INDEX

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .................................................................................................................. 4

1. INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................................... 12

1.1. METHODOLOGY ..................................................................................................................... 12

1.2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .......................................................................................................... 13

2. CONTEXT .................................................................................................................................. 14

2.1. LOCATION ............................................................................................................................... 14

3. TOURISM PROFILE ...................................................................................................................... 16

3.1. SEASONALITY ........................................................................................................................ 16

3.2. VISITOR NUMBERS .............................................................................................................. 16

3.3. DESTINATION POSITIONING AND BRANDING .................................................................... 19

4. SWOT ANALYSIS ........................................................................................................................ 20

4.1. MARKETING AND PROMOTION .......................................................................................... 20

4.2. DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE ......................................................................... 21

5. THE MARKETING ENVIRONMENT ............................................................................................ 22

5.1. BRANDING ............................................................................................................................. 22

5.2. KEY DEMOGRAPHIC-PsyCHOGRAPHIC MARKETS .............................................................. 23

5.3. SEGMENTATION FOR OUTBACK, GULF AND WESTERN DOWNS ...................................... 26

5.4. MARKETING CHALLENGES .................................................................................................. 27

5.5. OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE .................................................................................... 28

5.5.1. STATUS QUO SCENARIO .................................................................................................. 28

5.5.2. GRADUAL STAGED DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO .............................................................. 29

5.5.3. FULL IMPLEMENTATION SCENARIO ................................................................................ 29

6. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT ........................................................................................................ 31

6.1. FUTURE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT ..................................................................................... 35

7. ACTION PLAN ............................................................................................................................. 40
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Stafford Group (The Group) was commissioned by Diamantina Shire Council (the Council) to develop a Tourism Development Plan which will provide direction and maximise the potential from tourism.

The Plan covers strategic marketing opportunities, tourism development and related infrastructure. Although some initiatives are able to be implemented in the short term (2012-2013) others will require a staged approach over a longer period (2012-2016). A comprehensive Action Plan has been created covering 19 marketing initiatives, 23 development initiatives and 6 infrastructure initiatives.

Whilst a number of opportunities have been identified, the Group has deliberately focused on what it considers as the top priorities which will stimulate greater visitation and a higher yield per visitor. This focus was also noted as a requirement by Council.

In addition, The Councils CEO has requested responses to 7 critical success factors. These are provided in the box below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical success factors</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What drove tourism to Diamantina 10 years ago?</td>
<td>The caravan market undertaking “pilgrimage” travel mostly north to see the real outback and often heading to the Gulf of Carpentaria and those attending the Birdsville Races.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s driving tourism now to the Shire?</td>
<td>Visitors looking for “experiences” but who are increasingly time poor but who may often be more affluent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What changes are expected for the future?</td>
<td>Stabilising of the caravan market – 4WD experience market, growth in soft adventure market, potential all year round fly in market and move to more special interest niche areas such as bird-watching, heritage-explorer tours, indigenous culture, sports, car clubs etc if the product is available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do we address seasonality?</td>
<td>Develop all weather built experiences – attractions which complement the natural assets and attractions and which will help stimulate a fly – drive market all year round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What will tourism look like in the future?</td>
<td>More focussed on niche markets wanting quality experiences and tours which will entice more of the under 50’s markets to visit. They will be</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
short stayers but higher spenders. The caravaners will still come.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do we need to focus on for the future?</th>
<th>Promotable and commissionable product which will stimulate tour operators and wholesalers to take greater interest in promoting the Shire’s product. And creating the facilities - amenities for the niche markets identified.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What should the central theme be for the Shire?</td>
<td>Move on from being part of Far West Outback as that undervalues the product, people and experiences you offer. And for many the Northern Territory has claimed the outback brand. So rebrand to focus on the Shires strengths which correlate to being on the “edge of the Simpson Desert”. You need to conjure up more interest and excitement. You are more akin to “Frontier Country”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Marketing**

The following are the Group’s observations and recommendations to assist with marketing in the future:

- The visitor season will primarily remain from March through til November because of prevailing weather patterns and until more all-weather built experiences and attractions are available;

- The Group sees three primary markets being the focus for the short-longer term which build on the current successful initiatives already implemented and including:
  - The domestic 4WD-caravan market which we consider will continue to grow particularly as roads get fully sealed;
  - Potentially strong growth (based on a lower volume, however) of the fly-in market providing there are land-based tour operators to provide a number of package options; and
  - Ongoing growth in the event market as well as building on the successful Birdsville Races, the Bedourie Camel Races, and the utilisation of the Shire by a number of car clubs etc.

- The Group has received information from a variety of sources on the actual visitor numbers to Diamantina Shire which range from 25,000-100,000 per annum. Based on information
gathered from accommodation providers, retail operators and others, we consider that the actual numbers are more likely to be in the range of 45,000-51,000. There is a need to develop a robust surveying process to ensure all future investment and general decision making regarding tourism are based on an agreed visitor base which is defensible and supported by robust statistics; and

- Within this context it also needs to be noted that for the general outback regional tourism area for Queensland governed by OQTA, there has generally been a decline in visitation for many areas. With the exception of those years where flooding and other weather conditions have prevented visitation growth, we suspect that the number of visitors to Diamantina has achieved modest growth at best over the last 10 year period. This result needs to be seen against comparative destinations within the outback, not only in Queensland but also in NSW and the Northern Territory which have experienced significant decline over this period.

**Branding**

The opportunity exists to continue to strengthen Birdsville’s position as one of the top five iconic destinations of Queensland’s outback and to strengthen Bedourie’s position as one of the most authentic Australian outback towns one can experience. In addition, the Group recommends that Council and industry reconsider the brand positioning of Diamantina as we feel that putting the unique assets of the Shire within the outback context doesn’t do it justice. With its unique geographic relationship on the edge of the Simpson Desert, Diamantina is better described as frontier country rather than traditional outback. A marketing program which positions the Shire and its key assets using branding associated with *frontier country*, as an example, is more likely to stimulate stronger interest for those wishing to consider Birdsville and Bedourie as destinations for a true adventure (soft or hard). The Group has discussed this with the consultant currently undertaking the rebranding exercise for the Shire.

The challenge the Group currently sees is that without a clear differentiation from outback many will perceive the Shire in the same context as other outback destinations which are more easily accessible from Brisbane and other coastal cities. Branding the Shire as *frontier country* will help develop a point of difference which is needed for promoting the uniqueness of the area.

In recommending the above, the Group still considers that Diamantina should be involved in cooperative marketing programs with OQTA and South West Tourism.
Product development

The Group notes that a number of development projects are already in train by Council and offer some exciting prospects for expansion of the tourism product on offer. The priority development projects which should be focused on are the following:

- The proposed Dust Storm Centre for Bedourie which would also house the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) and which should aim to offer an all-weather visitor experience as well as education-based facility. The facility should also cater for the arts-cultural strength of Bedourie and offer a gallery space attached to the VIC for the sale of locally produced items;

- The Group notes that a Sky Walk project has been proposed for Big Red to help separate vehicles from people and to protect the dune. Whilst some thought has been given to a possible Simpson Desert interpretive centre at Big Red, the Group would caution against this. The beauty of Big Red and the landscape in general is the lack of built structures and as Big Red is one of the major, if not the major visitor attraction on offer, it should be kept as natural and authentic as possible;

- The Group considers that the VIC at Birdsville is an exceptional facility developed with long term foresight for expansion. As such, the current facility is underutilised. Consideration should be given to utilising part of the VIC as a Simpson Desert interpretive centre with the current gallery space set aside for this purpose. Over time, and based on funding, it may be possible to extend the interpretive centre but this could be done on a staged basis. In addition, the VIC in Birdsville should be used for the sale of locally produced quality handicraft and related items which can be controlled by the Tourism Manager;

- The Group can see merit in the proposed 4WD track but understands the constraints of the Bush Heritage Organisation site at Ethabuka. We note that whilst it is possible to circumnavigate the Bush Heritage area, the Mulligan River Crossing on the alternative route through Cameron Downs can be closed for periods due to flooding. A feasibility study is required to verify the actual level of market demand for this 4WD track development particularly if it is not able to be operational for a number of months throughout the year;

- Virtually every stakeholder interviewed commented on the high quality swimming pool and spa facility at Bedourie. It is a facility valued by the local community as well as visitors despite its relatively high operating cost. Consideration should be given to developing an artesian spa and swimming facility at Birdsville as well as further accommodation as part of
the development. The Group understands that land is set aside for the spa and swimming complex already. We consider this would be an important strategic project to stimulate greater visitor demand for Birdsville and Bedourie if both were able to offer quality swimming facilities unlike most other destinations in the wider region;

- Currently there are approximately 71 accommodation rooms in Birdsville and Bedourie and it was noted that this lack of accommodation restricts coach tours in particular. Additional commercial accommodation is therefore required for Birdsville in particular, but also Bedourie to allow for coach tour opportunities as well as growth in car club events etc.;

- Based on effective packaging and promotion and attractive flight scheduling there is an opportunity to grow land based tour operations. In addition, there is a market need for tag-along 4WD tours following an experienced tour operator. The demand for this will increase over the next five-ten years with the sealing of the road from Boulia. The Group is aware of stakeholders’ interest in developing a 4WD touring experience, though Council may need to help facilitate this to ensure the best outcomes possible are achieved;

- There is an existing need for 4WD hire facilities particularly out of Bedourie and Birdsville. This is not just for tourists but also for Council and State government in Bedourie and Boulia. The Group understands that currently, vehicles have to be hired in Mt Isa which is a considerable distance away. Council should therefore consider facilitating a 4WD hire operation to support government needs as well as the fly-in visitor market who may be keen to undertake touring within the Shire; and

- Through discussions with a variety of Indigenous stakeholders we understand there are a number of sites of significance to the various Indigenous communities throughout the Shire. There is also the potential for Aboriginal guides and tour operators to add a cultural overlay in explaining the uniqueness of the Simpson Desert and related flora and fauna. A close working relationship is required between the various Indigenous communities, Council and cattle station owners to investigate options for accessing sites and managing potential visitor flows through guided tours in particular. The Group understands there is already interest in doing this from the Indigenous community and acknowledges the work already done in the Two Boys Dreaming facility at Birdsville.
Tourism related infrastructure

To encourage greater visitation into Diamantina Shire, the primary need is for the sealing of highways to Boulia and the remaining unsealed portion of the Bedourie to Birdsville road. Once sealed roads are in place, this will significantly encourage a larger 4WD, caravan and coach market to venture into Diamantina Shire.

