

2021 - 2025
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Narrabri Region Tourism Destination Management Plan



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NARRABRI SHIRE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN, 2020

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Narrabri Shire has a strong and growing visitor economy. In 2018, the Shire attracted an estimated 246,000 visitors, 144,000 of whom stayed one or more nights in the Shire, with 102,000 being day visitors. Overnight visitors spent 429,000 nights in the Shire. Visitors injected \$53.052 million¹ into the local economy. The tourism sector employs an estimated 327 people² and has an output of \$61.797 million and a value-add of \$28.84 million³.

Narrabri Shire Council is a key driver of, and stakeholder in, the tourism sector. Council operates the Narrabri Visitor Information Centre and The Crossing Theatre, has two caravan parks, manages the Pilliga Hot Artesian Baths and camping area, and has a significant investment in the reserves, parks and gardens, infrastructure and facilities that underpin visitation. Council also supports events and activities and actively markets and promotes the Shire.

The on-going development of the visitor economy is a priority for Narrabri Shire Council, with Council looking to 'stimulate business and tourism by maximising our assets and attracting regional events'⁴.

While the tourism sector is performing well, there is more that can be achieved with the assets and resources available. Visitor markets are changing. There is strong and growing interest in, and visitation to, regional areas with this stimulated in part by the regional dispersal strategies being implemented by Tourism Australia and Destination NSW. Significant growth (across all age groups) is occurring in the caravan and camping sector. Accompanying this there has been a paradigm shift in visitor expectations with travelers increasingly wanting to challenge themselves; be outdoors and active; reconnect as a couple or family; and interact socially with locals and other travelers – to hear their 'stories' and to 'learn'. This creates opportunities to use assets differently – to focus on the activities that can be undertaken, and the experiences offered.

New technology is also impacting on the tourism industry. Digital technology has, and is, continuing to change the way in which consumers communicate, access and share information, select destinations and products, and book and pay for travel. Digital technology provides the opportunity to enhance the visitor experience (e.g. Apps, virtual reality), while the 'shared economy' provides opportunities for new businesses and investment.

Realising the opportunities that are emerging will be dependent on the continued development of the product, infrastructure and services available; delivering comprehensive information services via a diverse range of touch points; and ramping up marketing and promotion, particularly in the digital space.

¹ Statistics in this paragraph were taken from Tourism Research Australia – Local Area Profile: Narrabri Shire 2018: based on a 4-year rolling average.

² RDA Northern Inland: REMPLAN Economic Profile – Tourism: Narrabri Shire

³ RDA Northern Inland: REMPLAN Economic Profile – Tourism: Narrabri Shire

⁴ Narrabri Shire Council Community Strategic Plan

1.2. Destination Management

In line with Government policy, Narrabri Shire Council is adopting a destination management approach to provide the direction and framework for growing the visitor economy.

Destination management introduces a 'holistic' approach to the development, management and marketing of tourist destinations. The approach requires that all tiers of Government, the tourism industry, business and community leaders work together to develop and manage destinations to ensure that tourism adds value to the economic and social fabric of the area, is sustainable into the future, is resilient to external shocks and is responsive to changes in both the marketplace and competitive environment. It involves formulating a strong vision for the future of the destination and putting in place the framework and resources to 'deliver' this vision.

Destination Management Plans (DMPs) are one of the tools introduced by the Federal and State Government, to identify the product and infrastructure needed to support and facilitate growth in visitation and to set the directions and priorities. A DMP is a pre-requisite for accessing tourism and other Federal and State Government grant programs.

1.3. Purpose of the Narrabri Shire Destination Management Plan (DMP)

The Narrabri Shire DMP provides the direction and framework for taking the Shire's tourism sector forward over the next five years. The primary goal of this Plan is to increase visitor expenditure within the Shire, with resultant economic and social benefits for the Shire community. To achieve this, the Plan focuses on:

- Improving and expanding the product base of the Shire – attractions, activities and experiences;
- Ensuring that the infrastructure, facilities and services needed to attract, and support visitation are in place;
- Setting the directions for marketing and promoting the Shire;
- Identifying priorities to ensure the most effective use of limited funds and resources.

1.4. Outcomes being sought

The main outcomes being sought from the Narrabri Shire DMP are:

- To deliver on Council's Strategic Objectives as articulated in the Narrabri Shire Community Strategic Plan;
- A higher profile and increased awareness of Narrabri Shire;
- Increased visitation and visitor expenditure within Narrabri Shire;
- Increased appeal and competitiveness of Narrabri Shire as a service centre and destination – leveraging the Shire's key assets to build its attraction, activity and experience base;
- Increased viability and long-term sustainability of existing businesses and services;
- Increased public and private sector investment in appropriate and sustainable tourism products, facilities and services within the Shire;

- A stronger, more resilient community;
- Framework and directions to assist Council in the allocation of funds and resources.

1.5. Implementation

The Narrabri Shire DMP is the starting point for consolidating and growing the visitor economy over the next five years. It will however take time, funds, resources and commitment to implement the strategies and actions incorporated in this Plan.

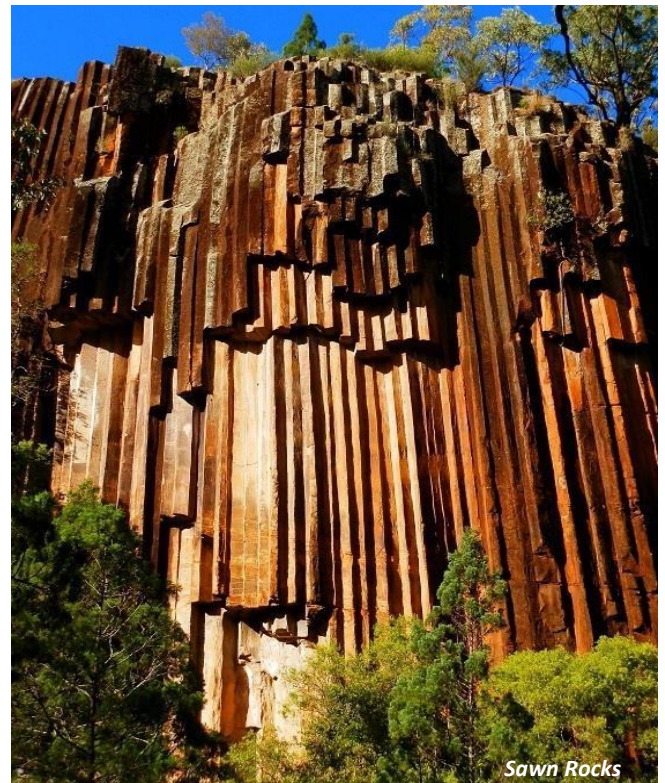
Given the limited resources available within the Shire actions need to be prioritised. While there are a number of relatively simple, cost effective actions that can be undertaken in the short-term that will result in growth in visitation, sustaining visitation in the medium to longer term will only be achieved if the Shire's tourism product and infrastructure base continues to be improved and expanded. This will require a strong partnership between Council and the Shire communities; support from tourism and business operators; and strategic relationships with surrounding LGAs, touring route marketing groups, Destination Network Country and Outback, land management agencies (NSW National Parks and Wildlife, Forestry Corporation, Australian Wildlife Conservancy); as well as funding support from the State and Federal Governments.

To be effective, the DMP must be a living document that is constantly evolving. The recommended actions need to be implemented and the results evaluated. Periodically the DMP will need to be revised, building on what has been achieved.



1.6. Abbreviations used in this plan

4WD	Four-wheel driving (off road)
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AWC	Australian Wildlife Conservancy
B&B	Bed and Breakfast accommodation
DNCO	Destination Network Country and Outback
DMP	Destination Management Plan
DNCO	Destination Network Country and Outback
DNSW	Destination NSW
FNSW	Forestry Corporation of NSW
LALC	Local Aboriginal Lands Council
LGA	Local Government Area
MTB	Mountain Bike
NPWS	NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
REDS	Regional Economic Development Strategy
RMS	Roads and Maritime Services
RV	Recreational Vehicle (e.g motorhome, campervan)
TRA	Tourism Research Australia
TSA	Travelling Stock Reserve / Route
VEAP	Visitor Economy Action Plan
VFR	Visiting Friends and Relatives
VIC	Visitor Information Centre



2. Strategic Content

The Narrabri Shire Tourism Destination Management Plan (DMP) was prepared within the framework set by Federal and State Government policies for the development and management of tourism destinations. It is also consistent with the NSW Government's priorities for Regional NSW and key regional plans and strategies and with the directions and strategic directions of the Narrabri Shire Community Strategic Plan.

2.1. Policies for the development and management of tourism destinations

2.1.1. Australian Government – National Long-Term Tourism Strategy

The National Long Term Tourism Strategy for Australia 2020 recognises that the future of tourism is dependent on providing 'compelling and sustainable experiences' to consumers with 'innovation, continuous improvement and renewal' of products, experiences and infrastructure required if Australia is to remain competitive. To facilitate this, the Commonwealth Government, in conjunction with the State Tourism Agencies advocates for integrated planning, development and management of tourism destinations, with localities encouraged to prepare and adopt Destination Management Plans (DMPs). The Long Term Strategy is currently being reviewed with the draft directions⁵ including a focus on dispersal of visitors into regional Australia, developing unique Aboriginal and agri-tourism tourism experiences, harnessing technology to enhance the visitor experience, addressing transport and accommodation capacity constraints and building a skilled workforce.

2.1.2. NSW – Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan (VEIAP) 2030

Building the visitor economy is a key priority of the NSW Government, with the visitor economy recognised as having the potential to drive growth in the State's economy. The VEIP sets a target to increase visitor expenditure in NSW to \$55 billion by 2030. The Plan has a strong emphasis on growing tourism in Regional NSW and has set targets of achieving \$20 billion in visitor expenditure in Regional NSW by 2025 and \$25 billion by 2030. Key directions include a focus on:

- Product development: nature-based activities, aboriginal experiences, tours and trails, interest-based activities, events and regional conferencing;
- Investing in infrastructure: including accommodation and signage;
- Industry development: including workforce skills

2.1.3. Destination NSW – Strategic Objectives⁶

Destination NSW's eight key strategic objectives are:

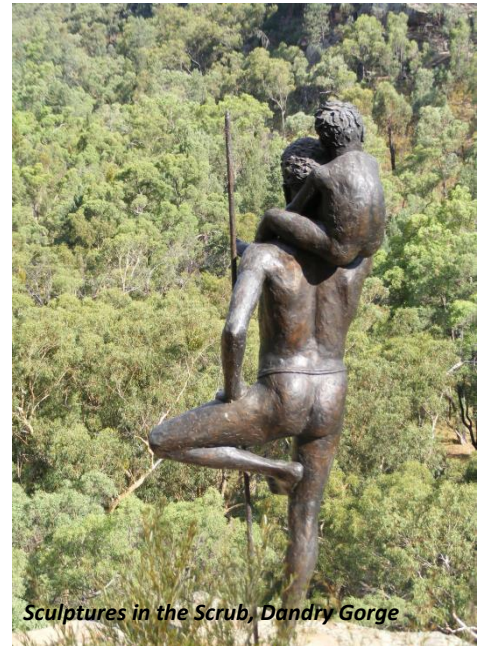
⁵ Beyond Tourism 2020 Steering Committee Report to Government

⁶ Destination NSW Annual Report 2018-19

- Position Sydney and NSW as world leading tourism and event destinations;
- Attract and secure high value major events;
- Build a sustainable events calendar for NSW;
- Increase industry stakeholder and customer engagement;
- Deliver value in partnership cooperative programs;
- Develop and sustain a high-performance organisation;
- Maximise yield and dispersal from the visitor economy;
- Implement the Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan.

For product development, Destination NSW's priorities include:

- Food and wine;
- Aboriginal experiences;
- Regional conferencing;
- Events;
- Nature-based;
- Agri-tourism;
- Touring routes and trails;
- Interest-based activities.



2.1.4. State-wide Destination Management Plan

The State-wide Destination Management Plan sets the directions for tourism product, infrastructure and industry development in NSW to deliver on the Government's visitor expenditure targets for NSW. The Plan has 10 Strategic Focus Areas:

- Destination NSW will continue to take a leadership role in aligning Government and industry across the state to deliver the 2030 Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan and grow the NSW visitor economy sustainably and raise the importance of the sector with all levels of Government;
- Position the visitor at the heart of the NSW visitor economy by making best use of data and developing deep customer insights that drive destination development, management and marketing strategy;
- Develop and deliver state-wide experiences and products strategies in partnership with the Destination Networks;
- Support the Department of Industry, National Parks & Wildlife Service and other Government departments in the development and delivery of sustainable state-wide tourism infrastructure and access improvement strategies;
- Work with Roads and Maritime Services and the Destination Networks to develop and deliver a streamlined state-wide wayfinding and visitor information services strategy;
- Develop and deliver an enhanced state-wide industry development strategy, in partnership with the Destination Networks and the Department of Industry;
- Develop and deliver an enhanced state-wide industry development strategy, in partnership with the Destination Networks and the Department of Industry;

- Develop and deliver an enhanced state-wide digital and content strategy and plan, in consultation with the Destination Networks;
- Develop a Destination Management Plan for Sydney;
- Prepare for future industry disruption, innovation and global trends.

For product development, DNSW will focus on supporting the Destination Networks to create and maintain a pipeline of 'hero' experiences, better 'bundling' of assets, developing touring routes and trails, industry development and increase the number of 'export ready' and 'China ready' experiences. The DMP identifies 20 experience categories that DNSW and the Destination Networks need to focus on.

The products and experiences offered by Narrabri Shire are strongly aligned with:

- Nature and adventure
- Caravan and camping
- Journeys and touring routes

The Shire also has products and experiences that fall within the categories of:

- Arts and culture
- History and heritage
- Aboriginal
- Agri-tourism
- Food and drink
- Aquatic (rivers and lakes)
- Special interest
- Events and festivals



2.2. Regional Plans and Strategies

2.2.1. Priorities for Regional NSW – A 20 Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW

In July 2018, the NSW Government released its priorities for driving economic growth in Regional NSW⁷. In relation to tourism, the NSW Government is looking to:

- Draw in more domestic and international tourists in areas with tourism potential;
- Attract more domestic and international students to regional NSW

The Plan is also looking to 'Grow vibrant places to live and work to encourage business and population growth.'

⁷ NSW Government (2018) A 20 Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW

2.2.2. New England North West Regional Plan

The NSW's State Government's vision for the New England North West Region is:

'A sustainable future that maximises the advantages of the region's diverse climates, landscapes and resources.'

Key elements of the Vision, relevant to tourism, are:

- Developing communities that are great places to live, work, visit and invest;
- Conserving and celebrating natural and cultural heritage assets.

The Plan identifies tourism as a priority sector, recognising that the Region's assets (including the national parks, heritage and cultural assets, events, conference and meeting venues, agriculture / local produce and the hot artesian waters), combined with good transport connections and the region's proximity to larger settlements in South East Queensland, the Hunter, North Coast and Sydney, provide opportunities to grow and diversify both the local and regional economy. The Plan has as one of its core actions:

Action 4.5.1 Facilitate opportunities for a range of tourist experiences and accommodation: 'The NSW Government will work with councils to plan for a range of tourist experiences and accommodation. This includes providing scope for complementary land uses, and infrastructure and services that support and build on existing and emerging tourist attractions across the region. This can be done by:

- Providing flexible planning controls to facilitate a range of tourist accommodation options, such as farm stay and bed and breakfast developments;
- Enabling a diverse range of cultural heritage tourism, including opportunities to engage with Aboriginal communities and their culture;
- Supporting the development of complementary tourism experiences associated with agriculture;
- Planning strategies and local environmental plans to provide land and opportunities to support tourist experiences and accommodation.'

Other strategic initiatives in this Plan that will help to drive growth of the visitor economy include:

- Encouraging locality planning to develop centres with a strong local identity and sense of place, including providing recreation and sporting facilities, open space, and infrastructure and services that promote healthy and active lifestyles (Direction 3.4);
- Improving linkages across the region and inter-regionally by improving road and transport connections (Goal 4). This includes improving road links, particularly between State Roads (Action 4.2.1) and preserving current regular passenger transport air services to Sydney Airport. The Plan states that 'The NSW Government does not support changes to the protection for existing

regional flights to Sydney Airport'. This is significant for Narrabri, as this initiative supports the retention of slots into Sydney Airport for regional air services as well as retaining regulated routes.

- Enhancing the viability and vitality of commercial centres (Direction 4.4);
- Protecting water, environment and heritage (Goal 5). Key directions and actions to deliver this goal include:
 - Managing water resources for a growing economy and environmental sustainability (Direction 5.1) and maintaining healthy waterways and wetlands (Action 5.1.3);
 - Protecting areas of high environmental value (Direction 5.2);
 - Protecting Aboriginal and European heritage (Direction 5.3), including identifying appropriate and innovative opportunities to leverage heritage assets (Action 5.3.2).

2.2.3. Upper North West Regional Development Strategy (REDS)

The State Government, through the Department of Premier and Cabinet, has prepared a Regional Development Strategy (REDS) for the Upper North West Functional Economic Region of NSW. This region includes Narrabri, Moree Plains, Gwydir and Inverell Shires. The REDS has as one of its core strategies:

'Diversify the economy through tourism and emerging industry sectors'

The REDS recommends upgrading and developing tourist attractions and assets, improving conference and event venues, and marketing and promoting the region.

2.2.4. Destination Country and Outback NSW – Destination Management Plan (DMP)

In 2016, DNSW established six Destination Networks in NSW. Narrabri Shire lies within the Country and Outback Destination Network. The Network, which incorporates the New England North West, Central NSW, Orana and Far West Regions of NSW, is administered by Destination Network - Country and Outback (DNCO). The Destination Network has adopted a DMP for the Region, with the core ambition of the Plan being to:

'Provide an inspiring and innovative approach to grow the visitor economy of Country and Outback NSW and create meaningful connection between the place, its communities and businesses with visitors to the region'

The DMP has six high level goals:

- Create a positive collaborative culture to support the growth of the visitor economy;
- Increase visitation and yield to Destination Country and Outback NSW;
- Strengthen the perception and awareness of Country and Outback NSW;
- Build the capacity and capability of the industry and local government;
- Facilitate the development or enhancement of products, experiences and events;

- Enable effective and efficient communication with stakeholders and communities across the network.

The Destination Network is looking to grow existing markets:

- Touring, with the focus on 55+ years;
- Visiting friends and relatives;
- Event participants;
- Nature and cultural visitors;
- Short breaks with an emphasis on food and wine.



It is also looking to diversify and build new markets including:

- Active families;
- Younger adults;
- More active 55+ years;
- Conference and meeting markets;
- International visitors – focusing on nature, cultural, and food and wine visitors.

For product development the Plan's positioning statement is:

'Explore the unlimited possibilities of Country and Outback NSW, as mesmerising as the stars that stretch across the evening sky'.

The Plan has 7 strategic product themes:

- **Celebrating Culture on Country:** enhancing existing and developing new meaningful and immersive Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences;
- **Wine Lovers and Foodie Finds:** food, wine and agri tourism experiences including events and be-spoke experiences;
- **Unlimited horizons:** developing drive journeys and touring routes, flying tours and leveraging the night sky (eg camping under the stars);
- **Exploring Our Nature:** leverage opportunities for outdoor activities and adventures – bush walking, cycling, canoeing etc – both independent and guided tours;
- **Revealing our Heritage:** enhancing and expanding heritage experiences to bring heritage to life. This include events, trails and use of technology in storytelling and interpretation;
- **Little Places Big Stories:** leveraging small town stories and events to encourage travellers to explore and stay longer in the region;
- **Conferences and Events.**

Narrabri Shire's strengths lie in outdoors and nature-based activities and unlimited horizons and potentially conferences and events and celebrating culture on country.

2.2.5. Kamilaroi Highway Destination Management Plan

The Kamilaroi Highway is a 600 kilometre east-west touring route across north west NSW. Named after the Kamilaroi nation, the Highway runs from Willow Tree on the New England Highway through to Bourke in Outback NSW, and passes through Liverpool Plains, Gunnedah, Narrabri, Walgett, Brewarrina and Bourke Shires. Promoted as a journey from the 'Great Divide to the Great Outback' the Kamilaroi is the most accessible and direct route between the Greater Sydney – Central Coast - Newcastle Region and the NSW Outback.

The Kamilaroi Highway Marketing Group (KHMG), an alliance of the six Councils along the route, is seeking to build the Kamilaroi into one of the 'must do' journeys in NSW.

The KHMG is focusing on drawing visitors from the Sydney-Central Coast Newcastle region and the long-haul Victorian, South Australian and south-east Queensland markets, with the primary target markets being:

- Over 55's touring market – primarily caravans and motorhomes.
- Family touring market – primarily 4WD with camper trailers.
- Special interest and activity-based markets – car and motorcycle rallies, anglers, bird watchers, aero-clubs etc
- Building visitation to events.
- Coach and social groups (eg Probus).



The priorities for product development within the Highway corridor are:

- Activating and leveraging the Namoi-Barwon-Darling river corridor;
- Improving the hot artesian bore bath experience;
- Developing touring routes and activity trails;
- Improving Aboriginal products and experiences;
- Growing the events sector.

With the focus being on attractions, activities and experience which:

- Increase the appeal of the Highway corridor to the target markets;
- Are unique and/or of national / international significance;
- Provide a strong point of difference to other touring routes;



- Are consistent with and have the potential to reinforce the positioning and brand values of the Highway corridor;
- Have the potential to raise the profile of the corridor and generate publicity.

2.3. Local Plans and Strategies

2.3.1. Narrabri Shire Community Strategic Plan

The Narrabri Shire Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027 articulates the vision, directions and framework for coordinating development, resource allocation and service delivery within the Shire. The vision for the Shire is:

‘A strong and vibrant regional growth centre providing a quality living environment for the entire Shire community’.

The Plan has four core themes, with Theme 3 being ‘The Economy’, with the Shire seeking to develop a ‘strong, diverse economy that attracts, retains and inspires business, industry and tourism growth’. Objective 3.1 looks to ‘**stimulate business and tourism by maximising our assets and attracting regional events**’ with the key actions being:

- 3.1.1 Identify and facilitate a diverse event, conference and entertainment program.
- 3.1.2 Facilitate the provision of a quality tourism product to present to visitors.
- 3.1.3 Implement the Narrabri CBD Master Plan to capture a greater proportion of highway traffic opportunities and improve shopping experience.
- 3.1.4 Airport facilities and services provide connectivity to capital city markets.



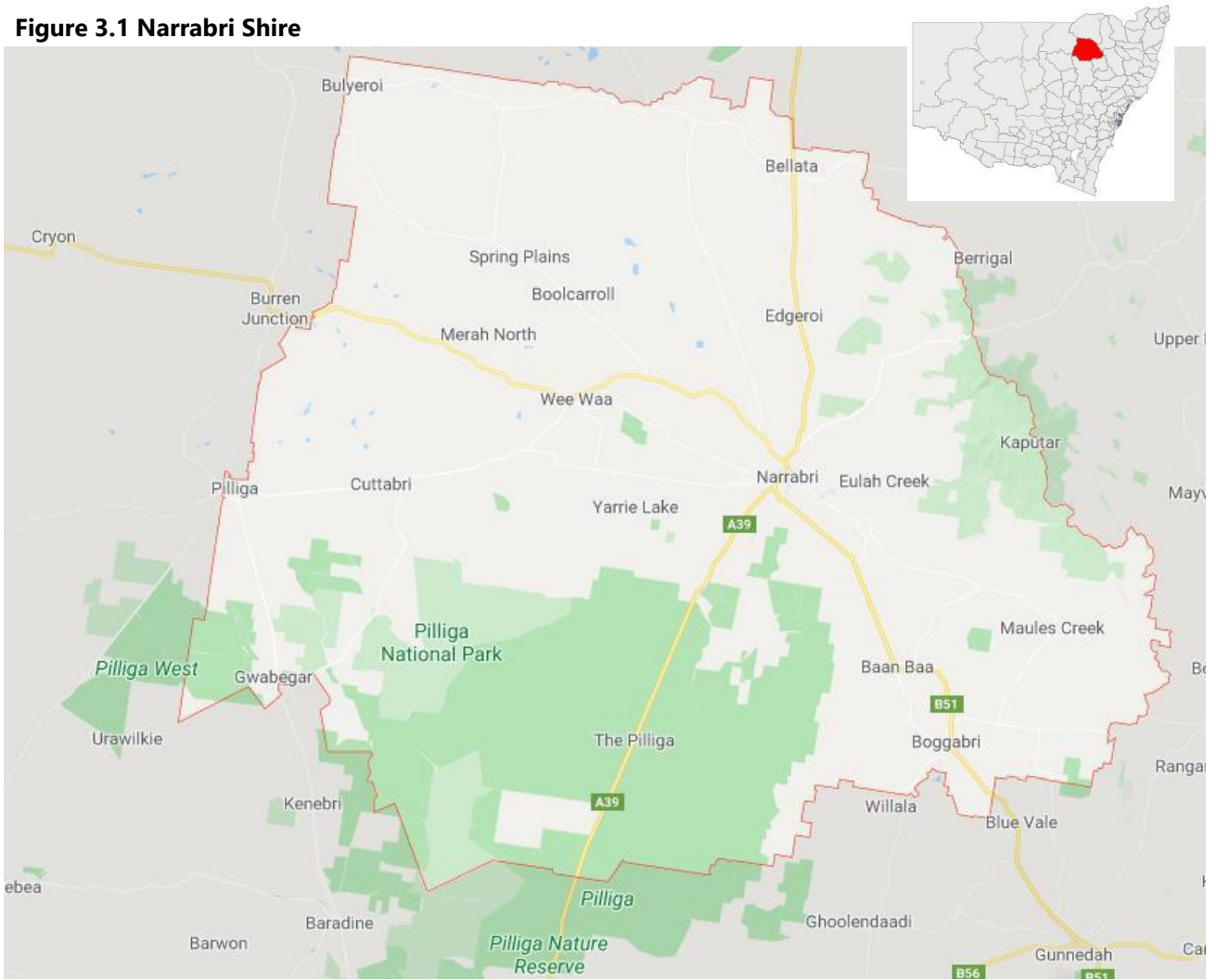
3. Narrabri Shire – Our Destination

3.1. Narrabri Shire

Narrabri Shire is situated within the Namoi River Valley in North Western NSW, approximately six hours' drive north-west of Sydney and approximately 2.5 hours south of the Queensland border. The Shire covers an area of 13,031 square kilometres extending west from the Nandewar Range. This Range marks the western edge of the Great Dividing Range. The Shire is bounded by Moree Plains Shire to the north, Gwydir Shire to the east, Warrumbungle Shire to south and Coonamble and Walgett Shires to the west.

The spectacular Mt Kaputar National Park lies along the eastern boundary of the Shire, with the Pilliga Forest occupying most of the south western quarter of the Shire. The Shire is drained by the Namoi River and its head-water tributaries, with the Shire's three towns and largest village located along the River.

Figure 3.1 Narrabri Shire



Narrabri Shire has a diverse economic base. The Shire has a strong agricultural sector, with cotton, grain and oil seed cropping, wool and fat lamb production and cattle being the primary activities. Some of the largest multi-national agricultural companies in Australia, including Cargill, Olam (Queensland Cotton), Louis Dreyfus Commodities and Monsanto have a presence in Narrabri. Cotton production is concentrated along the Namoi River floodplain from Boggabri through to Wee Waa, with Wee Waa promoted as the 'Cotton Capital of Australia'. The Shire has seven cotton Gin's, cotton seed storage facilities and a large cotton seed distributor. Grain and pulse production is concentrated to the north and west of Narrabri. To the north, the Edgeroi-Bellata area lies within the 'Golden Triangle' – the most productive grain producing area in NSW.

Narrabri Shire has three agricultural research facilities – the Australian Cotton Research Institute, Monsanto Narrabri Research Centre and the recently expanded IA Watson Grains Research Centre (University of Sydney). The Shire is also the home of the Paul Wild Observatory, which houses the Australia Telescope Compact Array. The Observatory is operated by the CSIRO Astronomy and Space Science Division.

Located at the northern end of the Gunnedah Basin, Narrabri Shire is resource rich, with extensive coal and gas reserves. There are four coal mines in the Shire with a fifth proposed at Vickery just south of Boggabri. The Pilliga Forest has extensive gas reserves. The proposed Narrabri Gas Project has the potential to supply up to half of NSW's natural gas demand and support the development of 'gas intensive' industries. The Shire's climate is ideal for solar power generation, with two large solar farms proposed for Narrabri and one near Wee Waa.

Narrabri Shire is a major transport and logistics hub, The Shire sits at the junction of the Newell and Kamilaroi Highways and traversed by several significant regional feeder roads. The Highways provide direct access to ports in Sydney, Newcastle, Melbourne and Brisbane. The Shire is also serviced by the North West Rail Line (freight and passenger services) and the Walgett Branch line (freight line via Wee Waa) and by 2025 will be connected to the Inland Rail network. Narrabri Airport has RPT services to Sydney and Brisbane and a strong general aviation base.

The Shire has three intermodal terminals (Narrabri North, Narrabri West and Wee Waa), several large grain receipt and storage sites, a number of trucking and freight forwarding companies and a range of transport and logistical service providers. The Shire draws commodities from a 350 kilometres radius, with its catchment area including the surrounding Shires and areas of southern Queensland. The transport and logistics sector is

poised to grow substantially with the opening of the Inland Rail and the establishment of the Northern NSW Inland Port in Narrabri.



At June 2019, Narrabri Shire had an estimated population of 13,135 people⁸. The Shire has three towns and five villages. Narrabri township (pop. Around 7,700) is the main commercial, retail administrative and cultural centre of the Shire. Narrabri is a subregional centre, with its trade area extending into the surrounding Shires. Narrabri is the main visitor destination within the Shire. The town is one of the most popular stops on the Newell Highway, with the Narrabri Visitor Information Centre and adjoining riverside reserve being the focal point for touring traffic.

Wee Waa and Boggabri are the other main towns in the Shire. Wee Waa (population around 2,080) is situated on the Kamilaroi Highway approximately 42 km west of Narrabri. First settled in 1837 and proclaimed in 1847, Wee Waa is the oldest town on the Namoi River. In the 1960's the town experienced considerable growth with the establishment of the cotton industry. The Wee Waa district is now one of the largest cotton-producing areas in Australia. The town has a small, attractive shopping centre and a strong agricultural service sector.

⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics Population Estimates by Local Government Area, 2018-2019

Boggabri, on the Kamilaroi Highway, is located on the south eastern corner of the Shire approximately 60km south of Narrabri and 40km north of Gunnedah. There are several large coal mines located to the east of the town. The town is a local service centre with a population of approximately 1,150 people, plus a large mining village (622 rooms).

Pilliga and Gwabegar are small villages along the western edge of the Shire. Pilliga (population 217) is located 100km west of Narrabri on the northern edge of the Pilliga Forest. The village has a hotel, general store and post office and is known for its hot artesian bore bath. Gwabegar (population 160) is located within the Pilliga Forest 125km south west of Narrabri.

Baan Baa is located on the Kamilaroi Highway, 38kms south of Narrabri. Baan Baa was established as a railway village. Today the village has a population of around 70. The village has a historic hotel, which provides meals and accommodation.

Edgeroi and Bellata are located on the Newell Highway, 25km and 48km respectively north of Narrabri. Both have grain silos. Bellata is larger, has a large truck stop with roadhouse, and several small service businesses.

3.2. Access and Transport

Narrabri Shire is readily accessible.

The Shire is located on the intersection of the Newell and Kamilaroi Highways and traversed by several significant regional roads. The Newell Highway (SH 17) is a National Highway and is the main route between Melbourne and Brisbane / North Queensland. The Kamilaroi Highway is a State Highway linking the New England Highway at Willow Tree through to Bourke. Both Highways are actively promoted as touring routes.

The regional road network includes three popular touring routes – Nature’s Way (State Touring Route 3), which links Narrabri to Bingara and onto Inverell; the Black Stump Way which links the Golden Highway near Dunedoo to the Kamilaroi Highway at Boggabri; and Cypress Way through the Pilliga Forest, linking Coonabarabran and Pilliga.

NSW TrainLink operates a daily service each way between Sydney and Moree via Boggabri and Narrabri, with the train stopping at Bellata by arrangement. A TrainLink coach service operates between Narrabri and Wee Waa on Mondays and Fridays to Wee-Waa with the Friday service extending to Burren Junction. TrainLink promotes travel to regional NSW. There is opportunity for Narrabri to feature in this program.

Fly Corporate operates RPT services between Narrabri and Brisbane and Narrabri and Sydney. Narrabri Airport caters for a significant number of charter flights, generated primarily by the resources sector. Data is not available on the number of passengers on these flights.

Table 3.1 Approximate Distance and Travel Times from Narrabri Township (by Road)

Centre	Distance	Time
Sydney	520 km	6 hours
Melbourne	1105 km	12 hours
Canberra	680 km	7-8 hours
Brisbane	580 km	6.5 hours
Gold Coast	640 km	7 hours
Newcastle	400km	5 hours
Dubbo	280 km	3 hours
Tamworth	172 km	2 hours
Gunnedah	100 km	1 hour
Moree	100 km	1 hour
Bingara	105 km	1.25 hours
Inverell (via STR3)	181 km	2 hours
Goondiwindi (Qld)	225 km	2.3 hours
Coonabarabran	120 km	1.25 hours
Coonamble	185km	2.2 hours
Walgett	185km	2 hours
Lightning Ridge	250km	3 hours

Narrabri Shire has a taxi service as well as two coach companies with charter operations. Avis, Budget, Hertz and Thrifty Rental Cars are available.

3.3. The Tourism Sector – Overview

Narrabri Shire has a strong and growing tourism sector. In 2018, the Shire attracted an estimated 246,000 visitors, of whom 144,000 stayed one or more nights in the Shire and 102,000 were day visitors. Overnight visitors spent 429,000 nights in the Shire.

3.3.1. Economic Contribution

Total visitor expenditure within the Shire in 2018 was \$53.052 million⁹. There are 135 tourism businesses

⁹ Statistics in this paragraph were taken from Tourism Research Australia – Local Area Profile: Narrabri Shire 2018: based on a 4 year rolling average.

in the Shire¹⁰ with an estimated 327 people employed in the tourism sector¹¹. Tourism is the 7th largest employer in the Shire. Tourism has an output of \$61.797 million and a value-add of \$28.84 million¹².

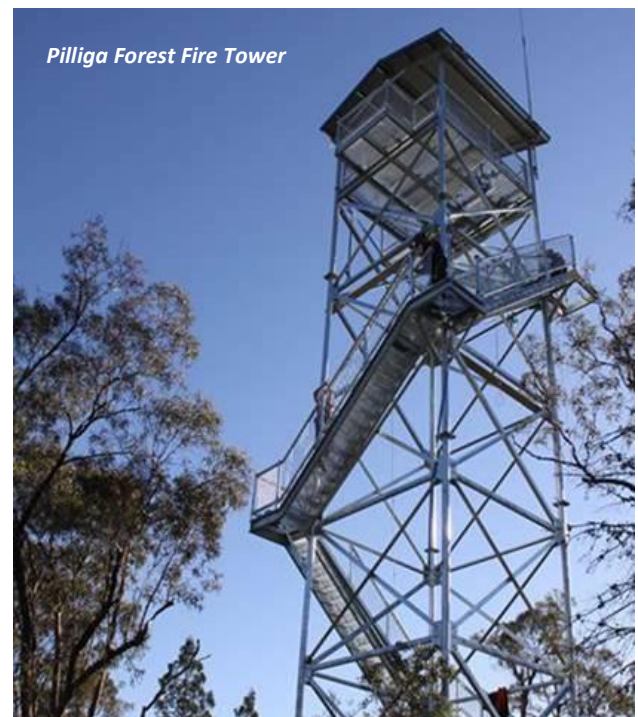
Tourism brings 'new' dollars into the local economy with these dollars having a multiplier effect, filtering through to most sectors of the local economy. The Shire's economy is highly dependent on the performance of the agricultural and coal mining sectors. 'Tourism dollars' are largely independent of the fluctuations these sectors, providing cashflow year-round. This contributes to the sustainability and resilience of local businesses.

3.3.2. Attractions, Activities and Events

Narrabri Shire has a diversity of attractions and events and supports a wide range of activities. Each of the towns and the larger villages has something to offer travellers. The scenery is extremely attractive, with the rugged profile of the Nandewar Range (Mt Kaputar) in the east, the Pilliga Forest in the south west, the highly fertile Namoi River flood plain and the changing agricultural landscape which becomes a patchwork of colour and a hive of activity at various times of the year.

Narrabri Shire's highest profile attractions are:

- Mount Kaputar National Park: The summit area (lookouts, bushwalking, camping and cabin accommodation) and Sawn Rocks (bushwalk and picnic facilities), with Sawn Rocks being an iconic attraction for the Shire and the broader North West Region. The Barraba Track through the Park is an iconic drive for 4WD enthusiasts.
- Pilliga Forest: 'a million wild acres' with attractions including the Salt Caves picnic and camping area with the Fire tower lookout, Australian Wildlife Conservancy and network of forest roads in Narrabri Shire; and the Forest Discovery Centre, Dandry Gorge (Sculptures in the Scrub) and Sandstone Caves in Warrumbungle Shire. The Forest has prolific bird life and wildflowers (in season). According to local folklore, yowies have been sighted in the Forest.
- CSIRO Australia Telescope Compact Array.
- Pilliga Hot Artesian Bore Bath.



