several existing trails, as indicated throughout this report. No new trails are proposed. However, the existing trails could be “amalgamated” into one single trail route, with the installation of trail directional markers, designating the circuit trail, bringing users past all the important elements of the park (Dreaming Sites, Centenary Pathway). Improvements will be subject to the findings and conclusions of the (current) Gnarojin Park Masterplan before Council at the time of writing.⁵⁷ Aboriginal interpretation should form an important component of the Trail upgrades (as detailed in the section on Aboriginal experiences).

History and Heritage Trails

The Trails Master Plan “also seeks to capitalise on the outstanding built history of the town. The Shire is supporting work on a revamped CBD heritage trail that will, when implemented, take users past a range of interesting and historic sites throughout the town, each with an interesting story.”⁵⁸ Once completed, an app-based audio tour and/or guided tour could be offered to share stories and more detail historical information for history buffs and other visitors. The image below shows the Narrogin Town Centre Heritage Trail Concept which is due for completion in 2019:



Narrogin Town Centre Heritage Trail Concept

DRAFT



March 2019

A significant opportunity also exists to develop (or integrate in the proposed trails), an enriching Aboriginal cultural experience. This would involve working closely with the Aboriginal elders to document and communicate appropriate Aboriginal stories and perspectives on the landscapes, nature, history, and contemporary life.

⁵⁷ The Shire of Narrogin Draft Walk Trails Master Plan, Transplan Pty Ltd. 2019.

⁵⁸ The Shire of Narrogin Draft Walk Trails Master Plan, Transplan Pty Ltd. 2019.

Self-Guided Interpretive Flora and Fauna Tours

The Shire of Narrogin Draft Walk Trails Master Plan (2019) identifies that “In terms of local reserves, Foxes Lair is without doubt Narrogin’s greatest natural attraction. There are five walk trails through this bushland area and already well used, however there is room for improvement of these popular attractions. This Walk Trails Master Plan promotes their upgrading and a range of safety improvements to the existing trails. Upgrading of these trails will be beneficial to residents of Narrogin, holidaymakers, and tourists passing through or visiting Narrogin.”⁵⁹ Encouraging active geocaching enthusiasts to set up geocaches in the area will also increase visitor use, awareness, and enjoyment of the trails.

Mountain Bike Trails

Common Ground Trails were engaged by the Shire of Narrogin to undertake a detailed feasibility study for the development of a pump track facility within Narrogin and a network of mountain bike trails within the vicinity of the town site. Their draft Pump Track and Mountain Bike Trail Feasibility Study suggested that:

“Foxes Lair, the Commonage and Railway Dam are recommended as the most appropriate sites for development of purpose designed mountain bike trails. Proximity to town and scale of the sites together with existing use of the reserves by mountain bikers suggest formal development of mountain bike trails would provide a valuable recreation resource. The scale of the site could comfortably accommodate up to 20km of purpose-built mountain bike single track.”⁶⁰

The appendix of the report defines a range of different mountain bike trail types, which note their suitability to competitive riders and events. Initial stakeholder feedback identifies that this is perhaps not well aligned with the Foxes Lair Management Plan or current and potential visitor demographics who are more focussed on exploring the natural and environmental values of the region as opposed to competitive mountain bike racers and hard-core adventurers.

Brighthouse reviewed the draft report, and while generally in agreement with the proposals, we noted comments, with which we concur, from local community member Doug Sawkins, who is actively involved in the management, conservation, and promotion of Foxes Lair:

- “The integrated network of access roads, picnic areas and passive recreation trails in Foxes Lair have been developed for a range of users, and to minimise dangers posed by trail bike and fast cars and 4WD incursions. Cyclists presently use the trails and access roads, compatibly with walkers and although random speeding motorists and trail bike riders still pose a risk on the roads.
- I do not support the creation of a dedicated mountain bike trail, as I do not think that there is sufficient social or economic benefit to justify the very high construction and maintenance cost and the likelihood that there will be ongoing problems with trail bike incursion. If council decides to create a trail, The Commonage is the best location. Foxes Lair is not suitable
- I propose amending the Foxes Lair management plan to increase safety for all passive recreation users, and to create an integrated network of family cycle/walk trails from existing walking trails and fire access tracks that would complement the five walk trails. The purpose is low speed cycling to enjoy the environment, not high-speed technical racing. As the greater part of these trails will be on existing fire access tracks, construction cost for these low-speed/low-impact trails should be relatively low, but careful planning and signage is essential. Implementation could be staged.
- “A 5 to 10km family cycle trail planned for Dryandra Woodland further reduces the viability of a similar circuit for tourists in Narrogin”⁶¹

⁵⁹ The Shire of Narrogin Draft Walk Trails Master Plan, Transplan Pty Ltd. 2019.