There is also a need to continually improve gateway and interpretative signage throughout the Shire. Whilst it is recognised that a number of locals have concerns about the abundance of signage, there is a need to look at maintaining and improving the quality of signage at times at a number of the key sites of significance and in particular to offer an ongoing maintenance program as climatic conditions are often harsh on signage in general. There is a need for a revised signage strategy by Council to ensure that there aren’t too many signs and that the quality of signage overall is maintained to a uniform standard. It is important that directional signs also offer estimated driving times as well as distances.

The new airport terminals at Bedourie and Birdsville and the quality of the airstrips are a major plus from an infrastructure perspective. Both terminals however are underutilised for much of the time as flight access is limited. In the case of Birdsville, consideration should be given to allowing scenic flight operators the use of counter space for encouraging visitors to book flights over Lake Eyre, down to Poeppel Corner and to other locations as value add experiences. This could be on a fee for service basis where they pay an agreeable amount to Council for the lease of space for both advertising and ticketing. Both terminals (Bedourie and Birdsville) should also contain attractive promotional material to encourage visitors to undertake excursions and tours, to stay long and to obviously spend more in the region.

Other opportunities

As previously indicated, the Group has discussed a number of potential projects with stakeholders. While some of these may have merit in the medium-longer term, a number, such as the re-opening of the Betoota Hotel should be considered higher risk. Whilst restoration of the hotel would provide more product in the Shire, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that the cost of refurbishment could be recouped in a realistic timeframe and offer an acceptable return on investment. However, if it were possible to secure a State or Federal grant funding to restore the hotel on heritage grounds rather than trying to find a commercial investor to do so, projects such as this could be considered.
Specific requirements of the project brief

As well as the above marketing, development and infrastructure recommendations noted, the Group makes the following recommendations in regards to specific project plans which have been identified:

- An opportunity does exist to restore the Birdsville Courthouse and potentially have this as an interactive heritage explorer museum and/or an outback police museum which we note there is support for. There also may be the opportunity of a ‘twinning’ arrangement with the historic police station in Bedourie so the story of outback policing potentially could be told in two towns on a complementary basis;

- For the Carcory Homestead ruins, the Group considers that this should be kept as natural as possible. The climatic conditions make it difficult and expensive to maintain signage let alone any other components installed on site. The story of the homestead should be told at the Birdsville VIC which would act as a hub to book tours to the homestead to view the site and its significance. The cost of trying to create interpretation at the homestead ruins site and maintaining this to a good standard is likely to be prohibitively expensive; and

- Similarly, the Group visited the bird hides at Cuttaburra Crossing and noted the extensive interpretative signage as well as the existing bird hide on the edge of the river. The ongoing challenge is the maintenance of signage and built facilities. As a result, the Group suggests that the importance and significance of the Cuttaburra Crossing be explained through the Birdsville VIC through interpretation panels and maybe an audio visual experience and that basic car parking, signage and bird hides be retained only at Cuttaburra Crossing.

Summary

Council and industry should be commended for the success to date of positioning Diamantina Shire and its key assets as major attractions as part of the Queensland outback. The Birdsville Hotel and Big Red by way of example are two major icons of Queensland’s outback and regularly appear in State-wide promotional material. The challenge now is to spread the visitor flows that come into Birdsville and Bedourie throughout the Shire to the benefit of the community in general.

The development projects identified will go a long way for significantly increasing market appeal and stimulating potential growth in visitor numbers, extended length of stay and higher visitor spend patterns. Growth in air access is likely to be a major stimulant for this along with appropriate ground transport operations. The Group does not believe one can solely rely on the self drive 4WD market
coming up the Birdsville Track from South Australia, Victoria and NSW, as whilst there is growth potential, the growth is going to be constrained by road conditions (sealing of roads as well as flooding which has occurred over the last three years in particular). The fragility of this market is noted.

The Group also wishes to highlight that the market (local, domestic and international) has high expectations on the quality and maintenance of visitor experiences. This includes keeping the environment in pristine condition and ensuring that built attractions and experiences use appropriate technology. In most cases, there is limited demand in many markets for static displays and instead strong preference exists for interactive experiences and the use of audio visual and other technology.

Because of this need for technology, it is recommended that built visitor experiences be focused on Bedourie and Birdsville where facilities can be more easily monitored and maintained than in the more remote locations of the Shire.

In summary, whilst Council and the tourism industry in Diamantina Shire have actively pursued marketing initiatives with South West Tourism and the OQTA, the opportunity exists to secure greater market share through implementing the various initiatives highlighted in this Report. Whilst there should be ongoing development of partnership opportunities with both of these entities, equal if not stronger emphasis should be placed on ensuring that access to the Shire is strengthened (air and road) and that technology (website development and mobile phone application in particular) is utilised for promoting and marketing the Shire as a unique destination in its own right.
1. INTRODUCTION

The Stafford Group (the Group) was commissioned by Diamantina Shire Council (Council) to develop a Tourism Development Plan which is to provide direction to maximise the potential of current and future visitation. In addition, the brief specifically required:

- A plan for the continued marketing of the Shire;
- The allocation of resources and support to the South West Tourism Group, and to OQTA as the regional tourism organisation;
- Commenting on the project plan for the Birdsville Courthouse restoration;
- Commenting on the project plan for the Carcory Homestead ruins; and
- Commenting on the project plan for Bird Hides at Cuttaburra Crossing.

The Group sees this plan therefore, as a guiding document for the short to longer term (2012-2017).

1.1. METHODOLOGY

The Group adopted the following approach when undertaking this Tourism Development Plan:

- Documentation including studies, data etc provided by Council were reviewed in order to understand current and future developments being planned;
- The Group reviewed regional studies including the Tourism Opportunity Plan prepared for the Outback, Gulf Country and Western Downs by Tourism Queensland and the Experience Audit Review undertaken for the same collective region;
- The Group reviewed statistical data on the region available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Tourism Queensland and various other sources;
- The Group visited the Shire for a one week period to undertake structured interviews with key personnel, to meet the community at large, to review sites and to gain a comprehensive context of product, challenges and opportunities;
- Follow up discussions and interviews were conducted with industry stakeholders including previous personnel from Council, tour operators who visit the Shire and broader region, staff at Tourism Queensland; and
- A draft report was prepared and presented to Council and key stakeholders for feedback.
Discussions with the CEO of Council as well as Councillors and key industry stakeholders have indicated a preference to focus tightly on those opportunities which are likely to generate the greatest impact in helping to grow tourism to the Shire sustainably over the next five year period.

Whilst the Group has received comment on many initiatives, those that are focused on in this Tourism Development Plan are seen as the ones with the greatest opportunity to achieve tangible results in a realistic timeframe. In addition, the Group appreciates that this Plan will provide the Action Plan for the Council’s Tourism Manager to follow.

1.2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Group wishes to acknowledge the free and frank comments which have been provided by a large number of stakeholders and the time and effort provided in follow up discussions especially.

It is clearly evident that the Shire and its positioning on the edge of the Simpson Desert make it a unique location and one in which people who live in the Shire and those who know it well value particularly highly.
2. **CONTEXT**

2.1. **LOCATION**

Diamantina Shire (the Shire) is located in Central West Queensland and has operated as a Local Government Area (LGA) since 1879. The Shire covers an area of 95,000km\(^2\) and is often referred to as ‘corner country’ as it borders South Australia and the Northern Territory. Parts of the Shire are also referred to as ‘channel country’ because of the network of western Queensland rivers, which during the wet season, create an extensive flood plain. Approximately 25% of the Shire consists of national parks and includes the famous Simpson Desert as well as the Diamantina and Astrebla Downs National Parks.

There are approximately 1,684kms of roads in the Shire with only 140kms of major road infrastructure currently sealed. It is envisaged that over the next five year period all of the major roads into and through the region will be sealed. Excluding the two small urban areas of Birdsville and Bedourie, there are 14 properties in the entire Shire with an average area of 6,800km\(^2\).

The two main urban areas in the Shire are Bedourie and Birdsville which have an estimated population of 250 people (Bedourie with approximately 140 and Birdsville with approximately 110) as well as additional people living and working on the major cattle stations. There are 177 registered voters within the Shire.

The major employer within the Shire is Council which has a major depot as well as a Visitor Information Centre in Birdsville and which is headquartered in Bedourie.

Whilst mobile phone coverage is available in Birdsville, there is very limited coverage elsewhere throughout the Shire. This does have implications for the use of technology for marketing and visitor information purposes.

From a destination positioning perspective, the Birdsville Hotel and Big Red are recognised as two of the most iconic products in the outback tourism region of Queensland. Whilst Bedourie does have better services and facilities (swimming pool and spa, public hall facility) than Birdsville, and it has positioned itself as a genuine authentic outback town, it is not as well-known as Birdsville. There is, as to be expected, a degree of rivalry between the two towns but yet both are able to offer quite different experiences.

In geographic terms the Shire is positioned by Tourism Queensland as part of the Far West subregion of the Outback Region.
The figure below illustrates the Far West and other regions as classified by Tourism Queensland.

**FIGURE 1: TOURISM QUEENSLAND REGIONS**
3. TOURISM PROFILE

The Shire has quite unique tourism and visitor characteristics and an understanding of these helps determine current issues and future opportunities.

3.1. SEASONALITY

Tourism activity and visitation are focused on the dry season which generally runs from Easter (late March) through to mid November at the latest. Over 90% of visitors come to the Shire during this period; however it is worth noting that there has been an increase in visitation during the wet season (mid-November to mid-March) as a result of changing weather patterns.

Over the last 10 year period (2001-2012), there has been a consistent period of drought with the exception of the last three years where extensive flooding has occurred. This has had a significant impact on visitation both positively and negatively. Positively in that it has helped fill Lake Eyre and generated strong interest for flights over the lake (which is often accessed from Birdsville) and negatively, as roads during the tourism season have become virtually impassable due to high river levels and flooding.

The impact of seasonality is seen across domestic and international visitation patterns to the Shire although anecdotal feedback from a number of stakeholders including local police indicate that there has been a growth in international visitors during the wet season. These visitors generally do not understand that this time of the year has the reverse weather conditions than most other parts of Australia.