¹⁰ Tourism Research Australia – Local Area Profile: Narrabri Shire 2018

¹¹ RDA Northern Inland: REMPLAN Economic Profile – Tourism: Narrabri Shire

¹² RDA Northern Inland: REMPLAN Economic Profile – Tourism: Narrabri Shire

Table 3.2 Attractions, Activities, Events – by Locality – Narrabri Shire

Locality	Attractions	Activities	Events
Narrabri	Mt Kaputar National Park / Barraba Track Sawn Rocks Namoi River / Narrabri Creek Deriah Aboriginal Area Narrabri Lake Old Gaol and Museum Narrabri Fish Farm Narrabri VIC – Kamilaroi Stories, Cotton Picker, regional produce Narrabri Arts and Crafts Sporting Wall of Fame Dirt Bike Territory	Town Golf Ten Pin Bowling Movies Boating / Canoeing Fishing Shopping and dining Coal and gas tour (occasional) National Park / Rural Areas Bushwalking / Walking Camping Cycling Mountain Biking 4WD / Geocaching Bird watching Abseiling and Rock Climbing Dirt Bikes / Trail Riding	NOSH Narrabri (biennial) Narrabri Agricultural Show Picnic Races Veteran’s Golf Tournament North West Speedway Maules Creek Campdraft Narrabri Campdraft Narrabri Carp Muster Narrabri Eisteddfod NSW Regional Motor Show Back to the Bri Festival Galloping Gully Polocrosse Eulah Creek Machinery Day Eulah Creek Cast Iron Chef Killarney Bike Classic
Boggabri	Boggabri Historical Museum Boggabri Tractor Shed Boggabri Art Shed Cox’s Creek / Iron Bridge Barber’s Lagoon & Pinnacle History Walk Dripping Rock Gin’s Leap	Bushwalking / walking Fishing Canoeing Golf	Boggabri Drivers Campfire Boggabri Camp Draft Wean Amateur Picnic Races
Wee Waa	Australia Telescope Yarrie Lake Namoi Echo Museum History walk Wee Waa Lagoon Arts Centre Yellow Bank / Weir	Boating / water sports Fishing Golf Arts Workshops (proposed)	Cotton Capital Country Muster Wee Waa Agricultural Show Wee Waa Flower Show Wee Waa Campdraft
Pilliga	Pilliga Hot Artesian Baths Pilliga Forest Historic Cemetery Pilliga Lagoon & Wetlands Walk	‘Taking the waters’ – Hot Baths Walking Fishing Bird watching Pilliga Forest drives and activities	
Bellata	Solar System Model – Pluto Millie Monument	Fossicking	
Baan Baa	Historic Hotel War Memorial	Fishing 4ED	



In addition to the events listed in Table 3.2, there are a range of sporting events held throughout the Shire with these including pony club camps and events, golf and bowls tournaments, shooting competitions, poultry shows, equine events and mainstream sporting (eg football carnivals) events. Concerts and other performances at The Crossing Theatre also draw visitors into the Shire.

Attractions located just across the border in adjoining LGAs are also included as part of the broader Narrabri Region. These include:

- Waa Gorge and the Rocky Creek Glacial areas at the northern end of the Nandewar Range;
- The southern half of the Pilliga Forest which lies in Warrumbungle Shire – Baradine Forest Discovery Centre, Pilliga Pottery and Barkala Farm Stay, Dandry Gorge and sculptures, and the Sandstone Caves;
- Burren Junction Hot Artesian Bore Baths.

There is also potential to 'annex':

- Horton Falls on the eastern side of Mount Kaputar National Park – to be marketed in conjunction with the Barraba Track and the Rocky Creek Glacial Area;
- The Boonalla Aboriginal Area (large cave plus picnic area and bushwalks) which is located between Gunnedah and Boggabri and is an ideal 'fit' with the landform attractions in the Boggabri area – Dripping Rock, Gin's Leap, Mount Robertson and Barbers Lagoon and Pinnacle.

3.3.3. Accommodation

Accommodation in Narrabri Shire includes:

- 14 motels providing 279 rooms
- 4 serviced apartment complexes – 52 apartments
- 7 pub hotels providing a mix of motel units, ensuite rooms and rooms with shared facilities.
- 4 bed and breakfast (B&B) / guesthouse properties
- 5 self-contained properties – 3 cabins in the Mt Kaputar National Park and 2 farm cottages.
- 8 properties listed with Air BnB – rooms in houses, apartments and cottages.
- 2 properties targeting niche markets – a nudist retreat and an off-road motorcycle park.
- 2 mining villages – currently providing over 1,124 rooms, with a total of 1,752 rooms approved
- 6 caravan parks¹³ – providing 235+ sites and 69+ cabins, with powered sites also available at the Pilliga Hotel, Yarrie Lake and the Narrabri, Wee Waa and Boggabri Showgrounds
- Five primitive camping areas, plus ‘walk-in’ bush camping in the National Parks and State Forests. Free camping also occurs in roadside rest areas and at various locations along the Namoi River.



Accommodation is concentrated in Narrabri, with Boggabri, Wee Waa, Pilliga and Baan Baa also having properties.

The supply of motel accommodation has been static for more than a decade, with many of the motel properties being tired and dated. The number of rooms in the mining villages has been increasing and it is likely that 350 additional rooms could be added to the Narrabri village within the next few years. There has been a small increase in the number of serviced apartments and self-contained properties. The Boggabri Caravan Park has been upgraded and the Big Sky Caravan Park in Narrabri being progressively upgraded. The art-deco Tourist Hotel in Narrabri has undergone a significant refurbishment.

3.3.4. Venues

Narrabri Shire is well supplied with venues suitable for business events, entertainment, horse and livestock events and sporting events. Venues include:

¹³ One of these caravan parks is operated as part of a motel

- The Crossing Theatre: The Crossing Theatre is one of the largest conference and function venues in Inland NSW, with a 1,000 seat capacity plus smaller rooms. The Theatre also has a large outdoor events space with frontage to Narrabri Creek.
- Licenced club venues – Narrabri RSL, Bowling and Golf Clubs; Wee Waa Bowling Club and Boggabri RSL Club.
- Hotel and motel properties with small meeting rooms.
- Craigdon Function Centre
- Showground and sports ground in Narrabri, Boggabri and Wee Waa, with these venues suitable for a range of outdoor events.
- Narrabri Racecourse.
- Yarrie Lake and Hall.
- Namoi River / Weirs – suitable for fishing and water- based events.
- Pilliga Forest, other State Forests and State Conservation areas – Forest roads and fire trails that can be used for a variety of outdoor events including mountain biking, audax, off-road motor sports etc.



3.3.5. Infrastructure to support the Visitor Economy

Facilities and infrastructure available within the Shire to support the visitor economy include.

- **Information services:** Accredited Visitor Information Centre (VIC) in Narrabri with information outlets in Wee Waa and Boggabri;
- **Eateries:** Hotels and licensed clubs, cafes and take-aways in each of the towns with Narrabri also having several restaurants, fast food outlets and a large truck stop. Pilliga has a hotel and general store; Baan Baa – a hotel; Edgeroi a general store with petrol; and Bellata a large road house and truck stop. There are several restaurants and cafes (Outback Shack at the Narrabri RSL, Vault in Boggabri, Yield at Marval Designs and the Tourist Hotel Narrabri) that are 'destination' eateries which are attracting visitors into the Shire;
- **Retail and support services:** Narrabri is a sub-regional service centre with a diverse range of businesses and services. Narrabri has a cluster of lifestyle shops and quality boutiques which

draw regional residents into the Shire. Hassab's boutique in Boggabri also has a regional following. Wee Waa and Boggabri are local service centres, each with a supermarket and local retail services;

- **Picnic and rest areas:** each of the towns have parks and reserves with playground, picnic facilities and amenities. The riverside reserve adjacent to the Narrabri VIC is very popular. An inclusive playground is proposed adjacent to the Narrabri VIC;
- **Dump Points:** Dump points for caravans and RVs are located in Narrabri (2), Wee Waa and Boggabri;
- **Electric Vehicle Charging Station:** A station is being located adjacent to the Narrabri VIC;
- **Free WiFi:** Free WiFi is available at the Narrabri VIC; Narrabri, Wee Waa and Boggabri libraries; and at McDonalds in Narrabri.

3.4. The Outlook for Narrabri Shire

Narrabri Shire is in a growth phase. There are currently twelve large resource-related development projects located in and around Narrabri Shire that have or are seeking development approval:

- Narrabri Gas Project – Santos;
- APA Western Slopes Pipeline;
- Perdaman Fertiliser Manufacturing Plant;
- Vickery Coal Mine Extension;
- Narrabri Underground Coal Mine Extension;
- Narrabri South Solar Farm;
- Silverleaf Solar Farm;
- Wee Waa Solar Farm;
- Inland Rail – Narrabri to North Star;
- Inland Rail – Narramine to Narrabri;
- Northern NSW Inland Port;
- Shenhua Watermark Coal¹⁴



The construction period for these projects is likely to extend over six years, with activity peaking in 2020/21 and 2021/22. During construction, the number of workers will fluctuate. The construction workforce will peak in 2020/21 and 2021/22 is with around 2,200 workers, with the Shenhua Mine potentially contributing a further 600 workers. During the construction period and the transition from construction to operations, there will be strong demand for accommodation. While the Civeo Group are looking to expand the Narrabri Mining Village, the demand for accommodation is likely to book-out most of the commercial accommodation in Narrabri and Boggabri. As such other visitor markets will be displaced. Room rates are also likely to increase substantially in both towns, with this having the potential for Narrabri to develop a reputation for being expensive. Medium to longer term, there is likely to be increased demand for accommodation and air services by business and work-related travellers and increased use of small meeting rooms for recruitment and training activities.

¹⁴ Shenhua is located in Gunnedah Shire but looking to accommodate its construction workers in Boggabri within Narrabri Shire.

In addition to the resource-related projects, the Australian Wildlife Conservancy in the Pilliga Forest is proposing to establish on-site accommodation and a visitor centre; there is a proposal for a hot bore bath at Yarrie Lake; the CSIRO Telescope is looking to increase night sky viewing activities; and Narrabri Shire Council is improving the presentation of the three town centres and developing the Narrabri Creek foreshore as a tourism and recreation precinct. The Wee Waa and Boggabri communities have several local arts-based projects, with the Wee Waa Local Aboriginal Land Council also looking at projects.



3.5. Strengths and Assets

From a tourism perspective, the Shire’s key strengths and tourism assets are:

Strengths	Assets to work with	Implications / Opportunities
Highway location and regional road links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newell Highway – major interstate route; • Kamilaroi Highway – link between the Hunter Valley and two key outback destinations – Lightning Ridge and Bourke; • State Tourism Route (STR 3) – ‘Nature’s Way’ – one of the most scenic routes in North West NSW; connecting iconic landforms; • Black Stump Way (Grain Valley Way) – secondary touring route feeding into the Shire; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging Highway travellers to stop and spend time in Narrabri Shire, with the riverside precinct adjacent to the Narrabri VIC positioned as the primary place to stop; • Draw visitors into the town centres by strengthening physical and visual links between the Narrabri VIC and the shopping centre; and the links between the highway corridors and the shopping centres in Boggabri and Wee Waa;

Strengths	Assets to work with	Implications / Opportunities
Highway location and regional road links continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cypress Way and the road links from Pilliga east to Narrabri, north to Burren Junction and west to Coonamble Shire; • Narrabri's location in relation to surrounding towns – minimal hour's drive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market development and cooperative marketing and promotion through touring route marketing groups; • Work with Warrumbungle Shire to re-activate Black Stump Way and build visitor traffic on Cypress Way; • Promotion of low traffic routes (Black Stump / Grain Valley Way and Cypress Way) as alternatives to the Newell Highway for the caravan and RV markets.
Landscapes / Landforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iconic landforms – Sawn Rocks and Mt Kaputar within the Shire and Horton Falls, Rocky Creek Glacial Area and Waa Gorge, located in adjoining LGAs close to the Shire border; • Landforms in the Boggabri area – Gin's Leap, Dripping Rock, Mt Robertson; • Yarrie Lake; • Changing landscapes – ranges in the east, broad acre cropping, river corridor, cypress forests; • Big sky experience – day and night. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitalising on the interest in landscapes and landforms: According to the Inland Tourism Market Research 64% of Inland NSW Travellers are looking for amazing and unusual landscapes, with this being the most sought-after experience; • 'Hero' shots of the contrasting, but stunning landscapes (and sky scapes) need to be incorporated into all promotional material; • Improve access to landforms in the Boggabri area; • Night skies viewing.
Namoi River corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kamilaroi Highway follows the river corridor and there are a multitude of access points for camping, fishing, bird watching, boating, canoeing; • Lagoons: Boggabri, Wee Waa, Pilliga; • Narrabri Creek foreshore upgrade – Narrabri; Boat ramps – Narrabri and Wee Waa (Yellow Bank); • River scenery, wildlife and bird life; • Fishing competitions – Narrabri and Wee Waa; • Riverside caravan park – Narrabri. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camping / fishing by the river – is one of the experiences that travellers 'aspire' to, and as such should feature in promotional materials; • Opportunity to develop / promote boating, fishing, walking, cycling and canoe trails and experiences; • Prolific bird and wildlife, including the opportunity to see brolgas and other rare birds; • Potential for events – fishing, canoeing, adventure racing.

Strengths	Assets to work with	Implications / Opportunities
National Parks, State Forests, State Conservation Areas and Reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mt Kaputar National Park: Summit precinct + Sawn Rocks + Barraba Track + rare pink slug; • Pilliga Forest; • Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC); • Mountain Bike Trails; • Yarrie Lake Reserve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travellers are drawn to National Parks and as such, the Parks should feature prominently in the promotional material; • The Barraba Track combined with the gravel roads in the Pilliga Forest will appeal to the 4WD market; • The Pilliga Forest roads are suitable for a range of activities and events: motor sports, MTB / Gravel grinding, horse riding, registered trail bikes; • Leverage walks, drives and camping to build the regional short-breaks market; • Leverage AWC; • Potential to grow mountain biking and other outdoor activities and potentially events.
Hot Artesian Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilliga hot artesian bore baths – with these baths drawing travellers into and through the Shire; • Part of the Great Artesian Drive which links the bore baths in north western NSW. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot artesian baths are one of the attractions of the West Region; • Opportunities for 'hero' images; • To support the establishment of additional bore baths at Yarrie Lake and/or in Wee Waa; • Seal Cypress Way to improve access to Pilliga.
Resource-rich area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coal mines / mine tours; • Proposed gas fields / Santos tours; • Solar Farms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feature these activities in the Narrabri VIC - potential for virtual reality experiences; • Explore options to grow the tour markets; • Leverage to grow business events' • Marketing the Shire's attractions and events to construction workers to encourage friends and relatives to visit.
Strong agricultural sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentration of cotton product and 'Cotton Capital branding: Cotton farms, Gin's, cotton seed storage and distributors, cotton seed oil, intermodal terminals, Cotton Fibre Expo, Cotton products; Cotton picker in the VIC; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-instate cotton tours and expand to include other farming activities;

Strengths	Assets to work with	Implications / Opportunities
Strong agricultural sector continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural Research Stations; • Agricultural landscape – crop viewing / crop alerts; • Narrabri Fish Farm; • Events – NOSH, Drovers; • Showgrounds suitable for agricultural events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intermodal terminals – potential for inclusion in tour itineraries – ‘paddock to port’ stories. Narrabri is the first place that travellers arriving from the east encounter the Inland Rail; • Enhanced interpretation in the Narrabri VIC - virtual reality experience for the cotton picker; • Agri tourism: crop viewing; • Leverage to grow business events and specialist industry tours.
Emergence of Aboriginal products and experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deriah Aboriginal Area; • Kamilaroi Stories – Narrabri VIC; • Former Aboriginal reserves: Tulladunna and Minnom; • Millie Monument. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the LALCs / Aboriginal communities in ‘story-telling’ and developing products and experiences; • Improve access to the Deriah Aboriginal Area.
Quality venues / diversity of venues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crossing Theatre; • Showgrounds; • Sports grounds / facilities; • Narrabri Racecourse; • Newtown Park Motor Sports complex – MotoX and Speedway; • Forests and State Conservation Areas; • Namoi River, Yarrie Lake. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow the events sector; • Promote the venues available to potential user groups, encouraging them to hold events and activities in Narrabri Shire.
Passenger rail services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rail services to Sydney-Central Coast-Hunter Region; • Rail connections to Tamworth and the New England region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of Narrabri experiences through NSW TrainLink; • Rail – accommodation – tour packages targeted to social groups (eg Probus Clubs).
Narrabri Visit Information Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VIC is very well located and highly visible; • VIC is a well-known and popular place to stop; • Large display area; • Availability of local and regional produce; • Access to the cotton picker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue to develop the VIC as an attraction with enhanced displays that showcase the Shire’s attractions, industries and lifestyle.
Strategic relationships in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrabri Shire is working cooperatively with surrounding LGAs and LGAs along the Kamilaroi and Newell Highways to build visitation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a range of cost-effective product and market development and marketing and promotional opportunities for Narrabri Shire.



3.6. Issues and Challenges

Issues and challenges faced by Narrabri Shire in growing its visitor economy include:

Issue	Challenges
Funding and resource constraints within Council and the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resourcing service delivery, including the on-going cost of operating the Narrabri Visitor Information Centre.
Impact of major resource-related projects on other visitor markets and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely accommodation capacity constraints if the development of the proposed mining, gas, solar farm and other major projects proceed simultaneously resulting in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Potential for damage to Narrabri's reputation – 'no vacancies / high room rates'; ○ Displacement of other market segments eg highway travellers, leisure markets; ○ Inability to grow the events market – resulting in under-utilisation of venues (eg Crossing Theatre). • Potential impact on the retail sector – loss of visitor markets that patronise lifestyle shops, boutiques, cafes etc; • Building markets (eg caravan, RV, camping) that are not dependent on motel, hotel and serviced apartment accommodation.
Tired / dated motels and caravan parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentration of older highway motels and caravan parks in Narrabri; • Limited and dated motel accommodation in Wee Waa and Boggabri; • Budget caravan parks in Wee Waa.
Unsealed roads which limit and/or deter visitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gravel sections of roads that feed into the Shire deter some travellers, particularly caravanners: Cypress Way, Rangari Road, Grain Valley Way (Black Stump Way); • Unsealed, narrow road to Mt Kaputar summit – not suitable for caravans; • Access roads to Dripping Rock and Deriah Aboriginal Area are unsealed, in poor condition and not suitable for some 2WD vehicles.

Issue	Challenge
Difficulty of 'pulling' visitors into the town centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No strong visual link / stimulus that encourages Newell Highway travellers and Narrabri VIC visitors to venture into the town centre. • Kamilaroi Highway by-passes Boggabri and Wee Waa town centres, with the speed-bump in Rose Street Wee Waa deterring caravans from travelling into the town centre; • Town centres have angle parking which is not caravan / RV friendly; • Most of the Shire's primary attractions are located 'out of town' which is a challenge for maximising visitor expenditure; • Most of the attractions within the towns are 'local' attractions, with limited opening hours and limited appeal – challenge to get visitors to explore the towns.
Changing travel patterns within the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of free camping areas, caravan park upgrades and increased activities and attractions in Liverpool Plains and Gunnedah Shires have changed travel patterns with Narrabri no longer the first night's stop on the Kamilaroi Highway for north-west bound travellers. These travellers are increasingly arriving in Narrabri before lunch and are looking to move-on; • Increased heavy vehicle traffic on the Newell Highway and the sealing of regional roads running parallel to the Newell, is resulting in touring traffic taking alternative routes to the Newell, by- passing Narrabri Shire; • Increased competition from Moree for the overnight stop – with Moree leveraging its hot artesian waters, increasing the number of caravan and camping sites available in town, and the establishing free camping areas along the Gwydir River corridor. The proposed lake-side camping area and hot artesian baths at the Moree Water Park will enhance Moree's appeal.
Under-performing venues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Shire's two main venues, the Crossing Theatre and Narrabri Showground, are under-utilised; • Buildings, facilities and infrastructure at Narrabri Showground are run-down and require significant investment in order to attract additional users and activities.
Limited arts and cultural scene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Shire's towns lack the vibrancy of other towns which have strong arts and cultural scenes; • Visitors are looking to engage with locals and hear their stories – arts-cultural activities is one of the channels for this.

4. Visitation¹⁵

4.1. Visitation to the New England North West Region

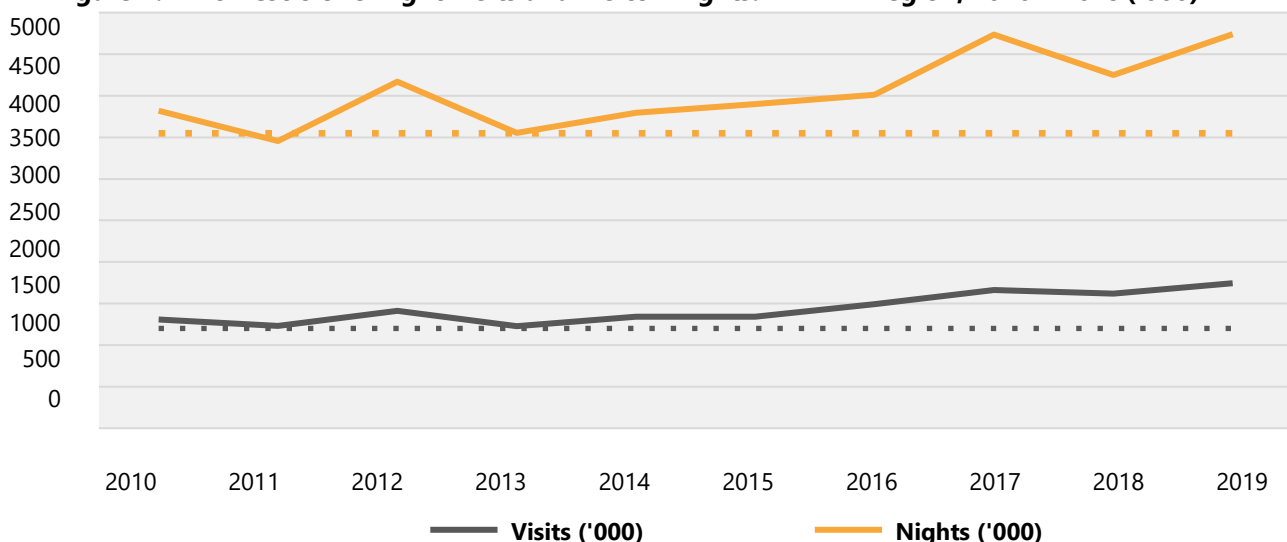
Narrabri Shire is located along the western edge of the New England-North West Region. The Region extends from the NSW – Queensland border south to the Liverpool Range, and from the Great Dividing Range west to the floodplains of the Namoi and Gwydir Rivers. The primary destinations within the Region are Tamworth, Armidale and Moree. Travel within the Region is concentrated north-south along the New England Highway in the east and the Newell Highway in the west. The main east-west routes are the Kamilaroi, Oxley and Gwydir Highways.

In 2019, the NE-NW Region attracted an estimated 1.744 million domestic visitors and 38,000 international visitors who stayed one or more nights in the Region and 2.286 million domestic day visitors. Domestic and international overnight visitors spent 4.740 and 1.014 million nights, respectively within the Region.

4.1.1. Domestic Overnight Visitors¹⁶

- The NE-NW was the 6th most visited region in NSW, sitting behind North Coast, South Coast, Hunter, Central NSW and Central Coast regions;
- Visitation to the Region is growing. Between 2010 and 2019, the number of domestic overnight visitors and the number of nights spent in the NE-NW Region has increased by 29.1% and 24.6% respectively.

Figure 4.1 Domestic Overnight Visits and Visitor Nights: NE-NW Region, 2010 – 2019 ('000)

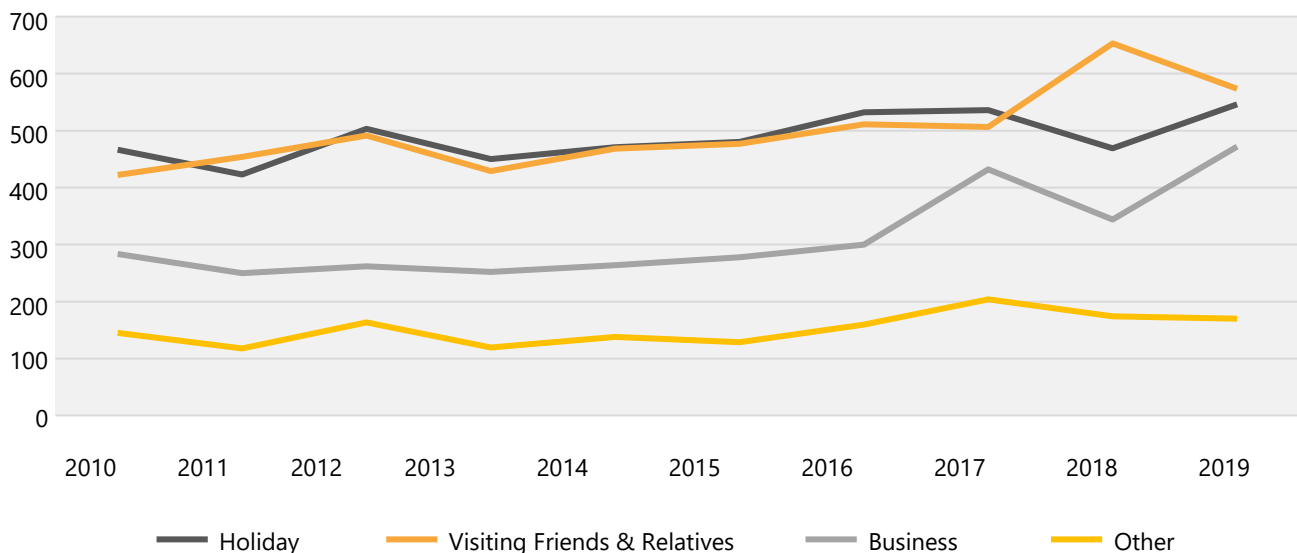


¹⁵ Data on visitation is limited and based on the National and International Visitor Surveys conducted by Tourism Research Australia. Destination NSW publishes visitation data at a regional level¹⁵, with time series data available for the New England – North West region. Tourism Research Australia provides visitation estimates for selected LGAs with data available for seven of the twelve LGAs within the New England North West Region. Data is also available for Warrumbungle Shire, which abuts Narrabri Shire.

¹⁶ Information in Sections 4.1.1 to 4.1.3 is taken from Destination NSW: New England North West Region NSW, Time Series

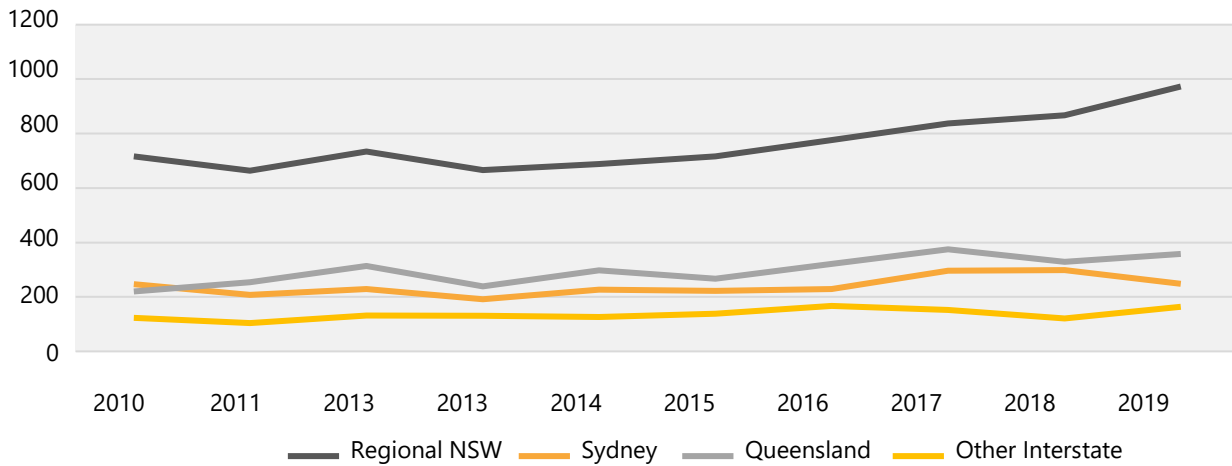
- In 2019, domestic overnight visitors spent nearly \$719 million in the Region, up 13.6% on 2018. The average spend per night was \$152. The average spend in the NE-NW was lower than the Regional NSW average of \$163 per visitor per night;
- The main reasons for visiting the NE-NW Region were to visit friends and relatives (32.5%), for a holiday (31.0%), for business (26.8%) and other (9.7%). From 2010 to 2019, there has been growth in all markets with the strongest growth being in business and holiday travel, up 66.2% and 35.8% respectively, with the VFR and other markets each growing by 17.2%.

Figure 4.2 Number ('000) of Domestic Overnight Visitors by Purpose of Visit: Domestic Overnight Visitors – NE-NW Region, 2010-2019.



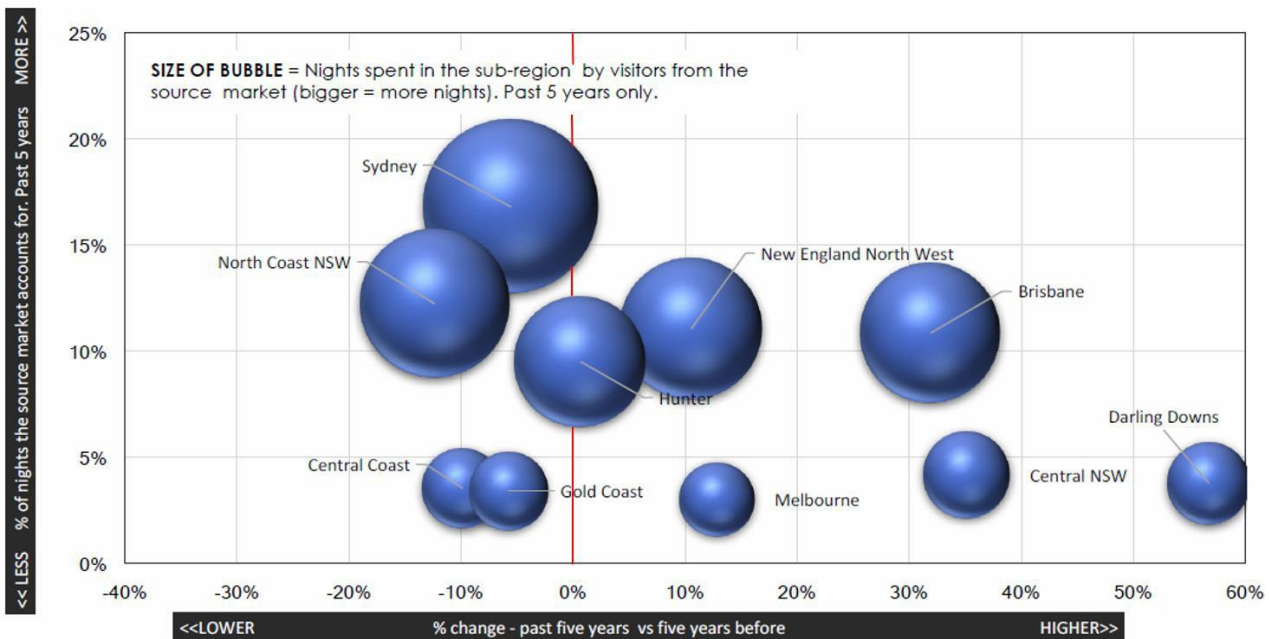
- Holiday travellers accounted for 35.3% of the nights spent in the Region, with these travellers staying on average 3.04 nights. VFR travellers accounted for 31.3% of nights and stayed on average 2.62 nights. Business and other travellers accounted for 24.1% and 8.7% of nights, respectively, with business travellers staying on average 2.41 nights and other travellers, 2.42 nights;
- 70.1% of visitors to the Region were from NSW, with 29.9% from Interstate. The main source markets are Regional NSW (55.8% of visitors), Queensland (20.5%) and Sydney (14.3%). Since 2010, strong growth has occurred in visitation from Queensland (up 62.7%), Regional NSW (35.5%) and other interstate markets (33.3%), with the Sydney market remaining static (0.4%).

Figure 4.3 Origin of Domestic Overnight Visitors, NE-NW Region, 2010 to 2019 (number of visitors '000)



- Destination Country and Outback NSW assessed changes in the main source markets for the NE-NW Region for the five-year period YE June 2013 to YE June 2017, with the regional data for each State broken into sub-regions. The analysis shows that the main source markets for the NE-NW are Sydney (the largest), NSW North Coast, NE- NW Region (intra-regional travel), Brisbane and the Hunter. From 2013 to 2017 the number of visitors from Sydney and the NSW North Coast decreased, the number of visitors from the Hunter Region remained static, while visitors from NE-NW Region and Brisbane increased. In the smaller source markets, there was a decline in the visitors from the NSW Central Coast and Gold Coast Regions, and an increase in visitors from Melbourne, Central NSW and the Darling Downs Region of Queensland, with the Darling Downs and Central NSW showing the strongest rates of growth;

Figure 4.4 Change in Visitor Nights Spent in the NE-NW Region by the Main Source Markets – YE June 2013 to YE June 2017



Source: Destination Country and Outback DMP – Appendix B Research and Insights Analysis

- The NE-NW attracts visitors across all age groups, with a relatively even spread. People aged 30-39 years and 60-69 years each accounted for 18.9% of visitors, with people aged 15-29 years accounting for 18.6% of visitors. Since 2010, the strongest growth has occurred in travellers aged 60-69 years (up 81.8%), followed by people aged 70+ years (up 81.4%) and people aged 30-39 years (up 48%). People aged 40-49 years declined by 5.8%;
- 32.6% of visitors were travelling along, 27.1% as adult couples, 15.8% with friends or relatives (no children) and 15.1% as a family (with children). Since 2010, there has been strong growth in the number of people travelling alone (up 69.3%), as adult couples (up 19.1%), and with friends and relatives (up 17.4%), while the number of families visiting the Region has remained static (0.4%). The increase in visitors travelling alone is largely due to the significant increase in business travel to the Region;
- During their visit, 51.0% of visitors dined out at restaurants and cafes, 27.6% visited a licensed club and/or pub, 17.6% went sightseeing and 9.7% went shopping for pleasure;
- Visitor nights were primarily spent in the home of friends and relatives (36.0% of nights), followed by standard hotel or motel (19.7%) and free camping (13.4%). In Regional NSW, the number of nights spent in commercial and non-commercial caravan parks and camping areas ranks second to nights spent staying with friends and relatives.

4.1.2. Domestic Day Visitors

- In 2019, the NE-NW Region attracted 2.286 million day visitors, up 39.5% on 2018;
- Domestic day visitors spent on average \$147 per trip, injecting \$339 million into the Regional economy;

- 40.7% of day trips were for holiday and leisure purposes;
- 45.4% of day visitors dined out at restaurants and cafes and 20.9% shopped for pleasure during their visit.

4.1.3. International Overnight Visitors

- In 2019, the NE-NW Region attracted 38,000 international visitors with these visitors spending 1.014 million nights in the Region (average stay of 27 nights);
- The number of visits and nights were up 5.6% and 12.2% respectively on 2018;
- International visitors spent on average \$49 per night in the Region, injecting \$49 million into the local economy;
- 57.9% of international visitors were holiday and leisure travellers.

4.2. Visitation within the Region surrounding Narrabri Shire

Visitation estimates are available for selected LGAs within NE-NW Region and Warrumbungle Shire. The data is for 2018 and is based on a 4-year rolling average of data from the National and International Visitor Surveys/

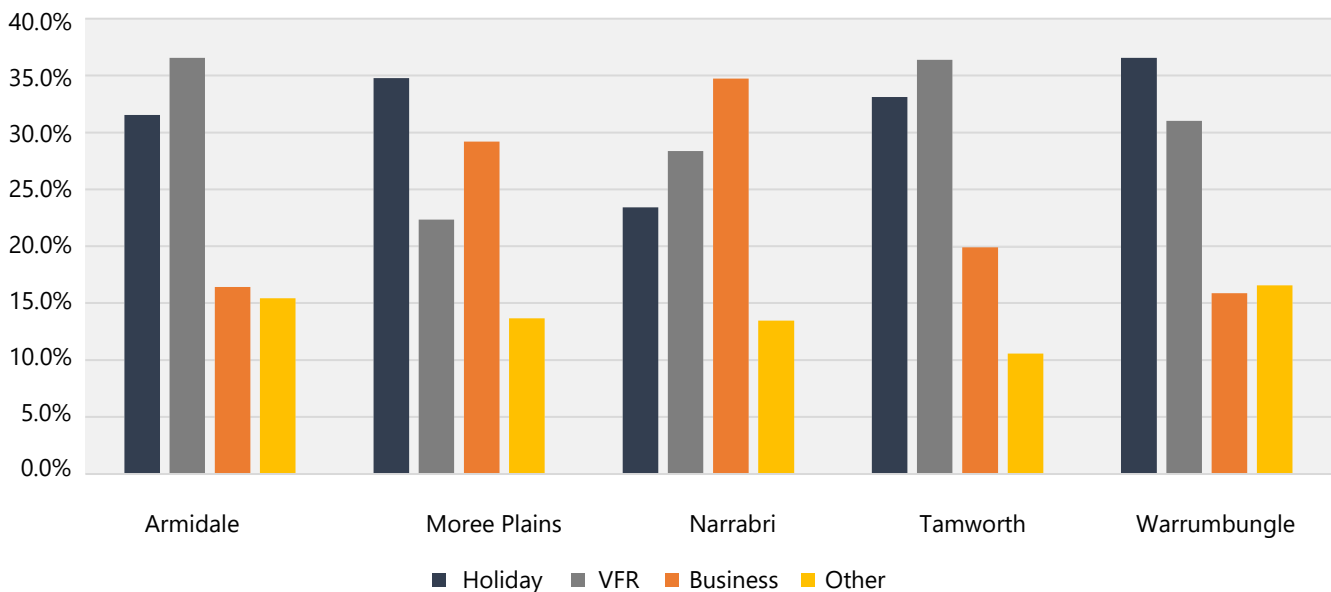
Within the NE-NW, Tamworth Regional LGA is the most visited destination, followed by Armidale Regional LGA and Moree Plains Shire with Narrabri Shire ranking 4th. Visitation to Warrumbungle Shire (Central NSW region) is marginally higher than Narrabri Shire. Narrabri Shire has the longest length of stay, but the lowest average spend per night by domestic overnight visitors.

Table 4.1 Estimated Visitation, Selected LGAs in the Region surrounding Narrabri Shire. 2018 (4 year rolling average)

LGA	Visitors	Domestic Overnight Visitors			International Overnight Visitors	Day Visitors
		Nights Spent	Av. Length of Stay (Nights)	Av. Spend / Visitor / Night		
Armidale	297,000	740,000	2.49	\$150	10,000	316,000
Gunnedah	94,000	238,000	2.53	\$123	np	92,000
Inverell	124,000	318,000	2.56	\$135	2,000	125,000
Moree Plains	161,000	424,000	2.63	\$143	4,000	np
Narrabri	141,000	388,000	2.75	\$107	3,000	102,000
Tamworth	492,000	1,185,000	2.41	\$150	13,000	633,000
Tenterfield	115,000	270,000	2.35	\$118	3,000	np
Warrumbungle	145,000	296,000	2.04	\$123	2,000	115,000

Purpose of Visit estimates are available for 5 LGAs. Business and VFR travellers are the primary markets in Narrabri Shire, while holiday-leisure and VFR travellers are the primary markets in the surrounding LGAs.