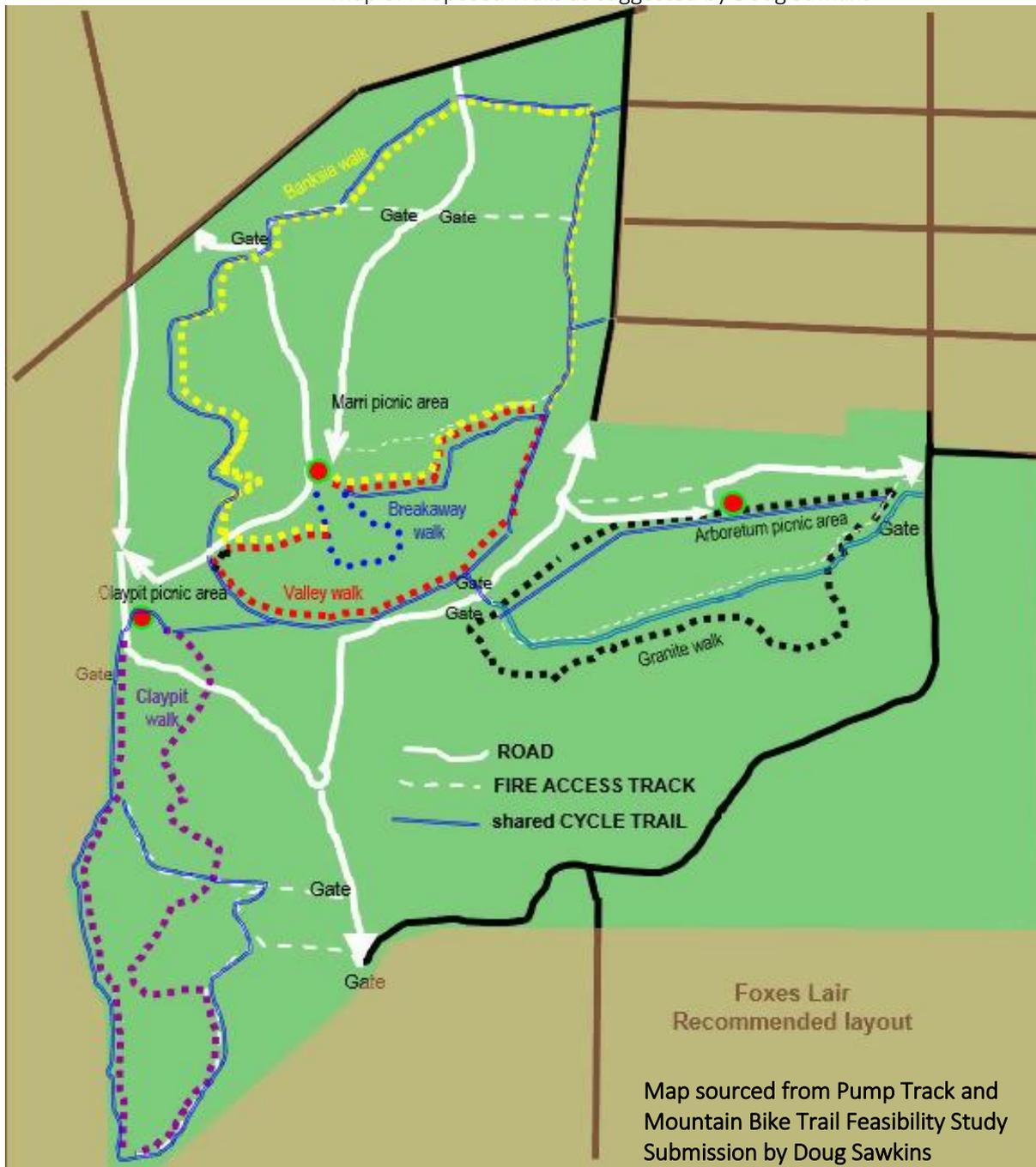
⁶⁰ Pump Track and Mountain Bike Trail Feasibility Study – Common Ground Trails (2019) – Draft currently out for consultation

⁶¹ Pump Track And Mountain Bike Trail Feasibility Study Submission by Doug Sawkins

Doug Sawkins proposes an alternate network of shared use cycle trails which consists of three circuits (one around each picnic area) that are interconnected to allow access to each other the town, and all three picnic areas. His submission details these as per the following description and map:

- Circuit 1 (1.2km) based on the Arboretum picnic area is ideal for beginner cyclists and well suited to the child-friendly picnic area requiring minimal construction, cost, and environmental disturbance.
- Circuit 2 (1.8km) based on the Claypit picnic area requires no construction as it follows existing fire access tracks. This circuit only requires clear signage to be installed. I suggest the same map as at the Granite carpark be placed at all three picnic areas. This circuit is mainly low slope with two steep slopes.
- Circuit 3 (3km) based on the Marri picnic area is mostly sloping ground with four steep sections. Most of the circuit is wide enough for a shared use trail but more construction work is required than the other two.⁶²

Map of Proposed Trails as suggested by Doug Sawkins



⁶² Pump Track And Mountain Bike Trail Feasibility Study Submission by Doug Sawkins

Linked Multi Use Trails

From a strategic tourism perspective, it could be considered that a network of linked multi-use trails has the potential to attract a broader visitor market, including seniors, families, and nature enthusiasts. These visitor markets are well aligned with Narrogin's existing and proposed target markets.

The softer adventure cyclists (families, seniors, nature enthusiasts, and non-competitive riders) are more likely able to safely share trails with existing users, avoiding potential conflicts between user groups. This is a growing issue in regions such as Margaret River, which has grown in prominence as a mountain bike tourism destination with a well-developed mix of enduro and cross-country trails attracting competitive mountain biking enthusiasts from across Australia and beyond. The success of the Margaret River trails has caused some division in the local community with mountain bike riders, walkers, horse riders, trail bike riders, and environmental groups often taking to social media to vent opposing views over each other's rights to use the trails and the associated safety risks.

Improving existing trails, with adjustments to realign and make them more conducive to multi-users along with improved provision of interpretive information, trail marketing, and facilities is likely to deliver a lower risk, better return on investment, and improved engagement of the local stakeholders and volunteers who provide invaluable support to the maintenance, education, interpretation, and marketing of the trails.

Once successful management strategies are proven effective in ensuring the safety of a range of trail users, the potential for linking the Foxes Lair, Commonage, and Railway Dam trails could be investigated. This would deliver a wider selection of highly attractive extended walk and cycle trails and support the potential viability of a nature-based camp in the area to accommodate overnight hikers, cyclists, and nature enthusiasts. The blue lines on the above map, show an indicative option for linking the trails, which would need to be subject to significant further investigation as part of the overall trail strategy.