3.2. VISITOR NUMBERS

There is significant variation in reported visitor numbers to the Shire. This makes it particularly difficult for tracking performance and planning. The Group received feedback from a number of stakeholders indicating annual visitation ranging from 27,000-100,000.

In reviewing numbers staying in commercial accommodation including the caravan parks, the Birdsville Hotel etc., we estimate overnight accommodation in the Shire at 45,000-51,000. In addition, there are an estimated 3,000 day trippers who fly into the Shire to visit Lake Eyre or for other purposes.

Over the last 10 year period it would appear that visitation to the Shire has remained static at best and that at worst, has experienced a slight decline. These results need to be seen within the context
of visitation to the Outback and Gulf country in general in Queensland which has experienced a significant decline in visitation over this period and an estimated 20% decline over the last two years alone.

Similar significant declines in visitation to Outback areas of South Australia, the Northern Territory and NSW have also been experienced.

The Shire therefore would appear to have fared far better than many other outback locations.
### TABLE 1: ESTIMATED OVERNIGHT VISITATION TO DIAMANTINA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>where</th>
<th>description</th>
<th>units</th>
<th>occupancy</th>
<th>guest ratio</th>
<th>avg LoS</th>
<th>tourist season</th>
<th>visitor nights</th>
<th>tourist season</th>
<th>off season</th>
<th>occupany</th>
<th>avg LoS</th>
<th>visitor nights</th>
<th>visitors off season</th>
<th>Full Year Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birdsville</td>
<td>birdsville hotel</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>27,540</td>
<td>11,016</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1,519</td>
<td>1,013</td>
<td>29,059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birdsville</td>
<td>caravan sites</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>20,592</td>
<td>13,728</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>21,242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birdsville</td>
<td>cabins</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birdsville</td>
<td>motels</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>3,564</td>
<td>2,376</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>3,789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedourie</td>
<td>powered caravan sites</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>2,088</td>
<td>1,392</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>2,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedourie</td>
<td>camping - unpowered</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>5,472</td>
<td>3,648</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>5,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedourie</td>
<td>caravans - unpowered</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>2,736</td>
<td>1,824</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>2,861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bedourie</td>
<td>camping sites</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>7,200</td>
<td>4,800</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>7,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bedourie</td>
<td>cabins at Roadhouse</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>7,128</td>
<td>4,752</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>7,353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bedourie</td>
<td>motel units at Roadhouse</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>1,584</td>
<td>1,056</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1,734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bedourie</td>
<td>motel units at hotel</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>3,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>totals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>198</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,893.75</td>
<td>3,387.50</td>
<td>86,261.75</td>
<td>50,955.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **percentage of year**
  - built accommodation: 71%
  - caravan and camping sites: 77%

---

Diamantina Tourism Development Plan  
14 May 2012
3.3. DESTINATION POSITIONING AND BRANDING

Currently the Shire is positioned by Tourism Queensland as part of the Outback region of the State. Its sub regional branding is part of the Far West Outback where Diamantina, Barcoo and Boulia Shires make up this sub region.

Unfortunately, including the Shire within the broad Outback Queensland region does not offer sufficient point of difference or reflect the area’s uniqueness.

With its unique location on the edge of the Simpson Desert, and being on the border of South Australia and the Northern Territory, the Shire has the potential to reposition itself as being located on the edge of ‘frontier’ country offering a number of unique adventure experiences.

The Group’s concern is that without a clear separation, the Shire will merely continue to be seen as a less accessible part of Queensland’s Outback. The need to reposition also is seen as important to help grow the fly-in market compared to the traditional drive market which has plateaued and, in some situations, is in decline.
4. SWOT ANALYSIS

The following two SWOT analyses provide feedback from stakeholders as well as the Group’s analysis on Marketing and Promotion and separately on Development and Infrastructure.

4.1. MARKETING AND PROMOTION

**STRENGTHS**
- The iconic Birdsville Hotel and its images
- Big Red (sand dune)
- The Birdsville Races
- Bedourie Camel Races
- The Simpson Desert
- Council and community support for tourism
- Ability to market with South West Tourism (interstate) and OQTA (intrastate)

**WEAKNESSES**
- Merely seen as part of Greater Outback Queensland
- Lack of packaging of product
- Lack of ground transport and tour operators
- Cost of accessing the Shire
- Unpredictable weather patterns
- Signage and maintenance
- Unsealed roads
- Restricted access to sites on private property
- Significant decline in Outback visitation
- Mixed feedback on the Birdsville Races

**OPPORTUNITIES**
- Growth potential in the fly in short break visitor market ex Brisbane-SE Queensland
- Tag along tours
- Indigenous tourism product potential
- Car club events
- Education tours, particularly linked to school groups
- Sports training in the Shire

**THREATS**
- Inability to separate from the Outback region and continuing decline
- Ongoing flooding affecting access during the tourist season
- Lack of packaging leading to decline in visitation
- Increasing cost of air access to the Shire
- Inability to grow traditional visitor markets as well as new markets
- Ongoing global financial decline with impact on visitation
4.2. DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

**STRENGTHS**
- The quality of the airport facilities at Birdsville and Bedourie
- The sports oval at Birdsville and Bedourie
- The Community Hall at Bedourie
- The swimming pool and spa at Bedourie
- Visitor Information Centres at Bedourie and Birdsville
- Authentic nature of Bedourie as an outback town
- Birdsville racecourse

**WEAKNESSES**
- Unsealed roads
- Lack of mobile phone coverage
- Limited accommodation options
- Limited food and beverage outlets
- Signage maintenance
- Lack of all-weather built visitor experiences
- Lack of interpretation for natural assets/attractions
- Lack of swimming facilities at Birdsville
- Maintenance of infrastructure for Birdsville Races
- Lack of parks and shade trees in Birdsville
- Lack of footpaths in Birdsville making it pram and wheelchair unfriendly
- Limitations on use of the oval due to the flight path in Birdsville

**OPPORTUNITIES**
- Create both Visitor Information Centres as interpretation hubs for the region with high quality interpretation and audio visual experiences
- Create Dust Storm interpretive centre in Bedourie with a new VIC
- Create a Simpson Desert interpretive centre as part of the Birdsville VIC
- Utilise both VICS as outlets for the sale of quality locally made products
- Creation of an Outback Policing experience using the old Marion Downs Police Barracks at Bedourie as well as the Birdsville Courthouse restoration project
- Develop an artesian spa complex for Birdsville
- Secure access to key tourism sites such as Dingo Caves and waterholes etc on private property once insurance-based issues can be addressed by Council to remove private landowner liability issues
- Investigate land speed racing on clay pans at Cluny Station
- Complete the remaining bird hides at Cuttaburra Crossing
- Create a soft adventure 4WD track as a half day experience opportunity for self drive visitors (rather than tag along)
- Provide facilities at Bedourie for hangars and fuel to support aviation tourism growth
- Develop a cooking competition using the unique Bedourie Camp Oven and look to create a major event around this competition with strong media coverage
- 4WD rental service in either Bedourie or Birdsville
- Expansion of housing particularly in Birdsville to cater for staff for current and future businesses
- Introduction of footpaths, shade trees and improve street lighting in Birdsville in particular

**THREATS**
- Lack of creation of all-weather visitor experiences leading to decline in visitation
- Lack of mobile phone coverage limiting technology applications for visitor information
- Lack of staff accommodation particularly in Birdsville limiting visitor growth
- Reduction in regular passenger air services
- Increasing prices of air services
- Lack of ground transport operators limiting growth potential for the fly in market
5. **THE MARKETING ENVIRONMENT**

5.1. **BRANDING**

Currently, Diamantina is positioned as part of the Far West Outback sub region of Outback Queensland (along with Barcoo Shire and Boulia Shire). As previously indicated, the Group considers this undervalues the potential for the Shire as it reinforces the distance from the coast and major growth markets as well as denoting potential access issues. The opportunity exists to reposition and rebrand Diamantina (either on its own or with Boulia Shire) as Queensland’s ‘frontier’ country.

The Group considers that this can be done in a compatible way with the Tourism Queensland branding (Where Queensland Shines) by creating taglines such as:

- Where Queensland shines for Frontier Adventure; and
- Where Queensland shines for the Great Frontier, etc.

It would still be possible to market collectively with OQTA as well as with South West Tourism. In addition, however, the opportunity exists to effectively use web based technology to position Diamantina as a frontier adventure hub on the edge of the Simpson Desert. It would therefore be possible and appropriate to include:

- Nature based tourism experiences;
- Heritage based tourism experiences;
- Building on the Burke & Wills explorer themes;
- Cultural tourism in the form of Indigenous history and product;
- 4WD experiences;
- Scenic flights over Lake Eyre;
- As a hub for car club based events and potentially clay pan racing; and
- Building on the success of events to date and increasing event based opportunities such as the Bedourie Camp Oven Cooking Competition etc.

In discussions with tour operators and other stakeholders outside of Diamantina Shire there was uniform agreement that retaining Diamantina’s brand position as part of the Outback alone did not allow the uniqueness of the product base or the potential to be realised.
5.2. KEY DEMOGRAPHIC-PSYCHOGRAPHIC MARKETS

Tourism Australia, Tourism Queensland and other state tourism organisations have moved to psychographic segmentation of visitor markets in order to plot trends and identify growth potential. There are a number of key themes which need to be highlighted in order for Diamantina to capitalise on these.

At the broadest global level, trends and influences affecting visitation to Australia and subsequently to Queensland and the region including the following:

- Increasing use of the internet and social media for marketing and holiday planning purposes;
- Improved access and affordability of air travel and comparison of air prices;
- The importance of value for money;
- The growth in destination brag value;
- The desire for experiences rather than merely destinations; and
- Growth in voluntourism/community oriented tourism and off the beaten track travel.

Whilst currently the international visitor market to Diamantina is small, there is the potential for significant growth. That growth however will only occur if the following is able to be provided:

- A dynamic website including social media links is required to encourage visitation and also to highlight important safety notices such as the dangers of being unprepared for the climatic conditions which a number of international tourists apparently are failing to realise;
- Whilst the cost of the airfare to and from Diamantina is high, it does reflect the distance from Brisbane especially, and the relative isolation. There needs to be a strong correlation with value for money for international visitors especially to see the significance of an experience on the edge of the Simpson Desert;
- With lack of tour packages, the international marketplace is likely to question the value-for-money proposition currently;
- Repositioning and rebranding Diamantina as part of ‘frontier’ country is likely to significantly improve brag value and market appeal;

---

1 Feedback from local police with the Shire (Bedourie and Birdsville) indicates that international visitor understanding of the harshness of the environment and risks are reducing not improving so a concerted effort is required to better inform visitors as part of their holiday planning.
The types of experiences which are able to be offered and which could also be increased for the future are those which provide more meaningful experiences which the market is looking for; and

There may be cultural, heritage and nature-based projects to encourage voluntourism which international visitors can participate in as part of their trip to Diamantina.

