

28 February 2025

Destination
Queensland 2045

Queensland's
Tourism Future
Consultation

Discussion Paper

Western Downs Regional Council
PO Box 551
Dalby, Queensland
4405

28 February, 2025

To Whom It May Concern

RE: Destination 2045 Queensland's Tourism Future Discussion Paper

Western Downs Region Council (Council) is a local government Council in Queensland, Australia. The Council manages an area of 37,937 square kilometres with a population of approximately 35,000. Council is at the forefront of the changing world and works to support our growing region, with our Corporate Plan underpinned by progress, people, place, and performance.

Thank you for the Invitation to share our insights in the development of a comprehensive 20-year tourism plan that enhances Queensland's global appeal, unlocks untapped lifestyle and culture, and maximises the legacy opportunities of hosting the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

We support this process and share your desire for Queensland, "A globally recognised, sustainable industry that celebrates the natural beauty and cultural heritage, fosters economic growth, and delivers lasting benefit for local communities."

Please find enclosed a copy of the Council's submission regarding the above discussion paper.

For any further information or questions, please contact Lidewij Koene-Sloss, Economic Development Manager via email lidewij.koene-sloss@wdrc.qld.gov.au or phone (07) 4679 4526.

Yours Sincerely,

Jodie Taylor
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Contents

About the Western Downs Regional Council 4

Executive Summary 6

Recommendations 6

Submission 7

Contact Details 17

Appendix 17

Conclusion..... 17

About the Western Downs Regional Council

The Western Downs is located on the Darling Downs, approximately 207 kilometres north-west of Brisbane and 83 kilometres north-west of Toowoomba. The region encompasses the centres of Dalby, Chinchilla, Jandowae, Miles, Tara and Wandoan, covering nearly 38,000 square kilometres. Combining country lifestyle with modern living, excellent retail offerings and conveniences, the area is home to a population just under 34,000 and has a large working age population of 60.9% aged 15-64 years.

Built on agriculture and thriving in intensive agriculture, energy and manufacturing industries, Western Downs Regional Council is focused on making our region a great place to live, work, visit and invest and the ensure our future generation can do what they love whilst enjoying a regional lifestyle and continue the strong economic growth of the region.

Council manages Australia's second largest road network of over 10,000 km with highways leading into the region including the Bunya, Leichhardt, Moonie and Warrego Highways. Located in the heart of the resource rich Surat Basin, the Western Downs has a diversified energy portfolio with five pillars of energy generation: Coal, Gas, Solar, Wind and soon Hydrogen cementing our reputation as the Energy Capital of Queensland. This contributes to the region's strong economic growth, investment, and consistently high employment with a GRP of \$5.9 billion and \$7.5 billion in the development pipeline.

In addition to the above key industry pillars, tourism is becoming a fifth pillar of our economy. The Western Downs Region is a place where you can indulge in the quiet calm of country living and immerse yourself in the natural splendour of a country landscape, however you decide to spend your time in the Western Downs, one thing is for sure - it's the people that make it.

Council is committed to proactively advancing our region as a tourist destination for travellers. Our vision is for the Western Downs to be an end destination of choice for repeat visitors, while leveraging drive-through visitation. Councils' 5-year Tourism & Events Strategy (2023 - 2028) is essential for our region as we inch closer to the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games - a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for our region to leverage domestic and international tourism, and to establish our great region as an end destination of choice.

The Tourism & Destination Events Strategy 2023 - 2028 focuses on five key strategic pillars:

- **Tourism Product** - The Western Downs has a wide range of unique and high-quality tourism product, including destination events of national significance.
- **Market** - The Western Downs is a destination of choice for domestic tourists from Australia's metropolitan and coastal areas and expands to emerging domestic and international markets.
- **Productivity & Innovation** - The Western Downs is equipped with modern infrastructure and quality essential services supporting the visitor economy.
- **Infrastructure** - The Western Downs is home to modern tourism operators embracing leading edge business practices and local productivity continues to increase.
- **Sustainability & Resilience** - The Western Downs is future-proofed for a changing climate and transitioning economies, and circular economy principles are stimulated.