Drive Trails

Only one existing drive trail was identified in the Narrogin Draft Walk Trails Master Plan (2019) which is the Narrogin Heritage Trail (Town Drive Trail and District Drive Trail).

A significant opportunity exists to form a critical mass of tourist attractions by linking in with the tourism highlights in other towns along a longer distance drive trail. These are popular with car enthusiast groups (as well as motorbikes and road biking groups) as well as independent travellers looking for something new and interesting to do.

Branding

In today's oversaturated world of too much choice and too little time, the competition for a customer's attention is fierce. Many tourism destinations are similar in features and quality, making it hard to convince consumers to travel and try novel places.

A tourism brand is the personality that a destination projects to connect with its customers. It is one of the most critical marketing weapons at the disposal of any organisation. It represents a destination's values, beliefs, and culture and helps it align with the customers it most wants to connect with. A brand is much more than a logo, which is the visual representation of the organisation and a means of brand recall. A brand is a collection of things that includes reputation, personality, and the promises made to customers about the quality of the experience they will have when visiting.

A brand is evident at every touch point where customers experience visiting Narrogin, whether it be directly with one of the tourism products or indirectly through the visitor website, social media, or other marketing collateral. Therefore, it is important to ensure that it is communicated in a clear and consistent way in a tone of voice that begets trust of the values, beliefs, and culture that are promoted. The strategic application of destination branding is growing with tourism places, as they realise they compete with other places for people, resources, and business. Destination brand management is the coordinated management of all elements that make up a destination, including the attractions, amenities, access, marketing, and pricing. It is important

to take a strategic approach to linking these sometimes very separate entities for the better management of a destination.

Destination branding is about combining all things associated with the “place” (i.e., its products and services from various industries – agriculture, tourism, sports, arts, investment, technology, education, etc.) that collaborate under one brand. Its aim is to capture the essence of the destination, in a unified manner, and can be consumed simultaneously at a symbolic and experiential level. It is then used to market those unique added values to consumer needs and sustaining its success in the face of competition.⁶³

Implementing a tourism strategy is about successfully managing the following aspects of a destination:

- Experience Development – tourism product development, packaging, and wayfinding;
- Tourism Branding – marketing and design services, social media, tour operator, and press familiarisation trips;
- Market Access – visitor centres, website reservation systems, social media, public relations, accessing existing networks;
- Ensuring Brand Integrity – establishing standards, tourism product and service accreditation, certification and training Customer Relationship Management – Maintaining life-long customer interaction; and
- Representation – giving stakeholders a unified and more powerful voice.

Destination brand management is not to be confused with destination marketing, although the two are intricately linked. The basis of any successful marketing strategy is an inspiring brand that identifies the specific key drivers of the target market. With all the diversity of niche and source markets, knowing and understanding who to target and how to target them is vital to success. Tourism brands, whether related to a single business or entire destinations, communicate an important message to potential visitors.

The Narrogin Draft Walk Trails Master Plan (2019) includes a Marketing and Promotion Plan on page 55. Although printed materials are still relevant for some of the older demographics (grey nomads), it is a relatively expensive option with a limited return on investment. It is recommended that mapping could be recorded and published by a volunteer via app-based mapping programs such as MapMyHike or AllTrails. These could then be produced immediately under the auspices of a volunteer group such as foxeslair.org.

Screenshots of the maps could then be printed and either sold on a cost recovery basis (or sponsored by advertisers) for those visitors who are not confident using apps.

Online maps and trail information could also be promoted through other specialist apps and websites such as geocaching.com, and the mobile App, Birdsong Id Australia, etc.

Existing Shire branding could be modified to give a consistent brand across all tourism marketing including trails and public art as per the following:



Its purpose is to provide a systematic network of directional signs to guide the traveling public from major highway gateways to key civic, cultural, regional, and commercial destinations using the minimum number of signs.

⁶³ Tourism WA

Extensions to Trails Development

The following additional actions are recommended for trails development:

- Develop a library of walk and bike trail maps with interpretation of key trail features. Provide in downloadable PDF format on the website (and on mobile app, if developed).
- Utilise Shire's high-quality printer resources to produce small quantities of the specialised collateral, on quality 200gsm+ stock, according to demand, to avoid cost of printing minimum print runs.
- Extend the development of the library of trail maps to include collateral for other key interests and activities (e.g., wildflowers, native birds, and animals).
- Develop a Scavenger Hunt similar to those found at scavengerhunt.com for a unique, memorable, and highly engaging way to bring to life a walking tour of Narrogin. This could then be used as a basis for attracting team building groups and families to visit and stay.
- Explore the development of longer drive trails & itineraries (i.e., Perth-Wandering-Williams-Dryandra-Narrogin and Narrogin-Wagin (Wave Rock)-Perth) to leverage other regional attractions and events.



Strategy 5 – Connect Visitors with Narrogin’s Heritage and Aboriginal Culture

- Upgrade existing parks and reserves, referencing the strong Aboriginal Culture and the Town’s heritage.
- Encourage Aboriginal residents to investigate opportunities for appropriately sharing their culture with visitors.

Aboriginal Tourism

The Shire of Narrogin’s recently commissioned Public Art Strategy identifies that “Narrogin is situated in Wiilmen Country and is a special place to many Noongar people today. Noongar occupation of the Dryandra Woodland – Wilgadiny, 22 kilometres north-west of Narrogin, dates to pre-European contact. Several Noongar sites have been recorded in the area, including an ochre quarry, a scar tree, stone arrangements, rock art, and artefact scatters.”⁶⁴

Opportunities for guided or self-guided tours exploring the ochre quarry, scar tree, stone arrangements, rock art, and artefact scatters should be investigated to ascertain potential visitor appeal, safety, accessibility, sensitivities, sustainability, and viability. When assessing potential Aboriginal cultural experiences, the Wheatbelt Development Commission cautions that:

“many iconic nature-based attractions in the Region have fragile environments and/or are Aboriginal sacred sites with cultural sensitivities”⁶⁵

By sharing the stories of culturally significant sites, their importance would be more universally recognised, and if information is communicated to visitors in a respectful and appropriate way, it can improve reconciliation outcomes, whilst also enhancing the visitor experience.