From a national perspective, there are also key psychographic requirements including:

- The experience seekers are looking for learning experiences;
- How you feel is more important than how old you are; and
- Visitors are seeking authentic interactions with locals, nature and destinations.

From a Diamantina perspective the current visitor market is noted as primarily a 50+ aged market with the time and disposable income to venture to the Shire. Whilst a high percentage of visitors are thought to be classified as experience seekers, there are limited learning opportunities currently which would need to be addressed.

With respect to visitors seeking authentic interactions with locals, nature etc., the uniqueness of being on the edge of the Simpson Desert does provide a strong nature-based experience, though feedback from a number of sources indicates there are limited opportunities for interacting with locals at times. By way of example, concern was expressed that it was not authentic to spend 3-4 days coming across the Simpson Desert, simply to stay in Birdsville and to be served by an Irish backpacker at the pub.

With respect to the trends affecting Queensland, the research indicates:

- Visitors are seeking natural encounters primarily with islands, beaches and Queensland’s relaxed lifestyle as well as adventure;
- Visitors want fun, relaxing and carefree experiences; and
- There is an industry shift towards experiences which target visitor needs and wants.

With respect to Diamantina, the following points are made:

- The challenge is that for many visitor markets, Queensland is strongly positioned as a coastal holiday destination rather than an inland experience;
The types of experiences available in the outback in general may not necessarily correlate to what visitors classify as fun, relaxing and carefree despite the fact that escapism is provided; and

Where Diamantina has a natural advantage however is in the type and range of experiences it can offer visitors whether this be nature-based, culture-based, event-based or adventure-based.

With respect to trends to the outback for the next 10 years, the research indicates:

- Visitors enjoy longer holidays and the ability to take their time which probably reflects the much older market going to the outback rather than younger people and families who are often time poor;
- Visitors enjoy discovering and exploring new things;
- Visitors are realistic in expectations about service and luxuries; and
- Visitors are looking for tangible and intangible unexpected experiences and interactions.

With respect to Diamantina specifically, the following are noted:

- The average length of stay is 2-3 nights which is unlikely to grow unless more events and visitor experiences are able to be offered along with tour packages;
- The primary experience for many will be undertaking four wheel driving in a ‘frontier’ environment either as part of a tag along experiences or on their own without a tour guide;
- The value proposition is something to be mindful of as the cost for many of getting to Diamantina is high which correlates to a higher expectation about service and facilities; and
- With limited product on offer and challenges associated with accessing sites (such as Dingo Caves and a number of waterholes etc. on private property) it is challenging finding tangible and intangible unexpected experiences or interactions.

Whilst the above points are highlighted in the recent Tourism Opportunity Plan created by Tourism Queensland for the Outback and Gulf Country, it is important to note that visitation to the Outback region has been in decline for the last 10 years and has dropped significantly (up to 20%) over the last two years in particular. The markets of today, therefore, would appear to be in decline and new market opportunities need to be found if visitor growth is to be achieved.

With respect to domestic tourism trends over the next seven years, the Tourism Forecasting Council notes the following:
There is likely to be a stable number of domestic trips throughout Australia;

There is expected to be increased domestic visitor nights in Queensland; and

There is expected to be a slight decline in domestic visitors visiting friends and relatives in regional Queensland.

The implications for Diamantina would appear to be that though the finite number of domestic trips throughout Australia and potentially in Queensland may not change over the next seven years, there will be increased competition to hold, if not grow market share from many destinations. There is therefore a need for a clear point of difference in the marketplace to help maintain visitor numbers and achieve visitor growth.

The Tourism Forecasting Council also notes that for international visitation, trends are likely to be:

- Recovery in Australia’s in-bound tourism markets;
- Increased seat capacity into Australia;
- Growth in overall international visitor numbers and increased average length of stay; and
- Increase in international VFR in regional areas.

A key feature which a number of international markets have started to consider and which the Group notes through its research around Asia/Pacific is the desire to find safe destinations. A number of stakeholders in Diamantina noted that the Shire is able to offer a safe destination.

Interestingly, whilst the Tourism Forecasting Council is indicating overall growth in international visitor numbers, some major gateway destinations such as Sydney are predicting a decline in in-bound visitor numbers during 2012-2020. Market share is expected to be grown at Sydney’s expense by Brisbane and to a lesser extent other major gateways into Australia.

5.3. SEGMENTATION FOR OUTBACK, GULF AND WESTERN DOWNS

The available research focuses on the broad inland area of Queensland when looking at psychographic segmentation. The major findings identified in 2011 in the Experiences Audit for this broad area include the following:

- The primary market for the Outback, Gulf and Western Downs is thought to be Connectors who represent the largest segment travelling in Australia and cover 4.8m consumers. Connectors account for an estimated 61% of those travelling to the Outback, Gulf and Western Downs. Connectors want to explore, have new experiences and leave the cares of
the world behind. Unfortunately, whilst 70% of Connectors nationally are aware of the broad region, they have limited knowledge of attractions and only 6% intend to visit;

- Other significant market segments include Self Discoverers (13% of the market to the region) who are after personal discovery and enrichment and prefer well furnished, better quality accommodation and would rather fly and hire a car than travel long distance by a car, coach etc.; and

- Unwinders represent approximately 12% of the market going to the broader region and also prefer to fly rather than drive. Unwinders have a focus on relaxation and look for the chance to focus on themselves and escape.

The research of this broad region indicates that 85% are part of a long haul drive experience, 69% are referred to as connector couples, 66% are retirees whilst 13% are self discovers and 12% are Unwinders who are staying more than a week and are motivated by nature (birdwatchers etc.).

Unfortunately, the decline in visitation to this broader region is thought to primarily be a result of the lack of suitable product currently available to entice visitor growth.

As previously indicated, the Group sees a need to differentiate Diamantina from this broad area encompassing the Outback Region, the Gulf and Western Downs and the need to rebrand to help achieve this. A number of new product opportunities identified in the SWOT analysis and discussed later in this report highlight product which will appeal to the niche markets, where growth potential is likely to be possible.

5.4. MARKETING CHALLENGES

There are a number of challenges already noted in the SWOT analysis under Weaknesses and Threats. From a marketing perspective the following challenges need to be adequately addressed:

- There is a need to reposition Diamantina as distinctly different from the traditional Outback region and as indicated, to consider positioning it as ‘frontier’ country to stimulate a degree of brag value and sense of adventure;

- The lack of tour packages and the lack of ground transport operators needs to be addressed particularly to pick up on the fly in market;

- Product and sites of interest which are located on private property need to be made accessible as without it, there is limited scope to stimulate higher spend or greater visitation;
• Whilst it is important to continue to market Diamantina at caravan and camping shows and other appropriate travel trade events, far more needs to be done with web-based marketing; and

• The potential exists for solid growth in the traditional 4WD and caravan market over the next five years when road sealing is completed.

Of equal importance is the need to ensure that the value proposition is strengthened through the creation of new visitor experiences. The consumer has significantly more destinations to choose from now particularly with the support of low cost carriers offering cheap outbound flights and this trend is expected to continue. As Diamantina is an expensive destination to access, a range of quality visitor experiences is required to support the cost implications of getting to the Shire.

5.5. OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

There are a number of scenarios to consider for Diamantina. These are dependent on what is able to be created and the speed in which they can be delivered.

We are also mindful that there is an element within the community who are fearful of the growth of tourism and the change in lifestyle which this may create. Council and community need to give careful consideration to the importance which is placed on tourism and the growth potential which is desired.

5.5.1. Status quo scenario

Under this scenario, technology changes would be introduced including the creation of a dynamic website as well as the introduction of additional online forms of marketing but utilising the existing product base with little or no change in the product mix.

Under this scenario the Group would anticipate maintenance of current visitor numbers at best although any increase in the cost of airfares, accommodation and pricing generally would more likely correlate with a gradual decline in visitation.

We do not advocate the status quo but consider it is important to acknowledge it as a scenario so stakeholders understand the risk of doing nothing.
5.5.2. Gradual staged development scenario

Under this scenario a number of the development concepts identified in the report would be planned and created over the next five year period. Not all of the development concepts would occur other than those already earmarked by Council.

Under this scenario we would envisage modest growth at best and more likely the retention of current visitor numbers. From a psychographic market perspective we consider that the Connectors segment would remain, but only if prices were held at current levels and/or inflation-indexed at best. There might be modest growth in the Unwinders and Self Discovers markets but this is highly dependent on a number of specific products being introduced. To some, this will possibly be seen as a more comfortable scenario to follow as growth would be very gradual and more easily managed.

We do note and appreciate that finding staff is a challenge and any new facilities created (accommodation, attractions or other forms of experiences such as tours etc) could generate significant problems in staffing.

5.5.3. Full implementation scenario

To achieve visitor growth and improve visitor yield necessitates equal emphasis on marketing initiatives and development and related infrastructure. If a considered effort is made to rebrand Diamantina and strengthen its point of uniqueness, this action on its own will stimulate interest from a number of tour companies as well as consumers. The development of web-based marketing initiatives and the packaging of product will also be a significant enhancement and stimulate stronger interest from businesses as well as consumers, both domestically and internationally.

The introduction of products such as the Artesian Spa for Birdsville and all-weather built experiences such as the Dust Storm interpretive centre for Bedourie and the Simpson Desert interpretive centre in Birdsville, could offer significant stimulants for encouraging new visitors as well as repeat visitors.

The development of new product and new marketing initiatives including nature-based, Indigenous-based, event-based activities and products could offer significant stimulants to the market. This in turn is likely to put additional pressure on already limited accommodation supply, so consideration would need to be given to increasing accommodation capacity in both Birdsville and Bedourie to cater for this.
Additionally, there would need to be a change in focus to allow:

- More accommodation for staff;
- Land availability for development; and
- Address current infrastructure constraints as already identified.