This strategy aligns closely with Tourism & Events Queensland Strategic Plan 2022 - 2027 to contribute to the Queensland economy and attract visitors to Queensland, generating overnight visitor expenditure, as well as the Australian Government's long-term strategy for the visitor economy, known as THRIVE 2030.

Executive Summary

The Brisbane 2032 Olympics presents a unique opportunity to showcase Queensland's attractions on a global stage, driving long-term tourism growth and creating a thriving, sustainable tourism sector that leaves a legacy. Queensland can secure a prosperous future by utilising the Brisbane Olympics as a catalyst to invest in critical infrastructure and connectivity, such as increased funding for road infrastructure maintenance and asset renewal, and upgrading digital and telecommunications infrastructure.

Addressing barriers to access and connectivity is vital for enhancing the visitor experience. Government funding for expanding networks, improving internet and mobile coverage, and upgrading transportation options can significantly improve accessibility. Investing in reliable public transportation and maintaining roads will make it easier for tourists to navigate the region. Enhancing digital and mobile connectivity ensures tourists have access to real-time information and online booking systems, enriching their experience.

In addition to this, further investment is required in key visitor infrastructure such as Visitor Information Centres to ensure modern services are delivered and leading edge business practices embraced.

By focusing on sustainable tourism practices and promoting authentic cultural experiences, Queensland can create a vibrant and resilient tourism sector that benefits local communities and attracts visitors worldwide. Leveraging natural resources and sustainable practices will attract eco-conscious travellers through advanced technologies, eco-friendly accommodations, and sustainable infrastructure.

Expanding tourism experiences through storytelling and supporting First Nations tourism not only creates economic opportunities but also celebrates Queensland's rich cultural heritage. Industry development programs, including mentoring, the delivery of workshops and the development of toolkits will assist tourism operators to elevate and expand their service delivery. Promoting diverse events and accessible tourism infrastructure will benefit both tourists and residents, fostering inclusivity and sustainable growth.

Recommendations

Council wishes to provide the following recommendations in response to the Destination 2045 Queensland's Tourism Future Discussion Paper, with the aim to maximise visitation and expenditure.

- **Recommendation 1: Ensuring a coordinated approach between stakeholders to utilise the Games as a catalyst for legacy tourism product development, events and increased visitation**

Strengthening a coordinated approach with Queensland Country Tourism (QCT), Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ), the State Government and Trade and Investment Queensland (TIQ) to attract private investment for the development of tourism product, increased markets and the delivery of destination events. This approach enhances the overall experience for visitors and boost post-Games visitation throughout Queensland. Focusing on strategies to increase visitation to the region beyond the Games will ensure a legacy and supports the development of thriving regional communities through elevating the visitor economy.

- **Recommendation 2: Government investment in accelerated development and expansion of tourism product and experiences**

Government investment in key tourism infrastructure and experiences, such as First Nations and accessible tourism enriching the cultural experience for visitors. Industry development programs, including mentoring, the delivery of workshops and the development of toolkits will assist tourism operators to elevate and expand their service delivery. To enable legacy outcomes, strong support is required for projects that are currently being developed such as Bunya Songlines in conjunction with Queensland Country Tourism (QCT) and Bunya People's Aboriginal Corporation (BPAC)

- **Recommendation 3: Priority funding to alleviate the backlog of urgent works and allocations and increased support for the ongoing maintenance, longevity and safety of road infrastructure for visitors.**

Investments in strategic infrastructure such as increased funding to maintain the national highways and state-controlled roads, expanded electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and strengthened public transport could significantly improve travel for both participants and spectators and boosts regional visitation beyond the Games.

- **Recommendation 4: Increased State and Federal targeted funding to place-based solutions to increase the availability and bandwidth of the cellular network across Regional Australia.**

Connectivity is a crucial layer of infrastructure and a barrier for regional Queensland with significant shortfalls in mobile and broadband technology

Rural residents, tourism operators and visitors face issues when it comes to mobile and internet access, reliability and speed. Regional resilience can be improved through an expanded NBN rollout, additional mobile towers, subsidies for residential and business microcells, domestic roaming, infrastructure sharing, and investigating alternative technologies as a backup.