It is important that the cultural implications are thoroughly assessed, and full consultation is undertaken with the broader Aboriginal community to ensure that any potential tours and/or interpretive information proposed is appropriate to be shared and will not negatively impact on country or culture.

Opportunities for economic development and employment for the regions Aboriginal people should be a key consideration in the development of culturally appropriate interpretative materials and tours. Walking tours, vehicle tours, storytelling, and bush food sampling are just a few options for aspiring Aboriginal tourism operators to investigate.

Organisations such as the Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council (WAITOC) and Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) have support programs and assistance for Aboriginal owned tourism businesses and aspiring business operators and can assist with investigating the feasibility of potential tourism businesses.

One existing cultural trail identified in the Narrogin Draft Walk Trails Master Plan (2019) is the Noongar Dreaming Pathway (Gnarrojin Park). This could be enhanced with infrastructure, facilities, and interpretative materials to support the development of a guided or self-guided walking tour to be offered by local Aboriginal cultural specialists.

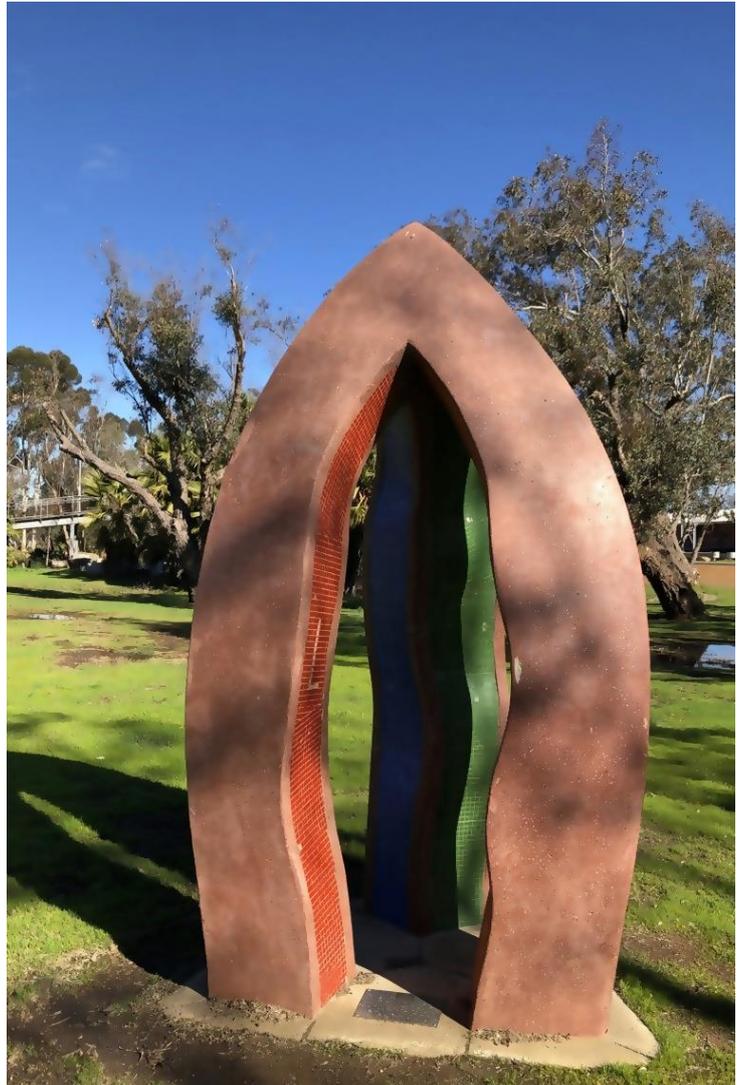
⁶⁴ Draft Public Art Strategy Shire of Narrogin (2019). artsource.net.au.

⁶⁵ Growing Wheatbelt Tourism 2017-2020, Wheatbelt Development Commission. 2017.

Cultural enhancements to other trails and attractions should also be investigated in close consultation with the Aboriginal custodians to determine suitability for sharing information and the most beneficial ways to approach the development of Aboriginal cultural experiences in Narrogin.

Connecting Visitors with Narrogin’s Aboriginal Culture and Heritage

- Develop Aboriginal cultural interpretive materials for placement at popular visitor locations, including Gnarojin Park, Foxes Lair, and Dryandra as well as where appropriate as part of the trail development works.
- Develop an Aboriginal meeting place or story telling amphitheatre with seating, fire pit, etc., which is also able to be used as a tour base and links in with Aboriginal cultural interpretive information at Gnarojin Park, Dryandra, or Foxes Lair.
- Engage and consult with local Aboriginal elders to ascertain what information is appropriate for sharing with visitors and how they would like to see it shared.
- Develop “Aboriginal Characters & Dreaming Stories” Trail (self-guided or guided) which brings to life the Aboriginal culture and history of the area. Publish interpretive materials online and on signage.
- Enhance Aboriginal Cultural interpretive materials at Gnarojin Park, Dryandra, and Foxes Lair to include (but not limited to) Aboriginal place names (and cultural significance where appropriate) on all signage.
- Make contact with local Aboriginal Groups and Elders to see if they can suggest any Aboriginal residents who would be interested in sharing culture with visitors and link them in with the support services such as Indigenous Business Australia, WAITOC, etc. who can help them to investigate the viability of setting up a tourism business.
- Liaise with Wheatbelt Development Commission and WAITOC to seek their support and to facilitate the development of Aboriginal tourism businesses.
- Identify any potential support through The Noongar Natural Resource Management Pathways project (see <https://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/McGowan/2019/06/McGowan-Government-partners-with-Lotterywest-to-boost-Aboriginal-capacity-in-the-South-West.aspx>)
- Seek funding and develop infrastructure for a Meeting Place/Story Place and Tours base.