Whilst this scenario probably provides the most exciting opportunity for Diamantina, it also creates the greatest challenges and requires a collective will on the part of Council and community to want to drive the benefits of tourism more strongly.
6. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

The following table provides assessment of the current product base and supporting infrastructure. The Group notes that a number of the issues identified are already being addressed by Council but have been restated here to reinforce the need for change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CURRENT PRODUCT AND INFRASTRUCTURE</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Accommodation mix                  | All accommodation is located in Birdsville and Bedourie. There are 71 accommodation units (hotel + motel rooms, and cabins) with most built accommodation pitched at a 2-3* level. In addition, there are an estimated 127 powered and non-powered caravan and camping sites excluding any informal roadside areas where people may stop. Research indicates the challenge of encouraging tour groups where there is a lack of accommodation facilities available, particularly over the peak period months. Tour operators advise that they book out accommodation two years in advance and with most establishments being particularly small it is often impractical for tour groups to be catered for with so few built accommodation facilities. Balanced against this however, is the extreme seasonality issue which reflects a 7.5-8 month tourist season and a significantly low off season period. Coupled with the extreme seasonality is the high cost of building within the Shire, as there is a need to truck in most construction materials. Anecdotal feedback indicates that the cost of construction in the Shire is approximately 1.9 times higher than if undertaking the same development in Brisbane. The Group believes developing further built accommodation facilities may be problematic, based on:  
  - The high cost of construction;  
  - The impact of seasonality and the likelihood that this will be hard to change;  
  - The lack of available land; and  
  - The challenges associated with staffing additional accommodation facilities. However, despite these limitations, opportunities are seen to exist where accommodation can be linked to a new attraction. In the case of Birdsville, the desire to create an Artesian Spa and Pool complex could provide the catalyst for encouraging a new accommodation development as part of the facility. Providing that sufficient land is made available, the introduction of a new major visitor experience such as an Artesian Spa and Pool complex could well support the viability of additional accommodation facilities at Birdsville. Similarly, with the development of a multipurpose sports complex in Bedourie, the proposed Dust Storm interpretive centre, the Outback Police museum experience and a number of tour-based opportunities (education tours, aviation tours etc.) could support the viability of developing new accommodation in Bedourie as well. Without new visitor experiences and attractions however the viability of new accommodation would be highly marginal. |
### CURRENT PRODUCT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRES (VIC)</strong></th>
<th><strong>ASSESSMENT</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Council has shown great foresight in developing a VIC with the capacity to expand in Birdsville. Whilst the current facility offers a number of services to visitors, further enhancements are possible including:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The introduction of high quality interpretation boards on the exterior walls at the front of the building for information display to cater for visitors who arrive outside of VIC operating hours;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The opportunity to utilise the audio visual room at the Birdsville VIC for showing mainstream movies, to provide locals and visitors with evening entertainment;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The ability to use the audio visual room for educational tours and lectures/seminars;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The opportunity to sell quality local handicraft and product through the VIC on a commission basis; and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The ability to convert the existing display area as State 1 of a Simpson Desert interpretive centre and the potential for expansion beyond this when funds are available in the future.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With respect to Bedourie, the VIC is much smaller. But we note that Council intends to create a Dust Storm interpretive centre and incorporate the VIC into this development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from tour operators has also indicated interest in establishing a booking facility particularly in the Birdsville VIC which could operate on a fee-for-service basis. A slight reconfiguration of space to allow for this would be required. With respect to the Bedourie VIC, there is insufficient current space for this but this should be contemplated as part of a new Dust Storm interpretation centre and VIC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### INTERPRETIVE AND DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SIGNAGE</strong></th>
<th><strong>ASSESSMENT</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signage is seen as a dilemma for many with the Shire. Whilst there is a need to identify sites of significance and provide interpretation in the absence of guided tours etc, a number of locals have commented on their desire to limit the amount of signage which they classify as a visual intrusion on the landscape.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additionally, our assessment is that the signage in this environment is problematic. Extreme weather conditions result in excessive wear and tear and reduce the longevity of signs which are not cheap to design and construct. As such, consideration should be given to offering high quality interpretation boards at the two VICs which should act as hubs to encourage people to disperse into the region to visit actual sites. There needs to be a carefully created simple map which highlights where each site is and which provides valuable information which visitors can take with them as they visit each site. This obviates the need for extensive interpretation signage at each site such as Cuttaburra Crossing, Carcory Homestead ruins and other sites. What each of these more remote sites requires is simple clear signage highlighting what the site is and offering minimal interpretive information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With respect to directional signage, this needs to cover not only the actual distance between towns and points of interest but also estimated driving times. This is important for safety purposes as well.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Consideration also should be given to entry signage/welcoming signage on the entry to Bedourie and Birdsville for more directions. There needs to be a consistent approach for this. Research also indicates that a number of signs are stolen (particularly Birdsville and Diamantina signs). Consideration should be given to producing lower cost
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CURRENT PRODUCT AND INFRASTRUCTURE</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smaller signs with Birdsville and Diamantina which can be sold through both VICs as a revenue generator.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food and beverage outlets</strong></td>
<td>There are limited food and beverage outlets in both Bedourie and Birdsville. Feedback from Bedourie has indicated a desire for a coffee shop to offer alternatives to the roadhouse and the hotel. With respect to Birdsville, the hotel and the roadhouse provide options along with the bakery (although this operated only a seasonal basis). The challenge for the introduction of any further food and beverage outlets is the seasonality and the small local population base to sustain the new enterprise. The Group does note that there is interest in establishing ground transport and tour operating enterprises which could help the viability of a new food and beverage outlet or at least enable an existing operator to expand into catering facilities to meet an expanded client base. If new accommodation facilities (an Artesian Spa and Pool complex in Birdsville and a new accommodation facility for Bedourie supported by new visitor attractions and experiences) were established, ideally they would have in-house food and beverage services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Road quality</strong></td>
<td>Anecdotal feedback indicates that most visitors would automatically assume that the vast majority of roads throughout the Shire would be unsealed. We note however, that over the next five-ten years the road from Bouila to Birdsville will be fully sealed which is expected to help stimulate much stronger traffic movements. We also appreciate that Council’s road budget (around $39m) constantly needs to be applied to maintenance and repair work particularly after the heavy rains and flooding which has occurred over the last year and for the two previous years. What is required is information available to visitors to encourage them to drive slower because of a combination of the road conditions and their lack of familiarity of driving on unsealed roads. This is particularly important and based on information gathered from local police in Bedourie and Birdsville as the number of road accident incidents continues to increase rather than diminish due often to excessive speed or fatigue. Furthermore, feedback indicates that the quality of vehicles now being seen within the Shire is progressively getting worse and their ability to handle the road conditions is questionable. An education campaign is something which should be seriously considered to help reduce the number of road accidents and to encourage visitors to take a more responsible approach. We also note the need for a number of access roads to get people to sites of significance such as Lake Machattie, and a number of sites such as water holes etc. on private stations. If visitors are to be encouraged to visit these sites (preferably as part of an organised tour group as a tag along or in a single vehicle with a tour guide) then appropriate road conditions are warranted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Telecommunications</strong></td>
<td>Many of those consulted, particularly in the community, commented on the lack of mobile coverage once outside of Birdsville and Bedourie. The practicality of extending mobile coverage throughout much of the Shire is something which may occur over time. But whilst it would be beneficial to have mobile coverage particularly on the main roads through the Shire for safety purposes, we suspect this will not occur for some time. What we believe needs to be introduced is a mobile application which can be downloaded in Bedourie and/or Birdsville. The mobile application would not require mobile phone coverage outside of the two town areas but by downloading the app in the two towns it would be possible for visitors to get information via the app on places of interest. As such, the app would be self-guiding and would allow visitors to get information on Cuttaburra Crossing which they can view both on the...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### CURRENT PRODUCT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSESSMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>way to the Crossing and whilst there as well information for other sites including the Carcory Homestead and the Beetoła historic hotel site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nearest 4WD hire outlet is in Mt Isa. With an expected increase in fly in visitors the opportunity also exists to hire them 4WDs which can be part of a tag along tour experience and/or without being part of a formal tour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anecdotal feedback also indicates that State government agencies and others may be receptive to hiring 4WD vehicles direct from Birdsville or Bedourie which would seem a more efficient way of operating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The current visitor attractions are mostly natural sites such as Big Red or historic sites such as the Corcory Homestead ruins etc. Currently, the VIC in Birdsville doesn’t constitute as a visitor attraction though it would be relatively easy to change some of the activities within the building to enable this to occur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To stimulate greater visitation and in particular higher visitor spend whilst in the Shire, Council should pursue its current initiatives for developing its Dust Storm interpretation centre for Bedourie and the Simpson Desert Interpretation Centre for Birdsville.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of the high maintenance cost and harsh climatic conditions, we would actively encourage Council to avoid creating infrastructure such as signage etc. in remote sites as alternatives exist which are more cost effective and require less maintenance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whilst self composting toilets have been positioned on many of the main roads through the Shire, industry feedback highlights concern at the lack of maintenance. There needs to be an ongoing maintenance program introduced to ensure that they are kept clean, particularly throughout the tourist season.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4WD hire facilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The nearest 4WD hire outlet is in Mt Isa. With an expected increase in fly in visitors the opportunity also exists to hire them 4WDs which can be part of a tag along tour experience and/or without being part of a formal tour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anecdotal feedback also indicates that State government agencies and others may be receptive to hiring 4WD vehicles direct from Birdsville or Bedourie which would seem a more efficient way of operating.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visitor attractions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The current visitor attractions are mostly natural sites such as Big Red or historic sites such as the Corcory Homestead ruins etc. Currently, the VIC in Birdsville doesn’t constitute as a visitor attraction though it would be relatively easy to change some of the activities within the building to enable this to occur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To stimulate greater visitation and in particular higher visitor spend whilst in the Shire, Council should pursue its current initiatives for developing its Dust Storm interpretation centre for Bedourie and the Simpson Desert Interpretation Centre for Birdsville.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of the high maintenance cost and harsh climatic conditions, we would actively encourage Council to avoid creating infrastructure such as signage etc. in remote sites as alternatives exist which are more cost effective and require less maintenance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public toilet maintenance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whilst self composting toilets have been positioned on many of the main roads through the Shire, industry feedback highlights concern at the lack of maintenance. There needs to be an ongoing maintenance program introduced to ensure that they are kept clean, particularly throughout the tourist season.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1. FUTURE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

The following projects are identified as priority projects to help stimulate greater visitation, higher visitor spend and to help address major issues associated with seasonality etc. As a number of these are all-weather built visitor experiences they have the capability of operating all year round. We believe this is a particularly important consideration even though prevailing weather conditions may require off season visitors to fly in rather than drive.