Figure 4.5 Purpose of Visit – Domestic Overnight Visitors by LGA, 2018 (as % of total Domestic Overnight Visitors)



Implications and Opportunities for Narrabri Shire

- Overnight visitation to and the length of stay within the NE-NW Region is growing, with this growth partly driven by strong growth in people travelling for business. Business travellers are a high yield market that have different needs to the holiday and VFR travel markets;
- Regional NSW remains the main source market of visitors to the NE-NW Region, with Queensland and Sydney also significant markets. The Queensland market (primarily out of Brisbane and the Darling Downs Regions) is showing the strongest growth and Narrabri needs to ensure that it has a presence in these localities. Central NSW and the NE-NW Region are also growing as source markets – with these localities ideal for day and short-break trips;
- While the number of international visitors to the Region is increasing, all-be-it from a small base, these visitors should not be a priority for Narrabri Shire;
- The long-haul touring market out of Melbourne is increasing, while the number of travellers coming out of regional Victoria is declining. This may be due to improvements in and/or promotion of alternative routes (eg Hume-Pacific Highway), competition from low cost airfares for travel between Victoria and the main destinations in Queensland and/or a decline in the number of Victorian retirees making the annual trip north to Queensland in winter (aging market);
- The Region has a large VFR market, providing the opportunity for Narrabri Shire to put in place promotions to encourage local and regional residents to bring or encourage their visitors to explore Narrabri Shire. The resident host significantly influences what their visitors see and do while in the area, and as such the challenge lies in educating and motivating the host community;
- The Region is seeing strong growth in the Baby Boomer and family markets – both of which have a focus on activities and experiences – ‘doing’ and ‘participating’ rather than just ‘looking’;
- The touring caravan market is growing strongly. With the product available in Narrabri Shire and the expected up-coming capacity constraints in the motel and hotel sectors, this is an ideal market for the Shire.

4.3. Visitation to Narrabri Shire

In 2018, Narrabri Shire attracted 141,000 domestic overnight visitors, 3,000 international overnight visitors and 102,000 domestic day trippers. 429,000 nights were spent in the Shire, with domestic visitors accounting for 388,000 nights, and international visitors, 42,000 nights¹⁷.

Visitor estimates for domestic overnight visitors to Narrabri Shire (also based on 4 year rolling averages) were published in 2011, 2014 and 2016, with number of visitors estimated to be 99,000, 100,000 and 99,000 respectively. The 2018 visitation estimates indicate significant growth in visitation over the past few years.

34.8% of domestic overnight visitors to the Shire are business and work-related travellers, 28.4% are visiting friends and relatives, 23.4% are holiday and leisure travellers and 13.5% are travelling for other reasons (eg sport, events etc).

Total visitor expenditure in the Shire was \$53 million, with domestic overnight visitors spending \$41 million, domestic day trippers, \$9 million and international visitors \$2 million. On average, domestic overnight visitors spend \$107 per visitor per night, with day trippers spending \$90 per visitor and international visitors spending \$50 per visitor per night.

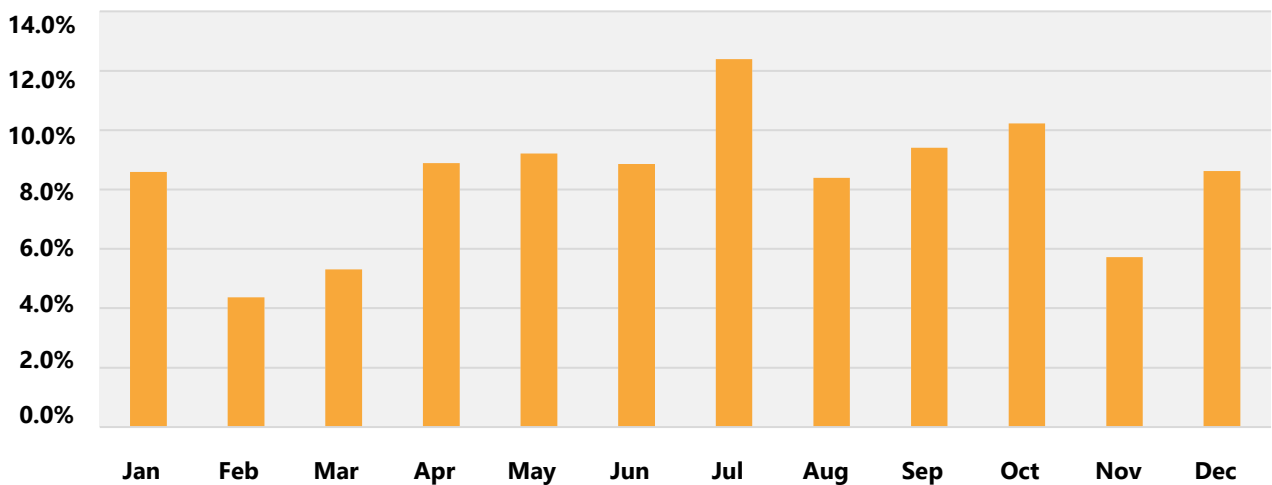
Data¹⁸ available from the Narrabri Visitor Information Centre for 2019 shows:

- 59% of visitors to the VIC came from NSW, 47.1% from interstate and 2.3% from overseas. The primary source markets were Queensland (27.6%), Inland NSW (19.8%), Coastal NSW (15.8%), Sydney (15.0%) and Victoria (14.4%), with other interstate markets accounting for 5.1% of visitors. International visitors came primarily from the UK- Europe (1%), Asia (0.9%) and the USA-Canada (0.5%);
- 43.1% of visitors were travelling alone, 38.7% as adult couples, 14.0% as families with children and 4.3% as groups;
- Visitation peaks during school holidays;

¹⁷ Tourism Research Australia LGA Visitor Profiles: Narrabri Shire

¹⁸ Data was adjusted to exclude local residents and 'not stated' categories.

Figure 4.6 Pattern of Visitation to Narrabri VIC (as % of total VIC visitors)



4.4. Markets Attracted

The following information on the Shire’s visitor markets is compiled from information provided by the Narrabri Shire VIC, VIC staff from the surrounding region, local accommodation and attraction operators, and the workshops held in Narrabri, Wee Waa and Boggabri. The information is qualitative and should be regarded as indicative only.

Narrabri Shire attracts a diversity of markets, with the market mix varying in the different localities throughout the Shire. The primary markets are:

- Through traffic – with the Shire being a convenient place to have a break;
- Touring traffic (looking to explore). Market segments include touring caravans and RVs (primarily baby boomers), family market (mainly 4WD with camper trailers), touring by car and touring by motorcycle;
- Business and work-related travellers – dominated in recent years by mining, gas and infrastructure workers; but also including sales representatives, tradesmen, professionals, government officers, contractors and rural workers;
- People visiting friends and relatives (VFR) including people coming into the Shire for social events such as weddings;
- Regional residents.

Secondary and minor markets include:

- Conference and meeting delegates;
- Sports participants and spectators;
- People attending events;
- Coach tour groups.

Narrabri also attracts a range of special interest and activity-based markets including:

- Technical tours / research related travel;
- Bushwalkers;
- Bird watchers;
- Anglers;
- Car and motorcycle clubs / social groups;
- 4WD clubs and enthusiasts;
- Dirt bike (motorbike) enthusiasts;
- Water skiers (Yarrie Lake);
- Horse riders / horse events;
- Golfers;
- Cyclists and mountain bikers;
- Canoe / Kayakers;
- History enthusiasts / Family historians.



Key market segments are discussed below.

4.4.1. Highway Travellers / Passing Traffic / Touring Traffic

Tourism in Narrabri Shire is highly dependent on highway travellers and passing traffic. The main feeder routes into the Shire are the Newell and Kamilaroi Highways, with most of the tourist traffic coming off the Newell. Secondary routes include Nature's Way (State Tourist Route 3) which connects the Shire to Inverell via Bingara, Cypress Way (Baradine- Pilliga Road), Black Stump Way (includes Grain Valley Road) and the Pilliga-Coonamble Road.

On both the Newell and the Kamilaroi Highways and most of the secondary routes, the main visitor markets are:

- Retirees and semi-retirees. This is predominantly a long-haul market with the main direction of movement being south to north. This market has a number of sub-segments which include caravanners and motorhomes; the touring market that is exploring North Western NSW; and long-haul through traffic: Victoria - Queensland; Sydney / Hunter - Queensland; Central and South Western NSW - SE Queensland;
- Regional traffic, primarily passing through Narrabri Shire to other localities in the region - primarily to Dubbo (north- south) and Tamworth (east-west traffic);
- Families with travel concentrated during school holiday periods. The primary reasons for visiting the Shire appear to be to visit friends and relatives and/or passing through on-route to other destinations;
- Truck drivers – primarily along the Newell Highway, with Narrabri being a fuel, meal / groceries and overnight stop for many drivers.

The Shire is also seeing growth in the motorcycle market.

Newell Highway Travellers

While Newell Highway travellers remain one of the largest markets for Narrabri Shire, the Shire's dependence on Newell Highway traffic has decreased over the past decade. This is largely as a result of increased traffic on other touring routes feeding into the Shire and the growth in business and work-related travel.

Anecdotal information from Tourism Managers and accommodation establishments along the Newell indicates that tourism traffic along the Newell has declined in recent years. This decline is attributed to a number of factors including the emergence of alternative touring routes, increasing number and size of trucks using the Newell which deters other travellers, discount airfares which has impacted on the long haul markets and changing holiday patterns.

Alternative routes include:

- Grain Valley Way – with travellers attracted by the free camping areas in Warrumbungle Shire. These travellers are primarily staying in Warrumbungle Shire and reaching Narrabri before lunch;
- Grain Valley Way – with travellers attracted by the free camping areas in Warrumbungle Shire. These travellers are primarily staying in Warrumbungle Shire and reaching Narrabri before lunch;
- Great Inland Way (Castlereagh Highway) to Coonamble and then across to Pilliga and north to Burren Junction with the artesian baths being the attraction.

The increase in caravan and camping sites in Moree (Hot Springs caravan park, Moree Showground and the free Gum Flat camping area on the Gwydir River), is also impacting on the south-bound highway market, with more vans staying overnight in Moree Plains Shire and reaching Narrabri mid-morning.

Kamilaroi Highway Travellers

Leisure-related visitor traffic on the Kamilaroi Highway is increasing, with the main markets being:

- Residents from the Hunter Valley, Central Coast and northern areas of Sydney using the Kamilaroi Highway to access the Newell Highway when travelling through to Far North Queensland, the Outback and Gulf Country;
- Domestic and a small number of international travellers touring North Western and Outback NSW, with Lightning Ridge and Bourke being popular destinations.

Travellers using Grain Valley, travel on the Kamilaroi Highway between Narrabri and Boggabri.

Travel patterns on the Kamilaroi Highway are changing. Until the past few years, Narrabri generally attracted the 'first night' stop for travellers coming from Sydney, Central Coast and the Hunter Region. With the introduction of free camping in Liverpool Plains Shire and on the Namoi River in Gunnedah, and the upgrading and changes in management of caravan parks in Murrurundi, Quirindi and Gunnedah, a significant number of travellers are now overnighing further east, and reaching Narrabri Shire around lunch-time.

For touring travellers from Sydney, the Hunter and Central Coast regions, Gunnedah and Narrabri are the logical 'pit' stops. Travellers will probably not plan to stop in Boggabri (too close to both towns), with any stop being more an impulse decision. For travellers joining the Kamilaroi via Grain Valley Way, Boggabri is an ideal pit stop location, as it is over than an hour from Coolah, Mudgee or Gulgong (last pit stop) and offers more services than Mullaley and Tambar Springs Likewise, the proximity of Wee Waa to Narrabri does not render it a 'logical' stop for west-bound Kamilaroi Highway travellers. It is however a logical stop for east-bound travellers.

Nature's Way (State Touring Route 3 – includes the Killarney Gap Road)

Tourist traffic on Nature's Way is increasing, with the main travellers being retirees and regional residents. According to VIC staff located along the route and in Glen Innes and Tenterfield, the route is becoming known for its stunning scenery with Sawn Rocks and the free riverside camping area at Bingara having a very high profile amongst travellers, with travellers also interested in Copeton Dam, the Rocky Creek Glacial area, Mt Kaputar National Park and the hot artesian pools west of Narrabri, with the Burren Junction having a higher profile than Pilliga. The route is also a 'short cut' between the Newell Highway and the NSW North Coast. The number of motorcyclists and cyclists using the route is increasing.

Pilliga Gateway

The increasing profile of the Pilliga Forest Discovery Centre at Baradine, the Pilliga Forest attractions, and the hot artesian baths at Pilliga and Burren Junction, combined with the sealing of the Pilliga - Burren Junction and the Coonamble – Pilliga Roads, is resulting in an increasing number of travellers entering the Shire through Pilliga. The primary markets are retirees and young families (pre and primary school aged children) travelling in caravans, motorhomes and 4WD with camper trailers; 4WD enthusiasts and clubs; regional traffic often breaking their journey at the bore baths; and heavy vehicles. While east-bound travellers generally continue onto Wee Waa and Narrabri, the sealing of the link between Pilliga and Burren Junction is resulting in the emergence of a secondary north-south touring route as an alternative to the Newell Highway.

Touring Caravan, RV and Camper Trailer Markets

The touring van market incorporates campervans, motorhomes (RVs), and travellers towing caravans and camper trailers. While these travellers are a subset of the traffic / touring market, this segment has different needs and expectations and can be separately targeted. The touring van market is a significant market for Regional NSW with the NE-NW Region being the 4th most visited region in NSW, ranking behind the North and South Coasts and Central NSW.

The touring van market and RV market is increasingly travelling with bicycles, canoes / kayaks and and/or small runabout boats and is looking for places to cycle, canoe / kayak, boat and/or fish, with riverside locations being very popular.

Narrabri Shire offers a range of opportunities for the caravan, RV and camping markets. Caravan parks are available in each town, with lower priced powered sites at each of the Showgrounds. Yarrie Lake, Mt Kaputar National Park (camping only) and the Pilliga Forest provide nature-based camping opportunities, with Yarrie Lake being one of the most attractive camping areas within the Region. Low-cost camping is available at the Pilliga and Burren Junction bore baths and free camping occurs along the Namoi River corridor.

The share economy, through sites such as 'You Camp' and 'Under the Stars' also provides opportunities for private landholders to advertise camp sites on their property.

Implications and Opportunities for Narrabri Shire

- The touring market, particularly the caravan sector, is a growth market for the Shire. These travellers will remain the primary source of holiday – leisure travellers for Narrabri Shire. As such the Shire needs to:
 - Remain active members of the Newell Highway, Kamilaroi Highway and Nature's Way marketing groups;
 - Work with Warrumbungle Shire to re-activate the Black Stump Way (includes Grain Valley Way) as a touring route and promote the Pilliga Forest and Cypress Way.
- Touring travellers, particularly caravaners, are looking for sealed, low traffic routes as an alternative to the Newell Highway. At present, the unsealed sections of road remaining on Grain Valley Way (Gunnedah Shire) and Cypress Way are deterrents for some travellers. Grain Valley Way is likely to be fully sealed in the near future which will result in more traffic arriving in the Shire via this route. Sealing Cypress Way between Gwabegar and Pilliga would increase the volume of touring traffic entering and moving through Narrabri Shire via Pilliga – potentially increasing visitation to Gwabegar and Wee Waa;
- With changing travel patterns and an increasing number of travellers arriving in Narrabri earlier in the day, the focus needs to be getting them to stay and explore, rather than just having a quick 'pit stop' and pushing on. Improving access to attractions (eg Mt Kaputar National Park, Deriah Aboriginal Area and Dripping Rock) and projects such as the Narrabri Tourism Precinct, the proposed bore baths at Yarrie Lake and the suggested Gin's Leap walking trail, are integral to retaining this market longer in the Shire. A strong visual link is also needed between the Narrabri VIC and the Narrabri town centre;
- For the majority of Kamilaroi Highway travellers, Boggabri and Wee Waa are **not** 'logical' stopping places for pit stops. The presentation of the entry corridors, signage, the link/s between the entry corridor and the town centre and the presentation of the town centre will play a major role in attracting the 'impulse' stop;
- West-bound travellers on Nature's Way have a strong interest in the Pilliga and Burren Junction bore baths. Touring route promotions should encourage these travellers to travel west via Narrabri, the Australia Telescope, Yarrie Lake, Wee Waa and then onto Pilliga before turning north to Burren Junction. The camping area at Yarrie Lake complements the camping available at Copeton Waters State Park and on the Gwydir River at Bingara;
- Pilliga is becoming an increasingly significant gateway to the Shire and the provision and maintenance of visitor facilities (eg toilets, information services etc) need to reflect this;
- On-going development of attractions and activities in the Pilliga Forest will draw more visitors into the western side of the Shire – providing the opportunity to bring visitors 'east' through Wee Waa, Yarrie Lake and Narrabri, and also draw south-bound traffic off the Newell, taking them 'west' through Wee Waa and Pilliga.

Caravan / Camping specific:

- Develop / promote activities sought by the touring van market – cycling, mountain-biking, canoeing / kayaking, fishing, bird watching etc to encourage travellers to stay longer in the Shire;
- Explore opportunities for:
 - Camping on private properties with landholders leveraging opportunities provided by the share economy;
 - Narrabri Shire to be included in the touring routes and itineraries being developed for the international market by DNSW in conjunction with the campervan rental companies;
 - Targeting caravan and RV rallies and other events;
 - Disseminating information on Narrabri Shire through caravan parks and camping sites within the surrounding Region.
- There is a need to ensure that 'long rig' parking is available in each of the town centres and that this parking is easy to find and accessible (drive through style), and effectively signposted.

4.4.2. Business and Work-Related Travel

Business-related travel is the primary market for hotels, motels and serviced apartments within the Shire. Narrabri attracts a diversity of business and work-related travellers as well as the conference and meetings market. Boggabri primarily attracts mine-related workers, while most of the work-related travel in Wee Waa is generated by the cotton and agricultural sectors.

Over the next 5 years, major projects in the Shire will lead to a significant increase in business and work-related travel, with this increasing the demand for accommodation and meeting rooms. The expenditure pattern of the business and work-related travel market differs significantly from leisure travellers (who shop for pleasure), with this market primarily spending on accommodation, food and beverage, fuel and personal services. When the projects become operational, there will be a steady flow of business and work-related travellers.

While the level of business and work-related travel is determined by economic activities in the Shire and surrounding region, strategies can be put in place to service and support the business travel markets and generate visitation and expenditure.

Implications and Opportunities for Narrabri Shire

- The likely increase in business and work-related travel over the next five years will result in capacity constraints in the accommodation sector, which will displace other travellers and potentially impact on retail trading. The touring caravan market is the least likely to be affected;
- Medium to longer term, additional 4-4.5 star standard accommodation will be needed in Narrabri to cater for the 'top end' of the business market. The terminal and associated facilities at Narrabri Airport need to be upgraded and expanded to meet the expected increase in demand;
- As business and work-related travellers generally do not frequent VICs, the Shire needs to ensure that comprehensive information is available on-line and in print-form at various touchpoints (eg Civeo Villages, accommodation properties). There may also be opportunities to work with employers / project managers to distribute information to staff at the work-site and/or on-line;

- There may be opportunities to:
 - Encourage this market, particularly the longer stay workers and those on rotational shifts, to bring their families and friends to the Shire on weekends and/or for school holidays. Workers could also be encouraged to stay in the Shire on weekends or between shifts to attend events, and/or undertake activities (eg. a spending the weekend at Bike Territory or four wheel driving the Barraba Track is likely to appeal to some workers);
 - Introduce targeted retail promotions (eg prior to Mother's Day, Christmas) to provide the opportunity for workers to shop;
 - Build the conference and meetings market, working with local businesses and organisations (eg Research Stations) to attract industry-based conferences;
 - Build the entertainment market – utilising pub, club, Crossing Theatre and outdoor venues.

4.4.3. Visiting Friends & Relatives Market

Approximately 28.4% (40,000) of overnight visitors to Narrabri Shire are visiting friends and relatives within the LGA. Likewise, there is a significant VFR market in the surrounding NE-NW Region with the Region attracting in the order of 546,000 VFR travellers each year¹⁹. In relation to 'what to do' and 'where to go', the VFR market is strongly influenced by recommendations from their hosts. Events also influence when people visit, for example, visits may be timed around NOSH, Picnic Races or major entertainment events.

Implications and Opportunities for Narrabri Shire

- Use both social media and the local and regional press to ensure that residents of Narrabri Shire and surrounding region are aware of 'what's on' within the Shire and to promote key attractions and activities;
- In the lead-up to school holidays, participate in the 'what to do with children during the holidays' sections of both the local and regional media and seek to secure a daily segment on local radio during holiday periods.

4.4.4. Regional Market

There are over 245,000 people residing within 3 hours drive of Narrabri Shire. To date, Narrabri's penetration into the regional market appears to be relatively low, with most of the trips being entertainment (when there are large concerts at the Crossing Theatre), sport, business and VFR related.

The regional market is potentially a source of day, short-breaks and event visitors. Regional residents are also able to bring or recommend attractions and activities in Narrabri Shire to their visiting friends and relatives.

One of the keys to attracting the regional market is to leverage opportunities to generate publicity and create a reason to visit 'now'. For example, the bushfires have changed the appearance of the Mount Kaputar National Park – 'visit now to experience it'. Events and packages with promotional offers can also be used to 'trigger' visitation.

Implications and Opportunities for Narrabri Shire

- Positioning Narrabri Shire as a short-breaks / weekend destination for:
 - Families: focusing on outdoor, soft adventure and fun activities;
 - Couples: focusing on 'escapes' – promoting properties such as the Vault, Tourist Hotel, Craigdon and the cabins at Mt Kaputar; with cafes and lifestyle businesses and 'spending time together outdoors';
 - Social groups: friends and/or extended families having a weekend away together – hiring all the cabins at Mt Kaputar, camping together at Yarrie Lake, group booking for the Tourist or Crossroads Hotels etc.
- Packages tailored for and direct marketed to clubs, organisations and groups from within the Region – eg: golf, fishing, 4WD, dirt bike weekends;
- Raising the profile of the Shire's events and capitalising on opportunities for value-adding and packaging;
- School holiday activities – positioning Narrabri Shire as a great day-out with the kids. There may also be opportunity to offer kid's entertainment and/or to run activities and arts-based workshops through the Crossing Theatre and other venues, and to work with sporting associations to run skills-based holiday programs.

4.4.5. Special Interest and Activity-based Markets

Narrabri Shire attracts a range of special interest and activity-based markets. These markets can be cost effectively targeted through direct marketing using on-line channels including and social media. Possible opportunities are summarised in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Opportunities to grow special interest and activity-based markets.

Market	Description	Potential Opportunities
Scientific and Technical Tours	<p>The mining, gas, agricultural and astronomical sectors attract a small number of domestic and international education-based tour groups. The Australian Cotton Research Institute, Sydney University IA Watson Wheat Research Centre / Plant Breeding Institute, and the Australia Telescope are recognised 'centres of excellence' in their fields. There are also a businesses in the Shire (eg Monsanto, Australian Recycled Plastics, Cotton Seed Distributors) that could potentially be of interest for scientific and technical tours.</p>	<p>Explore opportunities to list Narrabri products with specialist agricultural and industry tour operators, both in Australia and globally.</p>
Cycling – road, gravel grinding and mountain biking	<p>State-wide, cycle tourism is high-growth, high-yield niche market. Cycle tourism includes cycling enthusiasts who are motivated to travel to destinations primarily or solely because of the routes, trails and the riding experience available; event participants; cycling tours; and cycling for recreation and/or fitness. Cycling can be broadly divided into road cycling, gravel grinding and mountain-biking (MTB).</p> <p>Gravel grinding is the newest and fastest growing cycling sector. It involves routes that incorporate sealed and unsealed roads as well as fire trails and if accessible, mountain bike tracks. It is suitable for some road bikes as well as hybrid and mountain bikes.</p> <p>The NE NW Region has a strong cycling community with most towns having road cycling clubs and social groups. Armidale, Tamworth and Inverell have MTB parks and trail networks, with trails also available in Gunnedah and Glen Innes LGAs. Within Narrabri Shire, there are mountain bike trails in the Bullawa Creek SCA and along Jacks Creek</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalise road cycling routes in Narrabri Shire; list these routes on sites such as 'map my ride'; and promote to regional cycling clubs and groups; • Develop and promote 'gravel grinding' routes, incorporating the Shire's local sealed and gravel roads, forest roads, and suitable trails in the Mt Kaputar National Park and State Conservation Areas; • Introduce a gravel grinding event, possibly using Yarrie Lake or the Narrabri riverside precinct as the event staging area. The event could be held as part of the Killarney Bike Classic or developed as a stand-alone event; • Develop additional mountain bike trails and/or a mountain bike park, pump track and/or skills park; • Assess the potential of promoting the Barraba Track in Mount Kaputar National Park as a 'must do' MTB ride; • Promote cycle routes (eg riverside precinct, around Narrabri Lake) in Narrabri, informal trails along the Namoi River corridor (eg



Market	Description	Potential Opportunities
	<p>Road. The Killarney Bike Classic (Narrabri) and the Tour de Gorge (Warrumbungle Shire) attract significant numbers of cyclists into the Shire</p>	<p>Trindall's Reserve) and other suitable areas to the touring caravan and RV markets to encouraging them to spend time in the area;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Shire's assets to hold / attract multi-disciplinary events, such as a triathlon, dirty tri (off-road), adventure racing. Clubs from the surrounding region and commercial promoters could be invited to hold events in Narrabri Shire
Fishing	<p>Recreational fishing is a popular sport. In the NE-NW region, fishing is concentrated in the New England area, the water storage dams and along the Gwydir and Namoi Rivers. The Region hosts several large fishing events.</p> <p>There is also an angling market using the Kamilaroi Highway to access the outback rivers (Bourke and beyond) and to head north to the Gulf of Carpentaria. Recreational fishing is also popular with the retiree touring market, with travellers often selecting locations where they can fish.</p> <p>Within Narrabri Shire, some fishing occurs along the Namoi River and its tributaries, with most anglers being locals. Boat ramp access to the Namoi River is available at Narrabri and Yellow Bank at Wee Waa. Narrabri hosts an annual carp muster which attracts a few visitors to the Shire.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most effective way to grow the fishing market is to work at the sub- regional level, and with the Kamilaroi Highway and Newell Highway marketing groups, to develop comprehensive information and promotional collateral on fishing within the Region and along the Highway corridors; To improve to the Namoi River, access points throughout the Shire need to be sign-posted.
Bush Walkers	<p>Bushwalking is one of the most popular activities undertaken by visitors to the Shire²⁰. Mt Kaputar National Park is the most popular area for bushwalking. Other localities include Dripping Rock, Pilliga Forest and the Deriah Aboriginal Area in Narrabri Shire, Rocky Creek Glacial area, Horton Falls, Boonalla Aboriginal Area, Waa Gorge and the Warrumbungle National Park in adjoining LGAs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop / improve walks within the Shire - eg establish a walk at Gin's Leap; Promote Mt Kaputar to bush-walking clubs and groups – encouraging them to experience the post-fire landscape; Promote walks in surrounding LGAs as part of the Narrabri Region.

²⁰ The Narrabri Shire Visitor Profile published by DNSW in 2011 estimated that around 14,000 domestic overnight visitors went for a bush walk during their stay in the Shire.



Market	Description	Potential Opportunities
Bird Watchers	The New England-North West Region is popular with bird watchers, with most LGAs (including Narrabri Shire) promoting bird trails. Narrabri Shire is a 'cross-over' area for birds, with the mix of the eastern, western, tropical and southern bird species. Interbreeding of species has produced hybrids that are unique to the local area. The Pilliga Forest and Yarrie Lake are recognised bird 'hot spots'. Both Brolgas and Jabirus are found in permanent water areas within the Pilliga and Wee Waa areas with these being a potential attraction for visitors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop and promote bird routes and package these with accommodation (eg the Tourist Hotel) and direct market to bird watching clubs; • Work with the Crossing Theatre to target bird congresses and conferences.
4WD enthusiasts	The Pilliga Forest is attracting an increasing number of 4WD enthusiasts including independent travellers, small social groups travelling together and 4WD clubs. The Pilliga Forest Roads are also ideal a 'soft adventure' for people with 4WD vehicles who have minimal 4WD experience. The Barraba Track through the Mt Kaputar National Park is one of the high-profile 4WD touring routes in NSW. The Rocky Creek Glacial Area - Terry Hie Hie track (to the north-east of Narrabri Shire) also attracts 4WD enthusiasts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The re-opening of the Barraba Track will provide an opportunity to generate coverage in the 4WD media. This could be leveraged by having a high profile 4WD blogger and/or journalist profile the track, post-fire; • 'Package' the 4WD trails, camping opportunities and other activities (eg climbing the Pilliga Fire Tower) available within the broader Narrabri Region and direct market to 4WD Clubs and organisations; • Target 4WD events (eg Jeep Club Jamboree) – inviting organisations to hold events in Narrabri Shire.
Motorcycles markets	<p>The motorcycle market for Narrabri Shire includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road touring – with Nature's Way being popular with this market; • Dirt-bike touring (registered bikes) – with the Pilliga Forest attracting this market; • Off- road – Bike Territory motorcycle park caters for dirt bikes and ATV's; • Motocross and grass track racing at Newtown Park in Narrabri. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options to leverage the motorcycle touring initiatives being undertaken in the New England area; • Identify and promote dirt bike touring routes within the Shire; • Promote Dirt Bike Territory and the Pilliga Forest Trails through the Civeo Villages; • Work with the Narrabri Dirt Bike Club to build the event market; • Utilise the Pilliga Forest roads for dirt bike events such as Enduros and trail rides (eg: North Star Trail Ride).
Equine Tourism	Narrabri Shire hosts a range of horse sports and activities including pony club camps, polocrosse, camp draft, team penning and rodeos. The Narrabri, Boggabri and Wee Waa Showgrounds provide facilities for equine sports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving facilities, particularly Narrabri Showground, to enable the Shire to host more and/or larger events;



Market	Description	Potential Opportunities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities to introduce trail riding and/or carriage driving events - similar in concept to the Weddin Mountain Muster and 'Sore Butts Charity Ride' in West Wyalong.
Golf	Narrabri golf course is an attractive 18 hole course.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Package with accommodation (eg Tourist Hotel) and direct market to golf clubs (including social clubs not attached to a golf course), within the surrounding region.
Astro Tourism	In addition to the general public and coach tour groups, the CSIRO Australia Telescope attracts night sky astro photography groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grow the nights sky astro-photography tour market; Include a visit to the Australia Telescope as part of the itinerary for astro tourism groups staying at Siding Springs Observatory.
Rock Sports	Mt Kaputar National Park attracts a small number of abseilers and mountain climbers. While these activities are permitted, they are not encouraged nor promoted. Climbing infrastructure (eg rigging points) cannot be placed in the Park.	Given that there is interest in climbing in the Mt Kaputar Range, there may be opportunity for a private landowner with suitable climbing / abseiling sites to target this market.



4.5. Directions Forward: Target Markets and Market Development

Over the next five years, the focus needs to be on:

- Continuing to encourage through traffic to stop and spend in the Shire's towns and villages;
- Continuing to grow the touring caravan and camping markets encouraging these travellers to stay longer in the Shire;
- Building the regional market – encouraging residents and their visiting friends and relatives to take day trips and short breaks in Narrabri Shire and to attend the Shire's events;
- Leveraging the business and work-related travel markets to maximise expenditure. This includes growing the business event market;
- Capitalising on the Shire's assets to grow special interest and activity-based markets.



5. Market Trends

Understanding, embracing and responding to changes in the marketplace is fundamental to driving growth in the visitor economy in Narrabri Shire. The development of tourism products, activities and experiences needs to be based on an understanding of the changing expectations of consumers, while information delivery and marketing and promotions needs to respond to changes in the way that consumers are sourcing information at all stages of the 'path to purchase' and during the journey itself.

5.1. Growth in Regional Travel

Pre the Covid-19 pandemic, Tourism Research Australia was predicting strong growth in both domestic and international visitation to regional areas. From 2017-18 to 2026-27, nights spent by international visitors to Regional NSW were forecast to grow by 5.4% per annum, with Regional NSW attracting 15% of all nights spent by international visitors in NSW (15.783 million nights in 2017-18 increasing to 24.232 million nights by 2026-27). Once travel restrictions are lifted there is expected to be a surge in international visitors to Australia.

With significant accommodation capacity constraints in Sydney, DNSW has a strong focus on encouraging and supporting operators in regional areas to become 'export-ready'. They are also endeavouring to encourage regional dispersal through product development and packaging, promotion of touring routes, and building the regional conference / business events market and regional events. There is currently no export-ready products or experiences in Narrabri Shire.

Over the 10 years to 2026-27, the number of domestic nights spent in Regional NSW was forecast to grow by 1.9% per annum, with Regional NSW attracting 71.9% of domestic visitor nights by 2026-27 (85.47 million nights). With Covid-19 travel restrictions in place, there is likely to be strong growth in travel to Regional NSW over the next few years.

5.2. Strong Growth in the Caravan and RV Markets

The caravan and RV markets have been growing strongly, with growth forecast to continue. From 2018 to 2019, the number of people aged 55+ years holidaying in a caravan increased by 11.4%, while those aged 30-54 years increased by 2.2%. Most touring van travellers aged 55+ years do not have 'fixed' itineraries. As such these travellers are relatively flexible in where they travel and how long they stay. Factors that are important to this market and influence travel patterns include:

- Word-of-mouth referrals from other travellers;
- The 'RV Friendly' status of a town / locality and localities listed on caravan and camping websites (eg Wiki Camps);

- Access to free or low-cost camping areas in scenically attractive areas, with river foreshores being a favoured location in Inland areas;
- The attraction base of an area and the events being held – with caravaners often looking for self-drive itineraries, soft adventure-based activities, walks available, unusual landforms, national parks and forests, access to rivers and lakes, seasonal food events and local produce and artisan markets;
- Rallies, meetings and events held by the caravan / motor home clubs and associations, with travellers slowly making their way to and from these activities;
- Road conditions and the volume of truck traffic. The increase in caravan and camper trailers designed for unsealed roads / off road is resulting in more travellers on the unsealed roads;
- Safety - there is a fear and avoidance of areas that have a reputation for crime;
- Caravan park configuration and services – with a strong preference for drive-through sites and access to free Wi-Fi;
- Need to access facilities such as a dump point, laundry, power to recharge batteries etc (every few days).

Research undertaken by DNSW in 2017, found that 58% of caravaners and RVs stayed in commercial caravan parks and 42% in non-commercial locations. Non-commercial sites include free camping, campgrounds in National Park and SCAs, camping on private property and other locations such as sporting venues and showgrounds. This tallies with information provided by the CMCA who estimates that 34% of caravaners / RVs always stay in commercial caravan parks, 16% always free camp and 50% use a mix of commercial parks and other sites. Different travel parties and age groups had different propensities to stay at commercial and non-commercial sites.

Figure 5.1 Travel Party Mix: Proportion of Visitors staying in Commercial Parks and Non-Commercial Areas

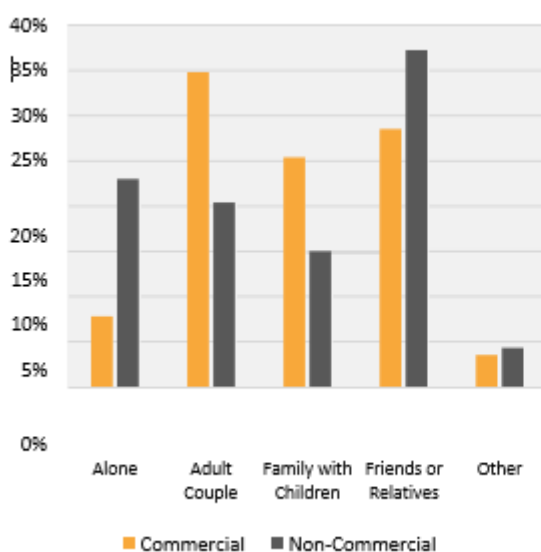
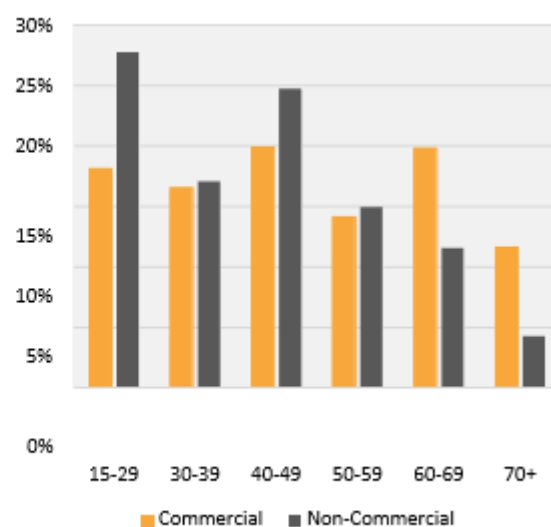


Figure 5.2 Age Structure (Years): Proportion of Visitors Staying in Commercial Parks and Non-Commercial Areas



Source: Destination NSW Domestic Caravan and Camping Travel to NSW, YE Dec 2017

5.3. Emergence of the Accessible Tourism Market

Accessible tourism is broadly defined as the ongoing endeavour to ensure tourist destinations, products and services are accessible to all people, regardless of their physical limitations, disabilities or age. The introduction of the NSW Disability Inclusion Act (2014) and the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan (2015) seeks to ensure that people with a disability have the right to full and effective participation in society. The introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), has provided scheme participants with greater opportunity for travel and participation in activities, with the scheme funding travel and recreation for both the person with the disability and their carer/s.

Research undertaken by Destination NSW²¹ has found that 18% of the population of NSW (1.4 million people) have some form of disability. In the March Quarter, 2017, people with disabilities made 1.2 million overnight visits in NSW, generating 4.6 million visitor nights. Sydney was the most popular destination (32% of trips), followed by followed by the North Coast (16% of trips and the South Coast (14.5% of trips).

5.4. Changing Traveller Expectations

Over the past decade there has been a paradigm shift in the expectations of travellers, with travellers increasingly looking to:

- Experience something different from everyday life;
- Understand and learn about different lifestyles and cultures;
- Hear the stories;
- Through participation, experience the lifestyle rather than just observe it;
- Meet and interact socially with locals and other travellers – making friends and developing personal relationships;
- Challenge themselves – physically, emotionally and/or mentally;
- Be outdoors and active, with a focus on natural settings (eg National Parks);
- Visit 'authentic' destinations;
- Have unique and personally compelling experiences

In addition to the above expectations, different market segments also have additional motivators and drivers. The key market segments for inland NSW are the baby boomers (over 55's) and family markets with the youth market starting to emerge.

Baby Boomers – over 55's

The baby boomer market is at, or approaching, retirement age. This market has a strong sense of freedom and a desire to travel. Baby boomers are generally healthy and active and are seeking new places, different lifestyles, soft-adventure and new experiences.