Strategy 6 – Encourage the Development of Experiential Accommodation Options

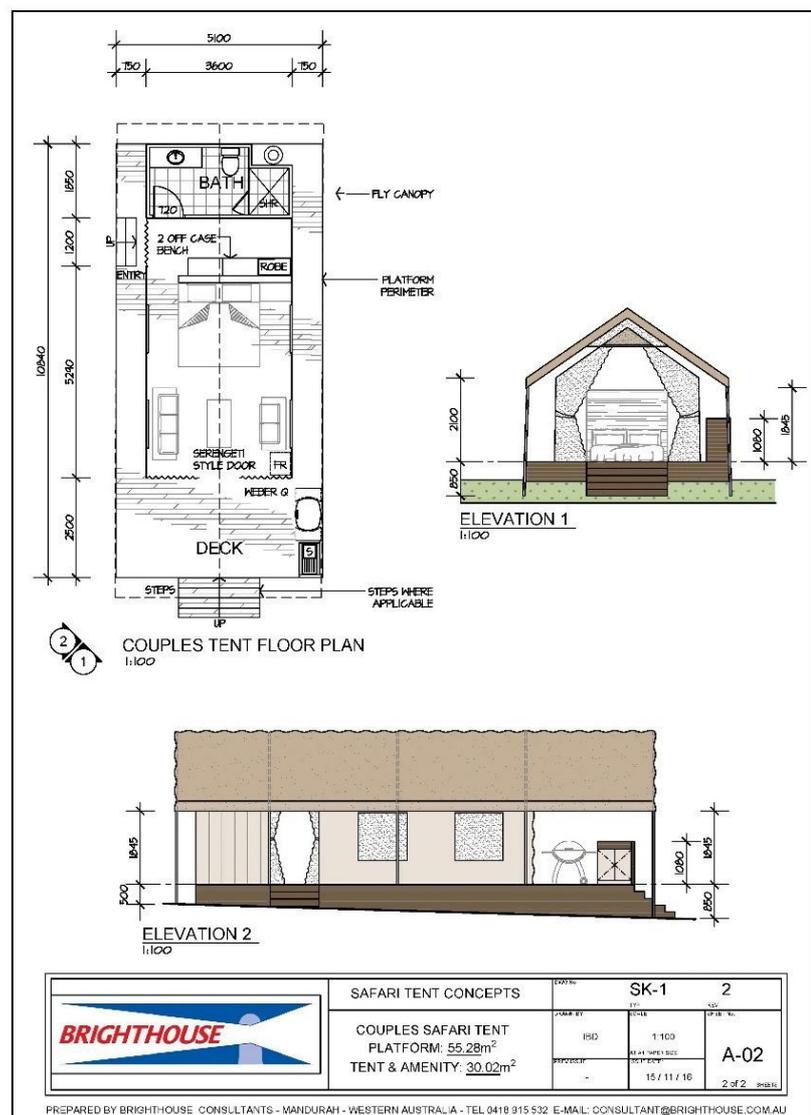
- Encourage development of niche accommodation product such as farm-stay, caravanning and camping (including glamping), and upgrade of historic hotels.
- Lay the foundations for future innovative experiential accommodation inside Foxes Lair, Railway Dam, Archibald Park, The Commonage, or Dryandra Woodland (long-term aspirational strategy for consideration once traction is achieved in tourism)

Experiential Accommodation

Reviews indicate that the niche accommodation and farm-stays are now better placed to meet visitor expectations than the larger more commercial hotels.

The establishment of more experientially focussed overnight accommodation in the Shire of Narrogin would present opportunities for domestic and international tourists to experience the diversity of activities and attractions that cannot be enjoyed on a short-day trip, adding significantly to the social and economic benefits from tourism. Visitor accommodation often acts as a conduit for other tourism development, encouraging operators to develop tourism product, servicing, attractions, and events.

The Caravan and Camping Regulations 1997 allows a variety of accommodation in tourist caravan parks, including powered and unpowered caravan and camping sites, tourist cabins, and “glamping” tents. Alternatively, these could be encouraged on private land under a Nature Based Campground Licence.



Foxes Lair, Railway Dam, Archibald Park, or Dryandra Woodland present opportunities for low-key nature-based tourist accommodation development at the sites, and it is proposed that a concept, which contains a variety of complimentary accommodation development options by separate individual developer/operators, would be the most practical way forward. To ensure that the Shire retains conceptual control over the site and achieves its desired outcomes, it may be preferable to prepare concept drawings for the development of the site, prior to seeking expressions of interest from developer/operators.

Inspiration for future possibilities – A new concept in accommodation

For a pristine environment such as Dryandra Woodland or Foxes Lair, the potential visual impact, environmental degradation, and access requirements during construction and subsequent occupancy of the tourist accommodation is confronting. However, new innovative construction techniques exist in final stages of development that have potential to overcome such issues, whilst providing built form tourist accommodation that is self-sustaining from an energy perspective, (the 50 panels on each accommodation unit being capable of producing 30kWh per day from the 56 square metre cabin footprint).

The developers of the robotically manufactured wall and roof panels that comprise the building structure realised that in recent years, the cost of producing a square metre of solar panel is now less costly than the cost of a square metre of structural plywood and the unique building system was born.