They are also important considerations because they draw upon and build on the important aspects of nature, culture and heritage which make the Shire unique.

The following are the priority product development needs but are not listed in any priority order:

- There is a need to create a ground-based transport operation and tour operation business either out of Birdsville or Bedourie. Currently, tour operators come into the region bringing groups with them. Discussions with tour operators indicate a desire to have a locally-based operator who can assist with coordinator, running tours and ensuring that vehicles and equipment can be based in the Shire etc.

- A feasibility study is required for the proposed Dust Storm centre for Bedourie which should incorporate a new Visitor Information Centre and possibly an art gallery which can sell quality locally products craft and artwork. Based on market research the facility should offer:
  - A high quality interactive experience where low maintenance technology can be applied;
  - Information on Channel country and prevailing weather conditions to help visitors understand the region in which they are in;
  - Education based facilities to encourage a fly in or drive in school market, a tertiary student research based market as well as other interest groups;
  - For any new Visitor Information Centre, an emphasis should be placed on touch screen technology and large display screens in order to start to move away from the older style brochure racks which are starting to become less applicable to the markets of today, and certainly for the future; and
  - The possibility of a cafe/coffee shop which is able to be leased out to a commercial operator and which can help offset the ongoing operating and maintenance costs of the Dust Storm centre.
We note that a feasibility study is planned for a staircase and platform on Big Red to help separate vehicles from people and to offer protection from erosion. The Group has spoken to a number of stakeholders about this project and notes local and other stakeholder concern that putting a structure on Big Red may actually devalue the experience over time rather than enhance it. There is also concern that with the movement of sand dunes, what might be an ideal location now could be less than optimal in the future. Additionally, there is the added concern of ongoing maintenance to keep any staircase and viewing area well maintained. If there is a need for a viewing platform etc to gain access onto a high quality sand dune, stakeholder feedback indicates that 14kms out of Birdsville there is an opportunity on the Birdsville to Windorah Road for a boardwalk and viewing platform at Bitumen Hill. It apparently offers easier accessibility than Big Red and may also relieve some of the pressure which currently exists to drive on to Big Red. We would also recommend that access to Big Red be carefully monitored with visitors having to register first at the VIC in order to manage tag-along tours and visitor flows generally. Additionally, by offering an alternative venue, such as that suggested, may also start to encourage greater visitation through offering new product;

Our research indicates that there is a need for a 4WD track which can be utilised by visitors without a tour guide. Suggestions have been made that possible half day 4WD track experiences exist off the Birdsville Track, by following the road up to the Big Red turnoff. Whilst the Group is aware of the major 4WD track contemplated which follows the Rabbit-proof Fence, we understand that this is an overnight experience and offering a longer loop circuit. We note that the concept is constrained by having to circumnavigate land owned by the Bush Heritage Organisation site at Ethabuka. Whilst it is possible to circumnavigate the area by using the Mulligan River Crossing as an alternative, this is often closed for lengthy periods due to flooding. If this is the case, there is little point in creating a route where the risk of track closure is already apparent. In addition, operator feedback indicates that for many visitors a half day 4WD experience may be more appropriate or a series of half day options so that people can extend their stay in the Shire. Consideration should be given to a series of ½ day self- drive 4WD track excursions which could offer different levels of difficulty;

The size and scale of the VIC at Birdsville creates an excellent opportunity for utilising part of the facility as a Simpson Desert interpretive centre. The current separate gallery space potentially could be used for stage one of this purpose and, over time and based on securing
additional funding, an extension to this wing may be possible. The VIC should also be a base for local tour operators including scenic flight operators to possibly base themselves out of. This could provide an income generating opportunity for Council to offset the ongoing costs of operating the VIC. Overall, the VIC needs to include:

- The redevelopment of the current gallery space for a possible Simpson Desert interpretive centre but this would need to be subject to a feasibility study;

- A feasibility is required into allocating space for tour operators (land-based and air based) on a commercial lease of spaces;

- The retail area could be reconfigured to also include appropriate product produced locally for sale on a commission basis;

- The theatrette should be made available in the evening for films to provide night time entertainment during the tourist season and on a full cost recovery basis;

- Interpretation signboards which were planned to be located at remote locations should be placed on the walls around the external walls and entrance to the VIC, to provide additional information and to make the VIC a hub for those going out and exploring the Shire;

- A mobile phone application should be developed to provide a self-guided tour with quality information on the sites of significance within the Shire. This should be able to be downloaded prior to arrival or at the VIC (via a WiFi network) either in Bedourie or Birdsville and will not need mobile phone coverage once the application has been downloaded; and

- The VIC should be utilised as a hub for town tours and astronomy tours during the day and in the evening.

- The concept of an Artesian Spa and Swimming complex (See figure 2 below for best-practice example) for Birdsville should be pursued even though there has been limited interest to date. The introduction of such a complex if created to a slightly higher standard could provide the catalyst to support additional commercial accommodation. A refinement of the initial concept and the land set aside for this purpose may therefore be required to enable:

- An attractive artesian spa facility to be developed;
- Sufficient land for a series of different pools offering different temperatures;
- A potential for a central reception building and welcoming centre with a food and beverage outlet;
- A cluster of accommodation units, and;
- The potential to have individual pools if this is environmentally appropriate and financially feasible.

**FIGURE 2: BEST PRACTICE ARTISAN SPA - POLYNESIAN SPA IN ROTORUA, NZ**

- Whilst there is an existing Indigenous site of significance (Two Boys Dreaming), the site requires ongoing maintenance and should act as a hub for providing information both on this site and other sites of significance in the Shire as part of tour packages. The potential for Indigenous tours and Indigenous guides generally needs to be further developed to provide visitors with a cultural overlay as they visit sites such as Big Red and potentially other sites such as Dingo Caves which is located on private property. It is important that Council help facilitate access onto the stations to Aboriginal sites where local communities are comfortable in explaining sites of significance and taking small groups of visitors on education-based tours;

- We note existing Council support for an outback police museum utilising the historic Police Station in Bedourie to tell the stories of outback policing. The restoration of the Birdsville Courthouse also provides an opportunity to provide a second and complementary venue for
either expanding the outback policing story experience or potentially for telling the story of the explorers (Burke & Wills and others);

- The Carcory Homestead ruins should be kept as natural as possible. Whilst consideration has previously been given to creating a roof structure over the shell of the building, the interpretive aspect of the Homestead should actually be told at the Birdsville VIC which can act as a hub to book tours to the Homestead’s ruins along with other sites of significance. The ongoing challenge of maintaining remote sites particularly when there is no one on site to manage the facility is highly problematic. Other than improvements to signage, the Carcory Homestead should be retained as a natural attraction with information available on a mobile phone application and with interpretive display at the Birdsville VIC;

- The bird hides at the Cuttaburra Crossing also suffer from the ongoing challenge of signage and built facility maintenance. The significance of the birdlife and more detailed information should be made available through interpretation panels at the VIC at Birdsville as well as information available to be downloaded via a mobile phone app. Maintenance of the specific site should be kept to a minimum which should allow for car parking, rubbish collection, and good quality directional signage.
7. ACTION PLAN

The following Action Plan provides a roadmap for Council and other stakeholders, and specifically the Tourism Manager, to follow for the next 5 year period (2012-2016). Budget estimates are indicative only and subject to further refinement based on feasibility assessment for a number of strategies.