²¹ Destination NSW Domestic Overnight Visitation to NSW by People with Disabilities

The most appealing experiences are nature and outdoors based (56%); touring by car – sightseeing (51%); relaxation, health and indulgence (43%); and food and wine (35%). This market is knowledgeable, sophisticated and demanding, and generally prepared to spend to achieve what they want. They are more interested in value-for- money than in the lowest price. They expect quality customer service and are intolerant of poor service. They are also technologically capable and use on-line sources to research, plan and book travel.

Trends in this market include:

- Increasing demand for soft adventure and recreational activities – seeking a variety of activities and experiences on each trip;
- Growth in the number of ‘learning’ visitors – wanting to come away with new knowledge and/or skills;
- Recognition that the journey is part of the experience;
- ‘Slow movement’ – travel slowly and immersion in the locale;
- A desire to feel like a local – to be welcomed by locals and treated like a visiting friend rather than a tourist;
- The freedom to interact - the ability to strike up a conversation and make themselves at home.

Family Market

For the family market, domestic travel fulfils a key role in busy lives by offering a chance for families to reconnect, recharge and have a break from normal routine. A domestic holiday is an opportunity for families to relax and to open lines of communication between adults and children without time pressures. The emphasis is on destinations that offer a range of activities that are enjoyable for every member of the family. Families have a high propensity to undertake outdoor and nature-based activities (52%) and to participate in sports and active outdoor activities (29%) and visit local attractions (27%).

Touring holidays offers opportunities for families to have a ‘safe adventure’ and to reconnect and bond as a family. Many of the experiences sought are ‘aspirational’ – escaping the city, camping by a river, camp-fires under the stars, exploring the National Parks, exploring the unsealed roads and trails; getting back to nature and a simpler lifestyle; and doing ‘fun’ things together. ‘Digital detox’, opportunities for the children to ‘learn’ and nostalgia (wanting their children to experience the holidays they experienced as a child) are also motivators.

Youth Market – Gen Y and Z ²²

The youth market (people aged 15-29 years) is the fastest growing visitor market. The youth market accounts for 33% (1.3 million visitors) of international visitors to NSW, with the market divided into travel

²² Information in this section taken from the Destination NSW Webinar on the Youth Market and from TNS Domesticate 2016.

for education, working holidays and holiday – leisure which includes VFR. The main source markets are Mainland China, United Kingdom, USA, New Zealand and Germany.

Domestically, the youth market takes around 6.5 million trips per annum in NSW. The most visited destinations are Sydney, the NSW North Coast and the NSW South Coast. In selecting destinations, the youth market seeks out experiences, particularly those that are unique, immersive, challenging and/or contribute to personal knowledge and development. They have an appetite for risk and a strong interest in environmentally sustainability. The youth market is sophisticated and reasonably wealthy, with value-for-money more important than price. Young people primarily take inspiration from word-of-mouth recommendations (67%), social media postings by friends and family (60%), and user generated content (45%).

5.5. Changing Technology

New technology is changing the tourism industry. Digital technology provides significant opportunity for information delivery, communication, marketing and promotion, and for enhancing the visitor experience. It also enables growth in the ‘shared economy’ and provides opportunities for new activities and businesses. Changing technology requires an investment in infrastructure and training. Opportunities include:

- Information delivery, marketing and promotion: Digital technology has and is continuing to change the way in which consumers access and share information, select destinations and products, and book and pay for travel. Travellers now have access to an exponentially increasing range of information sources through an expanding number of touch points including:
 - Tourism, travel and product websites and travel directories– information and bookings;
 - Google Maps and Google Earth – maps, satellite images, photographic images, routes, directions, distances and travelling times;
 - Social networking sites including Facebook, WhatsApp, Bebo, Twitter etc;
 - Trip Itinerary planning apps;
 - Pod casts and applications (eg sound trails, geo-caching);
 - User generated content (eg blogs, You Tube, Instagram) both on websites and through the social networking sites;
 - Travel specific networking sites – such as Trip Advisor, Google Review, Virtual Tourist, Lonely Planet Thorn Tree.

These sites not only advertise destinations, accommodation, attractions, tours, events etc, they also provide forums where travellers can discuss their experiences – providing a digital word-of-mouth referral system Allied to this is the ability to capture and process data which can be used for personalised, direct marketing of tailored experiences and the application of artificial intelligence – including use of website chatbots and biometrics.
- Capturing the sale and value-adding: the ability to book instantaneously on-line as well as seamless connectivity between products;
- Story telling: the use of virtual and augmented reality to promote destinations visually and through ‘story-telling’; enabling ‘virtual’ access to remote and/or highly sensitive areas; and enhancing visitor experiences by adding additional ‘layers’ of information;

- The rise in the share economy: home sharing (eg Airbnb, Couch Surfing), farm camping (eg You Camp, Under the Stars), ride sourcing (eg Uber, Go Get), tours (eg Airbnb tours by locals) and more recently dining options (dine with a local);
- Changes in building materials and technologies: to create different accommodation experiences (eg bubble tents, tiny houses) and the ability to go 'off grid' enabling accommodation to be located in remote and/or environmentally sensitive locations and relocated quickly (eg during flooding, bushfires) if needed;
- Introduction of electric cars: creating the need for charging stations. Over the next decade, the number of electric vehicles in Australia is forecast to grow at 28% per annum and reach 20% of new car sales by 2030²³;
- Electric bikes: Increasing access to cycle tourism (particularly for older people) and providing opportunities for cycle hire and cycle tours.

Implications for Narrabri Shire

- Narrabri Shire will continue to see an increase in the touring markets, with the majority of travellers likely to be in caravans, RVs, or 4WD with camper trailers. Baby boomers will generally have the flexibility to spend multiple nights in the Shire, with the decision likely to be made once they arrive. The VIC staff can play a pivotal role in the decision process. In contrast, the family and youth markets typically have time constraints, and will have largely planned their trip before leaving home. Information (particularly images and video clips) available on-line will significantly influence decision-making;
- Product development needs to focus on activities and experiences that provide the opportunity for travellers to be outdoors, active, learn and 'connect'. Narrabri Shire is extremely strong in outdoor, soft adventure and nature- based assets and experiences, providing a range of opportunities for visitors to be active and 'connect' with nature. The Shire also has a range of assets (eg agriculture and local industries) and events (eg Nosh, Drovers) that can be leveraged to 'educate' travellers and enable them to 'connect' with locals;
- Marketing and promotion needs to focus on the 'aspirational' reflecting what travellers are seeking for their country / bush experience – the adventure, scenery, camping by the river or in a national park, campfire under the stars, bushwalking, cycling, soaking in the hot artesian water, meeting the locals in a 'bush pub'.

²³ ENERGEIA (2018) Australian Electric Vehicle Study





6. Development Framework

6.1. Positioning

Narrabri Shire's strengths lie in its spectacular landforms and stunning scenery, and the opportunities to 'explore' and 'escape' that the environment offers. The Shire's positioning: **'Just you, a mountain range, 5 million stars and a yowie'** captures this.

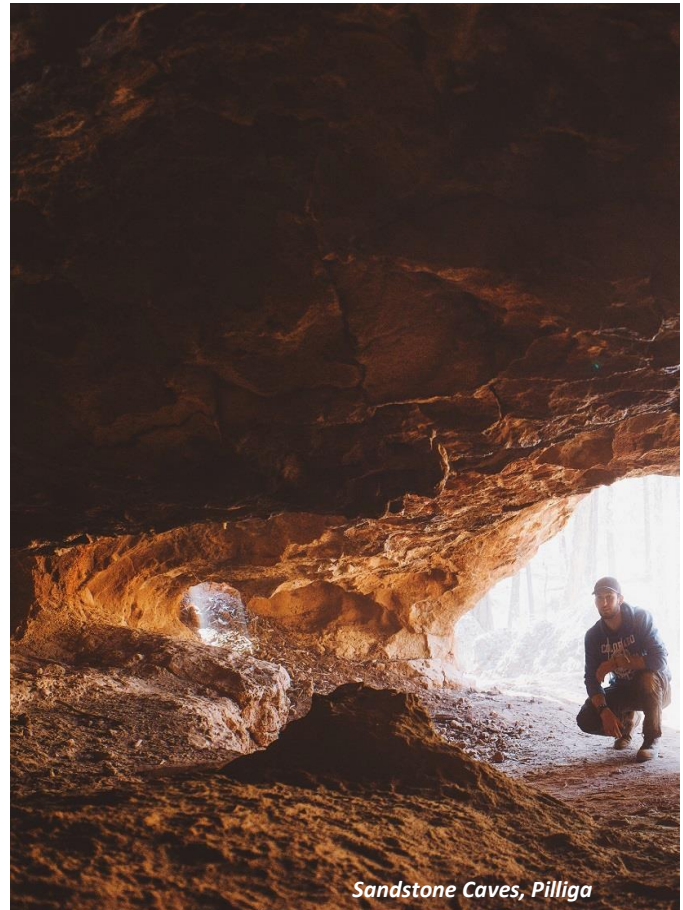
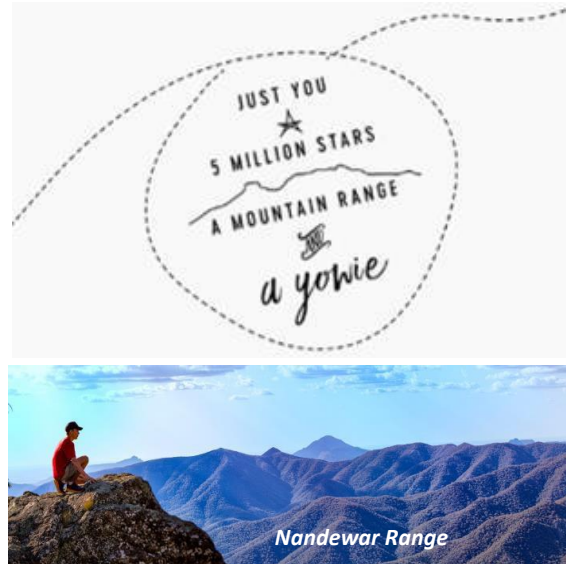
This positioning immediately conveys the sense of freedom and adventure – big country, big sky and a bit of 'fun'. It captures the desire to be outdoor, away from the rat-race. It challenges you; it immerses you into an aspirational landscape, and it invites you to explore.

Breaking it down further:

Just you: places the traveller at the centre of the landscape and the centre of the experience. It addresses the desire for a highly personalised experience in a highly attractive setting. This experience could be a challenge or adventure, or it could be the opportunity to escape, relax and indulge.

A mountain range, 5 million stars: focuses on the setting – amazing scenery and the dark, star-studded night sky. It provides links to the Nandewar Ranges and the spectacular landforms of the Mount Kaputar National Park, the 'camping under the stars' and Shire's astro-tourism products.

And a Yowie: the yowie is a bit of light-hearted fun. It contributes to the sense of adventure, provides a link to the Pilliga Forest, and opens the door for 'story-telling'. Narrabri Shire has some amazing stories to tell, its:



- Ancient landscapes;
- Gamilaroi heritage and culture;
- Highly productive agriculture, land and water management, and the cutting-edge research being undertaken;
- Harnessing of resources – the coal mines, gas field, solar farms, Australian Plastic Recyclers;
- Role in the exploration of the universe;
- Transport and logistics – the paddock / mine to port logistics, the inland rail, the Northern Inland Port;
- Local heroes – the people.



6.2. Product

'Product' encompasses the attractions, activities and the experiences available that form the backbone of the visitor economy. Attractions and activities have a major influence on trip behaviour, providing a reason to visit, and/or encouraging visitors to move around within the Shire, stay longer and spend money. Product can be broadly divided into 'hero' experiences – the high profile, iconic attractions that draw visitors into the Shire; and 'supporting' or 'local' attractions – things to do once travellers have arrived.

Hero Products and Experiences

The Shire's hero products and experiences are:

- **An Ancient Landscape:** The rugged wilderness of the Nandewar Mountain Range – an ancient volcanic landscape that dominates the Shire's eastern horizon. It includes the Mount Kaputar National Park with its summit lookouts, walking trails and mountain-top camping; Sawn Rocks – a towering wall of organ pipes; spectacular gorges – Waa Gorge to the north and Dripping Rock to the south; the Rocky Creek glacial area with a crystal clear mountain stream with pools and rapids created by huge boulders left in place by a melting glacier; and striking rock formations – Gin's Leap, Barbers Pinnacle and the Deriah Aboriginal Area. Add to this, Yarrie and Round Lakes, created by meteorites;
- **A Million Wild Acres:** The vast Pilliga Forest – one of the largest forests in Australia, with over 2,000 kilometres of forest roads and trails to explore; a fire tower to climb (the only one in NSW); salt and sandstone caves; a hidden gorge overlooked by aboriginal themed sculptures; the Australian Wildlife Conservancy and its small mammal conservation program; historic timber industry and heritage sawmill; an amazing pottery; prolific wildlife, birdlife and wildflowers; wild brumbies and possibly a yowie;

- **Dark, star-studded skies:** Clear, dark skies with millions of stars; the Australia Telescope Compact Array – the Dish times six;
- **Mineral rich, hot artesian waters:** Pilliga and (just across the Shire border) Burren Junction bore baths.

Supporting Products and Experiences

Supporting products and experiences include:

- An insight into Gamilaroi history, heritage and culture: Deriah Aboriginal Area, Kamilaroi Stories at the Narrabri VIC.
- Rivers, lagoons and wetlands: Namoi River; Narrabri Creek; Narrabri Lake; Yarrie Lake; Barbers, Wee Waa and Pilliga Lagoons; Pilliga Wetlands.
- Prolific bird and wildlife; spectacular wildflowers; the Australian Wildlife Conservancy story; brumbies; a giant pink slug, and possibly a Yowie.
- Extensive agricultural landscapes and stories: highly fertile, highly productive land that is a patchwork of colour and a hive of activity at various times of the year; the sheer scale of the enterprises and the international players; cotton country (Cotton Capital of Australia, cotton farms and cotton gins); the Golden Triangle; local and regional produce: paddock to port – the Inland Rail, intermodal terminals and the transport and logistics infrastructure; the research stations and cutting edge land and water management practices.
- The resources sector and local enterprises: interpretative experiences of the coal, gas, solar farm activities and other enterprises.
- Local attractions (museums, galleries, parks, historic walks ect) and events.



6.3. Product Development: Directions Forward

- **Place-making:** Continuing to improve the presentation of and facilities offered by the Shire's towns and villages, with each of the towns and Pilliga village providing quality local attractions and positioned as service nodes for surrounding attractions. The priorities are:
 - Completing the town centre streetscape programs in Narrabri and Wee Waa;
 - Implementing the Merton Street Project in Boggabri;
 - Implementing the gateway entry signage project;
 - Implementing the Narrabri Tourism Precinct project and linking this precinct to the Narrabri town centre and Narrabri Lake;
 - Building an arts and cultural 'layer', to bring the communities together, tell their stories and enhance lifestyle and liveability.

- **Continuing to strengthen and build the ‘hero’ products and experiences**, with these linked through the ongoing development and promotion of outdoor (eg bushwalking, 4WD) and nature-based (eg birdwatching, wildlife viewing) activities. The priorities are:
 - Realising the potential of Yarrie Lake, including establishing a hot artesian bore bath at Yarrie Lake (preferred) or within Wee Waa;
 - Improving access to and/or facilities at key sites – including Mt Kaputar National Park and Dripping Rock;
 - Leveraging the Australian Wildlife Conservancy;
 - Improving the Australia Telescope experience and grow night skies experiences.
- **Leverage the Namoi River corridor:** Improving access to and facilities within the River corridor, from Boggabri through to Pilliga, to support a range of outdoor and nature-based activities.
- **Develop agri and industry-based tourism:** Showcasing, through quality interpretation and tours, the Shire’s key industries and enterprises with these sectors also used to grow the business events market;
- **Encourage the development of Aboriginal products and experiences;**
- **Continue to develop touring routes, self-guided tours and special interest and activity-based trails.**



7. Place-Making

Place-making focuses on strengthening the Shire's towns and villages as both service centres and destinations – places where travellers want to stop and explore.

Objective:

To encourage travellers (including highway traffic) to stop, explore and spend money in the Shire's towns and villages.

This can be achieved by:

- Creating strong and favourable first impressions: through quality presentation of the gateway entry points and corridors, town centres and parks and gardens;
- Creating points of interest: through art, landscaping, colour, signage, footpath activation etc;
- Businesses presenting well and providing quality customer service: meeting the desire by visitors to interact with locals and encouraging positive on-line reviews and word-of-mouth referrals as well as repeat visitation;
- Improving local attractions.

Narrabri Shire Council is implementing streetscape improvement programs in Narrabri, Wee Waa and Boggabri and gateway entry signage projects for each of the towns and villages.

7.1. Narrabri

Narrabri is a sub-regional centre. The shopping centre is located in Maitland Street and anchored by Coles and Woolworths supermarkets. Overall, businesses in the centre present well, with the centre having some very attractive boutiques and lifestyle shops. Largely missing from the main street are the cafes with outdoor dining that are visible in most town centres. The Bakery and adjoining Subway outlet have outdoor seating, however the other cafes in Narrabri are essentially 'hidden'. While the cafes are known to locals; to visitors, the town appears to be devoid of a café scene.

Other issues include:

- The un-inspiring presentation of the Highway corridor (approximately 6 km long) through town, with a mix of advertising signs in the entry corridors, followed by light industrial businesses, service stations and older style housing and dated motels and caravan parks. The Tibbereena Street section (around 700m) presents better particularly the section between the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) and Crossing Theatre. The VIC is highly visible and a popular place for highway travellers to stop;

- There is no strong visual nor safe physical link between the VIC, and the shopping centre. Lloyd Street does not present well, and the Newell Highway is a significant barrier, particularly for families with young children, older people and people with mobility issues;
- Angle parking in the town centre with no designated (and sign posted) areas for caravan and long-rig parking. VIC staff advise caravanners to leave their rig in the VIC carpark and walk across to the shopping centre, however some travellers are reluctant to cross the Highway. For caravans arriving in Narrabri from the south, the town centre is signposted at Doyle Street (before they reach the VIC) and if they turn into Doyle Street and then into Maitland Street, there is no opportunity to park in the main street or adjoining side streets;
- Narrabri is the gateway to the Mt Kaputar National Park, however there is no signage promoting this within the gateway entry corridors, with limited directional signage to the Park at the Tibbereena – Dangar Street intersection. Signage to other visitor attractions surrounding Narrabri is also limited, with no signage to Yarrie Lake;
- The Narrabri Creek corridor is under-performing, with dated presentation, limited facilities and lack of connectivity between the parks and reserves along the corridor and between the corridor and other precincts and facilities (eg town centre, Narrabri Lake). The dump point in Cameron Park, while convenient for travellers, does deter use of the Park’s picnic facilities. The implementation of the Narrabri Tourism Precinct Masterplan will improve the appeal of the corridor in the VIC – Crossing Theatre area.

Directions Forward

- Build on the gateway signage project by improving landscaping and other signage at the town entry points and along the highway corridor;
- Explore options to raise the profile the Mount Kaputar National Park and other attractions in the Narrabri Region;
- Signpost the availability of caravan parking at the VIC at strategic locations within the town centre and along the Highway corridor;
- Implement the Narrabri Tourism Precinct Masterplan as a priority; and build on the this by:
 - Providing a safe, attractive link between this precinct and the shopping centre;
 - Extending and linking the proposed river walk-cycleway further along the Creek to the Riverside Caravan Park and RSL Club and to the shopping centre, Narrabri Lake and Golf Club;
 - Installing public art to create points of interest within the Creek corridor and other strategic locations within the town.
- Continue to improve the Narrabri VIC, with the Centre positioned as an attraction in its own right (see Section 10.3);
- Work with retail community to:
 - Provide opportunities to up-skill in the areas of digital marketing, merchandise display and window dressing;
 - Activate the main street through footpath dining and trading; temporary and permanent art installations; and events and promotional activities;

- Provide marketing support, including quirky on-line PR campaigns (eg the hidden cafes of Narrabri) – significantly raising the profile of local businesses that are likely to be attractive to travellers and will bring regional residents into town.



7.2. Wee Waa

Wee Waa is a small, attractive town located at the junction of the Kamilaroi Highway and the Yarrie Lake and Pilliga Roads. Due to its proximity to Narrabri, Wee Waa is not a 'natural' place to stop for long haul travellers. Continuing to improve presentation and signage and enhancing and diversifying the attraction base is essential to increase visitation.

While the town centre presents well, the Kamilaroi Highway corridor, particularly when arriving in town from the west, and in the section along Mitchell Street is not particularly attractive. For travellers arriving from the east, the entry corridor between the levee bank and Rose Street presents well however the view down Rose Street towards the town centre does not 'invite' travellers in, with the speed-bump being a deterrent to caravanners.

Wee Waa is the oldest town on the Namoi River and was the birthplace of the Australian cotton industry. Wee Waa promotes itself as the 'Cotton Capital of Australia'. While there are significant cotton activities and enterprises within Wee Waa and the surrounding region, these are not generally accessible to the public. Although there is some information on the birth of the cotton industry in the Namoi Echo Museum, opening hours are limited and the story is not well-told.

Wee Waa's attraction base includes the historic town centre, Australian Telescope, Yarrie Lake, the Namoi Echo Museum, Yellow Banks on the Namoi River, the Wee Waa Lagoon and the golf course. Yarrie Lake has the potential to become a significant attraction for the town (see Section 8.2). The Namoi Echo Museum is volunteer run, has limited opening hours and needs assistance to improve its external presentation and internal exhibits. The Museum has a large windmill that it is looking to erect, which would help to improve its visibility. Council has plans to improve the presentation of and facilities within the Wee Waa Lagoon precinct.

The Wee Waa community is establishing a Community Arts and Cultural Centre which will provide an additional attraction for the town. The Centre will include an art gallery and artisan workshops and will partner with the Aboriginal community to run cultural tours to historic sites and host workshops and cultural activities and events. The Wee Waa Local Aboriginal Lands Council also has development plans which include a new community centre – events space, possibly a native garden and improving access to and the interpretation of the former Tulladunna Reserve on the western edge of town.

Directions Forward

- Continue to improve the presentation of Wee Waa, including improving the presentation of the Kamilaroi Highway- Rose Street intersection and the Rose Street entry corridor; the Mitchell Street section of the Kamilaroi Highway and the Wee Waa Lagoon precinct. Reduce / remove the speed bump in Rose Street which is a deterrent to caravans;
- Explore options for telling the cotton story in Wee Waa – possibly through:
 - Public art / interpretation within the town centre;
 - Digital technology at the Community Arts and Cultural Centre (eg telling the Tulladunna story using virtual reality);
 - Re-introduction of cotton tours;
 - Embrace the Cotton Fibre Expo and growing this into a substantial event.
- Work with the Wee Waa community to improve and diversify the attraction base of the town and surrounding area including supporting:
 - The development of the Wee Waa Community Arts and Cultural Centre, with the Narrabri Shire Tourism Unit working with the Centre management to actively promote the Centre's exhibitions, sales outlet, activities and events;
 - Wee Waa LALC initiatives to develop Aboriginal attractions and experiences, including improving access to and interpretation of Tulladunna, and potentially establishing a native garden with art works adjacent to the new hall;
 - Wee Waa Fishing Club initiatives to continue to improve the Yellow Banks area and signpost this area and other river access points in the Wee Waa area;
 - The Namoi Echo Museum to erect their windmill and access grant funding to improve exhibits and potentially expand the Museum. Most towns have local history museums which offer similar exhibits to the Namoi Echo. To build visitation, the Museum needs to develop a 'unique' exhibition that provides a strong point of difference to other Museums.
- Continue to upgrade the Showground and endeavour to increase use for events and activities;

- Assess the feasibility of establishing a hot bore bath within the Wee Waa area, with potential sites including Yarrie Lake (see Section 8.2), Wee Waa Showground or in the Wee Waa Swimming Pool – Ludowici Park area.



Wee Waa town centre

7.3. Boggabri

Boggabri is promoted as the ‘Little Town with a Big Heart’ with the town proud of its strong community spirit. Boggabri is located on the Kamilaroi Highway approximately 40 kilometres north west of Gunnedah and 60 kilometres south east of Narrabri. To the south, Grain Valley Road links Boggabri to the Oxley Highway and Black Stump Way at Mullaley, while to the east, Rangari Road provides access to Tamworth via Manilla. Completing the seal of Grain Valley Way will result in more travellers moving through the town. Sealing Rangari Road would further increase visitation and improve access to Barbers Lagoon, Dripping Rock and the Boonalla Aboriginal Area (Gunnedah Shire).

Boggabri has an attractive setting. It sits on the fertile plains of the Namoi River at the southern end of the Nandewar Range. The Namoi River is located to the east of the town and there are volcanic outcrops arising from the floodplain just to the north of



The Vault

the town.

Boggabri has a small shopping centre with several shops that appeal to visitors. The Vault provides quality accommodation and meals and is one of the Shire's 'hero' businesses with a regional following. Council has recently upgraded the Boggabri Caravan Park with the Showground also providing good facilities for caravans. There are several coal mines located in the Boggabri area, with a large mining village (680 beds) located just out of town.

The Boggabri Community is seeking to implement the Merton Street Project which will provide insights into the town's heritage and major industries through art installations. The Project is designed to stimulate an 'impulse stop', drawing travellers off the Kamilaroi Highway into the town centre.

Boggabri is the home of the award-winning Drover's Campfire event and the Wean Picnic Races. Local attractions include the Boggabri Museum, Tractor Shed, Art Shed (gallery) and the Iron bridge. The Boggabri area has a concentration of natural assets – Gin's Leap, Mt Robertson, Barbers Lagoon and Pinnacle, Dripping Rock and the Namoi River corridor, each of which has the potential to encourage visitors to stay longer within the Boggabri area. There is also potential to create a touring route from Gunnedah and potentially Manilla / Tamworth, with links Boggabri and these natural assets with the Boonalla Aboriginal area and the Gulligal Lagoon reserve in Gunnedah Shire.



Directions Forward

- Work with the Boggabri community to implement the Merton Street Project. One of the art installations could include giant tyres from the mining equipment with this strategically located in Federation Centenary Park to encourage Kamilaroi Highway travellers to stop, take photos and walk through the Park into town;
- Explore options to enhance the art project and further improve presentation through themed landscaping at the art installations and within the town centre, parks and gardens and entry corridors;
- Up-date directional and facility signage, recognising that more travellers will be arriving in Boggabri via Grain Valley Way;
- Continue to improve facilities at and the presentation of, the Boggabri Showground and to promote the venue to a range of potential users. As part of this, advocate for improved access (turning lanes) from the Kamilaroi Highway;

- Capitalise on the potential of the landforms and river corridor in the Boggabri area (see Section 8.3) – focusing on where visitors can bushwalk, camp, fish, swim, canoe etc;
- Explore opportunities to hold a gravel grinding event on the unsealed roads in the Boggabri area, or to run an event from Gunnedah to Boggabri via Kelvin Road – Rangari Road - Barbers Lagoon – Braymont Roads (approximately 85km);
- Work with Gunnedah Shire to develop a touring loop (Kelvin and Rangari Roads and the Kamilaro Highway) including the Boonalla Aboriginal area, Dripping Rock, Barbers Lagoon, Gin’s Leap and Boggabri.

7.4. Pilliga

Pilliga is located on the Namoi River on the western edge of the Shire, approximately 100km west of Narrabri. It sits at the junction of five regional roads which link to Narrabri, Baradine (and onto Coonabarabran and the Warrumbungle National Park), Coonamble, Burren Junction and Walgett. The village has a hotel and general store.

Pilliga is the western gateway to Narrabri Shire and one of the gateways to the Pilliga Forest. The hot artesian bore baths are the main attraction, with the camping area adjacent to the baths being extremely popular and often at capacity during the touring season (March to October). The bore baths are promoted as part of the Great Artesian Drive and one of the Pilliga Forest attractions / experiences. Local attractions include the Pilliga Lagoon Wetland’s Walk and the historic graves in the Pilliga Cemetery. The Lagoon is suitable for canoeing, fishing, yabbing and bird watching, with the area being a bird hotspot. Brolgas are often seen in the area and the possibility of seeing 'the dance of the brolgas' should be promoted as one of the highlights of the area. The Pilliga Forest has several small herds of brumbies which can often be seen early morning and late afternoon along the Coonamble Road close to Pilliga.

The former Aboriginal Minnom Mission and Mission Cemetery is located on private land approximately 2km south east of Pilliga. It featured in the documentary – the Lousy Little Sixpence. Oral histories of people who lived at the Mission have been recorded and there may be opportunity to tell the story of the Mission and the people who lived there.

Directions Forward

- Seek funding to seal Cypress Way from Gwabegar to Pilliga. This would be a ‘game changer’ for Pilliga and Gwabegar and result in further growth in touring traffic, with a significant proportion of this traffic likely to feed into Wee Waa and Narrabri;
- During the peak touring season, the bore baths and camping area are operating at or close to capacity. Council, working with the village community, needs to develop a growth strategy / masterplan for the village. The strategy should assess the feasibility of providing an additional hot pool, expanding the camping area and/or the visitor facilities as well as other options such as establishing another camping area in Pilliga (eg adjacent to Pilliga Lagoon) to accommodate the overflow;

- Explore opportunities for telling Pilliga’s stories: the Minnom Mission; the hawkers of the Pilliga; the history of the village and the yowie ‘sightings’;
- Continue to develop and promote the activities that can be undertaken in and around Pilliga – fishing, canoeing, cycling / mountain biking – gravel grinding, bird watching, 4WDing etc;
- Work with Arts North West to explore the opportunities for bringing together the artists and artisans of the Pilliga to create a new experience / attraction for the village.

7.5. The Villages

The Shire has four small villages: Baan Baa, Gwabegar, Bellata and Edgeroi.

7.5.1. Baan Baa

The small village of Baan Baa is located on the Kamilaroi Highway, 19 km north of Boggabri and 40 km south of Narrabri. The village has a historic hotel, community hall and a new war memorial. The Hotel provides 19 basic rooms (4 pub and 15 ensuite). It caters primarily for mine-related workers, with other markets including touring travellers, truck drivers, motorcycle riders (often small groups), 4WD enthusiasts and anglers. The Hotel accommodation and ‘atmosphere’ are ideal for social groups.

The Namoi River is located a few kilometres east of Baan Baa with public access available near the Harparary Bridge. The Pilliga East State Forest is located around 5km west of Baan Baa and is accessible via the local road network from Baan Baa, with this area attracting some use by 4WD enthusiasts and registered trail bikes.

Narrabri Council has erected an information directory in Baan Baa, with information on the village, Boggabri and the surrounding area. The directory does not however show the extent of the Pilliga Forest with only parts of the Forest shown in green. When the directory is updated, the total Forest area should be shown, with information included on both the forest roads and the fishing spots / river access points along the Namoi River.

7.5.2. Gwabegar

Located within the Pilliga Forest, Gwabegar has a general store, community hall, public toilet and a free camping area. Several forest roads feed into the village and there are a range of forest attractions in the surrounding area. Gwabegar has a tiny roundabout – a quirky feature that provides a photo opportunity. It has a rich forestry – sawmilling history and is located close to the heritage-listed Wooleybah Mill and the Wombo Mill site. The village is also the terminus of the former Gwabegar – Wallerawang Railway line with the rail infrastructure still in place.

Establishment of visitor facilities at the Australian Wildlife



Conversancy will increase visitation to Gwabegar. Visitation would also be increased by completing the seal of Cypress Way and the village arrival points. Gwabegar should continue to be promoted as one of the attractions of the Pilliga Forest. There are also opportunities to:

- List and promote the Gwabegar Hall as an event venue;
- Promote Gwabegar to social groups (eg 4WD, touring trail bikes, birdwatchers) – encouraging them the camp in the village and use the hall for a ‘function’;
- Use Gwabegar as a staging area for forest events: eg rally sprint, off-road audax, gravel grinding;
- Raise the profile of the village through social media. Encouraging posts of the round-about, koala sightings, birds and wildflowers in the area, as well as the yowie stories.

7.5.3. Edgeroi

Edgeroi is a very small settlement located 24km north of Narrabri on the Newell Highway. Edgeroi was the location of one of the largest Soldier Settlements in the Australia with 65 soldier settlement blocks. The historic Edgeroi Station woolshed (still visible) was once the largest in the southern hemisphere. There is potential to tell the story of Edgeroi Station and the Soldier Settlement and to list the names of the settlers. The story could be told digitally.

7.5.4. Bellata

Bellata is the northern gateway to the Shire. The village is located on the Newell Highway, 47km north of Narrabri and 53km south of Moree. The village has a large roadhouse – truck stop and is both a highway and local service centre. For southbound travellers on the Newell, the area just north of Bellata provides the first view of the Nandewar Range, with the Highway running parallel to the range between Bellata and Narrabri. The high visibility of the Nandewar Range should be leveraged to raise awareness of and promote the Mount Kaputar National Park.

Bellata is one of the access points for Waa Gorge (via Wilga Street – Berrigal Creek Road).

Bellata has large silos and is centrally located within the ‘Golden Durum Triangle’ which produces some of the best ‘prime hard’ wheat in Australia. For south-bound travellers, the village is the ‘start’ of the ‘World’s Largest Virtual Solar System Drive’ which was established by Warrumbungle Shire. The Drive, which is the largest of its kind in the world, is centred on the dome of the Australian-Anglo Telescope (Siding Springs) as the sun. Scale models, (38 million times smaller than the solar system), of each of the planets have been erected on the five main approaches to Coonabarabran including the Newell Highway. The Pluto Billboard is located in Bellata near the roadhouse. It is well set-back from the Highway and not particularly ‘visible’ to passing traffic.

8. Product Development: Hero Attractions and Experiences

The Shire’s hero attractions and experiences are:

- **An Ancient Landscape:** the stunning landforms and scenery of the Nandewar Range (including Mount Kaputar National Park and Deriah Aboriginal Area) and Yarrie Lake;
- **A Million Wild Acres:** the Pilliga Forest;
- **Dark, star-studded skies:** Clear, dark skies with millions of stars; the Australia Telescope Compact Array – the Dish times six;
- **Mineral rich, hot artesian waters:** Pilliga and (just across the Shire border), Burren Junction bore baths.

Objective

To strengthen the hero attractions and experiences and leverage them to grow visitation to the Shire, encourage travellers to stay longer in the area and raise the Shire's profile.

This can be achieved through product development and improving access to key sites.

Priority Projects

The priority projects are:

- Mt Kaputar National Park;
- Yarrie Lake;
- Boggabri's Landforms and Landscapes: Gin's Leap, Dripping Rock, Mt Robertson and Barbers Lagoon and Pinnacle;
- Australian Wildlife Conservancy;
- Australia Telescope: Night Skies Viewing Activities.

The Deriah Aboriginal Area on the western edge of the Nandewar Range is also part of the ancient landscape as well as being an Aboriginal product. Deriah is discussed in Section 9.3.

8.1. Mount Kaputar National Park

Located on the Nandewar Range, Mount Kaputar National Park is one of the most visited attractions in the Shire, with over 30,000 visitors per year. The Park incorporates the highly eroded remnants of the extinct Nandewar Volcano, and rises abruptly from the surrounding plains, to reach an elevation of 1,510 metres (1,200m above the surrounding plains). The Park covers an area of approximately 41,000 hectares, of which 30,000 hectares is classified as Wilderness. The Park has a mix of vegetation communities, prolific bird and wildlife, and is home to the giant (20cm long) pink slug. The more elevated areas of the Park support sub-alpine vegetation and experience the occasional snowfall in winter.

The Park has four visitor precincts, the Summit, Sawn Rocks and Upper Bullawa Creek in Narrabri Shire and Waa Gorge in Moree Plains Shire, with these precincts separated by wilderness areas. Sawn Rocks is one of the iconic landforms within the NE-NW region. The main activities undertaken in the Park are sight-seeing,

bushwalking, and camping, with other activities including mountain-biking on the fire trails, picnicking, bird watching, photography and rock sports. The Barraba Track is accessible by 4WD and is one of the 'aspirational' journeys for 4WD enthusiasts – often ranking first in the top ten 4WD experiences in NSW. The NPWS is changing the conditions of use for the Barraba Track, with the track to be open for vehicles to travel in either direction along the track. Vehicles will need to pre-book, with numbers limited to 10 vehicles per week.

The Park was badly damaged in the 2019 bushfires, with areas still closed for recovery. The NPWS is currently preparing a new Plan of Management for the Park.

Issues

The key issues with the Park are:

- Approximately 8 kilometres of Kaputar Road, which provides access to the summit precinct, is unsealed and unfenced and in poor condition. Caravans are not permitted. The road is a constant source of complaint and a deterrent to some visitors. This section of the road lies fully within the National Park – it is not a gazetted public road. NPWS has had a long-standing, informal arrangement for Council to maintain the road at no cost to the NPWS. Council does not have the funds to maintain the road to the standard needed;
- The capacity of the Summit area is limited. During peak periods, the demand for camping sites and cabins, exceeds supply, with the cabins achieving occupancy rates of 90+% during winter. With most of the Park gazetted as 'Wilderness,' it is not possible to expand existing visitor precincts or open new areas;
- Visitor facilities at Sawn Rocks are often at capacity. This is being addressed by the NPWS, with new amenities to come on-line within the next 12 months.

Opportunities

- To focus on building visitation to the Summit area mid-week and outside of peak periods and to work with NPWS to offer alternative options to visitors looking for camping and bush cabin accommodation during peak times;
- To signpost and promote the Upper Bullawa Creek picnic area as an alternative to travelling up the Mountain. The picnic area is located at the end of Upper Bullawa Creek Road at the base of the mountain. This area is significantly under-utilised. The condition of the access road will need to be checked to determine whether it is suitable for 2WD vehicles;
- To package and promote the Barraba Track with other 4WD opportunities within the Shire and surrounding region (eg Pilliga Forest, Rocky Creek to Terry Hie Hie 4WD Track, Horton Falls National Park, Dripping Rock) and direct market to 4WD clubs and to 4WD tour and tag-along- tour operators. There may be opportunity for a Shire resident to develop 4WD and/or tag along tours of the region;
- For property owners adjoining the National Park / Nandewar Range to provide accommodation (eg bush cabins, glamping, bubble tents) and/or camp sites and other possibly activities such as rock climbing / abseiling, mountain biking and 4WD if their properties are suitable;

- To include the Barraba Track and fire trails within the National Park as part of the Shire's mountain bike product.

Directions Forward

- Advocate for the State Government to provide funds to seal the access road to the Park. Responsibility for maintaining the roads needs to be formalised and adequately funded. From a tourism perspective, sealing the road and providing safety fencing is a priority;
- Assess the Upper Bullawa Creek area at the base of the Mountain, and if attractive and suitable, signpost it from the Kaputar Road, and include in promotional material;
- Council to provide input into the draft management when it is released for exhibition. Council should be requesting the opening of additional walking tracks in the Killarney Gap area and possibly around the Upper Bullawa Creek area and potentially allowing camping in peak times at the Upper Bullawa area (if suitable). Council also needs to ensure that the Plan allows for the sealing of Kaputar Road.