The building system allows buildings to be constructed on sites with minimal access. The floors are elevated on screw piles and can therefore be set above understory vegetation and easily service by boardwalks. The energy efficiency of the buildings allows for electrical appliances and lighting to be operated off-grid, especially when grouped around a single storage battery. Floor plans for Energy Cubes can be provided in single-bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom configurations.



It is considered that the primary focus for Narrogin's future nature-based accommodation should be toward low-impact, low cost developments that are consistent with the identified target markets. Therefore, accommodation such as low-cost campsites, safari tents, and wildlife viewing cabins could be developed for people who visit Narrogin to experience the nature, history, and culture of the area. Additional experiential farm-stay accommodation (including energy cubes, chalets, camping and safari tents) should also be investigated and encouraged within Shire planning policies where possible.

Strategy 7 – Develop and promote escorted and self-guided tours

- Encourage the development of escorted and self-guided tours and periodic activities for special interest groups including either walking or bus tours, focussing on Aboriginal culture, history and heritage, wildflowers, nature, daytime and nocturnal wildlife spotting, stargazing, art, photography, railway heritage, farm tours, gliding, and competition cycling (Narrogin Velodrome), etc.

Leveraging Local Expertise

Currently, no tours are listed on the DCVC website. It is difficult for new tours and activities to prove viable in small country towns, though options for guided interpretation and a “local perspective” are important to visitors.

New and emerging channels exist for smaller businesses and individuals to share their local knowledge and passion for their region with low-key guided tour services communicated via websites such as Touristlink and Vayable. These websites link visitors with local residents interested in providing personalised tourism services, experiences, or tours. These sites offer benefits to individuals and operators of micro business and those looking for a supplemental income where demand will not support full-fledged tourism enterprises. Though the established tourism industry is not generally supportive of these new channels due to the competitive threats, if done fairly and within an approved regulatory framework, it can add great diversity and deliver additional business and benefits for the broader tourism, retail, and hospitality industry.

There are also options for existing businesses and organisations to offer tours as supplemental experiences to add value to their core product or purpose (e.g., farm-stays offering farm tours, tractor rides, and shearing demonstrations and the Art centre offering art tours, etc.).

In addition to the actions listed under the Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Strategies and the Trails Strategies, the following actions are recommended to encourage the development of local tours in Narrogin:

- Shire of Narrogin to document and communicate a policy for regulatory and licencing requirements for the provision of tour services by residents, clearly outlining regulatory requirements and how to set up and deliver an approved tour service;
- Offer free listing and promotion via the DCVC for micro tours to support the growth and development of fledgling tour enterprises;
- Consider the development of a mobile app, which can provide listing of tours as well as other tourism attractions and destination information;
- Contact Tourism WA, Tourism Council WA, Wheatbelt Tourism and WAITOC to encourage them to run a workshop in Narrogin for aspiring tourism businesses and individuals on how to get started in the tourism industry; and
- Advise local prospective tourism operators about tourism grants when they become available.

Strategy 8 – Strengthen Linkages with Industry Networks and Complementary Destinations

- Improve tourism network linkages with Tourism WA, Australia's Golden Outback and the towns and tourism attractions in the Southern Wheatbelt such as Wave Rock and Kulin.

Tourism Industry Linkages

There are significant benefits to active participation and engagement in the tourism industry supply chain and support channels, including:

- Ability to leverage off marketing opportunities and participation in familiarisations, regional marketing initiatives, funding opportunities, and industry initiatives
- Improved visibility and agency support for new initiatives
- Potential of support for tourism funding applications
- Access to industry insights as well as training and development opportunities
- Collateral distribution
- Identification of opportunities for local tourism industry and operators to connect them into tourism industry support networks

In addition to industry linkages, significant benefits can be leveraged through linking in with complementary tourism destinations to cluster attractions and develop self-drive itineraries. In addition to the existing collaborative relationships Narrogin has with surrounding shires for the promotion of Dryandra Woodland, reaching further afield to towns such as Kulin and Hyden to leverage off their appeal to a similar target market for a drive trail and attraction clustering could prove mutually beneficial.

Development of drive trails and collaboration on cooperative marketing activities would benefit tourists and industry with increased visitation and improved visitor satisfaction.

The following actions would help to strengthen linkages with industry networks and complementary destinations:

- Distribute a news release regarding the new strategic direction for Narrogin's Tourism Industry to Tourism WA, AGO, Tourism Council WA, DBCA, WAITOC, Wheatbelt Tourism, and other industry organisations and agencies to seek their support in implementing key strategies;
- Get on mailing lists for all the above-mentioned organisations and agencies to ensure opportunities can be leveraged where relevant;
- Send new collateral/website out to inspire networks with Narrogin's tourism potential;
- Encourage participation in familiarisations for social media influencers to experience (and blog about) country life and link in with "Farmer for a Day" strategies;
- Highlight opportunities to key agencies for product development and proposed tourism development direction to increase recognition of tourism potential and encourage support;
- Investigate the use of dynamic, live, interactive online engagement platforms as a means of seeking ideas, gathering feedback, and collaborating on decision making; and
- Attend tourism industry networking events to build relationships with key tourism industry influencers and build profile of Narrogin as a tourism destination.

Strategy 9 – Leverage Events to Attract New Visitors

- Encourage and create new events to attract large groups of visitors.

Enticing the Staging of Events

A handful of carefully selected events have the potential to draw a new mix of international, interstate, and intrastate visitors to the region, whilst also communicating key branding messages. When events are closely aligned with the regions distinctive difference or unique “sales” proposition, they serve to position Narrogin as a destination of choice for targeted special interest groups, giving these people a reason to come back repeatedly to enjoy the produce, nature, culture, and heritage of the region.