Whilst this Action Plan covers 19 marketing initiatives, 23 development initiatives and 6 infrastructure initiatives, there are a variety of additional opportunities which have been mentioned to the Group in the course of preparing this Tourism Development Plan for the Shire. This Action Plan therefore focuses on what are considered the priority actions and projects to achieve sustainable visitor growth over the next five year period. The Priority column, at the right of the KPI column, denotes those strategies which are considered to be of greater importance in achieving this desired outcome.
### TABLE 2: KEY RESULT AREA 1 - MARKETING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>BUDGET</th>
<th>KPI'S</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Ongoing marketing at trade shows such as the caravan and camping shows interstate | Council and industry operators to attend shows collectively | Tourism Manager | Ongoing | $20k | - Industry and Council attend shows in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide  
- Collateral developed is undertaken jointly  
- Survey is conducted with consumers/attendees at shows to gather feedback on the competitiveness of Diamantina as a destination | Medium |
| Encourage the fly in market all year round | To work with tour operators and wholesalers to stimulate an all year round fly in market to Birdsville and Bedourie | Tourism Manager and industry | Ongoing | $5k | - Meet with wholesalers and in-bound tour operators to promote fly in  
- Greater air capacity for tours  
- Increased occupancy rates at accommodation establishments from people flying in | High |
| Website enhancement | Re develop the website to offer product and packages and to appeal to a short break fly in market as well as the traditional caravan market | Tourism Manager and industry | By 30 November 2012 | $20k | - Product packages are created and promoted on a collective website  
- Strong industry support for the website | High |
| Develop mobile phone application | Commission a mobile phone application which provides detailed information on sites of significance for the self-drive market | Tourism Manager | By 30 March 2013 | $25k | - Mobile app designed and tested by February 2013  
- App available to be downloaded at VICs in the Shire and outside of the Shire by 30 March 2013 | High |
## MARKETING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>BUDGET</th>
<th>KPI’S</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Creation of a Visitor Survey and Database              | To create a survey form for all tourism and related businesses in the Shire, to collate the findings monthly and to report the findings to industry and Councils quarterly | Tourism Manager                 | From 1 July 2012        | N/A    | • All tourism and related businesses complete the survey form on a monthly basis and submit to Council  
  • Sufficient information is gathered to help refine marketing initiatives and identify future target markets | High     |
| Re brand the region for tourism purposes away from Far West Outback | To ensure that the current re branding exercise of the Shire for tourism purposes moves away from an outback theme to a Frontier Country theme to stimulate greater visitor interest and to reflect the uniqueness of the area | Council’s brand consultant and Council | By 30 December 2012     | $20k   | • New brand logo and tagline agreed by Council and supported by industry by 30 September 2012  
  • Support is gained from Tourism Queensland by 30 November 2012  
  • The new brand logo and taglines are available for industry and Council use by 30 March 2013 | High     |
| Continue to market Diamantina through the OQTA        | Continue to take advantage of cooperative marketing programs offered by OQTA providing a clear point of difference is able to be achieved | Tourism Manager                 | Ongoing                 | $30k   | • Up to four cooperative marketing opportunities are initiated with OQTA under the separate new branding created for the Shire  
  • Tracking of results is developed in target markets  
  • Positive response to cooperative marketing is achieved through feedback gathered from visitors in the Shire | Low      |
| Market through South West Tourism                      | To get involved in cooperative marketing programs where this is cost effective | Tourism Manager with support from industry | Ongoing                 | $15k   | • To ensure that cooperative marketing programs offer tracking of program success  
  • To monitor the success of cooperative campaigns through positive feedback from visitors to the Shire | Low      |
## MARKETING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>BUDGET</th>
<th>KPI’S</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop education section tours</td>
<td>Liaise with Department of Education, Universities and Tertiary Institutes to encourage high school and tertiary education tours</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>By 30 September 2013</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>▪ To research opportunities for education based tours</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ To identify schools, universities and research bodies with interest in the region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ To stimulate at least two education tours during 2013 calendar year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ To increase education tours by no less than 30% pa based on proven demand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop Indigenous cultural tours</td>
<td>To work with the local Aboriginal communities to encourage ground tour operators and guides</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>By 30 March 2013</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>▪ To ensure at least one Indigenous tour operation is established by 30 March 2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ To liaise with relevant State and Federal Government agencies to support an Indigenous business initiative for tours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ To ensure that Indigenous tours can access sites of significance on private land within the Shire during 2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of nature based tours</td>
<td>To work with tour operators, wholesalers etc. focused on bird watching specifically</td>
<td>Tourism Manager</td>
<td>By 30 October 2013</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>▪ To identify those tour operators specialising in bird watching tours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ To identify clubs and associations specialising in bird watching nationally</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ To ensure that at least one specific bird watching tour is operational by 30 May 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## MARKETING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>BUDGET</th>
<th>KPI’S</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop heritage based tours</td>
<td>To assess demand for tours which follow the famous explorers, including Burke &amp; Wills etc.</td>
<td>Tourism Manager</td>
<td>By 30 May 2014</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>▪  To identify tour operators and wholesalers focused on heritage and explorer based tours nationally as well as in-bound</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪  To determine if there is a market for explorer based heritage tours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪  If viable, to encourage at least one specific heritage tour by 30 June 2015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪  To ensure that heritage based tour elements are contained within generic tours of the Shire in 2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create tourism promotion within Birdsville and Bedourie air terminals</td>
<td>To introduce high quality wall mounted displays of tour options within the terminal buildings with contact details for tour operators</td>
<td>Tourism Manager and industry</td>
<td>By 30 December 2013</td>
<td>$12k</td>
<td>▪  Using the new brand logo to highlight the various tour options for positioning within the airport terminal</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪  To ensure that all tour options are also carefully promoted on the new website</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪  To ensure that complementary information on tours displayed is available at the two VICs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of road signs for sale through VICs</td>
<td>It is noted that visitors often steal Birdsville and Diamantina road signs. Create a series of road signs on a smaller scale for sale both through the website as a merchandising opportunity and for sale through the VICs</td>
<td>Tourism Manager</td>
<td>By 30 December 2013</td>
<td>$15k</td>
<td>▪  To design signs which are marketable to visitors</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪  To commission the production of signs and to retail these through the VICs and website</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪  To ensure a profit margin of at least 50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪  To trial for an 18-month period to ensure sufficient sales are achieved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### MARKETING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>BUDGET</th>
<th>KPI'S</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Encouraging an under 50 market                  | Developing a safe and softer adventure product for short breaks for couples and families | Council and industry | By 30 December 2014    | N/A    | ▪ To research the ability to attract an under 50s market for soft adventure  
  ▪ Create a short break (3-5 day) series of packages which may offer fly/drive for tag along tours  
  ▪ To ensure that industry fully supports packages | Medium   |
| Marketing to car clubs and motor vehicle manufacturers | To expand the car club market which has already been established | Council and industry | By July 2013           | N/A    | ▪ To research the number of car clubs and their interest in undertaking a tour to the Shire  
  ▪ To research interest with motor vehicle manufacturers and distributors for product launches and corporate events to be held in the Shire  
  ▪ To increase the number of car clubs coming out to the Shire by 30% pa from 2014-2016  
  ▪ To ensure that at least one major motor vehicle manufacturer takes on a sponsorship role for a new event or to promote a site of significance in the Shire on an annual basis | High     |
## MARKETING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>BUDGET</th>
<th>KPI’S</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| To create evening entertainment in the tourist season | To utilise the theatrette in the Birdsville VIC for mainstream movies during the tourist season and the Bedourie Community Hall for the same purpose | Council | From 1 July 2012 | Cost neutral (user pays) | ▪ To ensure there is ability to run movie sessions initially on a weekly basis over the tourist season  
 ▪ To ensure that the cost of renting movies along with licence fees is able to be recouped through a nominal charge to all users  
 ▪ To assess visitor feedback to this initiative | Medium |
| Sports tourism | Investigate with the Australian Academy of Sport the opportunity for elite sport training in the Shire and for small scale sporting events (biathlon, triathlon etc.) | Council | By July 2014 | N/A | ▪ To research the level of demand through appropriate State and Federal Government agencies  
 ▪ If demand is shown, to facilitate a visit to the Shire with officials  
 ▪ To encourage, if proven viable, the positioning of the Shire as an appropriate venue for sport training | Low |
| Bedourie Camp Oven Cooking Competition | To develop a major event centred around the Bedourie Camp Oven with inter-town cooking competitions inter-Shire cooking competitions, promotion through state and national media and linked to appropriate TV programs such as Master Chef | Council | By December 2013 | N/A | ▪ To research the level of interest in creating a cooking competition locally  
 ▪ To liaise with Restaurant and Catering Association Australia, TAFE etc. on the merits of creating such a cooking competition  
 ▪ If demand is shown, to liaise with appropriate media networks to promote the concept  
 ▪ If support is proven, to hold a cooking competition during 2013 and to expand this on a per annum basis | Medium |
### TABLE 3: KEY RESULT AREA 2 - DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>BUDGET</th>
<th>KPI’S</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dust Storm interactive centre experience for Bedourie</td>
<td>Complete a feasibility for a Dust Storm interactive visitor attraction incorporating the VIC, art gallery space and a cafe/coffee shop</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>Feasibility to be completed by September 2012</td>
<td>$20k for feasibility</td>
<td>Complete feasibility and determine all components including creating a number of revenue generating opportunities</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- If proven viable, Dust Storm interpretive centre to be planned, constructed and developed by 2015
- $3m indicative budget for facility

| Simpson Desert interpretive centre | Complete a feasibility for locating the Centre as an interactive visitor experience either within the existing VIC in Birdsville or as a standalone facility | Council | Complete feasibility by September 2012 and if viable, complete centre by 2015 or in stages earlier | $20k for feasibility | To undertake feasibility including utilising existing VIC gallery space as Stage 1 | High |