8.2. Yarrie Lake

Located just north of the Pilliga Forest, 18 kilometres south east of Wee Waa, Yarrie Lake is saucer-shaped lake, formed within a meteorite crater. The Lake is ephemeral and when full, is used for water-skiing, boating, canoeing and swimming. The surrounding Yarrie Lake flora and fauna reserve (150ha) is a wildlife sanctuary and bird hotspot. The area is Crown Land and managed by the Yarrie Lake Flora and Fauna Reserve Trust. The Trust has established bush camping and picnic sites around the Lake, with facilities including a boat ramp, group picnic area, 8 powered caravan sites and two amenities blocks. A caretaker resides on site.

To the west, the land adjoining the Reserve is also Crown Land and managed by two separate trusts: the Yarrie Lake Hall Trust and the Yarrie Lake Cricket Ground Trust. The Hall Trust is responsible for maintaining a large community hall and tennis courts, with the Cricket Ground Trust responsible for the area that was formerly used for cricket. The Hall Trust is active and has upgraded the Hall and maintains the area around the hall. The tennis courts are in poor condition and not usable. The Cricket Ground Trust is inactive.

On weekends and during school holidays (when there is water), the Lake attracts day trippers and campers, most of whom are drawn from the local area and north-west region. Throughout the remainder of the year, the Lake primarily attracts touring travellers with an influx of locals on fine weekends. The Lake is popular with social groups, with the area also used for functions. In the past, the Lake has hosted water ski events.

Yarrie Lake has been identified as a potential location for a hot artesian bore bath. Establishment of a bore bath would significantly increase visitation to the area, with the discharged water from the bore bath used to keep the Lake full. This would enable the Lake to be used for boating and water-skiing year-round. Funds have been raised by the Shire community to drill a test bore to assess the suitability of the artesian water and the feasibility of establishing a bore bath.

Issues

- The area is managed by three separate community trusts, one of which is inactive. The Trusts have different purposes, goals and objectives. This arrangement is not delivering the best outcomes for the Shire community;
- There are no Plans of Management in place to provide the framework and direction for the development and management of the three Trust areas;
- The Lake and Hall are being marketed separately, each with their own social media sites. A person wanting to hold a function at the Lake and book both camping sites and the Hall, must deal with two different groups;
- While there appears to be strong community support for the establishment of a bore bath at the Lake, the Flora and Fauna Trust does not appear to be supportive of the project, with community members, rather than the Trust, driving the fund raising and the project;
- There is no directional signage to Yarrie Lake from the Newell Highway at Narrabri and the Kamilaroi Highway at Wee Waa;
- Water ski events that have been held at the Lake in the past, are more likely to be held at the international standard water ski lakes that have been established at the Moree Water Park in Moree Plains Shire. When fully developed, the Moree Water Park will have two international standard water ski lakes, a recreational ski lake, cable waterskiing, camping area, cabin accommodation, a hot artesian pool and a network of walking and cycling trails.

Opportunities

- Establishing the hot artesian bore bath would be a game-changer for the Shire, increasing visitation to both Narrabri and Wee Waa, with travellers likely to stay longer in the area. The hot pool could be located near the Hall and the former cricket ground would be ideal for camping. Permanent water in the Lake would encourage use year-round;
- To provide bush cabins and/or permanent tents (glamping) on the Lake foreshore;
- To promote the area for functions and events. If the cricket ground is available for camping, the Hall could be used to attract group activities – eg 4WD, caravan, RV, motorcycle club rallies; social functions – eg family reunions, weddings; small concerts and for art exhibitions and/or markets. The area would also be ideal for staging events such as a 'dirty tri', adventure racing and gravel grinding;
- To provide a bridge or ford over the Lake outlet and establish a Lake foreshore walk.

Directions Forward

- Consolidate the three Trusts into one Trust responsible for the entire area;
- Proceed with the test bore to assess the suitability (chemical composition, temperature and pressure) of the artesian water and if suitable, develop a plan to proceed. If unsuitable, explore options for developing a hot artesian pool in Wee Waa;
- Prepare a comprehensive Plan of Management for the area;
- Endeavour to improve directional signage to the Lake, with the signage including international tourism icons for the facilities available at the Lake;

- Develop and promote touring and gravel grinding routes that start from the Lake and take in parts of the Pilliga and possibly Culgoora Forest, the surrounding area and incorporate Wee Waa and/or Narrabri;
- Work with the Trust/s to build the functions and event markets.



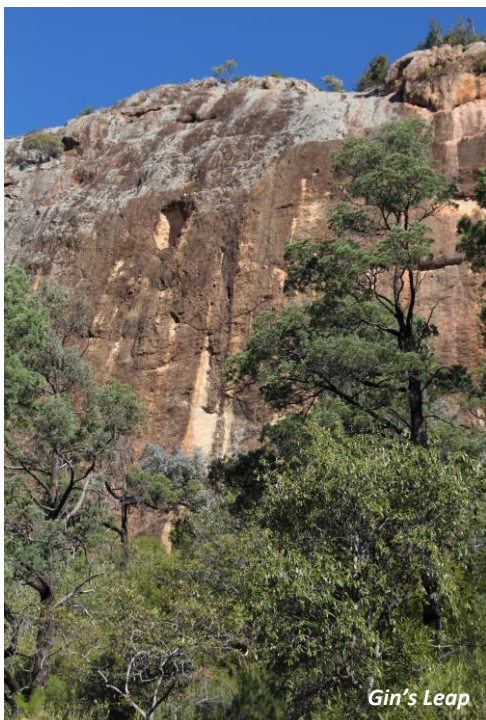
8.3. Boggabri District – Landforms and Landscapes

The area just north of Boggabri has several prominent landforms:

- Gin's Leap;
- Dripping Rock;
- Mt Robertson;
- Barbers Lagoon and Pinnacle.

While these landforms are promoted as tourist attractions, visitation is low. This is due to a combination of factors including limited facilities, minimal or no signage and/or poor access.

Upgrading facilities and/or access to these assets and focusing on the activities that could be undertaken (eg camping, walks, canoeing, bird watching), would provide travellers with a reason to stay overnight in Boggabri and explore the area. These assets also offer opportunities for the development of sub-regional touring routes linking Boggabri with Gunnedah and/or Manilla and to attract regional residents for day and short-break visits.



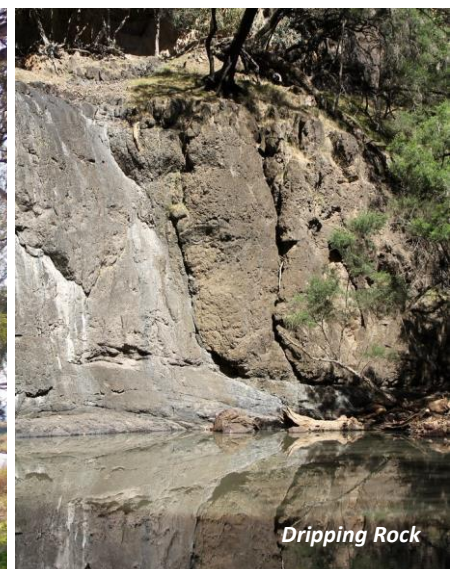
Gin's Leap



View east from Gin's Leap to Barber's Pinnacle and the Nandewar Range



Barber's Lagoon



Dripping Rock

8.3.1. Gin's Leap

Gin's Leap is a stunning rock formation located just north of Boggabri on the Kamilaroi Highway. Gin's Leap rises to a height of around 391 metres ASL, with a sheer rockface on the northern side. There is a small road-side rest area with a picnic table near the base of Gin's Leap. There is also a historic vault (4 graves) and a separate grave site and interpretative information on the former Inn (1854-1875) that was built at the base of the 'Rock'. The rest area is used occasionally by travellers for overnight camping or a 'tea-break'.

The Gin's Leap outcrop extends over several parcels of land - a travelling stock reserve, crown land managed by Council and land held by mining companies.

Gin's Leap is known as 'Cooobindi' or 'Gagabaayindaay' by the Kamilaroi people, with the formation marking the northern limit of the lands of the Gunn-e-daar people. According to the Red Chief Land Council, Cooobindi was probably used as a lookout site for the family groups camped along the Namoi River close to the base of the formation.

Gin's Leap and the nearby Gin's Leap Gap are a very significant geological feature. Gin's Leap is part of the Boggabri Volcanics Group, which arises above the surface at Gin's Leap and then dips down to the north east. Underground, these volcanic rocks form a 'dam' that restricts the flow of ground water through the aquifers, with ground water 'trapped' upstream and forming the groundwater resource of the Liverpool Plains.

There is an informal walking track along the northern side of Gin's Leap, which eventually winds up the western end of the formation to the ridge line. The walk is relatively easy, however the track is not marked and in places is difficult to find. There are a several old fences that can also be followed for part of the way. The view from the top is spectacular – across the Namoi Valley and east to the Nandewar Range. To the north-east, Mt Kaputar is visible. There are also views of the coal mining. There appears to be several caves and crevices around the base of Gin's Leap. The area is rich in wildlife, including kangaroos.

The land across the Highway from Gin's Leap is part of a travelling stock reserve that runs along the Namoi River.

8.3.2. Mount Robertson

Mt Robertson is located close to Gin's Leap, at the corner of the Kamilaroi Highway and Rangari Road. The area is part of a travelling stock reserve (TSR). There is an informal 4WD / walking track to the summit. The mountain is a small but prominent peak in the Boggabri district with 360° panoramic views from the summit. The climb is not as long as the climb to the summit of Gin's Leap and would be more accessible to people with low to average fitness. Mt Robinson would be an ideal location for the development of a lookout, possibly using some form of mining platform.

Approximately 1.6 kilometres east of Mount Robertson, Rangari Road crosses the Namoi River. Access to the River is available on the western side of the bridge, with this area being part of a TSR.

8.3.3. Barbers Lagoon and Pinnacle

Barbers Lagoon is an anabranch of the Namoi River located adjacent to Rangari Road approximately 5.5 kilometres east of Mount Robertson. Part of the Lagoon is located on a travelling stock reserve, with this area used occasionally for camping, fishing, canoeing and bird-watching. The area has Aboriginal scar trees. The Lagoon area is ideal for primitive camping. Barbers Pinnacle is a volcanic remnant rising from the surrounding plains. While it is located on private property and not accessible, travellers often stop and take photos.

8.3.4. Dripping Rock

Dripping Rock is located at the southern end of the Nandewar Range, approximately 34 kilometres by road from Boggabri. The area is Crown Land. Dripping Rock is a gorge, with a rock pool backed by a 40 to 50 metre high rock face that 'drips' in dry weather and becomes a waterfall after rain. There is a short walking track from the car park to the rock pool which is ideal for swimming, with a longer walk to the top of the rock face.

The access road to the Dripping Rock is unsealed and only accessible when dry. According to Council, a section of the road is located on private property. Council maintains their section of the road, but not the section on private property. Signage to the site is limited. Dripping Rock is not identified on Google Maps and travellers trying to find the area without a detailed map, often get lost.

8.3.5. Opportunities / Directions Forward

Gin's Leap

- To establish walking tracks within the area - formalising the track to the summit and possibly providing a track along the base of the northern face of the formation – featuring the caves and crevices. The works required would include installing a gate or stile to access the area; track head signage and a map; possibly providing some information at the summit; minor track improvements; and the installation of track markers (generally small, reflective disks). Part of the summit track appears to be located on land held by the mining companies and access would need to be negotiated;
- Provide a walking track from the eastern side of the Kamilaroi Highway opposite the Gin's Leap rest area, through the TSR to the Namoi River, with this track signposted from the rest area;
- Enhance the interpretative material available at the site to include information on the Aboriginal use of the area pre- European settlement, the geology and its significance, the coal mining activities in the surrounding area and other nearby attractions.

Mount Robertson

- Explore options to formalise the walking trail to the summit and possibly provide a lookout platform, with both the walk and lookout signposted from the Kamilaroi Highway.

Barbers Lagoon

- Signpost the Lagoon from the corner of Rangari Road and the Kamilaroi Highway and from Rangari Road on the approach to the reserve;
- Possibly provide a picnic table close to the water;
- Rather than just focus on the history of the Lagoon in promotional material, the information on the Lagoon needs to allude to its size and include the activities that can be undertaken – camping, picnicking, fishing, bird watching and canoeing; with promotional images focusing on the attractive natural environment;
- List as a free campsite. Around a third of the touring caravan and RV market will only freedom camp. The introduction of free camping areas in Liverpool Plains and Gunnedah Shires has resulted in growth in the touring van and RV markets on the Kamilaroi Highway. In addition, the free camping areas along Black Stump Way (Grain Valley Way) is one of the attractions of this route. The availability of an attractive primitive camping area near Boggabri, coupled with walks, canoeing and other activities to do in the area would encourage travellers to stop and explore.

Dripping Rock

- The access to Dripping Rock has been an ongoing issue. Options that could be explored include:
 - Council could enter into an agreement with the land-owner for public access / easement, with Council maintaining the road;
 - Council purchase the 'road' corridor;
 - The area is promoted as 4WD accessible only; with the area positioned as one of the 'must visit' 4WD sites within the Shire.
- Signpost Dripping Rock from the Kamilaroi Highway and Rangari Road.

Other Considerations

- Promoting these assets as a cluster of outdoor, nature-based experiences rather than landforms with interesting historic 'stories' will strengthen their appeal: walks at Gin's Leap, Dripping Rock and Mt Robertson; fishing and canoeing in the Namoi River and at Barbers Lagoon; potentially riverside camping at Barbers Lagoon; bird watching at all sites etc. The proposed lookouts also provide the opportunity to introduce visitors to the Shire's agricultural and mining activities;
- In addition, packaging the Vault (good food and accommodation) with outdoor activities in a beautiful setting, is an ideal product for the short-breaks couples market looking to get-away and spend time together;
- Establish sub-regional touring routes, linking Boggabri's assets with the Boonalla Aboriginal area to provide touring loops from Gunnedah and potential Tamworth / Manilla and possibly for visitors holidaying at Lake Keepit;
- Ensure that these sites are accurately identified on google maps.

8.4. Australian Wildlife Conservancy

The Australian Wildlife Conservancy in conjunction with the NPWS has embarked upon a project to re-introduce locally extinct mammals to the Pilliga Region. In addition to providing another attraction within the Pilliga Forest, it provides the opportunities to tell a 'great story' and generate media coverage, both of which will strengthen the outdoor and nature-based positioning of the Shire. It also provides opportunities for merchandising and possibly for guided tours.

The project area is located in the Pilliga State Conservation Area, approximately 50 kilometres south west of Narrabri. The AWC site has an area of approximately 6,000 hectares, with an inner predator free area of around 680 hectares. The site is fenced with no public access. AWC is progressively removing predators from the entire site, restoring habitat and managing the fire regime.

AWC has commenced the re-introduction of six mammals that were endemic to the area but killed-off by feral animals:

- Bridle Nail Tail Wallaby;
- Greater Bilby;
- Western Quoll;
- Western Barred Bandicoot;
- Brush-Tailed Bettong;
- Plains Mouse.

These are all very small, shy mammals that are largely nocturnal. Other than forest habitat, the security fence and signs of habitation (eg tracks, scat and burrows), there is not a lot to see at the site. The 'story' lies in the work being undertaken by AWC to create a predator-free environment, restore the forest habitat, the sourcing and translocation of the mammals from other localities Australia-wide, and the breeding and monitoring programs.

As part of their contract with NPWS, the AWC is looking to establish a Visitor Centre and a small camping area at the site. Given the remote location; unsealed, dry-weather only access roads; and the inability to view the mammals; the Visitor Centre may only attract 'enthusiasts'.



Western Quoll



Brush-Tailed Bettong



Western Barred Bandicoot

Opportunities

- To tell the AWC story at the Narrabri VIC: This could be achieved using a mix of a static displays and video clips. AWC has extensive video footage of its activities that could be used to produce short video clips and potentially virtual or augmented reality experiences. This would significantly raise the profile of the AWC and the Pilliga forest, and provide 'virtual' access for travellers, local and regional residents, school groups etc. It would also encourage visitors who want a more 'immersive' experience to visit the AWC Visitor Centre. Video clips and/or links could also be included on the Narrabri tourism website and in social media posts;
- Longer term, if viable, for AWC to establish several viewing hides and offer specialised nocturnal tours;
- To provide some interpretative signage on the enclosure gates. There are several roads within the Pilliga Forest that now end at the AWC fence and there is no explanation of what the fence is for. There is an opportunity to provide interpretative signage at these points explaining what the enclosure is, why it is fenced off and information on the animals that it is protecting;
- Leverage opportunities for publicity as well merchandise opportunities.

Directions Forward

- Explore with AWC the opportunity for an AWC exhibit at the Narrabri VIC and, if feasible, to seek funding to develop the exhibition, video clips etc.

8.5. Australia Telescope / Night Skies Viewing

The Australia Telescope Compact Array at the Paul Wild Observatory is located on the Yarrie Lake Road, approximately equidistant from Narrabri and Wee Waa. The Observatory is operated by the CSIRO as part of the Australia Radio Telescope network which includes the 'Dish' at Parkes. The Telescope has 6 large dishes, five of which are located on a 3 kilometre long railway track. The Dishes are moved along the track every six weeks, with at least one dish positioned close to the Visitor Centre at all times. The Narrabri VIC describes the site as 'the Dish times six'.

The unmanned Visitor Centre is open daily and free to access. The Centre incorporates an outdoor interpretative walk with models and information panels, an indoor exhibition area, a theatre with a video on-demand and a picnic area and amenities. Some of the displays are tired and need to be upgraded. As tourism is not a core function of the Observatory, it is difficult to secure internal funding, with the Narrabri facility being a 'poor cousin' to Parkes.

The Visitor Centre attracts around 10,000 to 12,000 visitors per year plus occasional coach tour and school groups. The Observatory will endeavour to provide a guide for groups. There is also a photographer who holds monthly astro- photography workshops at the Telescope from April to October (6-8 per year). Each workshop attracts around 20 to 30 participants, most of whom come from Sydney. The Observatory is interested in building this market.

The Observatory has on-site accommodation (14 rooms) however this is only available for staff, visiting scientists and students. The Observatory occasionally receives requests from photographers and astronomy clubs who would like to stay on site.

The marketing of the Observatory is limited to that undertaken by the Narrabri Shire Tourism Unit. Very limited information on the Observatory is provided on the CSIRO Australia Telescope National Facility website, with the Observatory not having its own website or facebook page.

Destination Network Country and Outback has night-skies tourism as one of its core product development themes. DNCO has recently prepared a Night Skies Experience Concept Plan which recommends packaging night sky viewing activities with accommodation and other experiences, exploring options for 'story telling' and building astro-tourism to the near- by Siding Springs Observatory, which is located on the edge of the Warrumbungle National Park.

Opportunities / Directions Forward

- Promote the Narrabri Observatory through the Parkes 'Dish' Visitor Centre. The Dish attracts over 100,000 visitors per year, with a significant proportion of these visitors being Newell Highway travellers;
- Enter into an arrangement with the Visitor Centre at Siding Spring Observatory at Coonabarabran to cross-promote each other's facilities;
- Leverage the tourism activities that are occurring at the Siding Spring Observatory (SSO). The SSO lodge accommodation is available for bookings by specialist astronomy tour operators and astronomy groups. The tours are tailored to the interests of each group and include night sky viewing through telescopes, astro-photography workshops, discussions with renown astronomers and day trips to explore the surrounding region. There may be opportunities for the Narrabri Observatory to be visited as a day trip and/or be included as an additional site for astro- photography workshops;
- Use the Australia Telescope's onsite accommodation for specialist tour groups and astronomy clubs, adopting a similar approach to the management of the SSO lodge;
- Grow the astro-photography market, possibly packaging workshops with accommodation in and transport from Narrabri or with the option to camp at Yarrie Lake and use the Hall for catering and social activities;
- Leverage the discoveries made by the Observatory to generate publicity (through social media and press releases to local and regional media) to raise the profile of both the Observatory's and Narrabri Shire.



9. Product Development: Supporting Attractions & Activities

A strong second tier of attractions is needed to support the hero experiences. The focus for product development will be on:

- Leveraging the Namoi River corridor;
- Building agri and industry-based attractions and experiences;
- Working with the Aboriginal community to develop Aboriginal products and experiences;
- Further developing touring routes and activity-based trails;
- Strengthening and growing the events sector

9.1. Namoi River Corridor

The Namoi River is the lifeblood of Narrabri Shire, with the river and its tributaries, anabranches and lagoons being part of the attraction base of Boggabri, Narrabri, Wee Waa and Pilliga. The Kamilaroi Highway follows the River from the southern boundary of the Shire through to Wee Waa, with the Pilliga Road running parallel to river between Wee Waa and Pilliga. The development and promotion of the River corridor is identified as a priority in the Kamilaroi Highway DMP, with the relationship between the Highway and River being a point of difference to other inland touring routes.

Within Narrabri Shire there are a multitude of Crown reserves and travelling stock reserves that provide access to the River. The majority of these access points are not sign-posted with travellers not aware that they exist. Narrabri VIC has a fishing map, however some of the fishing spots are not easy to find. Although not promoted, informal camping occurs at several locations along the River. The Big Sky Caravan Park in Narrabri is located adjacent to Narrabri Creek but a fence prevents direct access to the Creek.

The River corridor is intrinsically linked with most of the Shire's product themes and experiences, namely:

- Aboriginal heritage and culture – with signs (eg scarred trees, grinding grooves) of occupation spread throughout the river corridor;
- The farming history of the Shire, including the development of the cotton industry;
- Camping;
- Walking and cycling (mountain-biking and gravel grinding);
- Fishing;
- Boating and canoeing. Boat ramps are located in Narrabri and at Yellow Banks in Wee Waa, with a pontoon proposed for Wee Waa Lagoon;
- Wildlife and bird watching, the river corridor, particularly the billabongs and wetlands, have abundant wildlife and birdlife – with these water bodies attracting waterbirds as well as the birds of the plains and riverine forest. Brolgas and other rare birds can be found along the river corridor between Wee Waa and Pilliga;
- Public art - there is opportunity for art installations along sections of Narrabri Creek, around Narrabri Lake, at Wee Waa Lagoon and possibly along Oaky Creek – Pilliga Lagoon;
- Events.

Sites along the River corridor suitable for fishing and bird watching have been mapped and are being actively promoted.

The implementation of the Narrabri Tourism Precinct Masterplan and the Wee Waa Lagoon Plan of Management will provide attractive riverside precincts in both towns.

Opportunities / Directions Forward

- Signpost the key river and lagoon access points within the Shire;

- Develop a Namoi River Trail as a self-guided tour. The trail should include river access points, camping sites, fishing spots, areas suitable for canoeing and boating, wetlands, tracks suitable for off-road cycling etc. Yarrie and Narrabri Lakes should also be included in the trail;
- Promote riverside camping: Riverside camping is one of the aspirational experiences sought by the touring caravan and RV markets, the family market and increasingly the millennial market. Free, scenically attractive riverside camping areas are available and promoted by adjoining LGAs and the LGAs along the Kamilaroi Highway and Nature's Way. While informal riverside camping occurs in Narrabri Shire, it is not actively promoted nor are areas signposted. Consideration should be given to signposting and promoting the following areas for riverside camping:
 - Big Sky Caravan Park, Narrabri - for those looking for powered sites;
 - Barbers Lagoon, Boggabri;
 - Tarriaro Reserve;
 - Trindall's Reserve;
 - Yellow Banks, Wee Waa;
 - Yarrie Lake (while not part of the river, it meets the aspirational expectations).
- Add canoeing and boating as another activity in the 'Things to Do' list on the Narrabri Shire website, and produce supporting information (map, river access points, river condition notes etc). Areas suitable for canoeing include Barbers Lagoon, Tarriaro Reserve to Narrabri (dependent on water height), Narrabri Creek (from Narrabri to Mollee Weir), Wee Waa and Pilliga Lagoons, Yarrie Lake, Narrabri Lake and some of the larger wetlands (ephemeral) within the Pilliga Forest;
- Add Yellow Banks in Wee Waa and sites around Pilliga and fishing events, such as the Carp Muster, to the Shire Fishing Guide.

9.2. Agri and Industry Based Tourism

Agri and industry-based tourism involves showcasing, through quality interpretation and tours, the Shire's key agricultural activities, industries and enterprises. These sectors can also be leveraged to grow the specialist tours and business events markets. The assets available to work with are summarised in Table 9.1.

The Narrabri VIC is the ideal location to showcase these activities. Digital technology, including touch screens and virtual reality can be used to provide highly informative, immersive experiences. For example, virtual reality could be used:

- In the cotton picker, creating a cotton-picking experience;
- To take the viewer down the Narrabri underground coal mine or place them in truck going down into an open cut pit;
- To do a 'fly-over' of cropping, mining or gas areas within the Shire.

Whitehaven Coal is considering producing virtual reality tours of coal mining to show school students who are interested in working in the mining industry, and it may be possible to use these tours within the Narrabri VIC. Whitehaven Coal and Santos (Narrabri Gas Project) also host both technical / specialist tours and the occasional tour / open day for the general public.

Narrabri is the first place that travellers coming from the east will encounter the Inland Rail. There is opportunity to provide information on the Inland Rail, the proposed Northern NSW Inland Port and the existing transport and logistics infrastructure (eg the intermodals terminals and bulk grain storage sites) within the Shire.

Table 9.1 Assets to Work With

Sector	Assets to work with: activities to view and stories to tell.
Cotton Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural landscape: roadside viewing of cotton fields and harvesting activities; • Narrabri VIC: Picker experience; cotton farming displays; cotton products; cotton fibre expo wall hangings; • Wee Waa: cotton history; cotton capital of Australia; • Cotton Farms; • Cotton Gins; • Australian Cotton Research Institute; • Namoi Cotton intermodal terminal, Wee Waa; Auscott intermodal terminal, Narrabri; • Cotton Seed Distributors; • Cotton Seed Storage facilities and uses; • Cargill Cotton Seed Crushing (currently closed).
Other Agricultural Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural landscape: roadside viewing of crops and harvesting activities; • Narrabri VIC: displays and local products; • Farming properties; • IA Watson Grains Research Institute; • Sydney University proposed Indigenous Food Research Park and possible native food ventures and a display garden at Wee Waa LALC; • Monsanto Locharba Research Centre; • Transport and logistics – Narrabri Intermodal Terminals, bulk grain terminals, Inland Rail, Northern NSW Inland Port.
Coal Mining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open cut and underground mines in the Narrabri and Boggabri areas; • Civeo mining villages, Narrabri and Boggabri; • Tours – industry; open days for the public; group tours by request; • Coal handling, transport and logistics; • Rehabilitation and land management.
Gas Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Santos exhibition, Narrabri office; • Santos tours – industry and public; • Wilga Power Station; • Gas field activities: drilling rigs, production facilities.
Solar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed solar farms: Narrabri (2), Wee Waa (1).
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Plastic Recyclers; • Narrabri Fish Farm; • Black Snake Distillery; • Nelson Honey Factory.

Opportunities / Directions Forward

- Explore options for showcasing additional economic activities within the Narrabri VIC, including introducing virtual reality tours and experiences;
- Endeavour to re-introduce cotton tours and explore options for introducing other guided agricultural tours;
- Explore options for introducing self-guided crop trails and crop alerts;
- Explore with the mining companies, Santos Gas and potentially the solar farms and other enterprises, the opportunities to grow the tour market – by listing with specialist industry and technical tour operators; offering guided tours for organised tour groups (eg coach tours) and/or increasing the frequency of tours for the general public.



9.3. Aboriginal Products and Experiences

The range of Aboriginal attractions and experiences within the Shire is increasing. The Wee Waa community is keen to drive growth in this sector, with a focus on art, cultural activities and tours. The product available and being established within the Shire includes:

- **Deriah Aboriginal Area:** The Deriah Aboriginal Area is located in the foothills of the Nandewar Range, approximately 28 kilometres by road east of Narrabri. The Area is part of the ancient volcanic landscape, with steep volcanic cliffs and extensive views. Facilities include a lookout, picnic area, walking tracks, bush turkey sculptures and interpretative panels. From Narrabri, the first 17 kilometres of the access road is sealed, with the next 7.1 kilometres being a unsealed dry weather local road

suitable for 2WD. The remaining 3.9 kilometres is a former forest road / fire trail which is in poor condition and accessible by 4WD vehicle only;

- **Kamilaroi Stories:** Touch screen in the Narrabri VIC which shares narratives and recollections of traditions, life within the Shire and dreamtime stories by local Aboriginal elders. Additional stories are being progressively added;
- **Former Reserves:** Tulladunna Reserve at Wee Waa and the Minnom Mission Reserve at Pilliga. Tulladunna Reserve is located on the western edge of Wee Waa and was initially a riverside meeting place, which in the 1960's, became the 'camp' for Aboriginal people from throughout the region, attracted to Wee Waa to work as 'chippers' in the cotton industry. Today, the Wee Waa LALC is working with the community to restore the habitat on the site and provide interpretation. The site is being used for cultural events, with the LALC proposing to run cultural tours and activities on the site. Access to the site is restricted due to the low clearance of the railway viaduct and the unsealed access track; The Minnom Mission Reserve is located on private land and not accessible to the general public. The Reserve opened in 1902 and closed in 1952. From 1923 onwards, the Reserve operated as a pastoral station and had a large timber mill, with timber sourced from the Pilliga. Opportunities for telling the Mission Reserve story need to be explored.
- **Wee Waa Community Arts and Cultural Centre:** The proposed centre will include gallery / exhibition space and workshops for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists and artisans. Working with the LALC and local schools, the Centre is proposing to host a range of Aboriginal cultural activities (eg weaving) and provide the base for cultural tours;
- **Waterloo Creek Massacre site:** Waterloo Creek is located to the west of Bellata. The Aboriginal community is seeking funding to interpret the site. Waterloo Creek is currently being considered by Heritage NSW (Premier & Cabinet) to be listed as a State Heritage Significant Site. The nomination has moved to the second stage and has been allocated to a team to undertake further research and formal consultation with stakeholders;
- **Interpretative signage at the Pilliga Hot Artesian Bore Bath:** The panels provide information on the Aboriginal history of the Pilliga and native food and medicine plants.

Sydney University is undertaking research into native grasses and indigenous foods within the North West Region and is talking with the Aboriginal communities in Narrabri and Wee Waa regarding the potential to establish native food enterprises. As part of this program there may be opportunity to establish a native food and/or grasses garden at the Wee Waa LALC complex in Wee Waa.

There are also several aboriginal sites in surrounding LGAs that are readily accessible from Narrabri Shire and provide quality experiences:

- Sculptures in the Scrub at Dandry Gorge in the Pilliga Forest;
- Sandstone Caves, Pilliga Forest;
- Boonalla Aboriginal Area, at Kelvin to the east of Boggabri: Large cave, bushwalks, picnic facilities and interpretation;
- Terry Hie Hie Aboriginal Area near Waa Gorge, telling the story of the Terry Hie Hie Mission, with walking tracks and picnic facilities.

Directions Forward

- Seek funding to upgrade the access road to the Deriah Aboriginal area. Alternatively, explore options to establish a looped walk from the Information Bay at the base of the hill, to the picnic area using the access road as part of the loop and creating a walking trail between the car park and the picnic area to form the rest of the loop. With the road in its current state, promote Deriah as a 'must visit' site for the 4WD market;
- Explore with the RMS and Wee Waa LALC opportunities for improving vehicle access to Tulladunna Reserve, possibly moving the access road to the west to cross the railway line at grade, rather than go under the line adjacent to the River;
- Continue to work with the Aboriginal community to 'capture' oral histories and stories and explore ways to enable visitors to hear some of these stories;
- Encourage and support Aboriginal tourism initiatives.

9.4. Touring Routes, Self-Guided Tours and Activity Trails

Touring routes are designed to bring travellers into and through the Shire, with the self-guided tours and activity trails providing links between attractions and activities to generate 'scale', and to encourage travellers to stay longer in, and explore the Shire. Touring routes and trails form part of the Shire's visitor dispersal strategy, designed to increase visitation to, and potential expenditure in, the Shire's towns and villages. Activity trails also provide the opportunity to build special interest and activity-based markets. There are opportunities to enhance and potentially value-add to some of the existing trails and to use existing assets to develop new trails that will appeal to target markets and strengthen the Shire's outdoor, nature and soft-adventure based positioning.

9.4.1. Touring Routes

There are eight key roads feeding into the Shire that carry visitor traffic:

- Newell Highway (SH 17);
- Kamilaroi Highway (SH 29);
- Nature's Way: State Tourist Route 3 incorporating Killarney Gap Road (MR 133);
- Cypress Way – also known as the Baradine – Pilliga Road (MR329);
- The Black Stump Way – Grain Valley Road (RR 7709);
- Rangari Road – also known as the Boggabri-Manilla Road (MR 357);
- Pilliga – Coonamble Road (MR 383);
- Pilliga – Burren Junction Road.

While the Newell Highway has traditionally been the main generator of touring and visitor traffic, an increasing number of travellers are arriving in the Shire via the Kamilaroi Highway and the regional road network. Narrabri Shire is actively involved in the promotion of the Newell and Kamilaroi Highways and Nature's Way as touring routes.

The development and promotion of the Pilliga Forest as a visitor attraction, the growing interest in the hot artesian bore baths and the sealing of the Pilliga (Pilliga to Wee Waa), Pilliga – Coonamble and Pilliga – Burren Junction roads, has resulted in a significant increase in the number of visitors entering the Shire via Pilliga. The bore baths are also drawing travellers arriving from the east on Nature’s Way and the Kamilaroi Highway, west through the Shire. Completing the sealing of Cypress Way would encourage more travellers to take the forest route between Coonabarabran and the Warrumbungle National Park and Pilliga, rather than stay on the Newell Highway.

The Black Stump Way feeds into the southern edge of the Shire. The route extends north from the Castlereagh and Golden Highways just east of Dunedoo, through Coolah to the Oxley Highway at Mullaley, and then further north via Grain Valley Way to joining the Kamilaroi Highway at Boggabri. In the past the Black Stump Way from the Golden Highway through to Boggabri was promoted as a touring route. Promotion ceased when the unsealed section of Grain Valley north of Mullaley proved to be a deterrent to travellers, with travellers turning either east or west onto the Oxley Highway rather than continuing north. Grain Valley Way is being progressively sealed, with the road expected to be fully sealed within the next 12 months. This will provide the opportunity to re-activate and re-launch the route. One of the key attractions of the route (and the roads feeding into the route from Mendooran) are the freedom camping sites both along the route and in the Coolah Tops National Park. Promoting Barbers Lagoon as a freedom camping area along with the Boggabri Caravan Park and Showground sites, will help to strengthen the route and encourage travellers to overnight in the Boggabri area.

Rangari Road links Boggabri to Manilla and onto Tamworth. It also links with the Kelvin Road which provides access to the Boonalla Aboriginal Area in Gunnedah Shire. From a tourism perspective, sealing the road would improve access to Narrabri Shire for the regional market and facilitate the development of a touring loops from Gunnedah and the Tamworth – Manilla – Lake Keepit area.

Opportunities / Directions Forward

- Narrabri Shire to continue to be actively involved in the Newell Highway, Kamilaroi Highway and Nature’s Way marketing groups;
- To leverage the completion of the seal of Grain Valley to re-launch the Black Stump Way as a touring route. This route passes through four LGAs and will increase visitation to Mendooran, Dunedoo and Coolah in Warrumbungle Shire; Premer in Liverpool Plains Shire; Tambar Springs and Mullaley in Gunnedah Shire; and draw travellers through Boggabri. Re-launching the route needs to coincide with the completion of the seal, with each of the Council tourism units contributing;
- To continue to advocate for State and/or Federal Government funding to complete the seal of Cypress Way. Once sealed, Narrabri Shire needs to work with Warrumbungle Shire to actively promote the route as a scenic alternative to the Newell, linking Narrabri and Coonabarabran via the Pilliga Forest and Pilliga Bore Baths.

9.4.2. Self-Guided Tours and Activity-based Trails

Self-guided tours and activity-based trails enhance and expand the range of activities available in the Shire, encouraging travellers to stay longer and explore the area. Themed trails can also be used to strengthen and reinforce the Shire's 'positioning' as well as its tourism and economic development themes. They can also provide the basis for additional product development and value-adding and be leveraged to grow special interest and activity-based markets and events.

Narrabri Shire has in place six self-guided scenic tours (A Day in Narrabri, Top of the World, Back to Nature, Mother Nature's Playground, Go West and Boggabri and District Tours) with these designed to encourage travellers to spend multiple days exploring the Shire. The Shire also promotes four key activities / trails:

- Bird watching – Bird Routes;
- Fishing spots;
- Bushwalking;
- Historical walks – Narrabri, Wee Waa and Boggabri.

As discussed in Section 9.1, there is potential to establish the Namoi River Trail as a self-guided tour. There is also potential to develop cycle (road cycling, gravel grinding and mountain-biking), canoeing / kayaking, and off-road touring (4WD and trailbikes) trails.

Opportunities and Directions Forward

The opportunities to improve existing activity-based trails and establish additional trails are summarised in Table 9.2.