Events, such as the recently held Australian Championship Orienteering event, bring in new visitors who have a good fit with what Narrogin has to offer. It is important that events such as this are encouraged through ensuring needs of the organisers are well catered for as well as the businesses in town have appropriate stock and staffing on hand to meet the needs of visitors.

“Some pics of the starting line for the Australian championship orienteering event in Foxes Lair. Fabulous family sport. The white boxes contain maps for each of the 18 different race circuits.

There was a huge crowd of entrants waiting for their start, with each group leaving at 10-minute intervals. The members in each group each took a different circuit according to their class which ranged from 10-year-olds, (with many other categories male and female) to seniors...

The visitor centre and cafes were completely overwhelmed. There were orienteering brochures given to these venues by the association and an Observer article, but businesses didn't realise that hundreds of people were coming. Still a great event for Narrogin “
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1486933428191882/>

Attracting events is always a challenge, and it is important that a proactive approach is taken with identifying prospective events and contacting event organisers to encourage them to consider Narrogin for their event.

Work with local enthusiasts to engage with their networks and encourage them to bring events to Narrogin. Local birdwatchers are often well connected with bird-watching groups, for example, and could encourage these groups to hold a meet-up or event in Narrogin. Whilst, ideally, a full events strategy and database should be developed, in the meantime, there is an opportunity to focus on a few key past and current events and look to ensure they are welcomed back to Narrogin in the future.

Ensuring events are well attended and supported by the local residents and businesses is critical to ongoing attraction of events. Communication is key in getting the locals involved and, as a priority, an events database should be compiled and communicated via the Shire website, the tourism website, and via direct email communications to retail and hospitality businesses in the Shire.

Implementation

Though detailed action planning should be done once analysis of each of the proposed strategies has been carried out, some top-level actions, along with their recommended priority for implementation are provided in the following table. This is to assist the Shire of Narrogin to pick the low hanging fruit and implement some of the key strategies in the short term to enable the foundations to be set for the longer term and more aspirational strategies.

Strategy	Priority	Actions
Strategy 1 – Conduct a Visitor Information Services Review	1	Undertake a cost benefit analysis of the current visitor centre operation, to ascertain whether the physical distribution of tourist information can be achieved more sustainably through alternative options.
	1	Depending on outcome of the cost benefit analysis, seek expressions of interest from local businesses (or aspiring businesses) to lease the current visitor centre building and provide visitor information in return for subsidised (or peppercorn) rent (with or without the support of volunteers).
	1	Transition the Visitor Centre Manager role over to a Destination Marketing Manager role with responsibility for the implementation of the marketing strategy.
	1	Collate detailed information and gain permission to publish it including all Foxes Lair Information, Dryandra Woodland information and listings of both small and large tourism operators, hospitality providers and other tourism related businesses, amenities, organisations, etc. Offer a free listing option for all, and an enhanced paid listing for those who want increased exposure.
	1	Develop an exceptional tourism destination promotional package, incorporating an outstanding, all-encompassing website, digital visitor information distribution, social media and visitor-interest and activity-based collateral.
	1	Put all visitor servicing information online and on touch screen kiosks to encourage self-service where possible.
	1	Activate an online engagement platform, either on the Shire website or the proposed new DCVC website for collaborating with the community and visitors and inviting stakeholders to work with the Shire of developing Narrogin as a tourism destination.
Strategy 2 – Enhance Narrogin’s Natural Experiences	1	Compile and disseminate (as per the strategy) detailed information on Narrogin’s soft-adventure, nature-based experiences, Dryandra Woodland, and the region’s unique flora, fauna, and geoscience features. Key attributes to be conveyed are the profusion and diversity of wildflowers and birdlife, the ease of access for self-guided tours, the hidden “stories” behind the area’s landscapes and vegetation (e.g., the trees that that create the gravelly, lateritic soils), and the ease of access for self-guided tours;
	2	Devise wayfinding strategy and design and implement signage as appropriate.
	1	Develop Foxes Lair as a centrepiece of Narrogin’s Natural Experiences by improving and upgrading facilities, amenities, wayfinding, and interpretation at the site, targeting the appropriate large traveller segments identified in the three WA Tourism Domestic Market Segmentation – Escape and Connect, Off the Beaten Track, and Family Fun.

Strategy	Priority	Actions
	2	Develop a viewing area at Foxes Lair for Astrotourists and develop relevant marketing collateral to support the new infrastructure.
	3	Plan to value add to other natural locations, such as Railway Dam, Gnarogin Park and Yilminning Rock, which are located on Narrogin Shire-controlled land, by gradually improving access, wayfinding, and amenities to make them more accessible and interesting;
Strategy 3 – Farmer for a Day	1	Compile and disseminate detailed information on opportunities for visitors to immerse themselves in Narrogin’s farming heritage - Love the (Country) Life, and mentor famers and aspiring tourism operators in how to leverage tourism opportunities to build new income streams.
	1	Encourage and facilitate regular weekend Farmers’ Produce Markets.
	1	Compile fact sheets clearly outlining relevant policies and regulations to encourage rural properties to develop tours, small-scale cabin, glamping, and caravanning and camping facilities to attract city-dwellers to experience the country life.
Strategy 4 – Identify and Cater for Niche Visitor Interests	1	Identify and develop tourist experiences that cater to specific niche interests (e.g., wildflowers, bird spotting, nocturnal animal viewing, and walk and mountain bike trails, (including the proposed pump track at Gnarojin Park).
	1	Take ownership of activities and interests of prospective visitors to the area and add them to Narrogin’s tourism portfolio. Add each activity to the What-to-do and What-to-see pages of the new website and distribute via social media.
	1	Create online and printed collateral for each major interest and activity (e.g., nocturnal animals, trails, wildflowers, farm-stay, camping, etc.) rather than locations, other than for Narrogin’s iconic attractions such as Foxes Lair and Yilminning Rock.
	1	Encourage viewers to download and print trail maps and other collateral from the website and social media, requiring registration as a prerequisite - name, email address, or mobile phone number; postcode (for future marketing and statistical purposes); and provide a voucher pack for goods and services discounts (provided by participating local businesses).
Strategy 5 – Connect Visitors with Narrogin’s Heritage and Aboriginal Culture	1	Engage and consult with local Aboriginal elders to ascertain what information is appropriate for sharing with visitors and how they would like to see it shared.
	2	Upgrade existing parks and reserves, referencing the strong Aboriginal Culture and the Town’s heritage. Develop Aboriginal cultural interpretive materials for placement at popular visitor locations including Gnarojin Park, Foxes Lair, and Dryandra as well as where appropriate as part of the trail development works.
	2	Develop an Aboriginal meeting place or story telling amphitheatre with seating, fire pit, etc. that is also able to also be used as a tour base and links in with Aboriginal cultural interpretative information at Gnarojin Park, Dryandra, or Foxes Lair.
	2	Develop “Aboriginal Characters & Dreaming Stories” Trail (self-guided or escorted) which brings to life the Aboriginal culture and history of the area. Publish interpretative materials online and on signage.