Submission

Western Downs Regional Council works in strong partnership with key tourism stakeholders, such as Queensland Country Tourism. This submission has been developed with input of QCT as well as other tourism stakeholders.

Q2. How can Queensland best deliver the attractive and adventurous experiences that Queenslanders and visitors are seeking while showcasing and preserving our natural environment?

Council would like to advocate for comprehensive training programs for tourism operators focusing on sustainable practices, customer service, and cultural sensitivity that are emerging trends for domestic and international visitors. These could be delivered through the Regional Tourism Organisations (RTO's). Further professional support and development opportunities will strengthen operators to embrace leading edge business practices and meet market demand.

Tourism funding should be aimed at upgrading tourism infrastructure and providing capital to tourism operators to either develop or expand their offering. Further to this, private investment is required to be attracted supporting showcasing the economic and environmental benefits of sustainable tourism projects.

Q3. How can industry help to position Queensland as the leader in eco and nature-based tourism?

Council's Tourism & Destination Events Strategy addresses increased sustainability and resilience as a strategic pillar aimed to enable environmental sustainability of tourism offering. A collaborative approach involving government, industry and local communities is required to ensure that eco-tourism in Queensland is sustainable and responsible, ensuring environmental conservation outcomes whilst balancing increased visitation.

To achieve this, investment and planning is required to support the development and expansion of eco-friendly tourism operators and transportation options. In addition to this, considering that Queensland is competing with other global destinations for eco-conscious travellers, further innovation and strategic marketing efforts will support tourism businesses that are investing in eco-tourism.

Q4. What can governments at all levels can do to facilitate more development of eco and nature-based tourism experiences?

Council requests the State and Federal Governments to take several actions to facilitate the development of eco and nature-based tourism experiences by considering sustainability incentives through, grants, and subsidies. Further investment is required in infrastructure supporting eco-tourism, such as renewable energy sources, waste management systems, and sustainable transportation.

Collaboration with local communities is a critical factor to develop tourism products to reflect their culture and traditions and provide training and resources to operators to assist in the development of eco-tourism initiatives.

By implementing these strategies, governments can create a supportive environment for the growth of eco and nature-based tourism, ensuring long-term sustainability and benefits for local communities and the environment.

Q5. What tourism-related outcomes would you like to see from Brisbane 2032?

The Games will put Queensland on the global stage, showcasing its diverse attractions to a worldwide audience. This increased visibility can drive long-term tourism growth and it's important that we showcase the best of Queensland's diversity, including the coast, regions and outback.

Council advocates to attract more domestic and international visitors, capitalising on the global attention from the Games, and encouraging visitors to extend their stay by exploring more of regional Queensland.

Council has an annual Destination Events Program offering funds for new events to be established in the region. It is considered that TEQ is changing the Queensland Destination Events Program (QDEP) from an aggregated strategy, to a curated strategy pro-actively attracting events to the state. Council would like to see new events and activities to be attracted to the region which align with the Olympic spirit and attract diverse audiences pre- during and post-Games, and seeks strong alignment between stakeholders and levels of government.

Existing tourism operators can be further supported with grants and funding to upgrade their facilities and services. Industry development programs, including mentoring, the delivery of workshops and the development of toolkits will assist tourism operators to elevate and expand their service delivery to meet the expectations of international visitors.

Queensland should aim to create a vibrant, sustainable tourism sector to benefit local communities and attracts visitors from around the world.

Q6. How can the tourism sector support and leverage infrastructure, event and destination promotion opportunities before and after 2032?

Improving roads and public transport is crucial to ensure seamless travel for visitors. Within the Western Downs current funding allocations fall well short of the value of urgent safety repairs required and the critical need for asset renewals is not met. This will result in future exponential increase in funding required to maintain the roads in safe condition.

Targeted marketing campaigns promoting events and destinations are essential, highlighting Queensland's unique attractions, cultural heritage, and diverse experiences which can draw visitors both before and after the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games.