Trail	Assets / Experiences / Information & Promotional Material	Opportunities / Suggested Improvements
Existing Trails		
Bird Routes	<p>Narrabri Shire is rich in birdlife. The Shire’s diverse habitats provide the opportunity to see birds of the mountains, forests, plains and waterways. The Shire has several high- profile bird ‘hotspots’ as well as rare and endangered bird species. In addition to promoting the Mount Kaputar National Parks and Pilliga Forests for bird watching, the Shire has three bird routes: Narrabri Lake, Yarrie Lake and the Western Namoi Floodplains (a network of 8 trails). The information and promotional material available for each of the routes is well presented and comprehensive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To feature several birds on the birdwatching page of the Narrabri tourism website – eg the brolgas with a video clip of their dance; the eagles that soar above Mt Kaputar; the emus and owls of the Pilliga etc; • Enhance the Narrabri Lake bird route with bird sculptures / bird art installations; • Provide information on / links to, bird identification and bird call apps, that travellers can download; • Explore ways to harness bird-related user generated content; • Direct market to bird-watching clubs and groups; • Target / bid for bird watching congresses and conferences – eg: Australasian Ornithological Conference; Birdlife Photography Conference; • To list the trails and provide a link to the trail brochures and bird lists on sites such as Bird Life Australia; • Approach specialist bird tour operators (eg Australian Wildlife Journeys) to explore opportunities to bring tours to Narrabri Shire.
Fishing Spots	<p>The Fishing Spots Guide provides a map and basic information on access points along the Namoi River between Boggabri and Wee Waa. It does not include the Wee Waa Fishing Club’s facilities at Yellow Banks, nor the fishing spots in and around Pilliga.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To redesign the fishing guide and fishing web page to include an aspirational image/s plus information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yellow Banks at Wee Waa and fishing spots around Pilliga; ○ Fish species (and any regulations relating to these); ○ Boat ramp locations and navigable sections of the river; ○ Campsites; ○ Businesses that sell fishing gear, boats and watercraft, and bait; ○ Fishing events – within the Shire and possibly the surrounding region;



Trail	Assets / Experiences / Information & Promotional Material	Opportunities / Suggested Improvements
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Licences and regulations. ● Package with accommodation and direct market to fishing clubs; ● Explore ways to harness fishing-related user generated content.
Bushwalking	<p>The Narrabri Tourism website promotes walks in Mount Kaputar National Park and the Pilliga Forest, with links through to the NPWS websites for these areas. The information available on the tourism website does not effectively 'convey' the quality and diversity of the walks the available. Quality print material on the National Park areas is available from the Narrabri VIC.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore with NPWS the feasibility of positioning and promoting one of the walks in the Shire as a 'signature' or 'iconic' walk for the area (eg Washpool Walk near Glen Innes) and seeking to have this featured on 'great walks and hike' websites, including the VisitNSW 'Hikes and Walks' site; ● To provide additional information on bushwalking on the Narrabri Tourism website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Showcasing several of the more 'spectacular' walks; ○ A map showing the location of the walks; ○ A table summarising each walk – key features / attractions, length, time to allow, degree of difficulty, wheelchair access, surrounding facilities; ○ Include other walks in Narrabri Shire – eg Deriah Aboriginal Area, Narrabri Lake, Dripping Rock as part of the 'walking' product base. ● Develop additional walks – Gin's Leap (see Section 8.3), Deriah Aboriginal Area (see Section 9.3), Yarrie Lake foreshore (Section 8.2); ● Leverage the 'after the fires' landscape in the Mt Kaputar National Park to encourage bushwalking groups and enthusiasts to visit the park and experience the spectacular landforms and views that have been 'exposed'; ● Explore ways to harness bushwalking related user generated content.
Historical Walks	<p>Historical walks have been developed in Narrabri, Boggabri and Wee Waa. Printed brochures are available for each of the walks with these</p>	<p>The sound clip on the Tourism website is unlikely to inspire travellers to download the App. Clicking on the 'hear more in soundcloud' link</p>



Trail	Assets / Experiences / Information & Promotional Material	Opportunities / Suggested Improvements
	<p>able to be downloaded from the Narrabri Tourism website. The Narrabri Creek Historical Walk App which uses 'proximity' GPS beacons to trigger sound clips and images.</p> <p>The Narrabri Tourism website historical walks page has a link to a sound clip on the Narrabri Historical Creek Walk.</p>	<p>results in audio clips relating to Council services – libraries, waste etc, which are not of interest to visitors. The sound clip should be removed from the tourism website.</p>
Potential Trails		
Namoi River Trail	The Namoi River traverses Narrabri Shire, and provides opportunities for sightseeing, camping and a range of activities (see Section 9.1).	Develop and promote a 'Namoi River Trail' self-guided tour (see Section 9.1).
Cycling	<p>Cycle tourism is a high growth, high yield niche market. Cycling can be broadly divided into road cycling (sealed road), gravel grinding (also called adventure riding incorporating a mix of sealed and gravel roads, fire trails and MTB tracks) and mountain biking. Gravel grinding is relatively new, and currently the fastest growing cycling sector.</p> <p>The Shire has a range of attributes that renders it highly attractive for cycling – a network of low traffic local and regional roads, stunning scenery, well placed towns and villages, suitable topography and a diversity of areas to ride. The Shire also hosts the Killarney Bike Classic, with the Pilliga Forest (Warrumbungle Shire area) home to the Tour de Gorge event.</p> <p>The Shire has two mountain bike tracks – Bullawa Creek in the Bullawa Creek State Conservation Area and Jack's Track, off Jack's Creek Road. Mountain biking is permissible on the Barraba Track and the fire trails in the Mt Kaputar and Moema National Parks and the Bobbiwaa and Killarney State Conservation areas; trails around Yarrie Lake; the forest roads and fire trails within the Pilliga Forest and the Culgoora State Forest, and trails along the Namoi River (eg Trindall's Reserve).</p>	<p>Road Cycling and Gravel Grinding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop and promote a range of road cycling and gravel grinding routes (see the Cowra Rides Guide and Cycling Canowindra for examples); endeavour to identify one road and one gravel grinding route that can be promoted as 'signature' / 'must-do' rides; • Post the routes on cycling websites (eg bicyclensw; bikeexchange, strava); • Package and promote the routes to cycling clubs and groups within the surrounding region; • Work with DNSW / DNCO to organise a famill for cycling journalists / bloggers to generate publicity for the 'signature' rides and other routes; • Organise a gravel grinding event – possibly as part of growing the Killarney Bike Classic (see: the Gears and Beers Festival in Wagga as an example) or as a stand- alone event (eg Thunderbolt's Adventure in the Barrington Tops National Park). There are currently no gravel grinding events in the NE-NW region, providing the opportunity for Narrabri Shire to 'claim' this space;



Trail	Assets / Experiences / Information & Promotional Material	Opportunities / Suggested Improvements
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach Audax Australia and other organisations that organise long distance and charity rides to include Narrabri Shire in ride itineraries and/or bring events to the Shire. <p>Mountain Biking: Working with local MTB enthusiasts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the best MTB tracks and trails within Narrabri Shire and produce a MTB guide for the Shire. List these trails on relevant MTB websites, eg Trailforks, MTB NSW, Strava; Assess opportunities to extend the single track network and/or establish a MTB park, pump track and/or skills park; Assess opportunities to hold and/or attract a MTB event to the Shire – eg a 24 hour enduro in the Pilliga Forest. <p>Multi-Disciplinary Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore with local cycling and triathlon groups the opportunity to organise / host multidisciplinary events such as adventure racing, dirty tri, teams events ect. <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore ways to harness cycling-related user generated content.
4WD	<p>The Shire offers a range of experiences suitable for 4WD enthusiasts, 4WD clubs and people with a 4WD vehicle looking for a 'soft' adventure. Opportunities include:</p> <p>Narrabri Shire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barraba Track, Mount Kaputar National Park and Horton Falls National Park as part of the Track experience; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Package and promote the Barraba Track with other 4WD opportunities within the Shire and surrounding region (eg Pilliga Forest, Rocky Creek to Terry Hie Hie 4WD Track, Horton Falls National Park, Dripping Rock) and direct market to 4WD clubs; Publicise the re-opening of the Barraba Track, potentially working with DNSW and/or DNCO to bring a 4WD journalist and/or blogger to experience the track and other 4WD experiences within the Shire;



Trail	Assets / Experiences / Information & Promotional Material	Opportunities / Suggested Improvements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilliga Forest – over 2,000 kilometres of forest roads and trails; Fire trails and forest roads in the Culgoora State Forest and possibly the State Conservations Areas; Access to Dripping Rock and Deriah Aboriginal Area and possibly Upper Bullawa Creek. <p>Surrounding Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terregee Track - Rocky Creek to Waa Gorge; ADOs 4WD course (50km of tracks) on Doorroombah Sheep Station on the western edge of the Warrumbungle National Park. The tracks can be 'coupled' with are opportunities for camping and fishing, as well as 'adventures as a family', which are often part of the 4WD experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote 4WD opportunities to workers staying in the Civeo Villages; With the variety of experiences available in the area there may be opportunity to establish a 4WD and/or tag along tour business; Target 4WD club training trips and events (eg Jeep Jamboree); Establish 4WD tracks or 4WD park on private property (eg ADOs 4WD course in Warrumbungle Shire); Explore ways to harness 4WD-related user generated content.
Trail Bikes	<p>The Shire's 4WD tracks and trails are suitable for registered trailbikes. In addition, Bike Territory offers a variety of trails, MotoX and enduro circuits and hill climbs for dirt bikes and Quad bikes with the Park also having camping facilities and onsite accommodation. The Goanna Tracks MotoX and Enduro Complex in Warrumbungle Shire (southern end of the Pilliga Forest) also offers a variety of trails and circuits plus camping facilities.</p> <p>The Narrabri Dirt Bike Club has a MotoX and a Grass Track at the Newtown Park complex in Narrabri, with the Club hosting a range of events.</p> <p>Parts of the Pilliga Forest and/or Culgoora State Forest may be suitable for motorcycle events such as enduros and organised trail rides.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a 'Rides Guide' for Narrabri Shire and surrounding region, incorporating touring routes and trail rides suitable for registered trail bikes as well as the bike parks; Explore with the Narrabri Dirt Bike Club opportunities to grow their events and activities and to organise a trail ride and/or an enduro event in the State Forests within the Shire. (see the North Star Trail Ride, Stockman's Rally in Victoria, Sunny Corner Trail Ride at Portland as examples); Promote trail riding and dirt bike experiences to workers staying in the Civeo Villages; Explore ways to harness dirt-bike related user generated content.



Trail	Assets / Experiences / Information & Promotional Material	Opportunities / Suggested Improvements
Canoe Trails	An increasing number of caravanners, RV'ers and campers are arriving in the Shire with canoes. Areas suitable for canoeing in Narrabri Shire include Barbers Lagoon, Tarriaro Reserve to Narrabri (dependent on water height), Narrabri Creek (from Narrabri to Mollee Weir), Wee Waa and Pilliga Lagoons, Yarrie Lake, Narrabri Lake and some of the larger wetlands (ephemeral) within the Pilliga Forest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a canoeing and kayaking guide to Narrabri Shire; • List Narrabri Shire canoe trails on relevant canoe websites; • Direct market the canoeing areas to canoe clubs; • Explore options for canoe hire; • Explore ways to harness canoeing-related user generated content.
Seasonal Trails	<p>At various times of the year, agricultural activities create a 'patchwork' of colour across the Shire. Depending on the crops grown and their location and accessibility, there may be opportunities to promote self-guided tours.</p> <p>During good seasons, the National Parks and Forests, particularly the Pilliga, come alive with wildflowers.</p>	<p>Explore options to introduce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crop alerts and self-guided crop trails (see the Liverpool Plains sunflower alert, and the canola trails in Cowra as examples); • Wildflower alerts and trails.



9.5. Events

Events have a core role to play in growing the visitor economy, strengthening key themes, showcasing and celebrating the Shire and its communities, and enhancing lifestyle. Locally, events are part of the cultural and social fabric of the area, providing an opportunity to bring visitors and residents together, 'tell the stories', and create memorable experiences. For visitors, events provide a reason to visit – they are essentially a 'call to action', encouraging consumers to 'visit now'. Events also generate publicity and focus attention on the area. They can be a key driver in the economic, social and cultural development and play a role in the 'tree change' process.

Narrabri Shire hosts a diverse range of business, entertainment, sporting and community events.

9.5.1. Business Events

Business Events include meetings, conferences, exhibitions and business and industry functions. Narrabri has several venues, including the Crossing Theatre and the licenced clubs that target this market. The recently renovated Tourist Hotel includes small meeting and function rooms. The majority of business events held in the Shire are small meetings, training seminars and workshops (generally less than 30 delegates). The Shire attracts a share of regional meetings as well as the occasional large conference. Conferences are a high yield market sector. They also provide the opportunity to showcase the locality to a wide range of people and organisations who would not normally have visited the area.

Due to accommodation and venue capacity constraints in Sydney, DNSW is working with the destination networks, to increase the number of business events held in regional NSW. Venues in Narrabri Shire are listed on the NSW Regional Conference venue data base and the Shire has participated in several DNSW business events marketing initiatives.

With the Crossing Theatre providing one of the largest non-club venues in regional NSW and the range of other venues, accommodation and supporting facilities available, growing the business events market should be a priority for the Shire. The most effective way of securing business is to target association conferences that have a connection with the Shire's economic activities, services sector and community groups. For example:

- Local and State Government conferences;
- Agriculture / Agricultural Research;
- Mining and gas;
- Astronomy;
- Land and water management;
- Service Clubs – Rotary, Lions ect;
- Social Services – Community Health, Aboriginal support, Libraries;
- Special Interest Associations – eg Family History, Genealogy.

Bidding for association conferences will require staff resources and a funding commitment from Council.

9.5.2. Entertainment

Narrabri Shire has successfully hosted several large entertainment events include the Daft Punk (4,000 people), Jimmy Barnes and Suzi Quatro Concerts. With the availability of the Crossing Theatre, the proposed amphitheatre in the Narrabri Tourism Precinct, other large outdoor venues (eg the Showgrounds) and potentially Yarrie Lake, there is capacity to grow this sector.

9.5.3. Sporting Events

Narrabri Shire has a strong sporting community and good sporting facilities. In the past, the Shire has been successful in attracting a range of regional and state sporting events, including mainstream sports (eg rugby and cricket).

Going forward, the Shire will struggle to attract mainstream sporting events. The competitive environment for these events has increased substantially with the larger regional cities and towns investing heavily in sporting infrastructure and offering significant financial incentives to attract regional, State and National events. Within the NE-NW region both Tamworth and Armidale Regional Councils are actively vying for the sports events market.

Narrabri Shire's strengths lie in:

- Horse events: racing, polocrosse, camp draft, rodeo, pony club and potentially trail rides and other events. Upgrading the stables and providing a covered arena at the Narrabri Showground would enable Narrabri to attract additional horse events;
- Motor sports: Newtown Park motoX, grass track and speedway, with forest areas potentially suitable for trail rides, rallying and enduro events;
- Cycling events: building on the Killarney Bike Classic and potentially introducing gravel grinding, mountain biking, audax and other cycling and cycling-related events.

9.5.4. Community / Tourism Events

The Shire's highest profile tourism events are Nosh Narrabri (biennial) and Boggabri Drover's Campfire. Drover's Campfire has won regional, State and National awards and has been successful at raising the profile of Boggabri, particularly amongst the touring caravan market. Wee Waa has introduced the Cotton Capital Country Music Muster as its signature event, however the Muster has struggled to gain traction. The inaugural 'Back to the Bri' festival (2019) was relatively successful and planning is underway for this to become an annual event.

9.5.5. Opportunities / Directions Forward

Opportunities to build both the events sector and events-based visitation include:

- Grow the business events sector, concentrating on attracting regional events and the association conference market;
- Leverage the Crossing Theatre and the Shire’s large outdoor venues to grow the entertainment market;
- ‘Refresh’ and ‘revamp’ existing events. This is particularly important for established events such as Drovers Campfire and the Cotton Capital Country Music Muster to continue to grow;
- Grow participation in and/or attendance at existing events. In addition to the support currently provided by the Narrabri Tourism Unit, there may also be opportunities to:
 - Raise the profile of the event within the surrounding region;
 - Direct market to special interest groups;
 - Package the event with other accommodation and/or activities in the Shire;
 - Package and direct market the event to coach wholesalers and/or coach companies that organise tours.
- Organise / attract events that leverage the Shire’s outdoor assets including its road network, river corridor, State Forests and Crown Reserves. Events could include road cycling, gravel grinding, trail running, long distance running, dirty-tri, adventure racing, orienteering, rogaining, a birding conference, music festival etc;
- Continue to improve event venues (see Section 10.2) and support and assist venue managers to:
 - Secure grant funding to improve their venues to enhance their capacity to attract and host events;
 - Bid for and/or organise events.
- Attract caravan and RV club chapter rallies and events: Utilising the showground infrastructure in Boggabri, Narrabri and Wee Waa and potentially Yarrie Lake;
- Attract 4WD, car and motorcycle club rallies and events;
- Identify and target footloose events that could be held in Narrabri Shire: bidding for events, as well as direct marketing the Shire’s venues to event organisers and promoters.

10. Infrastructure, Facilities and Services

Narrabri Shire will continue to ensure that its infrastructure, facilities and services have the capacity to facilitate and support growth in the visitor economy and meet the needs and expectations of travellers.

10.1. Accommodation

Narrabri Shire offers a diverse range of accommodation from quality, boutique properties to primitive camping areas. Many of the motel properties and some of the caravan parks within the Shire are tired and dated. The expected influx of construction workers over the next 5 years is likely to result in capacity constraints, particularly in Narrabri and Boggabri. With high occupancy rates, owners will be unlikely to take

rooms out of service to refurbish, which in the medium term will impact negatively on the Shire's competitiveness.

Opportunities / Directions Forward

- To encourage the expansion of the Civeo Villages to help meet the expected demand from construction workers, with the priority being to expand the Narrabri village;
- To encourage the development of 4 to 4.5 star motel and/or corporate hotel properties to meet the demand from the business sector. The proposed resources projects and the development of the Northern NSW Inland Port will result in increased business travel. Additional 4 to 4.5 star accommodation will also assist in growing business and entertainment events at the Crossing Theatre;
- To encourage older motel properties and caravan parks to upgrade rooms, sites and facilities to better meet market needs and expectations;
- To explore options to increase the capacity of the camping area at Pilliga, potentially opening up additional land for camping at the bore bath or providing another site in town or at Pilliga Lagoon;
- To increase the accommodation available at Yarrie Lake, potentially using the cricket ground for camping and providing glamping and/or cabins around the lake;
- To encourage on-farm accommodation, particularly on properties on the edge of the Mount Kaputar National Park. Accommodation could include camping areas, powered sites, glamping, conversion of farm buildings and/or bush cabins;
- To signpost and promote riverside camping areas in strategic locations;
- To provide direct access to the river foreshore from the Narrabri Big Sky Caravan Park, with the Park linked to the river foreshore walk, and if feasible, provide a fishing pontoon or jetty adjacent to the Park;
- To encourage all accommodation operators to improve their on-line presence, including having a contemporary website with on-line booking facilities. The websites need to promote the Shire's key attractions and provide a link to the visitnarrabri website.



10.2. Venues

Growing and capitalising on regional events and building the regional conference market are priorities of Destination NSW and the Destination Network. DNSW has in place regional conferencing and regional event strategies which are looking to build capacity and infrastructure in regional NSW. The DNCO DMP has identified the need to improve venue and event infrastructure in inland NSW.

As discussed in Section 9.5, events can be used to drive growth in visitation, with the Shire having the potential to grow business, entertainment and sporting events. Growing the events sector is dependent in part on upgrading venues and leveraging assets, such as the State Forests, to host events.

10.2.1. Business Events and Functions

The Crossing Theatre is the Shire's premier venue for conferences, meetings, functions and entertainment, providing contemporary facilities with a very attractive outlook. With 1,000 seats, the Theatre is one of the largest, non-club venues in regional NSW. The Theatre has an outdoor, serviced exhibition space which is ideal for festivals, markets and entertainment. The Narrabri Riverside Tourism Precinct will include an amphitheatre.

Each of the towns have licensed clubs with these providing basic auditoriums and/or meeting rooms. The Narrabri Bowling Club has on-site accommodation plus two motels close by, with the Narrabri RSL Club having a motel across the road. The Narrabri Golf Club is being progressively upgraded with the outdoor deck being popular for small functions. Upgrading (or replacing) the Club's auditorium could provide a large, quality function room with views over the golf course.

The recently re-furbished Tourist Hotel in Narrabri provides several small high-quality meeting and function spaces plus onsite accommodation, restaurant, bars and an outdoor stage and entertainment area. Craigdon provides a quality boutique function centre that specialises in weddings. The property has some accommodation, rendering it also suitable for small, high-end corporate retreats.

10.2.2. Sporting, Outdoor and Community Venues

The Shire has a range of sporting, outdoor and community venues that are suitable for events. Most of the venues are managed by community groups, with these groups largely relying on volunteers, fund-raising, and grants to maintain and improve facilities. There are also assets, such as the State Forests, State Conservation Area and Namoi River, that could be used for a diversity of outdoor events. The potential of the main outdoor venues and assets and the improvements needed are summarised in Table 10.1.

The Narrabri Showground is a major asset that has the potential to be used for a range of activities. The Showground has been developed on an ad hoc basis and presents poorly. Significant investment is required to improve facilities and infrastructure.

The Shire's showgrounds need websites, and all venues need to be marketed and promoted.



Motocross at the Newtown Motor Sports complex, Narrabri

Table 10.1 Sporting, Community and Outdoor Venues

Venue / Asset	Facilities	Events & Activities		Improvement Needed
		Existing	Potential	
Venues				
Narrabri Showground	Showring and stands, trotting track, sand arena, stables (including stables for overnight hire) and yards, large pavilions, basic catering facilities, powered and unpowered camp sites, canteen, showers and toilets	Show, Pony Club camps & events, Trotting / Harness Racing, Rodeo, Campdraft, Poultry Show, Team Penning, Functions (Pavilion), Camping, Circus	Additional horse and livestock events Carriage racing / pony cart racing Dog events Expos – eg caravan and camping show Caravan and RV rallies. Outdoor entertainment included conferences	Stables need to be upgraded / replaced. Possible eventing course on the nearby floodway Upgrade and potentially cover the area. Upgrade the trotting track and arena lighting as well as the general lighting throughout the venue Replace caretaker's residence New grandstand seating Replace perimeter fencing Upgrade showground entrance and install new boom gates and electronic ticketing infrastructure Improve internal roads and signage Upgrade toilet and shower facilities Improve landscaping
Narrabri Racecourse	Racetrack, Stands, area for corporate tents, polocrosse (in-field area)	Horse racing, polocrosse	Functions Horse events Drone events	Upgrade kitchen Re-roof the bar area Fit-out the new stable complex New grandstand Provide additional stables
Newtown Park Motor Sports Complex, Narrabri	Junior and senior motocross tracks, speedway track, pits, canteen, amenities, camping area	Motocross Grass track Speedway	State and open Motocross events Clinics Event staging	Improvements in track-side facilities including tiered seating and new canteen equipment Cement pad under the starting gates. Address issues with ARTC / Inland Rail
Wee Waa Showground / Cook Oval	Showground and stands, pavilion, stables and yards, pony club ground, powered and	Annual show, pony club camps and events, rodeo,	Additional horse and livestock events Dog events	Continue to upgrade facilities. Explore feasibility of establishing an eventing course





NARRABRI SHIRE
DISCOVER THE POTENTIAL

Venue / Asset	Facilities	Events & Activities		Improvement Needed
		Existing	Potential	
	unpowered camping sites, amenities. Indoor stadium (not used)	campdraft, camping, entertainment. Sport on Cook Oval	Outdoor music festivals and similar style events Small caravan and RV rallies Drone events Car and motorcycle club rallies	Explore potential for an artesian bore bath if Yarrie Lake does not proceed
Boggabri Showground	Showground and stands, pavilion, stables and yards, pony club ground, powered and unpowered camping sites, amenities	Drovers' Campfire event, Pony Club, campdraft, camping	Horse, livestock & dog events. Outdoor festivals and events Small caravan and RV rallies Car and motorcycle club rallies	Continue to upgrade facilities Perimeter tree planting to enhance the appeal of the area Turning lanes from the Kamilaroi Highway
Crossing Theatre Outdoor Exhibition Space – Narrabri Creek Forshore	Adjacent to the Crossing Theatre with access to CT facilities and services Power outlets in the Reserve Proposed amphitheatre	Entertainment, Nosh Narrabri, Carp Muster	Increased number of events and functions	Access to the rooms and facilities under the Crossing Theatre to provide indoor-outdoor space
Gwabegar Hall and Anzac Park	Hall, kitchen, amenities		Staging and camping area for forest events Base for 4WD club rallies Art / photography show	
Wee Wee Community Arts and Cultural Centre	Exhibition space	Venue still being established	Art and cultural exhibitions, entertainment and activities	
Outdoor Assets that could potentially be used to hold events				
Yarrie Lake	Powered and unpowered campsites, amenities, picnic shelters, boat ramp	Has hosted a bare foot ski event in the past, organised group picnics, triathlon With international standard water ski lakes near Moree, it is unlikely that Yarrie Lake will attract water ski events in the future	Triathlon and off-road triathlon, open water swimming Model boat activities If the Lake, Hall and cricket pitch area are combined, the precinct could be used for a variety of events including:	See Section 8.2.





NARRABRI SHIRE
DISCOVER THE POTENTIAL

Venue / Asset	Facilities	Events & Activities		Improvement Needed
		Existing	Potential	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger sporting events eg staging area for triathlon and off-road triathlon, AUDAX, orienteering, rogaining, mountain biking, gravel grinding, iron man, endurance and marathon events ect; • Model boat racing; • Social groups – eg Jeep Jamboree; • Social events, eg fun runs; • Weddings and functions; • Music concerts & entertainment; • Art shows and events; • Markets. 	
Narrabri Lake	Round-the-Lake shared pathway, picnic facilities, jetty, playground amenities	Community events	Entertainment (stage on the Lake) Model boat racing	Improved access to the river
Namoi River / Narrabri Creek	Various access points Facilities in the reserves at Narrabri Fishing Club facilities at Yellow Banks in Wee Waa	Narrabri Carp Muster Wee Waa Fishing Club events at Yellow Banks	Canoe events / adventure racing - when water levels are suitable	
Namoi River – Narrabri Creek Floodways	Large tracts of parkland and cleared land		Cross country running events (eg School zone and regional carnivals) Eventing course (horses)	Development of an eventing course, if feasible – linked to the Narrabri Showground





NARRABRI SHIRE
DISCOVER THE POTENTIAL

Venue / Asset	Facilities	Events & Activities		Improvement Needed
		Existing	Potential	
Mt Kaputar National Park – Barraba Track	Amenities in the summit precinct		Hill climb MTB event Across the Range MTB / Gravel Grind event	
State Forest	Forest Roads and Fire Trails, picnic and camping areas, facilities in Baradine, Pilliga and Gwabegar that can be used for event staging Facilities in Wee Waa to service the Cullagoora State Forest	Mountain bike event – Baradine to Dandry Gorge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motorsports – car rallies, motorcycle enduro, trials, motorcycle tours, 4WD activities; • Mountain bike events – including ultra and endurance events; • Off-road Audax; • Horse events – eg endurance rides; • Marathon; • Orienteering, regaining. 	Explore with Forestry Corporation of NSW opportunities to host events and activities in the State Forests
State Conservation Areas	Fire trails Mountain-bike trails in Bullawa Creek SCA	Mountain-biking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mountain-biking / gravel grinding; • Orienteering, regaining • Horse riding 	Explore with local MTB users and NPWS, the opportunities to provide basic facilities at Bullawa Creek and to develop the track network to enable events to be held
Road network	Killarney Gap and Kaputar Road are growing in popularity with cyclists Other roads in the Shire have been used for long distance cycle events plus time trials and criterium	Cycling training and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road cycling training and events; • Gravel grinding events; • Marathon – the distance between Narrabri and Wee Waa is ideal for a marathon; • Social events eg fun runs. 	



10.3. Information Services

Information services are integral in supporting visitation. These services are an important link between local businesses and visitors, support the Shire's marketing and promotion, and, most importantly, make a visitor feel welcome. Information needs to be available and readily accessible from a range of touch points and devices at all stages in the path to purchase, during the journey and at the destination (see Figure 10.1). Information services extend well beyond the visitor, with services provided to tourism and business operators, the travel trade, government agencies, tourism organisations and the local community.

10.3.1. Sourcing Information

Web and digital technology have and are continuing to change the way in which consumers access and share information, select destinations and products, and book travel. Travellers now have access to an exponentially increasing range of information sources through an expanding number of touch points. To remain competitive, Narrabri Shire needs to continue to expand its multiple channel use (traditional and online) to communicate targeted messages to consumers at each stage of the decision-making process.

On the downside, consumers have access to too much information creating a 'data surplus' and an 'insight deficit'. Consumers are increasingly relying on VIC staff to provide the 'insight'. The challenge for the Shire is to provide a range of information services that are authoritative, contemporary, comprehensive and unbiased, in a diverse range of formats that are responsive to individual needs.

Travellers are using multiple devices (referred to as 'cross platform') to research travel, with 89% of searches started on one device (frequently a smart phone and/or tablet) and completed on another. Most of the searches undertaken on mobile devices are 'micro minute' - short searches while people are waiting around (eg at the bus stop, on the train, in a cafe etc) with searchers primarily looking for 'inspiration'. At this stage, there is a very high propensity to view images, short videos (YouTube) and deals and offers.

94% of people are now travelling with one or more mobile devices²⁴ (90% with smartphones, 42% with tablets and 26% with laptops/notebooks). Amongst those travelling with mobile devices, nearly three-quarters (71%) used them to navigate, source travel information, and/or to make bookings during their stay. VICs (42%) and word-of-mouth referrals are leading sources of information while in-region.

Videos have become one of the most important promotional tools. Destination videos are primarily used during the 'Dreaming' stage when travellers are searching for ideas and destinations. 85% of travel-related searches on YouTube focus on destinations, attractions, points of interest and general travel ideas²⁵. Product (including accommodation) videos are more likely to be viewed during the planning stage when travellers are comparing products and prices. Travellers watch a mix of user generated and professionally made video clips. 58% of leisure travellers and 64% of business travellers advised that watching on-line videos influenced

²⁴ Mytravelresearch.com

²⁵ Travel Content Takes off on YouTube www.thinkwithgoogle.com.au

their choice of destination and/or products (eg accommodation, activities, tours) selected.

User Generated Content (USG), both as a communication tool and to share travel experiences, continues to increase. User generated content is broadly defined as any content (text, images, videos) posted on the web that is not published by a brand. It includes content such as blogs, comments, posts, forums, reviews, podcasts, videos and images, posted via on-line services, social media and content sharing sites. UGC provides another source of information, from a user perspective, with potential travellers interested in what other travellers have to say about a destination.

Figure 10.1 Information Sources used in the Path to Purchase and during the journey

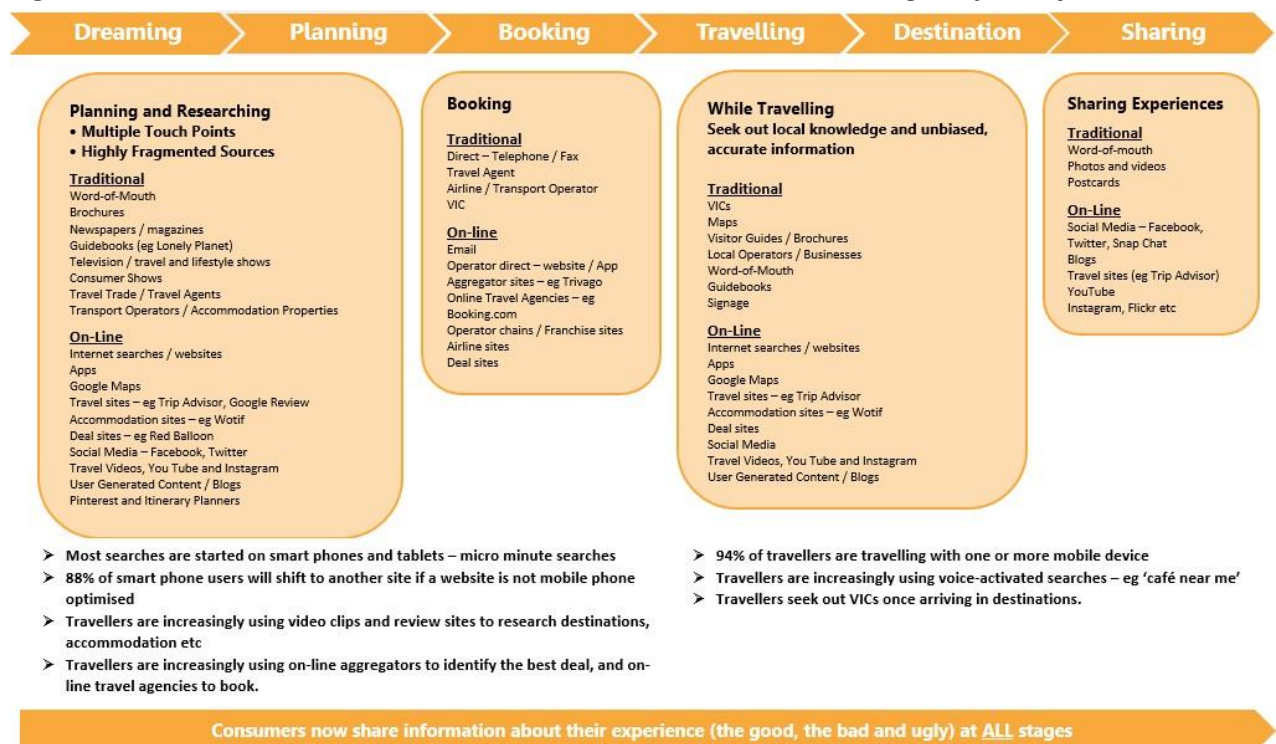
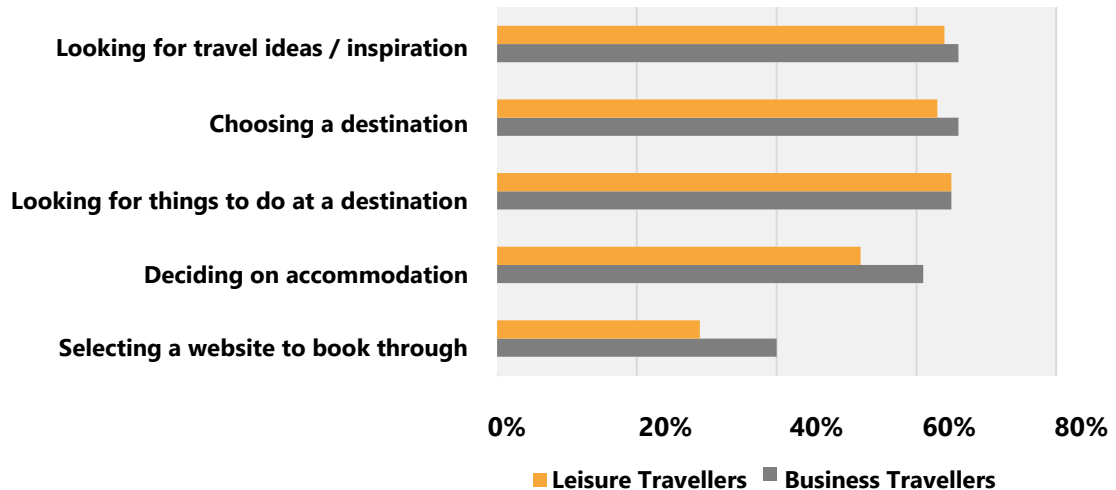


Figure 10.2 Use of on-line video clips (eg YouTube) in researching and planning trips



Source: Travel Content Takes off on YouTube www.thinkwithgoogle.com.au

10.3.2. Changing Nature of Information Services

As a result of the changing technology, the ‘back room’ activities for information service providers have increased significantly. Tourism organisations / VICs are increasingly employing people with strong digital and graphic design skills to leverage the digital space.

Research within Australia and internationally, has concluded that:

- The tourism website is now the most important information and marketing tool. The website has to be cross-platform (mobile, tablet, computer and in the future – smart watch) and voice optimised, and semantic search responsive and supported by and fully integrated with social media, with social media being used to ‘drive business’ to the website;
- Despite digital devices, travellers are still looking for contact with and recommendations from locals, as well as print- based information – maps, visitor guides, information sheets;
- Visitor Information Centres are and will remain a significant in-region touch point for visitors, bringing visitors into contact with what the area has to offer – providing visitors with the information, advice and services needed to enhance their visit and encourage them to spend more time and money within the area. VICs are also an integral part of the marketing, distribution and sales process. The key attributes that VICs bring to this process is their ability to:
 - Inspire - to match visitor needs with local experiences in a friendly, professional manner and create a ‘wow’ factor for visitors;
 - Make sense of the vast amount of information that is available – removing uncertainty and confusion;
 - Deliver current, comprehensive and, most importantly, unbiased information.

VIC’s also have a significant role in keeping visitors ‘safe’, being the ‘go to’ places for information during

natural disasters as well as providing information on road conditions, 'safe' places to leave vehicles or camp etc.

- **The 'next generation' of VICs²⁶ will:**
 - Continue to evolve to provide an extraordinary experience, including telling inspiring stories;
 - Continue to deliver a high level of customer service underpinned by a wealth of local knowledge;
 - Provide information at all stages of the trip planning, booking and travel phases – using a range of communication media, channels and touch points;
 - Deliver their visitor guide, maps and other key information in both print and digital format;
 - Provide opportunities for booking accommodation and tours;
 - Offer free Wi-Fi and have information available digitally through a variety of mediums. This will be supported by spaces within VICs where visitors can sit and spend time using their own digital device;
 - Provide information on a 24 hour basis through a number of touch points – eg static information displays, touch screens, web, Apps, QR codes etc;
 - Integrate the use of technology (eg touch screens, tablets, augmented and virtual reality, soundscapes etc) into how information is displayed and presented. Tablets are proving very popular within VICs, allowing staff and visitors to search for information, communicate with non-English speaking visitors, book on-line and transfer information digitally to the consumer's smart phone or tablet.

10.3.3. Information Services in Narrabri Shire

Information services in Narrabri Shire are co-ordinated and delivered by the Narrabri Visitor Information Centre. Working with the VIC, information is also available through local businesses in Boggabri and Wee Waa, with information directories located in each of the towns and villages. The visitnarrabri website and facebook page and the Narrabri Visitor Guide (available electronically and in print) are the primary communication tools. The Narrabri VIC has in place a social media strategy which aims to:

- Increase brand awareness outside of Narrabri Shire – building the reputation of the Narrabri Region Destination Brand;
- Increase social community engagement;
- Drive traffic to the visitnarrabri.com.au / explore narrabri.com.au websites.

Wee Waa has a website (weewaa.com) and facebook page which provides information on Wee Waa, Pilliga and Gwabegar.

The Narrabri VIC is well located and highly visible. In addition to delivering information, the VIC is an 'experience' providing access to a cotton picker, showcasing agricultural activities and the Shires key attractions, delivering 'Kamilaroi Stories' and displaying and selling local and regional produce and products. The Centre provides Narrabri with a quality attraction. The proposed Riverside Tourism Precinct project and electric vehicle charging station will further strengthen the Centre and could provide opportunities for e.bike hire.

²⁶ Australia's Accredited VICs : A Strategic Directions Discussion Paper

The Narrabri VIC is part of the way to becoming a 'next generation' VIC. Opportunities to enhance the experiences offered, tell additional stories and expand the service delivery include:

- Enhancing the agricultural displays through digital technology. For example: a virtual reality experience in the cotton picker; providing video clips of growing and harvesting activities; providing a virtual tour of a cotton gin; showcasing the research institutions;
- Establishing a mining display and using virtual reality to take visitors down the Narrabri Underground mine and into one of the open cut pits;
- Showcasing the Shire's other industries and activities: gas (if the Narrabri Gas project proceeds), solar and transport and logistics sectors (Inland Rail, new Port, handling and transport of various commodities – including the intermodal terminals);
- Telling the Australian Wildlife Conservancy story – utilising the video clips and other information available from AWC;
- Providing 'virtual' access to remote, inaccessible areas of the Shire – eg the wilderness areas in the Mount Kaputar National Park;
- Continuing to build on 'Kamilaroi Stories' to provide an insight into the Shire's Aboriginal heritage and culture;
- Installation of charging stations for digital devices.