Strategy	Priority	Actions
	2	Encourage Aboriginal residents to investigate opportunities for appropriately sharing their culture with visitors by linking them in with organisations, such as WAITOC (https://www.waitoc.com/) and Indigenous Business Australia, to seek mentor support and funding or loans.
Strategy 6 – Encourage the Development of Experiential Accommodation Options	1	Conduct and release investigations into regulatory considerations and top line feasibility to encourage development of niche accommodation product such as farm-stay, caravanning and camping (including glamping), and upgrade of historic hotels.
	3	Lay the foundations for future innovative experiential accommodation inside Foxes Lair or Dryandra Woodland (long-term aspirational strategy for consideration once traction is achieved in tourism).
Strategy 7 – Develop and promote escorted and self-guided tours	1	Compile information on Encourage the development of escorted and self-guided tours and periodic activities for special interest groups including either walking or bus tours, focussing on Aboriginal culture, history and heritage, wildflowers, nature, daytime and nocturnal wildlife spotting, stargazing, art, photography, railway heritage, farm tours , gliding, competition cycling (Narrogin Velodrome), etc.
	1	Shire of Narrogin to document and communicate a policy for regulatory and licencing requirements for the provision of tour services by residents, clearly outlining regulatory requirements and how to set up and deliver an approved tour service.
	1	Offer free listing and promotion via the DCVC for micro tours to support the growth and development of fledgling tour enterprises.
	1	Contact Tourism WA, Tourism Council WA, Wheatbelt Tourism and WAITOC to encourage them to run a workshop in Narrogin for aspiring tourism businesses and individuals on how to get started in the tourism industry.
	1	Advise residents about tourism grants when they become available.
Strategy 8 – Strengthen linkages with Industry Networks and Complementary Destinations	1	Distribute a news release regarding the new strategic direction for Narrogin’s Tourism Industry to Tourism WA, AGO, Tourism Council WA, DBCA, WAITOC, Wheatbelt Tourism, and other industry organisations and agencies to seek their support in implementing key strategies.
	1	Get on mailing lists for all the above-mentioned organisations and agencies to ensure opportunities can be leveraged where relevant.
	2	Send new collateral/website out to inspire networks with Narrogin’s tourism potential.
	2	Encourage participation in familiarisations for social media influencers to experience (and blog about) country life and link in with “Farmer for a Day” strategies.
	2	Highlight opportunities to key agencies for product development and proposed tourism development direction to increase recognition of tourism potential and encourage support.
	1	Attend tourism industry networking events to build relationships with key tourism industry influencers and build profile of Narrogin as a tourism destination.

Strategy	Priority	Actions
Strategy 9 – Leverage Events to Attract New Visitors	1	Instigate an automated system (new website) for allowing residents and local businesses to upload events to a central database which is published online and emailed out to subscribers (and/or shared on the Shire Facebook page).
	1	Develop a listing of key events that could be developed for Narrogin that are aligned with the Destination Narrogin Brand attributes. Possibilities might include a bush polo competition, culture & heritage events – step back in time, antiques & trinkets markets/garage sales, shearing events, country music event/festival, sport events, hobby farm expo, etc.
	1	Seek feedback from organisers of previous events and encourage them to consider Narrogin as a location for future events. Explore options and potential partners/organisers for Trail Events - Car Rallies, Wildflower Events, Orienteering, Geocaching, Treasure Hunts, Cycle Race, History Mystery Events, etc.
	1	Collate an events attraction database with details of organiser contacts for past and potential events. Include in the database contact details for organisers of (past, present, and future) events being held in similar locations. Contact the organisers to see if they would consider Narrogin for future events and look for feedback on what would encourage them to hold future events in Narrogin.
	1	Build an annual events schedule for regularity and continuity and set key selection criteria such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with the “Narrogin Experience” • Creating a high profile for the region • Generating economic value and a return on investment • Level of support from the community • Explore options and potential partners/organisers for Trail Events - Car Rallies, Wildflower Events, Orienteering, Geocaching, Treasure Hunts, Cycle Race, History Mystery Events, etc.
	1	Do up a calendar of events and capture all (arts, theatre, group walks, wildlife, community, markets, wildflowers in bloom, geocaching, etc.) publish on visitor centre website and submit to other websites for publication.
	1	Ensure events are fully leveraged with appropriate marketing, communications with local residents and businesses, etc.
	1	Improve visibility and tourism marketing of Narrogin Farmers’ Market and Artisans’ Market to encourage it to thrive and potentially grow into a weekly event.