After the 2032 Games, the tourism sector is expected to capitalise on the improved infrastructure and global exposure. Hosting recurring events, supporting legacy projects, and maintaining upgraded facilities will sustain long-term tourism growth. Engaging local communities in these efforts ensures that the benefits of tourism are widely shared, fostering a resilient and inclusive tourism industry.

Q7. What investment opportunities (public and private) do you believe are critical for enhancing Queensland's tourism sector over the next 20 years, such as accommodation, transport infrastructure, attractions, events or technology investments?

Enhancing Queensland's tourism sector over the next 20 years will require a multifaceted approach, focusing on several key areas:

- Investment in diverse accommodation options, including eco-friendly. Consider sustainable and innovative designs to attract environmentally conscious travellers.
- Improving transport infrastructure, including roads, EV charging stations and public transport to enhance accessibility and connectivity. Expanded regional airports can make travel more convenient for both domestic and international visitors.
- Develop unique attractions (new and existing) which capture culture, nature and history. Emphasising Queensland's natural beauty through ecotourism initiatives can also be a significant draw.
- Hosting major events, including sports, cultural festivals, and international conferences by leveraging the legacy of the Games.
- Investing in local produce, such as food, wine, and other agricultural products, presents a significant opportunity. Agricultural properties can benefit, promoting their local produce to visitors and sharing their unique stories.
- Embracing technology to enhance the tourist experience is vital, developing smart tourism solutions, mobile travel planning, virtual reality, and digital marketing strategies to attract global visitors.
- Investing in sustainable tourism practices will ensure long-term growth. This includes initiatives to protect natural resources, reduce carbon footprint, and promote responsible tourism.

Q8. What are your insights into the process of working with government on tourism investment and how can this be further enhanced?

Council already works closely with the State Government and other key partners to collaboratively increase tourism visitation and expenditure, and is interested to continue this approach.

To further enhance collaboration, fostering strong public-private partnerships will be key. These partnerships can leverage the strengths of both sectors, driving innovation and ensuring sustainable growth. Additionally, engaging local communities and stakeholders in the planning and decision-making process can lead to more inclusive and effective tourism strategies.

By aligning tourism initiatives with broader economic, social, and environmental goals, the impact of government involvement in tourism will be significantly amplified.

Q9. What is the most valuable role state government can play in promoting and facilitating investment in tourism?

A strong collaboration is required with RTOs and Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) who set clear policies and guidelines to encourage sustainable tourism practices. It would be considered beneficial to simplify the application process for funding and reducing red tape to make it easier for operators to invest in tourism projects.

In addition to this, education and training programs should be provided for operators to diversify into tourism-related activities, such as agritourism, and improve their business skills, via a collaboration with Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT).

Foster collaborations between the government and private sector to pool resources and expertise. These partnerships can drive innovation and promote sustainable growth in the tourism sector. Additionally, include Queensland regional tourism organisations (RTO) as key stakeholders to ensure comprehensive and inclusive development.

By focusing on these areas, the Queensland State Government can create a supportive environment for tourism investment, benefiting local communities and attracting visitors from around the world.

Q10. What initiatives, including use of technology, are needed to realise our full tourism potential?

Council would like to suggest to enhance promotion of the Tourism Business Digital Adaptation Program [Tourism Business Digital Adaption Program – Queensland Tourism Industry Council](#) providing rebates to tourism businesses for adopting digital technologies, enhancing the visitor experience. In addition to this, robust digital connectivity should be ensured across Queensland to support tourism operators and provide tourists with easy access to information and services.

The availability of real time information supports visitors to make informed decisions guiding their multi-destination travel plans, further dispersing visitors throughout the state and leveraging visitor expenditure.

Council has been made aware that costs for ATDW registrations could be reinstated following costs to be waived post the COVID-19 pandemic. This decision has significantly dropped the ATDW listings of tourism operators in the Western Downs region, directly limiting their visibility to market. Further consideration needs to be given on working collaboratively with industry to ensure listings are maintained.

Q11. What natural, cultural or historical resources in Queensland are currently underdeveloped or not being used to their full potential as tourism attractions?

A prime example of an underdeveloped natural resource is the Bunya Mountains, which hold significant potential for eco and cultural tourism, presenting a hidden treasure trove of natural beauty and First Nations significance.