10.3.4. Directions Forward

- To continue to expand the range of information available, including information on individual activities (bushwalks, mountain bike trails, areas to canoe etc (see Section 9.4.2);
- Continue to build the Shire's on-line presence, including implementing the social media strategy;
- Evolve the Narrabri VIC into a 'next generation' centre, focusing on enhancing and expanding the displays, increased use of digital technology to tell 'stories' and provide experiences;
- Implement the Narrabri Tourism Precinct project to consolidate and strengthen the VIC precinct as Narrabri's primary attraction.



The Cotton Picker in the Narrabri VIC would be ideal for an immersive virtual reality experience.

10.4. Access Infrastructure

10.4.1. Roads

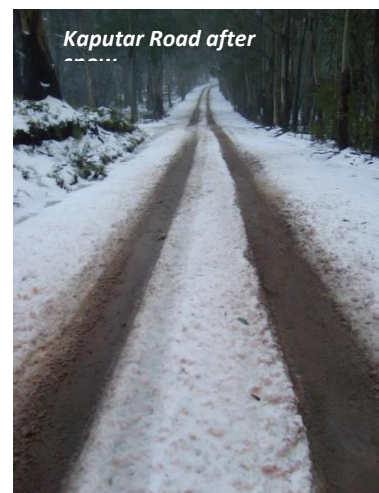
Roads are critical infrastructure for tourism, providing access to and through the Shire. They also form part of the attraction (scenic drives) and activity (eg cycle tourism) base of the Shire and can be used to stage events. As such, the role that the road network plays in tourism needs to be taken into consideration in Council and RMS decision-making. Within the Shire, roads that are significant for tourism include:

Roads Feeding into the Shire:

- Newell Highway (SH 17);
- Kamilaroi Highway (SH 29);
- State Tourist Route 3 incorporating Killarney Gap Road (MR 133);
- Cypress Way – also known as the Baradine – Pilliga Road (MR329);
- The Black Stump Way – Grain Valley Road (RR 7709);
- Rangari Road – also known as the Boggabri-Manilla Road (MR 357);
- Pilliga – Coonamble Road (MR 383);
- Bugilbone Road (Burren Junction to Pilliga);
- Come-by-Chance Road (RR7716)

Internal Roads:

- Yarrie Lake Road (SR 29);
- Pilliga Road (MR 127);
- Kaputar Road (SR 5) – provides access to the Mount Kaputar National Park summit precinct;
- Eulah Creek (SR6) and Carinya (SR143) Roads – provides access to Deriah Aboriginal Area;
- Dripping Rock Road (SR 27) – provides access to Dripping Rock



Priorities

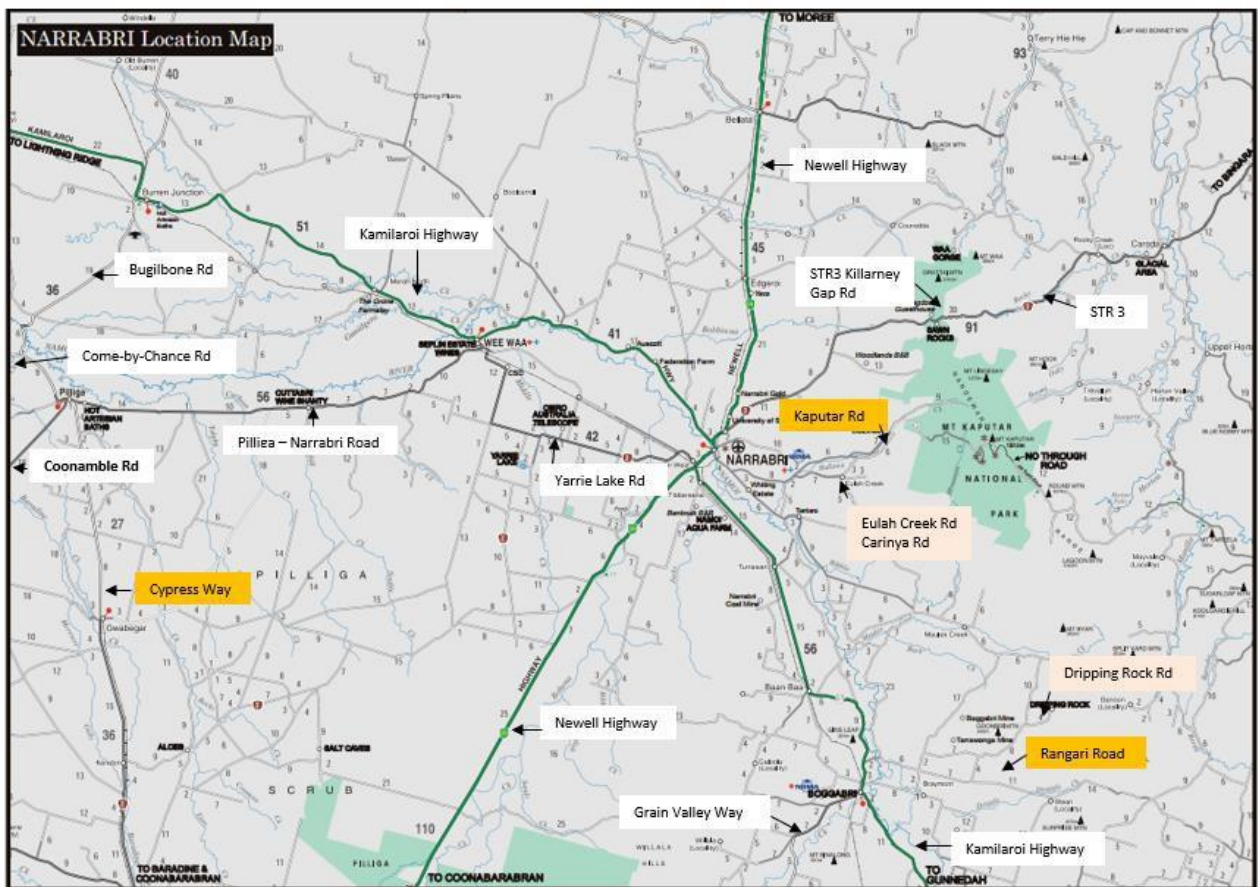
From a tourism perspective the priorities for sealing are:

- Cypress Way – completing the seal from Gwabegar to Pilliga;
- Kaputar Road;
- Rangari Road.

Access also needs to be upgraded to:

- Dripping Rock (Dripping Rock Road);
- Deriah Aboriginal Area (Carinya Road).

Figure 10.3 Significant Roads for Tourism, showing priorities for sealing (dark yellow) and upgrading (light yellow)



10.4.2. Rail

There is potential to leverage the passenger rail services to grow visitation to Narrabri. As such Council and the Community need to continue to advocate for the retention of passenger rail services.

10.4.3. Air Services

Narrabri Airport is critical infrastructure for business travel, with business travellers using both RPT services and charter flights. The Airport is also an enabler for business and entertainment events, with the retention and expansion of RPT services essential for growing these activities. Narrabri Shire Council has recently upgraded the runway and other air-side facilities to increase capacity to take more flights and larger planes. The landside facilities are too small for the current volume of use and struggle to meet security requirements.

Priority

To redevelop the landside infrastructure at Narrabri Airport, including providing a new passenger terminal and larger car park, as per the Narrabri Airport Masterplan recommendations.



10.5. Signage

Signage plays a significant role in how an area presents. It also forms part of the visitor information services infrastructure and is a significant marketing and promotional tool. Within the Shire, Council is responsible for signage on Council controlled roads and in the public domain, while Roads & Maritime Services (RMS) is responsible for Highway signage.

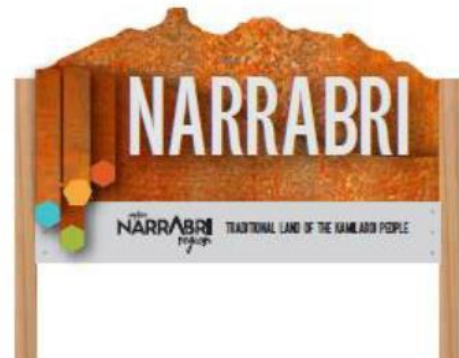
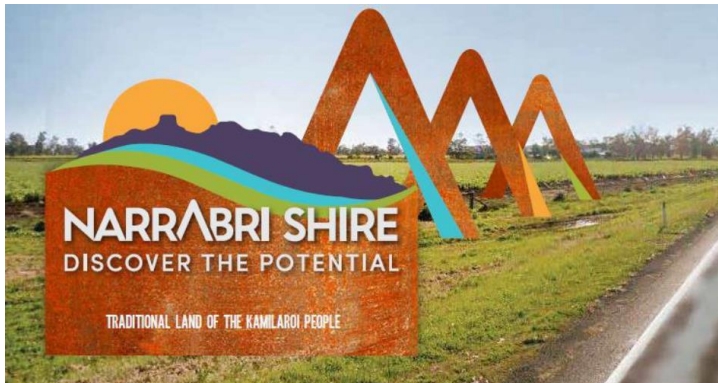
To be effective, the signage needs to be comprehensive and integrated at all levels, namely:

- **Motivational and promotional signage** – to raise the profile of the area, develop brand / image recognition and to make travellers aware of the area and the attractions and facilities on offer. Billboards can be effective if well designed (eg quality images) and maintained. Council needs to explore opportunities for billboard signage on the Kamilaroi and Newell Highway corridors;
- **Gateway signs** – important in creating a sense of arrival, making a visitor feel welcome and reinforcing the Shire's brand. Council is in the process of providing new gateway entry signs for the Shire and each of the towns and villages, with the signage reflecting the skyline of the Nandewar Range / Mt Kaputar area (see below);
- **Information signs / directories** – on arrival in a new area, visitors tend to look for the Visitor Information Centre 'i' signs and roadside information directories. While the Narrabri VIC is well signposted and visible to Highway travellers, there is some confusion about the entry and exit driveways to the Centre. This will be addressed as part of the Narrabri Tourism Precinct improvements;

Information directories are located in each of the towns and villages. While informative, these signs are relatively small and not highly visible. There is no signage directing travellers to these directories. Information directories can be signposted (using the white and blue 'i' signs, provided that the signs incorporate the information outlined in the RMS Tourist Signposting Guidelines for 'non-accredited visitor information services' (Section 2.5.2 of the Guidelines).

- **Directional signage** – the primary purpose is to ensure that travellers can find their way easily. Directional signage also provides re-assurance and reinforces the motivational signage by creating the perception that the area has 'a lot to offer'. There is a need to update directional signage to and throughout the Shire, including signposting Yarrie Lake and river access points. The directional signage needs to include advance warning signs, so that travellers, particularly caravanners, have time to process the information and make a decision;
- **Service & facility signs** – international symbols for public toilets, accommodation, camping areas, car and caravan parking etc. Fingerboard signs are not as effective as the symbols. There needs to be a program in place to progressively replace fingerboard signs with international symbols and to ensure that all facilities are signposted. Signage on the entry corridors to the towns and villages should include symbols of the facilities and services available. With caravanners and RVs being a significant market for the Shire, it is important that the caravan parks, camping areas, dump points and caravan parking areas are well signposted;

- **Interpretive signage / information** – this is particularly important at attractions that are not staffed;
- **Event signage** – frames / hanging points, where event organisers can advertise their events, with this infrastructure strategically located so that it is visible to both local residents and passing traveller.



10.6. Telecommunications

Most visitors are now travelling with a smart phone and generally with a Tablet and/or lap-top computer. There is also increasing use of ‘wearable’ technology (eg smart watches) which are being used to access information. Visitors are highly dependent on access to the mobile telephone network and are increasingly expecting free WiFi to be offered by the VIC, accommodation properties, cafes and other businesses.

Each of the towns and villages within the Shire have 4G mobile phone coverage on both the Telstra and Optus networks. Between the towns and villages, coverage along the Highway and regional road corridors is patchy, with a mix of black spots and 3G and 4G services. There is virtually no coverage along Grain Valley Way, Cypress Way and within the Pilliga Forest.

The NBN is available in the Narrabri, Boggabri and Wee Waa urban areas, with satellite access in the rural areas.

Directions Forward

Visitation to the Pilliga Forest will increase significantly if the Narrabri Gas Project proceeds, with more traffic, including truck traffic, on the Forest roads. For safety purposes, mobile coverage within the Forest and along Cypress Way needs to be improved.



11. Industry Development

The marketplace is evolving, and tourism and business operators need to keep abreast of changes. In particular, tourism and business operators need to be highly active in the digital space, with this space used to communicate, build relationships, market and promote, and 'make the sale'. Tourism operators need to be responsive to changing needs and expectations, recognising that customers are becoming more sophisticated and demanding and less tolerant of inferior customer service. The retail community needs to recognise the importance of the presentation of both their shop front and merchandise. It is also essential that retailers and service providers have a strong online presence as travellers looking for goods and services are increasingly searching on-line. Narrabri Shire needs an on-line business directory so that all businesses have a basic on-line presence.

Council has recently appointed a Small Business Liaison Officer to deliver a range of industry development and marketing initiatives including organising business networking and show-casing events.

Directions Forward

- To develop an on-line business directory for the Shire;
- To generate publicity about activities and successes of Council's industry and development and marketing initiatives and showcase local innovative businesses and business operators, to encourage more businesses to participate, evolve and grow.



12. Marketing & Promotion

Destination development needs to be supported by effective destination marketing.

12.1. Marketing undertaken by Narrabri Shire

The destination marketing of Narrabri Shire is undertaken by Council's Tourism Unit with marketing and promotional activities including:

- Producing and distributing information and promotional collateral, including the Narrabri Region Visitors Guide;
- On-line marketing through the visitnarrabri tourism website, facebook and other social media;
- Listing and updating the Shire's products, experiences, events and business content on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse / NSW Get Connected data bases that underpin the Destination NSW – visitnsw and regional conferences and websites;
- Cooperative marketing with touring route promotions groups: Newell Highway, Kamilaroi Highway, Nature's Way and the Great Artesian Drive. This includes on-line marketing and exhibiting at travel shows in NSW, Victoria and Queensland;
- Co-operative activities with Destination NSW and other partners, leveraging opportunities as they arise;
- Supporting local events, including marketing and promoting these events both on-line and through local and regional media channels;
- Public relations marketing - endeavouring to generate media and industry exposure for the Shire – press releases and media interviews, capitalising on events and activities;
- Feature articles accompanied by advertising in key publications – eg the Open Road; CMCA's Wanderer magazine; regional Lifestyle magazines. This is a challenge to secure as most of the publications are looking for local businesses to take out paid advertisements to support the feature article;
- Hosting familiarisation tours for journalists and social media 'influencers', with the activities generally organised through Destination NSW;
- Direct marketing to special interest groups.

While the approach has been basically sound, the expected impact of Covid 19 on travel, combined with the changes occurring in the market place, will require a more strategic approach to marketing incorporating a stronger focus on digital marketing including social media and targeted marketing focused on special interest and activity-based markets.

12.2. Marketing Directions

- Review marketing directions and strategies to leverage Covid 19 related travel opportunities and shifts in the market;

- Increase the focus on-line marketing activities to build destination awareness, communicate directly with key target markets and to harness user-generated content. In addition to implementing the Tourism Social Media Strategy, the Tourism Unit and Small Business Liaison Officer need to encourage tourism and business operators, community organisations and event organisers to develop /update their websites, embrace social media and to list on relevant free directories and third party websites;
- Continue to participate in the cooperative marketing of the touring routes that feed into and through the Shire. The completion of the sealing of Grain Valley Way provides the opportunity to work with the LGAs along the route to 're- launch' the Black Stump Way as a touring route to generate benefits for the small towns and villages along the route. Likewise, when Cypress Way is sealed, Narrabri should work with Warrumbungle Shire to promote this route, with the Cypress Way then linked east (via Pilliga Road) to link-up with Nature's Way;
- Increase marketing and PR activities within the surrounding region (3 hours' drive) to grow the regional day trip, VFR and short-breaks markets;
- Undertake targeted direct marketing and promotional activities to grow the:
 - Touring caravan and RV markets;
 - Conference market;
 - Event markets;
 - Special interest and activity-based markets: cycling, bushwalking, horse riding, birdwatching, motorcycling, off- road driving etc.

Targeting these markets will require the production of activity-based promotional material and supporting information.



2021 – 2025

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Volume 2



Narrabri Region Strategic Action Plan



13. Priorities, Strategies & Actions

13.1. Vision

A strong, diversified and sustainable visitor economy, that delivers significant social and economic benefits for the Shire community. Leveraging its spectacular landforms, national parks and forests, star-studded dark skies, and rivers and waterways, Narrabri Shire will be a destination of choice for outdoor, soft adventure and nature-based activities – a place to escape to; a place to explore.

13.2. Strategic Priorities

Strategic priorities are:

Priority 1	Continue to develop and promote the touring routes that feed into Narrabri Shire
Priority 2	Strengthen the Shire's towns and the villages as both destinations and service centres
Priority 3	Strengthen and build the Shire's hero products and experiences
Priority 4	Continue to develop and improve supporting attractions and activities
Priority 5	Ensure that the infrastructure, facilities and services needed to support growth of the visitor economy are in place
Priority 6	Continue to build industry capacity
Priority 7	Market growth and development supported by effective marketing and promotion

13.3. Strategies and Actions

Priority 1: Continue to develop and promote the touring routes that feed into Narrabri Shire

Narrabri Shire's visitor economy is highly dependent on highway travellers and passing traffic, with leisure travellers primarily visiting the Shire enroute to other destinations. The touring caravan and RV market is a significant and growing market for the Shire. While the majority of travellers arrive in the Shire via the Newell and Kamlaroi Highways, the Shire is seeing an increase in travellers on Nature's Way (STR3) and arriving in the Shire via Pilliga village.

Goals:

1. Strengthen and consolidate the Shire's position on existing touring routes.
2. Develop new touring routes that feed into the Shire to encourage visitors to explore the Shire.
3. Continue to improve infrastructure to support the drive tourism market (see Priority 5).

Priority 1: Continue to develop and promote the touring routes that feed into Narrabri Shire		
Actions	Key Tasks	
Strategy 1: Continue to develop and promote the routes that feed into Narrabri Shire as touring routes.		
1.2. Build visitor traffic on the Newell Highway	1.2.1.	Advocate for changes in how the Newell Highway is marketed, exploring options to 'cluster' the products and experiences available within the Highway corridor to appeal to specific market segments (eg travelling with kids,).
	1.2.2.	Change how Narrabri Shire is positioned on the Newell Highway – focus on outdoor, nature-based and soft adventure activities rather than the towns, good sporting facilities and a great way of life – invite travellers to spend multiple days in the Shire.
1.3. Continue to develop products and experiences along the Kamilaroi Highway corridor	1.3.1.	Implement the Kamilaroi Highway DMP strategies and actions relevant to Narrabri Shire, with the priority being the development of the Namoi River corridor and activity-based trails.
1.4. Continue to develop Nature's Way (STR3) – to tap into the NSW North Coast and South East Queensland markets.	1.4.1.	Ensure that the route and the attractions along the route are effectively signposted, including exploring options for information directories and directional signage at strategic locations (eg Sawn Rocks).
	1.4.2.	Progressively post route information on relevant tourism, drive touring and caravan and camping websites and link to key sites where possible.
	1.4.3.	Endeavour to have Nature's Way included on regional and touring route maps (eg Cartoscope).
	1.4.4.	Leverage the spectacular landforms and stunning scenery along the route to advocate for the route's inclusion as one of DNSW's 'Natural Wonders' Road Trips.
	1.4.5.	Link Nature's Way through the Shire to Cypress Way and onto the Warrumbungle National Park to encourage travellers to traverse the Shire.
	1.4.6.	Explore options to tap into the New England region motorcycle touring market.
	1.4.7.	Explore options to tap into the NSW North Coast and South East Queensland markets.

Priority 2: Strengthen the Shire's towns and villages as both destinations and service centres

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

who are looking to relocate to and/or invest in the area, with tourism being an important driver of the 'tree change' process.

Goals:

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

Priority 2: Strengthen the Shire's towns and villages as both destinations and service centres		
Actions	Key Tasks	
Strategy 2: Position Narrabri as the gateway to Mount Kaputar National Park and the hub of the Narrabri Region		
2.1. Continue to improve the presentation of the gateway arrival points and entry corridors.	2.1.1.	Install new gateway entry signs and ensure that they are well maintained.
	2.1.2.	Remove / replace tired and/or dated signs in the entry corridors.
	2.1.3.	Undertake / improve landscaping – adopting a unifying theme along the corridor.
	2.1.4.	Assess opportunities for public art installations to create points of interest.
	2.1.5.	Improve / update directional and facility signage within the entry corridors.
2.2. Strengthen the link between Narrabri and the Mount Kaputar National Park	2.2.1.	Explore options for raising the profile of the Mount Kaputar National Park on the approaches to Narrabri (eg signage, billboard advertising)
	2.2.2.	Communicate the gateway positioning in information and marketing and promotional collateral.
	2.2.3.	Leverage snow events to generate publicity for the town and park.
	2.2.4.	Capitalise on the unique pink slug.
	2.2.5	Leverage the restrictions on taking caravans into the Park to encourage caravanners to overnight in Narrabri.
2.3. Develop the river corridor into a significant tourist attraction and recreational asset	2.3.1.	Implement the Narrabri Tourism Precinct Masterplan.
	2.3.2	Extend riverside walkways and cycleways to link with the Riverside Caravan Park, RSL Club, cycleway to the Civeo Village, shopping centre and Golf Club.
	2.3.3.	Use art installations to tell 'stories' and create points of interest.

Priority 2: Strengthen the Shire's towns and villages as both destinations and service centres			
Actions		Key Tasks	
		2.3.4.	Provide a strong, safe attractive link between the tourism precinct and the town centre.
2.4. Evolve the town centre into a lifestyle precinct		2.4.1.	Formulate and implement a retail marketing strategy to 're-launch' and activate the town centre when the streetscaping is completed.
		2.4.2.	Encourage and support property owners and businesses to improve the presentation of their buildings and shop fronts.
		2.4.3.	Continue to encourage on-street trading and attractive signs, flags etc to activate the footpath by adding colour and movement.
		2.4.4.	Endeavour to increase the visibility of the town's cafes and restaurants.
		2.4.5.	Explore options for temporary and permanent art installations.
2.5. Consolidate the Narrabri VIC as a key attraction and service node			See Action 18.1.
2.6. Ensure that Narrabri remains caravan, RV and long rig friendly.		2.6.1.	Provide ease of access to and sufficient caravan and long rig parking within the VIC – Tourism Precinct, maximising the number of drive-through sites.
		2.6.2.	Signpost the availability of caravan and long-rig parking at the VIC, from strategic locations within the town centre and along the Highway corridor.
		2.6.3.	Explore options to provide designated, signposted long rig parking spots near supermarkets.
2.7. Partner with the business community to drive growth in patronage		2.7.1.	Provide opportunities for business owners and staff to network and up-skill, with the focus on digital marketing, window dressing and merchandise displays and customer service.
		2.7.2.	To encourage activation of the main street through footpath dining and trading; temporary and permanent art installations; events; and promotional activities.
		2.7.3.	Market and promote the centre and the services available – to locals, visitors and regional residents.
Strategy 3: Position Wee Waa as the service centre for the western side of the Shire			
<i>The focus for Wee Waa needs to be catering for the touring market particularly the caravans and long rigs, encouraging visitors into the town centre; further developing its attraction base; and growing its events sector. The promotion of the Kamilaroi Highway as a touring route, the development of the Pilliga Forest as an attraction, and the growing awareness and popularity of the bore baths at Burren Junction and Pilliga are resulting in growth in the touring market, in particular the caravan and campervan market. For the touring market the first impressions of Wee Waa will be critical, with the decision to stop largely influenced by the presentation of the town. The establishment of artesian baths at Yarric Lake and/or in Wee Waa would be a 'game changing' project.</i>			
3.1. Encourage travellers to venture into, stop and explore the town centre		3.1.1.	Continue to improve the overall presentation of the town, concentrating on the gateways entry points and corridors and the buildings and businesses within the town centre. As part of the improvements, explore options for creating a point of difference through public art and/or landscaping (eg themed plantings town-wide).

Priority 2: Strengthen the Shire's towns and villages as both destinations and service centres	
Actions	Key Tasks
	3.1.2. Improve the Rose Street - Maitland Street – Kamilaroi Highway intersection to encourage travellers into Rose Street: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove or reduce the height of the speed bump (deterrent for caravans); Create a visual stimulus that attracts attention. Possible improvements could include landscaped 'blisters', centre-line tree planting, flags, and/or public art.
	3.1.3. Provide signage to the facilities in Dangar Park for travellers arriving in Wee Waa from the west - possibly placing a sign below the town centre sign at Church Street to direct travellers looking for toilets etc to stay on the Highway and turn into George Street.
	3.1.4. Encourage businesses along the Kamilaroi Highway corridor to improve their presentation.
	3.1.5. Sign-post caravan and long rig parking sites in the town centre from the town entry points.
	3.1.6. Endeavour to raise the visibility of the information directory in Dangar Park - adding 'i' signs to the facility signs on the Highway.
3.2. Improve directional signage to tourist attractions	3.2.1. Remove out of date and damaged signs (eg winery signs).
	3.2.2. Provide directional signage to Yarrie Lake and the Australia Telescope from the Kamilaroi Highway.
3.3. Work with the Wee Waa community to improve local attractions and visitor facilities	3.3.1. Explore options for telling the cotton story in Wee Waa, possibly through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public art / interpretation in the town centre; Digital technology / virtual reality; Re-introduction of cotton tours; Embracing the Cotton Fibre Expo and growing this into a signature event.
	3.3.2. Develop the Wee Waa Community Arts and Cultural Centre into a quality attraction for the town.
	3.3.3. Encourage and support initiatives by the Wee Waa LALC to develop Aboriginal attractions and activities.
	3.3.4. Work with the Wee Waa LALC to improve vehicle access to and facilities at the Tulladunna Reserve.
	3.3.5. Support Wee Waa Fishing Club initiatives to improve the Yellow Banks area.
	3.3.6. Improve the presentation of and facilities at the Wee Waa Lagoon reserve - progressively implement the recommendations of the Plan of Management, including a levee bank walk.

Priority 2: Strengthen the Shire's towns and villages as both destinations and service centres		
Actions	Key Tasks	
	3.3.7.	Signpost river access points in and around Wee Waa.
	3.3.8.	Assist the Namoi Echo Museum to secure grant funding to continue to improve their presentation and exhibits.
	3.3.9.	Investigate the feasibility of establishing a hot artesian bore bath in Wee Waa.
	3.3.10.	Continue to upgrade the Wee Waa Showground and endeavour to increase the use of the venue.
	3.3.11.	Improve the accommodation offer: encourage the refurbishment / upgrade of existing properties and/or the development of new accommodation.
3.4. Build the events sector	3.4.1.	Assess opportunities to grow, diversify and/or value-add to existing events.
	3.4.2.	Explore options for introducing new events eg a marathon between Narrabri and Wee Waa.
3.5. Raise the profile of the town within the region	3.5.1.	Endeavour to include information on the services available in Wee Waa on information directories at Yarrie Lake, the bore baths at Pilliga and Burren Junction.
	3.5.2.	Provide information on the services available in Wee Waa in promotional material produced for Gwabegar, Pilliga and Yarrie Lake.
Strategy 4: Position Boggabri as the southern gateway to the Shire		
<i>Boggabri has the 'raw' assets available to build its tourism sector. The touring caravan and motorhome market is the 'best fit' with the products and experiences available. Boggabri is also well located to become a day trip destination for visitors staying in Narrabri and Gunnedah. Touring traffic on the Kamilaroi Highway is increasing, with Boggabri facing the challenge of how to draw these travellers off the Highway into the town centre. Completing the sealing of Grain Valley Way will also bring more travellers through the town. The focus needs to be on the continual improvement of the presentation of the town including strengthening the link between the Highway and the shopping centre, improving the attraction base of the area – with one or more 'iconic' attraction images linked with Boggabri.</i>		
4.1. Encourage visitors to stop in and explore Boggabri – drawing travellers off the Kamilaroi Highway into the town centre	4.1.1.	Continue to improve the presentation and visual impact of the gateway entry points into Boggabri – gateway signage and landscaping. Explore options for incorporating some form of public art reflecting the Drivers' Campfire.
	4.1.2.	Continue with the corridor and street tree planting, concentrating initially on the gateway corridor, Kamilaroi Highway corridor and the streets feeding into the shopping centre. A number of tree species have been used in the past, and future planting should endeavour to 'tie' these together.
	4.1.3.	Explore the possibility of 'themed' planting in the town centre, parks and at the gateway entry points. (For example, Rydal near Lithgow has planted out their village and approach roads with daffodils, with the village now having an annual daffodil festival. Goulburn and Molong have both used roses in their landscaping, with Goulburn having a rose festival).

Priority 2: Strengthen the Shire's towns and villages as both destinations and service centres		
Actions	Key Tasks	
	4.1.4.	Implement the Merton Street Project improve the presentation of the shopping centre. Support this with attractive landscaping and continuing to improve the presentation of the buildings and businesses.
	4.1.5.	Continue to develop Federation Centenary Park as a feature for the town. Explore options for providing a strong visual and pedestrian link between the Kamilaroi Highway and the shopping centre. Consideration should be given to having an 'eye-catching' feature in the Park - something that visitors will stop to take a photo of (and once out of their car, can be tempted through to the main street). A display of large tyres from mining vehicles could provide a photo opportunity.
	4.1.6.	Ensure that accommodation properties are well signposted (using international icons) along the Highway corridor and for travellers arriving on Grain Valley Way.
4.2. Gear up for an increase in travellers arriving via Grain Valley Way	4.2.1.	Up-date directional and facility signage to meet the needs of travellers arriving in town via Grain Valley Way.
4.3. Encourage the touring caravan and motorhome market to overnight in Boggabri	4.3.1.	Ensure that Boggabri Caravan Park and the Showground camping area are well signposted from the Kamilaroi Highway and Grain Valley Way.
	4.3.2.	Explore options for introducing on-line bookings for the Boggabri Caravan Park.
	4.3.3.	Signpost camp sites (eg Barbers Lagoon) in the area surrounding Boggabri.
4.4. Strengthen and enhance the town's attractions	4.4.1.	Leverage the iconic landforms and landscapes in the Boggabri area (see Strategy 8).
	4.4.2.	Work with Gunnedah Shire tourism unit to develop a touring taking in the Boonalla Aboriginal Area (Kelvin State Forest), north along the Kelvin Valley to the Manilla Road, west to Dripping Rock, Barber's Lagoon, Gin's Leap to Boggabri and then returning to Gunnedah via the Kamilaroi Highway and Gulligal Lagoon.
	4.4.3.	Signpost access points to the Namoi River, Iron Bridge, Cox's Creek and Barber's Lagoon.
4.5. Continue to grow local events	4.5.1.	Continue to support the Boggabri community in growing and sustaining the Drovers' Campfire event and Boggabri Camp Draft.
	4.5.2.	Explore options for growing / value-adding to the Wean Picnic Races.
	4.5.3.	Continue to improve facilities at, access to (highway turning lanes) and the presentation of, Boggabri Showground and promote the venue to potential users.

Priority 2: Strengthen the Shire's towns and villages as both destinations and service centres			
Actions		Key Tasks	
		4.5.4.	Explore options for introducing new events: eg gravel grinding event on the unsealed roads in the Boggabri district.
Strategy 5: Encourage travellers to stop, explore and spend in the villages			
5.1. Improve the presentation of the villages.		5.1.1.	In conjunction with the village communities, formulate and implement an improvement plan for each village, with the Plan addressing presentation and including both tourism and community / lifestyle initiatives.
5.2. Promote the facilities and services available		5.2.1.	Erect blue and white facility (icon) signs on the approaches to each village.
5.3. Consolidate Pilliga's position as the western gateway to the Shire		5.3.1.	Work with the Pilliga community, to formulate and implement a masterplan to address capacity constraints in the Pilliga bore bath precinct.
		5.3.2.	Explore opportunities for telling Pilliga's stories: the Minnom Mission; the hawkers of the Pilliga; the sawmill industry; the history of the village and 'yowie' sightings.
		5.3.4.	Continue to develop and promote the activities that can be undertaken in and around Pilliga – fishing, canoeing, cycling – mountain biking – gravel grinding, bird-watching, brumby viewing etc.
		5.3.5.	Signpost Lagoon and river access points.
		5.3.6.	Work with Arts North West to explore opportunities to bring together the artists and artisan of the Pilliga district to create a new attraction / experience for the village.
5.4. Build visitation to Baan Baa – leveraging the accommodation available at the hotel		5.4.1.	Encourage the hotel operator to list the property on accommodation and pub hotel websites.
		5.4.2.	Promote the hotel as suitable for small groups – eg motorcycle groups, trail biker riders, fishing clubs.
		5.4.3.	Promote the Namoi River and Pillage East Forest as part of Baan Baa's attraction base. Include information on the Pilliga East Forest and the fishing spots along the Namoi River on the Baan Baa information Directory by using another panel hung below the existing panel and/or providing information that the Hotelier could display at the Hotel (eg in the car park).
5.5. Promote Gwabegar as a destination within the Pilliga Forest		5.5.1.	List and promote the Gwabegar Hall as an event venue and a potential staging area for forest events.
		5.5.2.	Promote Gwabegar to social groups (eg 4WD clubs, touring trail bikes, bird watchers) encouraging them to camp in the village and utilise the hall for social activities.
		5.5.3.	Raise the profile of the village through social media – encouraging posts of the round-about, koala sightings, birds and wildflowers of the area and yowie 'sightings'.

Priority 3: Strengthen and build the Shire's hero products and experiences

The Shire's hero attractions and experiences are its ancient landscape (the stunning landforms and scenery of the Nandewar Range and Yarrie Lake), the Pilliga Forest – a million wild acres; its dark star-studded skies and its mineral rich, hot artesian waters. The focus will be on further developing these attractions and experiences and improving visitor facilities and access.

Goal:

To strengthen the hero attractions and experiences and leverage them to grow visitation to the Shire, encourage To strengthen the hero attractions and experiences and leverage them to grow visitation to the Shire.

Priority Projects:

The priority projects are:

- Mt Kaputar National Park;
- Yarrie Lake;
- Boggabri's Landforms and Landscapes: Gin's Leap, Dripping Rock, Mt Robertson and Barbers Lagoon and Pinnacle;
- Australian Wildlife Conservancy;
- Australia Telescope: Night Skies Viewing Activities.

Priority 3: Strengthen and build the Shire's hero products and experiences		
Actions	Key Tasks	
Strategy 6: To maximise the potential of the Mt Kaputar National Park and Nandewar Range		
6.1. Improve access to Mt Kaputar National Park	6.1.1.	Advocate for the State Government to fund the sealing of Kaputar Road.
	6.1.2.	Formalise responsibility for the maintenance of the road.
	6.1.3.	Assess the potential of the Upper Bullawa Creek area as a day use and possibly an overflow camping area during peak times. If suitable signpost from Kaputar Road and include in promotional material.
	6.1.4.	Review the Draft Plan of Management when it is placed on public exhibition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that the Plan allows for the sealing of Kaputar Road; ○ Seek to have additional walking trails opened in the Killarney Gap area; ○ If the area is suitable: seek to further develop the Upper Bullawa Creek area and enable overflow camping in peak times.

Priority 3: Strengthen and build the Shire's hero products and experiences		
Actions	Key Tasks	
6.2. Leverage the Barraba Track	6.2.1.	Package and promote the Barraba Track with other 4WD opportunities within the Shire and surrounding region.
	6.2.2.	To mark the re-opening of the Track, seek support from DNSW to host a famill of influential 4WD journalists and bloggers.
	6.2.3.	Package and promote the Barraba Track and other 4WD opportunities to 4WD Tag-a-Long Tour operators – encouraging them to include.
	6.2.4.	Explore the possibility of a local / regional resident offering 4WD tours and/or tag-a-long tours.
	6.2.5.	Include the Barraba Track and fire trails within the National Park as part of the Shire's mountain-biking / gravel grinding product.
6.3. Utilise areas adjacent to the park to provide accommodation and activities	6.3.1.	Support property owners along the edge of the Nandewar Range develop farm- based tourism: including cabins, camping areas and outdoor, adventure and nature-based activities.
6.4. Build the profile of the Park	6.4.1.	Continue to use the image of Sawn Rocks as an iconic landform for the Shire and the New England North West Region.
	6.4.2.	Select 'hero' images of the Barraba Track and the Summit Precinct and uses these repeatedly in marketing and promoting these attractions.
	6.4.3.	Provide a virtual wilderness experience: work with NPWS to capture drone and other video footage of the remote, wilderness areas of the Park and develop into a virtual reality experience for the Narrabri VIC.
	6.4.4.	Approach NPWS to partner with the Narrabri VIC to update the National Park display (Mt Kaputar National Park, the Parks in the Pilliga Region and other Parks and SCAs within the Shire) in the Narrabri VIC.
	6.4.5.	Through social media and PR marketing, leverage opportunities to report on the recovery of the Park post-fire, the pink slug, snow and other interesting stories.
Strategy 7: Evolve Yarrie Lake into a significant attraction		
7.1. Consolidate the management of the Yarrie Lake Precinct	7.1.1.	Consolidate the Yarrie Lake Flora and Fauna Reserve, Yarrie Lake Hall and Yarrie Lake Cricket Ground Trusts into one Trust, responsible for the entire area.
	7.1.2.	Prepare a Plan of Management for the consolidated area, with the Plan reflecting the tourism and recreation potential of the precinct.
7.2. Develop new visitor experiences.	7.2.1.	Investigate the feasibility of establishing a hot bore bath at Yarrie Lake.
	7.2.2.	Establish a foreshore walk which circumnavigates the Lake.