Home to the largest population of Bunya Pines in the world and feature subtropical rainforests, grasslands, and diverse wildlife. This area holds significant cultural importance for First Nations, who have gathered there for thousands of years centred around the bunya nut harvest. The 'In Country' learning space offers visitors an experience to immerse themselves in culture, lore, and customs. This ancient gathering place on traditional lands provides a unique educational experience, connecting visitors with the rich cultural heritage.

There are ongoing efforts to develop First Nations tourism in the Bunya Mountains, including stakeholder engagement sessions and the creation of a First Nations Tourism Action Plan.

The Western Downs region is a significant hub for renewable energy in Queensland, often referred to as the "Energy Capital of Queensland." The region could offer a unique tourism experience centred

around renewable energy projects. Visitors would explore the impressive infrastructure of wind and solar farms, such as the Coopers Gap Wind Farm.

These sites could be integrated into educational tours highlighting the benefits of renewable energy, providing a fascinating insight into sustainable practices mirrored across Queensland. Developing information centres and interactive exhibits to explain the science and technology behind renewable energy, offering an engaging and educational experience for all ages.

Q12. What more can government and industry do to maximise community benefits from tourism?

Council believes that pro-active and strong collaboration and engagement with local communities supports maximising benefits of tourism. Tourism developments should align with business plans and community strategic plans.

Further education and training programs can equip residents with the skills needed to participate in the tourism industry. Due to workforce shortages, scholarships and grants for students pursuing careers in tourism and hospitality would incentivise tourism as a sector of choice and encourage local talent to stay and work in the region.

In addition to this, visitor expenditure supports the economic development of small regional towns. By promoting visitors to travel through regional areas, small communities can benefit significantly from increased visitation and expenditure.

Q13. What is needed to ensure the tourism industry has a skilled workforce to deliver exceptional visitor experiences?

In the 2022/23 period, the tourism sector in the Western Downs Regional Council area generated total sales of \$182.2 million, with a total value added of \$102.9 million.

To ensure Queensland tourism industry has a skilled workforce capable of delivering exceptional visitor experiences, the Western Downs Regional Council proposes the following:

- Support continued collaboration between educational institutions and industry to offer a range of apprenticeship and traineeship programs in hospitality, management, and customer service in regions including local facilities such as the Country Universities Centres (CUC).
- Council welcomes the state government to continue to fund industry-led micro-credential courses delivered by industry peak bodies. These courses will support the evolving needs of the sector, ensuring that the workforce is up to date with new trends and standards, offering continuous professional development opportunities for current employees to keep their skills aligned with industry trends and best practices
- Support initiatives like the Outback Queensland Agritourism Accelerator Project, aligned with the Australian Regional Tourism National Agritourism Strategy Framework and Agritourism 2030 Action Plan. Agri-tourism contributes to alleviate workforce stress in parts of Western Downs' agricultural sector, key to regional economic development. These initiatives focus on community capability and capacity building, connecting job seekers with tourism opportunities across Queensland.

- Council also encourages the state government to continue to support programs like the Young Tourism Leaders initiative, which inspire the next generation to pursue careers in tourism. Provide incentives for participation, facilitating training and mentorship to shape the future workforce in tourism.

Council would like to draw attention to the State Government on recognising the significant contribution of backpackers to the region's tourism and agricultural sectors. Council advocates the State Government to collaborate with the federal government to implement policies that encourage backpackers to stay in the region, providing essential support to the agricultural sector and agritourism.

The above measures would allow Queensland to cultivate a skilled and adaptable workforce, ensuring the continued growth and success of the tourism industry in the region and in Queensland.

Q14. What type of events destination does Queensland want to be? For example, sporting, cultural, festivals, multi-day, multi-location etc.

Council would like to see promotion of cultural festivals celebrating Queensland's rich heritage, including First Nations experiences. These events highlight the state's diverse cultural landscape and attract culturally curious tourists. Encouraging events which span multiple days and locations to showcase the diverse attractions of Queensland would also help distribute tourism benefits.

The Western Downs Regional Council's Destination Events Program (DEP) (Appendix 6) aligns with these goals by focusing on growing visitation to destination events, attracting new events, and expanding tourism products. The DEP aims to enhance the profile and appeal of the host destination, generate local economic activity, and drive social and community outcomes. By focusing on these types of events, Queensland can create a vibrant and inclusive events calendar to attract a diverse range of visitors. This boosts tourism and importantly fosters community pride and economic development across the state.

Q15. What type of benefits would you like to see from securing and staging events?

High-profile events put Queensland on the global stage, attracting media attention and promoting the region as a premier destination. First Nations experiences through events also highlight the cultural significance and heritage of Indigenous communities. Successful events can attract further investment in tourism and related industries, driving long-term economic growth.

Western Downs Regional Council offers various grants and funding programs to support not-for-profit community organisations in making positive contributions to their communities. These programs are designed to enhance local projects and events, fostering community engagement and economic growth. (See appendix 6)

Recently, Council made the difficult decision to cancel the Big Skies Festival as a Council-run event. This decision was based on careful consideration of the operational costs and resourcing required to sustain the four-day festival. While this was a challenging choice, it was necessary to ensure sustainable and responsible use of resources and to manage event costs effectively. The Western Downs has built a wonderful reputation for hosting sustainable and unique destination events. To continue this tradition, Council is eager to see the Big Skies Festival taken over by an active, vibrant community group or local business with a passion for live music. Council believes with the right leadership; the Big Skies Festival can continue to thrive and contribute to the region's reputation for outstanding events.

Q16. What can the government do to ensure the success (and in the case of recurring events, the long-term viability) of events?

Continuous investing in and upgrading sports and event facilities to ensure international standards are met and venues can host a variety of events. Marketing campaigns can be enhanced to promote Queensland events and event trails to both domestic and international audiences, and to include broader destination tourism offerings.

It is suggested to engage communities in the planning and execution of events to ensure they meet local needs and preferences, including volunteer programs to involve residents in event operations, fostering a sense of ownership and pride.

Further to this, multi-year financial support and grants to event organisers is considered critical to encourage the continuation of existing events and development of new events. This could include funding for sustainable practices in event planning and execution to minimise environmental impact and appeal to eco-conscious visitors.

Council is optimistic that Queensland will be successful attracting recurring events which can build on the success of the Olympics, creating a calendar of regular, high-profile events that attract visitors year after year. By focusing on these strategies, government can ensure events continue to thrive and bring long-term benefits to local communities.

Q17. What are the major barriers to access and connectivity for tourists travelling around Queensland, and how can these be addressed?

Many regions in Queensland have significant gaps in internet and mobile coverage, particularly in the rural areas outside of the town centres. Fast and reliable mobile and internet (connectivity) services are vital to ensure a strong and diverse economy and to assist in ensuring a quality lifestyle for the community. Connectivity is a prerequisite for attracting tourism investment to the region and for the existing businesses to run day-to-day operations, to improve productivity and reach markets anywhere in the world.

Increased Government funding to increase the availability and bandwidth of the cellular network across regional Australia is critical. Connectivity is the crucial layer of infrastructure for business and community and delivering a resilient and stable mobile and data connection is essential to ensure tourism operators can compete locally, nationally and internationally.

Regional resilience can be improved through an expanded NBN rollout, additional mobile towers, subsidies for residential and business microcells, domestic roaming, infrastructure sharing, and investigating alternative technologies as a backup.

Q18. How can we improve transportation options (e.g. air, rail, road) to enhance connectivity between key tourism destinations in Queensland?

The poor condition of state-controlled roads and national highways presents an ongoing risk of property damage, injury or death. Funding should be made available for asset maintenance and renewal of state-controlled roads and national highways, as well as increased longevity of constructed roads.

Upgrading and maintaining roads can significantly improve accessibility. This includes widening roads, improving signage, and ensuring regular maintenance to provide a smooth travel experience.

Considering TEQ's Drive strategy focus on growing the multi-destination drive market, more investment is required in directional signage, RV parking facilities, rest areas, waste disposal, available drinking water and public WiFi. Funds should be made available to Local Governments to invest in these critical services for visitors.