Priority 3: Strengthen and build the Shire's hero products and experiences		
Actions	Key Tasks	
	7.2.3.	Promote the area for gravel grinding – with the trails in Yarrie Lake Reserve promoted in conjunction with forest roads in the nearby Culgoora State and Pilliga Forests.
	7.2.4.	If Round Lake (a meteorite lake on private property) can be seen from Culgoora Road and/or Culgoora State Forest, promote as a point of interest.
	7.2.5.	Investigate the feasibility of using the former cricket ground as a primitive camping area.
	7.2.6.	Investigate the feasibility of providing bush cabins and/or glamping tents within the reserve.
7.3. Build visitation to the Reserve	7.3.1.	Improve directional signage to the Lake from Wee Waa, Narrabri and the Pilliga Road.
	7.3.2.	Work with the Trust/s to build the function and event markets.
	7.3.3.	Explore options to hold entertainment and arts-based events in the Reserve.
	7.3.4.	Include Yarrie Lake as a camping option for the Australia Telescope night sky photography groups.
Strategy 8: Realise the potential of the landforms and landscapes of the Boggabri area – provide opportunities for camping and outdoor and nature-based activities		
8.1. Develop Gin's Leap (Cooloobindi) into an activity precinct	8.1.1.	Expand / enhance the interpretative material to include Aboriginal use of the area pre white settlement, and the geological significance of the formation (damming of the ground waters of the Liverpool Plains).
	8.1.2.	Formalise (with track markers, signage and an access gate) the walking trail to the summit, possibly extending the trail to provide a 'loop' walk.
	8.1.3.	Investigate options for establishing a walking trail around the base of the northern face of Gin's Leap.
	8.1.4.	Provide a walking track from the eastern side of the Kamilaroi Highway at the Gin's Leap Rest area, through the TSR to the Namoi River.
8.2. Capitalise on the views afforded by Mount Robertson	8.2.1.	Assess the feasibility of developing Mt Roberson into a Lookout: Improving the walking track to the summit and possibly providing a lookout platform.
8.3. Reposition Barber's Lagoon as an activity precinct	8.3.1.	Improve the presentation of the area – possibly slashing, remove rubbish and upgrade the entry track.
	8.3.2.	Rather than promoting Barbers Lagoon as just a heritage site, promote the beauty of the lagoon, its size and the activities that can be undertaken – camping, picnicking, canoeing, bird watching etc.
	8.3.3.	Consider listing the Lagoon as a free camping site.

Priority 3: Strengthen and build the Shire's hero products and experiences			
Actions		Key Tasks	
		8.3.4.	Improve signage: provide directional signage from the Kamilaroi Highway, signpost the reserve; possibly improve interpretative signage.
8.4. Improve access to Dripping Rock		8.4.1.	Resolve land ownership and access issues and upgrade and maintain the road to 2WD dry weather access standard.
		8.4.2.	If the road can not be upgraded, promote as 4WD accessible only and feature as part of the Shire's 4WD product.
		8.4.3.	Signpost Dripping Rock from the Kamilaroi Highway and Rangari Road.
8.5. Raise the profile of Boggabri's landforms and landscapes		8.5.1.	Promote these assets as a cluster of outdoor and nature-based experiences, rather than landforms with interesting stories.
		8.5.2.	Leverage the proposed lookouts at Gin's Leap and Mount Robertson to introduce visitors to the Shire's agricultural and mining activities and promote Mt Kaputar National Park / Nandewar Range and the Namoi River corridor.
		8.5.3.	Ensure that each of the sites is accurately identified on google maps.
Strategy 9: Promote the Australian Wildlife Conservancy Pilliga Project			
9.1. Tell the AWC Pilliga Story		9.1.1.	Explore with the AWS the opportunity to tell their Pilliga 'story' at the Narrabri VIC and through the Narrabri tourism website and social media posts.
		9.1.2.	Explore with AWC the possibility of providing interpretative signage on the enclosure gates – explaining what the enclosure is, why the area has been fenced off and the animals that are being re-introduced.
		9.1.3.	Support the development of visitor facilities at the AWC enclosure.
		9.1.4.	Explore opportunities for fund raising and merchandising.
Strategy 10: Leverage the interest in Night Skies and Astro Tourism			
10.1. Raise awareness of and build visitation to the Australia Telescope Compact Array		10.1.1.	Encourage CSIRO to promote the Australia Telescope more effectively through the Parkes 'Dish' Visitor Centre, encouraging Newell Highway travellers to also visit the Narrabri Telescope.
		10.1.2.	Endeavour to work cooperatively with the Siding Spring Observatory Visitor Centre to cross-promote.
		10.1.3.	Participate in relevant initiatives from Destination Network Country and Outback to develop, grow and/or promote night skies and astro tourism.
		10.1.4.	Encourage the upgrading of displays at the Telescope Visitor Centre.
		10.1.5.	Improve directional signage to the facility – from Narrabri and Wee Waa.

Priority 3: Strengthen and build the Shire's hero products and experiences		
Actions	Key Tasks	
	10.1.6.	Endeavour to leverage the discoveries made by the Observatory to generate publicity for both the Telescope and the Narrabri Region.
	10.1.7.	Explore opportunities to attract astronomy-based conferences to Narrabri.
10.2. Grow the astro tourism and night skies photography markets	10.2.1.	Purchase several 'hero' images of night sky photographs taken at the Telescope and use these to raise the profile of night sky photography (DK Photography has some stunning photos).
	10.2.2.	Work with CSIRO to determine what is possible and acceptable on the site and develop a framework / strategy to grow the market. As part of this assessment, explore the potential to use the onsite accommodation for tour groups.
	10.2.3.	Assess the potential to build on existing night sky photography tours – increasing the number of tours and value-adding if possible.
	10.2.4.	Explore with local photographers, the potential to run night skies workshops and activities at the Telescope and work with these photographers to package and promote.
	10.2.5.	With the approval of CSIRO, market night skies photography packages to astronomy and photography clubs.
	10.2.6.	Explore with SSO and their tour operators, the opportunity for incorporating a visit to the Australia Telescope and/or a night sky photography session at the Telescope as part of their tour itinerary.
	10.2.6.	Encourage the development of other night skies experiences within the Shire.

Priority 4: Continue to develop and improve supporting attractions and activities

While the hero attractions and experiences will bring visitors into Narrabri Shire, a strong second tier of local attractions will keep visitors engaged; enhance their experience and encourage longer lengths of stay; and increase expenditure, repeat visitation, positive on-line reviews and word-of-mouth referrals.

Goal:

To strengthen local attractions and assets to support the hero attractions and experiences.

Priority Projects:

- Namoi River corridor;
- Agri and industry-based attractions and experiences;
- Aboriginal products and experiences;

- Scenic drives and activity-based trails;
- Events.

Priority 4: Continue to develop and improve supporting attractions and activities		
Actions	Key Tasks	
Strategy 11: Develop the Namoi River corridor as a visitor attraction		
11.1. Improve access to the river corridor and enhance the presentation of key areas	11.1.1.	Signpost key river and lagoon access points across the Shire, with the priority being the access points close to the towns and villages.
	11.1.2.	For key access points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grade the main access track – in information relating to the River, classify the access track as 2WD or 4WD and whether it is accessible in dry weather only; ○ Remove litter and dumped rubbish; ○ Slash occasionally to define the area and reduce weeds; ○ Where needed erect safety / warning signs; ○ If needed, improve access to the river.
	11.1.3.	Develop key river/lagoon side precincts: Narrabri Creek (see Action 2.3), Wee Waa Lagoon (Task 3.3.6), Yellow Banks (Task 3.3.5) and Barber’s Lagoon (Action 8.3).
	11.1.4.	Improve the river-bank adjacent to the Big Sky Caravan Park and investigate the feasibility of a providing a small jetty or pontoon.
11.2. Develop river trails and activities	11.2.1.	Develop a river trail as a self-guided tour, identifying river access points, camping sites, fishing spots and areas suitable for boating, canoeing, birdwatching, bushwalking and off-road cycling.
	11.2.2.	Add canoeing and boating to the ‘Things to do’ list on the Narrabri Shire tourism websites and produce supporting information (map, river access points, river condition, marine service providers etc). (see Section 9.1 for areas suitable for canoeing).
	11.2.3.	Add Yellow Banks in Wee Waa and sites around Pilliga to the Shire Fishing Guide.
	11.2.4.	Expand the Shire fishing guide to include marine / fishing service providers and fishing events held in the Shire and surrounding region.
Strategy 12: Develop agri and industry-based tourism		
12.1. Showcase the Shire’s economic activities	12.1.1.	Showcase the Shire’s agricultural activities and industries at the Narrabri VIC, embracing digital technology, including virtual reality experiences.
	12.1.2.	Consider providing information on the transport and logistics sector in Narrabri VIC – noting that Narrabri is the first place that travellers arriving in the Shire on the Kamilaroi Highway and STR3 encounter the Inland Rail.

Priority 4: Continue to develop and improve supporting attractions and activities			
Actions		Key Tasks	
		12.1.3.	Continue to sell local and regional produce and products through the Narrabri VIC.
12.2. Build agri-tourism		12.2.1.	If there are farmers interested in diversifying into agri-tourism, approach the NSW Small Business Commissioner to explore the possibility of running an Agri Tourism program (based on the 2019 pilot program run in Liverpool Plains Shire).
		12.2.2.	Assess the feasibility of re-introducing cotton tours and introducing other guided agricultural tours.
		12.2.3.	Explore options for introducing self-guided crop trails and crop alerts.
		12.2.4.	Target / bid for agricultural and land and water management conferences.
		12.2.5.	Explore the possibility of listing innovative agricultural enterprises and the research stations with Australian and international specialist agricultural study tour operators.
		12.2.6.	Assess the potential to re-instate and grow the Cotton Fibre Expo into a signature event for the Shire.
12.3. Develop and promote industry tours		12.3.1.	Research how industry tours have been introduced successfully in other areas as a potential model for introducing tours in Narrabri Shire.
		12.3.2.	Explore with the mining companies, Santos and other enterprises, opportunities to provide guided tours – for specialist industry groups; coach tour and other groups; and the general public.
Strategy 13: Encourage the development of Aboriginal products and experiences			
13.1. Improve access to Aboriginal attractions and areas		13.1.1.	Improve access to the Deriah Aboriginal area – improving the condition of Carinya Road and/or be developing a walking track from the information bay at the base of the hill to the picnic area
		13.1.2.	Explore with the RMS and Wee Waa LALC, opportunities for improving vehicle access to Tulladunna Reserve.
13.2. Encourage and support the development of Aboriginal products and experiences		13.2.1.	Continue to work with the Aboriginal community to ‘capture’ oral histories and stories and explore ways to enable visitors to hear some of these stories.
		13.2.2.	Encourage and support Aboriginal tourism initiatives.
Strategy 14: Improve and expand the range of self-guided tours, scenic drives and activity trails within the Shire			
<i>Opportunities to improve existing trails and develop new trails are summarised in Table 9.2.</i>			
14.1. Improve and leverage the bird trails		14.1.1.	Identify ‘signature / hero’ birds for the Shire feature these on the birdwatching page of the Shire tourism website (eg video clips of broilgas dancing, eagles soaring about Mt Kaputar, emus and owls of the Pilliga).
		14.1.2.	Enhance the Narrabri Lake bird route with bird art installations

Priority 4: Continue to develop and improve supporting attractions and activities		
Actions	Key Tasks	
	14.1.3.	Provide information on / links to, bird identification apps.
	14.1.4.	Capture and use bird-related user generated content.
	14.1.5.	List the bird trails and provide a link to the bird brochures on key birding web sites.
	14.1.6.	Direct market the trails to bird-watching clubs and groups.
	14.1.7.	Target / bid for bird watching congresses and conferences.
	14.1.8.	Approach specialist bird tour and bird photography operators to explore opportunities to bring tours to the Shire.
14.2. Improve the Fishing Spots Guide	14.2.1.	Redesign the fishing guide and fishing page on the tourism website to include aspirational images and more comprehensive information (see Table 9.2).
	14.2.2.	Package with accommodation operators and direct market to fishing clubs.
	14.2.3.	Work with the local fishing clubs to grow their fishing events.
	14.2.4.	Explore ways to capture and harness fishing-related user generated content.
14.3. Position the Shire as a destination for bushwalking	14.3.1.	Explore with NPWS the feasibility of positioning and promoting one of the walks in the Shire as a 'signature' or 'iconic' walk for the area and have this walk featured on 'great walks and hikes' sites, including the VisitNSW 'Hikes and Walks' page.
	14.3.2.	Expand the information available on bushwalking on the Narrabri tourism website (see Table 9.2).
	14.3.3.	Develop additional walks: Gin's Leap, Deriah Aboriginal Area, Yarrie Lake Foreshore.
	14.3.4.	Leverage the 'after the fires' landscape in the Mt Kaputar National Park to encourage bushwalking groups and enthusiasts to visit the park and experiences the spectacular landforms and views that have been 'exposed'.
	14.3.5.	Explore ways to capture and harness bushwalking-related user generated content.
14.4. Refine the information available on the historical walks	14.4.1.	The historical walks sound clip on the Narrabri tourism website needs to be removed as it is not effective in promoting the Narrabri historic walk.
14.5. Establish cycling, gravel grinding and mountain-biking trails and experiences	14.5.1.	Develop and promote a range of cycling and gravel grinding routes and prepare route notes.
	14.5.2.	Post the routes on cycling websites (eg bicyclensw; strava).
	14.5.3.	Package and promote to cycling clubs within the surrounding region.
	14.5.4.	Work with DNSW / DNCO to bring influential cycling journalists and bloggers to review the cycling experience.
	14.5.5.	Grow the Killarney Bike Classic and introduce other events, including a gravel grind.

Priority 4: Continue to develop and improve supporting attractions and activities			
Actions		Key Tasks	
		14.5.6.	Approach Audax Australia and other organisations that organise long distance and charity rides to include Narrabri Shire in itineraries and/or bring events to the Shire.
		14.5.7.	Work with local MTB enthusiasts to improve the MTB trails and experiences within the Shire, including establishing a pump track and/or skills park
			Explore ways to capture and harness cycling / MTB-related user generated content.
14.6.	Promote 'soft' adventure 4WD routes	14.6.1.	Package and promote the Barraba Track and other 4WD / off-road activities within Narrabri Shire and surrounding region (see Table 9.2).
		14.6.2.	Leverage the re-opening of the Barraba Track to generate publicity.
		14.6.3.	Work with DNSW / DNCO to bring influential 4WD enthusiasts and bloggers to review the track.
		14.6.3.	Direct market to 4WD clubs and organisations.
		14.6.4.	Promote 4WD opportunities to workers at the Civeo Villages.
		14.6.5.	Encourage the establishment of a local 4WD and/or tag-along tour operator.
		14.6.7.	Endeavour to attract 4WD club events to the Shire – eg the Jeep Jamboree.
		14.6.8.	Encourage the establishment of a 4WD park and/or 4WD tracks on private property (eg ADOs 4WD course in the Warrumbungle Shire).
		14.6.9.	Explore ways to capture and harness 4WD-related user generated content.
14.7.	Promote trails and experiences for registered trail bikers	14.7.1.	Prepare a 'Rides Guide' for Narrabri Shire and the surrounding area – including touring routes, trail rides and the dirt bike parks.
		14.7.2.	Explore with Narrabri Dirt Bike Club opportunities to grow their events and introduce a trailbike and/or enduro event.
		14.7.3.	Explore ways to capture and harness trail bike-related user generated content.
14.8.	Develop and promote canoe routes and experiences	14.8.1.	Produce a canoeing and kayaking guide to Narrabri Shire – including information for both inexperienced and experienced canoeists (see Table 9.2)
		14.8.2.	List Narrabri canoe trails and sites on relevant canoeing websites.
		14.8.3.	Direct market to canoe clubs.
		14.8.4.	Explore ways to capture and harness canoe-related user generated content.
14.9.	Explore options to introduce seasonal trails	14.9.1.	Explore options to introduce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Self-guided crop trails and crop alerts; ○ Wildflower trails and alerts.

Priority 4: Continue to develop and improve supporting attractions and activities		
Actions	Key Tasks	
Strategy 15: Grow the Events Sector – focusing on business, sporting and entertainment events		
15.1. Grow existing events	15.1.1.	Assess whether local events have the potential to be 'grown' into signature events for the LGA and if so, work with the organisers to formulate and implement a growth strategy / business plan.
	15.1.2.	Continuously 'refresh' and 'revamp' existing events to ensure that they do not become stale.
	15.1.3.	Explore opportunities to offer event packages.
15.2. Grow the business events sector	15.2.1.	Participate in relevant DNSW initiatives to grow the regional conference and business event markets.
	15.2.2.	Target / bid for regional meetings and conferences, focusing on those that have a connection (eg agriculture, land and water management) with the Shire.
	15.2.3.	Explore options to introduce business 'expos'.
15.3. Grow the entertainment event market	15.3.1.	Leverage the Crossing Theatre, Showgrounds and other venues to increase the number of events held within the Shire.
	15.3.2.	Leverage opportunities to offer event packages, which include accommodation.
15.4. Introduce new events	15.4.1.	Leverage the Shire's outdoor assets (eg road network, forest trails) to introduce / attract new events. (see Section 9.5.5).
15.5.	15.5.1.	Encourage and work with local organisations to bid for regional, state and possibly national events.
	15.5.2.	Identify and target footloose events (eg car, caravan and motorcycle rallies, 4WD jamborees, concerts etc) that could potentially be held in the Shire.
	15.5.3.	Direct market the Shire's venues to clubs and organisations and commercial event organisers, inviting them to hold events in Narrabri Shire.
	15.5.4.	Target regional school events that the Shire has the capacity to host (eg Cross Country carnivals).
15.6. Encourage event attendees to spend money within the Shire.	15.6.1.	Encourage event organisers to list accommodation available in the Shire and include a link to the tourism website on their event website and/or facebook page as well as the tourism website address on all their correspondence and in the event program.
	15.6.2.	Provide event organisers with lists of accommodation properties and eateries, to send out / attach to their event information / entry form.
	15.6.3.	Provide Visitor Guides / town and village information for event organisers to distribute at the event and if possible, include promotional vouchers and value-add offers from local businesses.

Priority 5: Ensure that the infrastructure, facilities and services needed to support growth of the visitor economy are in place.

Narrabri Shire will continue to improve its infrastructure, facilities and services to facilitate and support growth in the visitor economy.

Goals:

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

Priority 5: Ensure that the infrastructure, facilities and services needed to support growth of the visitor economy are in place.

Actions		Key Tasks	
Strategy 16: Increase the capacity of the accommodation sector			
16.1. Improve and expand the accommodation base of the Shire	16.1.1.	Encourage the expansion of the Civeo Villages to meet the expected increase in demand for accommodation for construction workers.	
	16.1.2.	Encourage the existing properties to refurbish.	
	16.1.3.	Encourage the establishment of new accommodation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 4-4.5 star motel accommodation in Narrabri; ○ 3.5-4 star motel accommodation in Wee Waa; ○ Cabin and/or glamping accommodation at Yarrie Lake (see Tasks 7.2.5, 7.2.6) ○ Farm stay accommodation – lodges, cabins, shearers quarters, glamping and camping. 	
	16.1.4.	Address camping capacity constraints in Pilliga village (see Task 5.3.1).	
		16.1.5.	Explore options to minimise the expected capacity constraints that are expected to arise as a result of major construction projects in the Shire. Possibly look to home hosting, Air BnB, and farm stays as options.
16.2. Continue to improve facilities and infrastructure for the touring caravan, RV and camping markets	16.2.1.	Ensure that the Narrabri Tourism Precinct project provides adequate and easily accessible (drive through) parking for caravans and long rigs.	
	16.2.2.	Provide and signpost long rig parking spaces close to the town centres.	
	16.2.3.	Provide a dump point at Pilliga.	
	16.2.4.	Signpost and promote riverside / lagoon-side camping areas in strategic locations.	
	16.2.5.	Explore options for overflow camping for Mt Kaputar National Park during peak periods.	

Priority 5: Ensure that the infrastructure, facilities and services needed to support growth of the visitor economy are in place.			
Actions		Key Tasks	
		16.2.6.	Ensure that caravan and camping sites are listed in relevant on-line directories and Apps (eg Wiki Camps, Find-a-Camp).
16.3. Continue to improve the on- line presence of accommodation properties		16.3.1.	Encourage Accommodation operators to make more effective use of web- based and digital marketing including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updating their own websites and include real time booking facilities; ○ Use of social media; ○ List on the higher profile accommodation booking websites; ○ Maintain listing on the DNSW State Tourism Data Warehouse data base; ○ Utilise free / low cost listings on tourism and third party websites; ○ Utilise web-based resource material on DNSW, Tourism Australia and business support sites.
		16.3.2.	Encourage pub hotels with refurbished rooms to list on pubrooms.com.au and other pub hotel accommodation directories.
		16.3.3.	Continue to provide content and images on Narrabri Shire that accommodation properties can include on their websites.
16.4. Encourage improvements to customer service levels		16.4.1.	Continue to advise operators of training programs and industry briefing workshops held throughout the Region as well as the training resources available on-line.
		16.4.2.	Identify skills gaps and training needs and access relevant training programs.
Strategy 17: Improve facilities at, and increase use of, event venues			
17.1. Continue to improve facilities at, and increase the use of, event venues		17.1.1.	Assist and support venue operators to develop masterplans / venue plans / business cases to assess the improvements needed, with these plans suitable for use in grant applications. Improvements needed at some of the Shire’s venues are listed in Table 10.2.
		17.1.2.	Assist venue managers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Secure grant funding; ○ Attract and host events; ○ Market and promote their venue to potential user groups;
		17.1.3.	Continue to list suitable venues on the DNSW regional conferencing data base and other relevant on-line directories.
Strategy 18: Continue to expand and improve information services, ensuring that information on the Shire is available from multiple touch points at all stages of the path to purchase and whilst travelling			

Priority 5: Ensure that the infrastructure, facilities and services needed to support growth of the visitor economy are in place.		
Actions	Key Tasks	
18.1. Continue to develop the Narrabri VIC as a key attraction for the town and a visitor service hub	18.1.1.	Evolve the Narrabri VIC into a 'next generation' centre (see Section 10.3.3), enhancing the experiences offered, telling the Shire's 'stories' and enhancing the delivery of information (see Section 10.3.4).
	18.1.2.	Provide digital device charging stations.
	18.1.3.	Implement the Narrabri Tourism Precinct project to consolidate and strengthen the VIC precinct.
18.2. Continue to improve and expand the range of information and promotional collateral available	18.2.1.	Produce brochures, information, maps etc to promote and support the Shire's scenic drives, trails, attractions and activities (eg cycling, horse-riding etc). Ensure that key brochures and maps are downloadable from the tourism website.
	18.2.2.	Develop information kits to support targeted marketing to special interest and activity based markets (eg cycling, bushwalking, 4WD etc).
	18.2.3.	Continually update video clips, images and display material.
	18.2.4.	Ensure that visitor information remains available in all towns and villages and in other strategic locations throughout the Shire.
	18.2.5.	Develop an on-line business and services directory with this accessible from the Narrabri Shire tourism website.
18.3. Continue to improve the Shire's on-line presence	18.3.1.	Continue to enhance the Narrabri Shire tourism website.
	18.3.2.	Increase the use of social media in accordance with Council's tourism social media strategy.
	18.3.3.	Progressively build consumer data bases to be used for distribution of information, direct marketing, promotional offers etc.
	18.3.4.	Improve and expand Narrabri Shire content on third party websites – including touring route sites and special interest and activity-based sites.
	18.3.5.	Continue to improve the Narrabri Shire content on local operator, town and village, and event websites.
	18.3.6.	Increase exposure of individual products, services and facilities: Encourage operators to list on free and low cost tourism, travel and other relevant websites and directories.
18.4. Continue to build product knowledge and sales skills	18.4.1.	Continue to expand the knowledge and skills of VIC staff, including undertaking property inspections and famils
	18.4.2.	Provide opportunities for tourism and business operators to expand their product knowledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Continue to publish and distribute the e.newsletter; o Explore the feasibility of hosting quarterly industry networking functions, with operators invited to showcase their product / services;

Priority 5: Ensure that the infrastructure, facilities and services needed to support growth of the visitor economy are in place.			
Actions		Key Tasks	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encourage new operators to hold a briefing function / open day for other existing operators; ○ Host familiarisation tours and/or take new operators / accommodation managers on guided tours of the Shire.
Strategy 19: Improve and leverage access infrastructure			
19.1. Recognise that road conditions will influence visitation levels and travel patterns	19.1.1.	Ensure that implications for tourism are assessed in developing road construction and maintenance programs and priorities. The most significant roads from a tourism perspective are listed in Section 10.4.1.	
19.2. Seal key feeder routes	19.2.1.	Advocate for the sealing of Cypress Way between Gwabegar and Pilliga (highest priority) and Rangari Road.	
19.3. Improve access to key attractions	19.3.1.	Advocate for funding to seal and improve the safety of Kaputar Road.	
	19.3.2.	Improve the access roads to Dripping Road and the Deriah Aboriginal Area.	
	19.3.3.	Maintain access tracks into the main reserves along the Namoi River corridor.	
19.4. Retain and leverage passenger rail services	19.4.1.	Continue to advocate for the retention of passenger rail services.	
	19.4.2.	Explore opportunities to grow rail-based tourism; seeking to have Narrabri Shire listed as a destination on the TrainsNSW website and exploring options to develop and promote rail packages to social and seniors' groups (eg Probus Clubs).	
19.5. Increase the capacity of Narrabri Airport	19.5.1.	Redevelop and increase the capacity of landside facilities at Narrabri Airport as per the Plan of Management.	
Strategy 20: Ensure that signage is effective and contributes positively to the image of the area			
20.1. Assess signage needs	20.1.1.	Undertake a comprehensive signage audit and formulate and progressively implement an improvement plan.	
20.2. Improve gateway signage to the Shire and all towns/villages	20.2.1.	Implement the Gateway entry sign project, and support this by with attractive landscaping and on-going maintenance of the entry corridors.	
	20.2.2.	Improve and maintain event advertising signs in Narrabri and provide event signage in other towns and strategic locations within the Shire.	
20.3. Improve directional and facility signage	20.3.1.	Progressively improve directional signage throughout the Shire including improving signage to Yarrie Lake, the Australia Telescope, Upper Bullawa Creek day use area, Dripping Rock and Waa Gorge.	
	20.3.2.	Signpost the access points to the Namoi River.	
	20.3.3.	Progressively replace fingerboard facility signs with international icons.	

Priority 5: Ensure that the infrastructure, facilities and services needed to support growth of the visitor economy are in place.			
Actions		Key Tasks	
		20.3.4.	Erect facility and services signs (using international icons) on the approaches to Boggabri, Wee Waa and the villages.
20.4. Utilise bill boards and motivational signage		20.4.1.	Consider purchasing billboard space along the Highway and touring route corridors to promote the Shire.
20.5. Warning Signs		20.5.1.	Provide 'last fuel' warning signs at Narrabri (LPG) and Wee Waa (petrol / diesel) on the Kamilaroi Highway and Yarrie Lake / Pilliga Roads for westbound traffic.
		20.5.2.	If road cycling and gravel grinding routes are established – provide cycle warning signs as needed.
Strategy 21: Advocate for improved and expanded telecommunications infrastructure			
21.1. Improve mobile and broadband services within the Shire		21.1.1.	Advocate for improved mobile and broadband coverage throughout the Shire
21.2. Increase access to free Wifi		21.2.1.	Provide free WiFi in the Narrabri VIC.
		21.2.2.	Promote free Wifi locations to travellers.
		21.2.3.	Endeavour to provide free Wifi access in all towns and villages.
		21.2.4.	In the accommodation directory, include information on availability of broadband / wifi at each of the accommodation properties within the Shire.
Strategy 22: Continue to improve visitor facilities			
22.1. Ensure that the parks, gardens and reserves are well presented and maintained		22.1.1.	Continue to maintain and improve the presentation of parks, gardens and reserves, both to enhance the visual impact and appeal of the locality and to encourage travellers to stop.
22.2. Continue to provide and maintain public toilets in strategic locations.		22.2.1.	Ensure that public toilets throughout the Shire are clean and well maintained and signposted using the international facility symbols.
		22.2.2.	List accessible toilets on inclusive / accessible tourism and other related websites.
22.3. Cater for electric vehicles (EV)		22.3.1.	Provide an electric vehicle charging station in Narrabri and if needed, in other localities within the Shire.
		22.3.2.	As the need increases, encourage accommodation operators to provide charging facilities.
		22.3.3.	Ensure that charging stations are well signposted and listed on relevant on-line directories.

Priority 6: Continue to build industry capacity

Allied with product and infrastructure development is the need to increase the skills of tourism and business operators and their staff. The marketplace is evolving, and tourism and business operators need to keep

abreast of changes. In particular, tourism and business operators need to be highly active in the digital space, with this space used to communicate, build relationships, market and promote, and 'make the sale'. Tourism operators need to be responsive to changing needs and expectations, recognising that customers are becoming more sophisticated and demanding and less tolerant of inferior customer service. The retail community needs to recognise the importance of the presentation of both their shop front and merchandise. It is also essential that retailers and service providers have a strong online presence and travellers looking for goods and services are increasingly searching on-line.

Goal:

- Skilled and motivated business and tourism operators.

Priority 6: Continue to build industry capacity		
Actions	Key Tasks	
Strategy 23: Continue to provide opportunities for industry training and development		
23.1. Encourage tourism and retail operators to continue to build their business, customer service and marketing skills	23.1.1.	Continue to work with business organisations, operators and training service providers to identify skills gaps and the type of training programs needed within the Shire and develop strategy / approach to deliver appropriate programs.
	23.1.2.	Encourage businesses to participate in Council's business development and marketing initiatives: generate publicity about initiative outcomes and showcase local innovate businesses and business operators.
23.2. Promote training and career opportunities	23.2.1.	Ensure that the tourism / hospitality sector is represented at training and career expos held within the Shire.
	23.2.2.	Participate in the High School / TAFE work experience and VET Programs, working with operators to provide experience in the Narrabri VIC, accommodation properties, Crossing Theatre, eateries and other hospitality businesses.

Priority 7: Market growth and development supported by effective marketing and promotion

Narrabri Shire needs to continue to build visitation and diversify its market base. The focus will be on consolidating and building the Shire's primary target markets and capitalising on cost effective opportunities to build secondary markets. This will be supported by effective marketing and promotion.

Goals:

- To grow visitation to Narrabri Shire;
- To increase the yield from visitation;
- To spread visitation throughout the Shire, to provide benefits for all towns and villages;

Focus:

- Growing the drive-based touring market:
 - Encouraging through traffic to stop and spend within the Shire;
 - Encouraging the touring caravan and RV markets to extend their length of stay in the Shire.
- Building the regional market, focusing on the day trip, short breaks and VFR markets and event visitation;
- Leveraging the business and work-related travel markets to maximise expenditure. This includes growing the business events market;
- Leveraging the Shire’s assets to grow special interest and activity-based markets;
- Building capacity for inclusive / accessible tourism.

Priority 7: Market growth and development supported by effective marketing and promotion		
Actions	Key Tasks	
Strategy 24: Grow the drive-based touring market: car-based, caravans and RV’s, motorcycle		
24.1. Engage with potential travellers at the trip planning stage	24.1.1.	Continue to enhance and expand Narrabri Shire’s on-line and digital presence, harnessing on-line directories, touring route and other third-party websites, and social media.
	24.1.2.	Continue to showcase Narrabri Shire at consumer and travel shows (including caravan and camping shows) In Sydney, regional NSW and interstate.
	24.1.3.	Participate in DNSW and Destination Network famils, campaigns and initiatives targeted to the drive touring market.
	24.1.4.	Undertake direct and PR marketing to caravan and motorhome clubs endeavouring to place feature articles on Narrabri Shire in magazines, and newsletters and participate in forums.
	24.1.5.	Endeavour to participate / tap into regional initiatives to build motorcycle touring.
24.2. Continue to develop and promote tourism routes	24.2.1.	See Priority 1.
24.3. Attract drive-based events and activities	24.3.1.	Endeavour to attract: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Caravan and motorhome club rallies and events; ○ Motorcycle rallies and charity rides; ○ Car and 4WD club rallies, jamborees and other events.
Strategy 25: Continue to build the regional market		
25.1. Grow the regional market focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Offering the opportunity for families and groups of friends to escape: to be outdoors, get 	25.1.1.	Endeavour to raise the profile of Narrabri Shire within the surrounding region: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use PR marketing to place stories in the regional media; ○ Leverage social media and user generated content to raise awareness; ○ Use both the Tourism and Council social media sites to communicate with the regional media (journalists are

Priority 7: Market growth and development supported by effective marketing and promotion		
Actions	Key Tasks	
<p>back to basics, reconnect and have fun;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bringing residents and their VFR into the Shire for events and activities; ○ Positioning Narrabri Shire as a day out destination for social groups. 		<p>increasingly using social media sites to generate ideas for stories);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that Narrabri Shire events and activities are listed in regional 'what's on' directories and programs and seek media coverage in the lead-up to and during the events; ○ Explore 'quirky' opportunities to raise the profile of Narrabri Shire and generate interest and media coverage; ○ Work with accommodation and business operators to develop and promote 'short-break' packages.
	25.1.2.	Work with local businesses to raise the profile of shopping and dining opportunities within the Shire.
	25.1.3.	Target and direct market Narrabri Shire to clubs and social groups within the surrounding region – those that organise day and short trips.
	25.1.4.	Direct market Shire venues to potential users and relevant interest groups; encouraging sporting clubs and commercial promoters to hold a 'round' or 'leg' of a sporting event in Narrabri Shire.
	25.1.5.	Package and value-add to entertainment events being held in Narrabri.
Strategy 26: Increase yield from the business and work-related travel market		
<p>26.1. Encourage business and work-related travellers to spend more time and money in the Shire.</p>	26.1.1.	Provide access to visitor information in the Civeo Villages – directory, brochure display, visitnarrabri website address / QR codes in each room etc.
	26.1.2.	Work with operators to provide 'packages' for weekends and school holidays that encourages workers to bring their families to visit the Shire rather than them returning home. For example, many of the miners have 4WD vehicles and trail bikes and places such as the Pilliga Forest and Bike Territory would appeal to this market.
	26.1.3.	Ensure that the Narrabri dining guide is available in all accommodation rooms and from places that have a high level of visitation and that guide is identified by search engines for people googling places to eat in Narrabri Shire.
	26.1.4.	Explore with the mining companies, Santos and project managers, the opportunity to display the Narrabri Visitors Guide and possibly an A3 tear-off map in the office / reception area where workers and visitors sign-in.
	26.1.5.	Continue to have information on display at Narrabri Airport, with the display improved when the terminal facilities are expanded.

Priority 7: Market growth and development supported by effective marketing and promotion		
Actions	Key Tasks	
	26.1.6.	Encourage business operators to develop loyalty and incentive programs to encourage business and work-related travellers to spend money in the Shire.
	26.1.7.	Introduce targeted retail promotions (eg prior to Mother's Day, Christmas etc) and services (eg delivery to place or work or accommodation) to provide the opportunity for visiting workers to shop.
26.2. Build the business events sector	26.2.1.	Endeavour to ensure that Narrabri Shire attracts its 'share' of regional Council, regional agency and government meetings.
	26.2.2.	Build the conference and meetings market, working with local businesses and organisations to attract industry and association conferences.
	26.2.3.	Explore opportunities to introduce business events (eg expos) to showcase local industries and businesses and bring external visitors into the Shire.
Strategy 27: Build special interest and activity-based markets		
27.1. Build special interest and activity based markets, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Cyclists – road, gravel grinding, mountain-biking; o Bush walkers – walking groups; o 4WD and trail-bikers; o Anglers; o Canoe / Kayakers; o Astronomy clubs / night sky enthusiasts; o Bird watchers; o Horse riders / equine sports; o Specialist agricultural, industry tours and astronomy; o Golfers. (see Table 4.2)	27.1.1.	<p>Use the Shire's assets and facilities to grow special interest and activity-based markets – clubs, individuals and social groups - targeting these groups primarily through direct marketing online, and PR in specialist publications and on specialist websites.</p> <p>Basically, the same approach can be used to grow the different special interest markets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identify the activities, attractions, facilities and/or services available in the Shire and surrounding region that the market is likely to be interested in; o Package these into itineraries and products; o Use the internet to identify associations, clubs, event organisers etc – develop a data base; o Direct marketing to clubs and associations; o Conduct follow-up; o Support the direct marketing with public relations and social media marketing – seeking to place articles in relevant magazines, newsletters and websites and post on social media sites; o List on free directories and websites relevant to the interest / activity and participate in forums; o Include relevant information on the tourism website and seek links to relevant activity-based sites.
Strategy 28: Leverage emerging markets		
	28.1.1.	Undertake research to develop an understanding of market needs and expectations.

Priority 7: Market growth and development supported by effective marketing and promotion		
Actions	Key Tasks	
28.1. Develop the accessible (inclusive) tourism market	28.1.2.	Evaluate the Shire’s accommodation, products, facilities and infrastructure to assess suitability and capacity. Identify ‘accessible ready’ products and infrastructure as well as the work required to upgrade other products and infrastructure.
	28.1.3.	Develop targeted information and promotional collateral - including video clips, images and specifications and include information on the Narrabri Tourism website (see www.shoalhaven.com/inclusive as an example).
	28.1.4.	If there is sufficient product and facilities, direct market to disability / inclusive travel wholesalers and retailers and disability service providers.
	28.1.5.	Explore options to target disability / inclusive-based conferences and sporting events (eg water sports).
	28.1.6.	Continue to improve access through the implementation of the Shire’s Disability Inclusion Action Plan.
Strategy 29: Effective marketing and promotion		
29.1. Update marketing directions / plan	29.1.1.	Review marketing directions and strategies to leverage Covid 19 related travel opportunities and shifts in the market.

14. Monitoring

It is important that Council monitor the effectiveness of its tourism development and marketing activities. This will assist in:

- Providing an indication of whether the strategies and actions are effective in building visitation and/or achieving economic growth. Ineffective actions can be terminated or modified;
- Setting priorities and allocating funds and resources;
- Providing data to support funding applications. This is particularly important where funding for the extension of an existing program is being sought.

Potential indicators include:

- Progress of product and infrastructure development projects;
- Grant funding secured;
- Value of new / additional investment in the tourism facilities (accommodation, attractions, tours etc) in the Shire;
- Visitor statistics collected at the Narrabri VIC;
- Website and social media analytics;
- Performance statistics from the Big Sky and Boggabri Caravan Parks and the Crossing Theatre;
- Visitation statistics from attractions within the Shire (eg Yarrie Lake, Mt Kaputar National Park, Museums);
- Media coverage gained (track amount of coverage and the dollar value);
- Familiarisation tours hosted and the resultant coverage;
- Traffic count data;
- Number of coach and other tour groups attracted, tour participants and nights spent in the Shire;
- Growth in local events: number of events held; number of attendees;
- Number of events attracted to the Shire, and the number of participants and room nights generated;
- The business / industry development activities held, the number of participants and the outcomes achieved.

For some initiatives, particularly in the areas of market development, it may take several years before the results are fully realised.



NARRABRI SHIRE
DISCOVER THE POTENTIAL



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12		Camping in the Mount Kaputar National Park	Woolgoolga Off Road Club
15		Mt Kaputar National Park – Active Senior	Instagram #mounttkaputar
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25		Pilliga Campground	NSW National Parks
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