Q19. What is the most valuable role government can play in improving access and connectivity for visitors to easily travel to, and within, Queensland?

More funding should be made available for asset maintenance and renewal of state-controlled roads and national highways, as well as increased longevity of constructed roads. Ensuring they are efficient, reliable, and capable of handling increased tourist traffic

Current funding allocations fall well short of the value of urgent safety repairs required and does not address the critical need for asset renewals. This will result in future exponential increase in funding required to maintain the roads in safe condition. Western Downs Regional Council has a maintenance backlog of \$33.2 million for the state controlled roads, with a further \$4.9 million for the national highway. The value of urgent safety repairs for state roads is \$16.8 million, with a further \$2.1 million for the national highway.

RACQ's Unroadworthy Roads Survey (2024) finding 3 of the top 10 most unroadworthy roads are National Highways, with the remainder being state controlled roads.

Enhancing digital and mobile connectivity across the region to ensure tourists have access to real-time information, navigation tools, and online booking systems. This can significantly improve the overall visitor experience.

By focusing on these areas, the government can significantly enhance the accessibility and appeal of Queensland as a tourist destination, driving economic growth and enriching the visitor experience.

Conclusion

To enhance tourism in Queensland, investment in connectivity, transportation, and sustainable solutions is essential. Upgrading digital connectivity and telecommunications infrastructure boosts tourism, business development, and educational opportunities.

The TEQ tourism strategy targets tourists who travel with the head, heart, and hand. Queensland, especially the Queensland Country region, has significant opportunities to expand tourism experiences focused on natural landmarks like the Bunya Mountains. Supporting First Nations tourism creates economic opportunities and celebrates cultural heritage.

Council supports the promotion of diverse events, such as cultural festivals and multi-location to attract visitors, boost tourism, and foster community pride and economic development. Securing and staging events in Queensland will boost tourism, increase visitor spending, and enhance the community's cultural appeal. Events generate employment, stimulate the local economy, and leave a legacy through improved infrastructure and sustainable practices. High-profile events also attract media attention and promote Queensland as a premier destination, driving long-term economic growth.

Facilitating development by providing incentives for sustainable practices, investing in infrastructure, and collaborating with local communities is imperative. The Brisbane 2032 Olympics presents a unique opportunity to showcase Queensland's attractions on a global stage, driving long-term tourism growth. By focusing on sustainable tourism practices, enhancing infrastructure, and promoting authentic cultural experiences, Queensland can create a vibrant and resilient tourism sector that benefits local communities and attracts visitors worldwide.

Addressing barriers to access and connectivity is also essential. Investing in reliable public transportation and maintaining roads makes it easier for tourists to navigate. Enhancing digital and mobile connectivity ensures tourists have access to real-time information and online booking systems, enriching their overall experience. Ensuring accessible tourism infrastructure benefits both tourists and residents, fostering inclusivity and sustainable growth.

Contact Details

Please do not hesitate to contact Lidewij Koene-Sloss, Economic Development Manager via email via email lidewij.koene-sloss@wdrc.qld.gov.au or phone (07) 4679 4526 should you wish to discuss any aspect of this submission.

Appendix

1. Western Downs Regional Council Tourism & Events Strategy 2023 – 2028 [Tourism & Destination Events Western Downs Regional Council \(wdrc.qld.gov.au\)](#)
2. Tourism Events Queensland Strategy 2022 - 2027 [Strategic plans | Tourism and Events Queensland](#)
3. Australian Government long-term strategy for the visitor economy: THRIVE 2030
4. Reference TEQ's Strategic Plan 2024 - 2028: To inspire travellers to visit Queensland as their destination of choice <https://teq.queensland.com/au/en/industry/who-we-are/strategic-plans>
5. Western Downs Regional Council Destination Events Program (DEP) <https://www.wdrc.qld.gov.au/Community-Recreation/Grants-Funding/Grant-Programs>
6. Western Downs Regional Council advocates for increased connectivity in the region. <https://www.wdrc.qld.gov.au/Council/Advocacy>