- $2.5m indicative budget for facility
- Assess whether it is possible to develop on a staged basis with potential to expand the VIC with another wing for the interpretive centre when funding is available
- Identify funding sources through State and Federal Government agencies
- If proven viable, ensure the centre is operational by 2015
## DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>BUDGET</th>
<th>KPI’S</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Artsien spa and resort for Birdsville | Complete pre-feasibility and business case to support an artsien spa with accommodation on site | Council        | By December 2012 | $15k                    | - Build on the work already undertaken for the tender process for the spa but expand to include accommodation  
- Identify existing spa and resort operators and investors for pitching to  
- Ensure sufficient land is available for the facility to cater for spas, swimming pool and accommodation and supporting facilities | High     |
| Infrastructure support for Big Red   | Undertake a feasibility to determine the most cost effective form of infrastructure support (viewing area, strategies for erosion remediation work etc.); identify other locations for potential boardwalks and viewing platforms on sand dunes for visitors; identify risks associated with sand movement | Council and industry | By December 2012 | $15k for feasibility  
$45k for possible boardwalk and viewing platform at Big Red or alternative site | - Carefully consider possible sites for accessing sand dunes other than Big Red  
- Develop a plan of management for Big Red regardless of whether infrastructure is put in place there or not  
- Gather tour operator feedback to help inform the process and guide what the markets expect and are looking for | Medium   |
| Self-drive 4WD track                | Note the need for more 4WD experiences (other than crossing the Simpson Desert) for the 4WD adventure market; reassess the proposed track which follows the Rabbit-proof Fence as a 2-day 4WD loop experience | Council        | By 30 June 2013  | N/A                     | - Ensure that a 4WD track is created which avoids areas subject to flooding and which may limit opportunity  
- Assess other locations for the planned 4WD track based on feedback of the need to circumnavigate the Bush Heritage Organisation area which cannot be driven through | Medium   |
## DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>BUDGET</th>
<th>KPI’S</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Half day 4WD track experiences | To create soft adventure self-drive 4WD experiences which encourage visitors to return to Bedourie and/or Birdsville each night; look at 2-3 half day options with different levels of difficulty | Council | By 30 June 2013 | N/A | - Identify 2-3 hour 4WD experiences ideally easily accessible from Bedourie and Birdsville  
- Market these via the new website and specifically to 4WD clubs and vehicle manufacturers  
- Assess the level of demand on an annual basis | Medium |
| Ensure adequate staff housing to support tourism growth | Industry indicated a staff housing shortage to support existing tourism businesses, let alone any growth; consider changing Council policy to allow non-Council personnel to utilise Council houses if not needed for Council purposes; ensure adequate available land for constructing new staff housing opportunities | Council | By December 2012 | N/A | - Liaise with industry to determine specific accommodation needs for staffing in Bedourie and Birdsville  
- Ensure that existing staffing needs are able to be catered for and any increase in visitor facilities and visitor growth has additional staff housing available | High |
| Encourage sale of locally produced quality merchandise | Encourage the art and handicraft producers particularly in Bedourie to retail items through the VICs in Bedourie and Birdsville on a commission basis | Council | By 30 June 2013 | N/A | - To liaise with artists and community groups to determine items this can be sold through the VICs  
- To assess the marketability and price points in order to be competitive  
- If appropriate, to encourage other arts groups in neighbouring shires to retail quality items produced through the two VICs on a commission basis | Medium |
## DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>BUDGET</th>
<th>KPI’S</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Ground based tour operations in Birdsville and/or Bedourie | To actively encourage the establishment of local tour operations either as standalone or in partnership with external tour operators who currently come into the region | Council and industry | By March 2013 | N/A | ▪ Identify interested local parties and work with them to establish a tour operating business case  
▪ To provide assistance with securing funding if needed through State or Federal Government sources or through private funding arrangements  
▪ To ensure that tour operators and guides are appropriately trained and accredited  
▪ To market local based tour operating opportunities through the new website | High |
| 4WD hire facility | Note that the nearest 4WD hire facility is in Mt Isa; encourage establishment of a 4WD hire facility in either Bedourie or Birdsville to support government needs as well as potentially the fly/drive market | Council and industry | By 30 June 2013 | N/A | ▪ To liaise with all the rental car companies to ascertain the requirements for establishing a hire facility in Bedourie or Birdsville  
▪ To determine the level of demand from State and Federal Government agencies as well as local businesses and tourism for vehicles if based out in the Shire  
▪ If proven viable, to have a hire facility operational by November 2013 | High |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>BUDGET</th>
<th>KPI’S</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop light aircraft aviation</td>
<td>To ensure hangars and supporting infrastructure are available in Bedourie and Birdsville to encourage owners of light aircraft to undertake excursions to the Shire; to investigate the potential for light aircraft training in the Shire</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>By 2014</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>To undertake a feasibility into the level of demand for aviation tourism focused on light aircraft, training, touring etc.</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating access to tourism sites of significance on private land</td>
<td>Note that access to sites of significance such as the Dingo Caves, the Waddi Trees, various waterholes and other sites is restricted because of private land ownership; address the issue of insurance liability to private landowners by Council taking over responsibility for this liability where possible</td>
<td>Council and cattle station owners</td>
<td>By December 2012</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>To identify the constraints and solutions for accessing sites of significance on private land holdings</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reuse of Bedourie old air terminal as an air museum</td>
<td>Assess the potential for utilising the old airport terminal at Bedourie as an air museum of Frontier Country; assess the availability of memorabilia, photos etc. which many may hold within the Shire</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>By 2014</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>To assess the potential for use of the building to display outback/frontier air memorabilia as a small visitor experience</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Development Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>KPI’s</th>
<th>Priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Development of the old Marion Downs Police Barracks at Bedourie as an outback policing experience | To undertake a feasibility for utilising the existing old police building to tell the story of outback policing; if the site is found to be inappropriate, to investigate the use of the old Birdsville Courthouse restoration project for this purpose as well | Council | By 2014 | N/A | - To undertake a feasibility on developing an outback policing experience utilising the old Marion Downs Police Barracks and/or other facilities  
- To determine the cost of operating and maintaining the experience  
- If proven viable, to identify appropriate Federal and State Government sources | Medium |
| Restoration of the Birdsville Courthouse | To determine the viability of restoring the Birdsville Courthouse as an interactive experience on the overland explorers (Burke & Wills etc.); if appropriate, include elements of the outback policing story as part of a ‘twinning’ arrangement where the story is partly told in Birdsville and partly told in Bedourie to encourage greater travel between the two centres by visitors | Council | By 2014 | $20k for feasibility | - To undertake a feasibility on restoring the Courthouse as an interactive experience  
- Investigate the potential for a ‘twinning’ approach where elements of the outback policing story are told in both Birdsville and Bedourie to encourage greater travel between the two  
- If proven viable, market the experience on the new website | Medium |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>BUDGET</th>
<th>KPI’S</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Investigate leasing of desk space for tour operators at the VICs          | During the tourist season, to encourage tour operators to provide information and be available at specific times at the VICs for air excursions (flights to Poeppel Corner, flights over Lake Eyre) as well as tag along tours etc. | Council and industry | By 2013        | Self-funding   | ▪ To liaise with existing tour operators and other interested parties for leasing out desk space within the VICs for encouraging tour operations during peak periods  
  ▪ To provide the facility on a user pays basis to cover any maintenance and overhead costs  
  ▪ To actively encourage greater industry use of the VICs and greater collaboration in packaging product with the assistance of Council and its VICs | Medium   |
| Carcory Homestead ruins                                                  | To improve directional signage for the Homestead ruins; introduce a mobile phone application that can be downloaded at the two VICs or outside the Shire in advance of a visit, the purpose of which is to encourage self-guided tours with quality information rather than installing extensive signage at the site; the emphasis should be on maintaining the site in its natural state | Council              | By December 2013 | N/A            | ▪ To improve directional signage  
  ▪ To introduce a mobile phone application for self-guided tours  
  ▪ To advertise on the new website the availability of mobile phone application for self-guided tours | Low      |
| Availability of bird watching information                                | To introduce bird watching information at the VICs which should act as hubs for self-guided tours to Cuttaburra Crossing, Lake Machattie etc.; to reduce the amount of interpretive signage at specific bird watching sites and encourage this and related interpretation boards to be available on external walls of the VICs; to introduce a mobile phone application with bird watching information and how to access the sites | Council              | By 2014        | N/A            | ▪ To liaise with bird watching tour operators, societies etc. for the level of information requirements needs  
  ▪ To monitor the level of interest  
  ▪ To ensure that information is provided on the new proposed website | Medium   |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>BUDGET</th>
<th>KPI’S</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhancement to Diamantina Lakes National Park</td>
<td>Opportunity to increase visitor use of the lakes including day and night time tour operations with a guide, expeditions to look for the night parrot, Aboriginal cultural tours, provision of an information kiosk with base information and parking, and a later stage the potential for a small store and potentially on site cabins</td>
<td>National Parks &amp; Wildlife Service</td>
<td>By 2016</td>
<td>$20k for feasibility</td>
<td>▪ Liaison between Council, industry and National Parks to determine the need for feasibility study to assess access, infrastructure requirements and potential ▪ Secure funding from a variety of State and Federal sources</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of shade trees for Birdsville</td>
<td>Note the challenge of growing larger shade trees in the climatic conditions, desire for greater shade (natural) along the riverfront/lagoon area by the caravan park, in the surrounding streets to enhance the ‘oasis’ potential of Birdsville</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>By 2013</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>▪ To assess the suitability of shade trees in various locations ▪ To ensure strong community support ▪ If proven viable, to introduce appropriate species by 2014 at the latest</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop speed racing on clay pan sites</td>
<td>There are a couple of sites where clay pans exist for high speed racing. These are on private property and would require landholder consent. A feasibility is required to determine whether a clay pan site could provide growth potential in car clubs and those interested in undertaking land speed records</td>
<td>Council and landowners</td>
<td>By 2014</td>
<td>$15k for feasibility</td>
<td>▪ Liaise with station owners on access possibilities for clay pan racing ▪ Undertake a feasibility study to determine the suitability, level of market demand and associated issues and opportunities</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land yacht racing</td>
<td>Investigate the potential for land yacht racing on clay pans or other suitable sites potentially including small sand dune areas</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>By 2014</td>
<td>$10k for feasibility</td>
<td>▪ To commission a feasibility to determine possible sites for land yacht racing ▪ If proven viable, to negotiate the use of sites if on private land ▪ To liaise with operators of land yacht circuits, clubs or associations ▪ If proven viable, to provide details on the new website</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>BUDGET</th>
<th>KPI'S</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Multipurpose facility for Bedourie | Council is already investigating the potential for a multipurpose facility adjacent to the oval and tennis courts in Bedourie to provide a potential gymnasium, golf club house etc. | Council        | By 2015  | $20k for feasibility | ▪ To liaise with all community groups on potential demand for a multipurpose facility  
▪ To undertake a detailed feasibility to determine the cost, benefits and associated operating and maintenance costs  
▪ Based on a positive result from the feasibility study, to identify funding sources at State and Federal level | Low      |


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>BUDGET</th>
<th>KPI’S</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Completion of road sealing  | We note that over the next five years the road from Boulia to Bedourie will be fully sealed. This is expected to have a significant impact on increased traffic movements. Information on road conditions needs to be made available so visitors understand that in many parts of the Shire sealed roads are not necessarily two lane and also note the impact of flooding on road surfaces | Council        | By 2016| N/A    | ▪ To ensure that ongoing road sealing occurs on an annual basis as per Council’s budgetary cycle to complete the sealing of the main road between Boulia and Bedourie  
▪ To ensure that regular maintenance is undertaken on all secondary roads which remain unsealed  
▪ To ensure that associated signage is provided to enhance visitor information on not only road distances but expected travelling times between key points/destinations | High     |
| Public toilet maintenance  | Whilst a network of self-composting toilets exists on major roads throughout the Shire, anecdotal feedback indicates inadequate maintenance/cleaning. To improve the quality of the visitor experience greater resource is required to monitor and maintain public toilet facilities in towns as well as in remote locations | Council        | Ongoing| N/A    | ▪ To introduce a public toilets maintenance schedule and an audit to indicate areas where the greatest maintenance challenges occur  
▪ To highlight information on location of toilets on major roads on the new website | Medium   |
| Improvements to directional signage | Directional road signage highlights distances between destinations and sites. As many visitors do not understand the impact of road conditions, the likely travel time between destinations should also be included. This means updating road signs particularly where unsealed roads occur | Council        | By 2014| N/A    | ▪ To introduce a program of updating directional road signs to include driving times as well as distances | Medium   |
### INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>BUDGET</th>
<th>KPI’S</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Interpretive signage enhancements | There is an extensive amount of interpretation signage - large signs in particular - in various locations. As climatic conditions are particularly harsh on signs, a strategy is required to minimise large interpretive signage and replace this with information available on mobile phone applications, the use of large interpretive signs for displaying on the exterior entranceway of the VICS | Council        | By 2014 | N/A    | - To undertake a signage audit of all interpretive signage used in the Shire  
- To start removing aged/weathered interpretive signage and replace this through the mobile phone application to be created along with the use of interpretive signage at VICS instead which act as hubs  
- To undertake an annual assessment of interpretive signage remaining in the Shire to ensure consistent quality | Medium   |
| Footpaths and lighting for Birdsville | Lack of footpaths is noted as wheelchair and pram unfriendly. More effective street lighting is also required for safety purposes | Council        | By 2015 | N/A    | - To determine a Works Program for introducing sealed footpaths and more street lighting  
- To roll out a program over the next three years in Birdsville  
- To use the opportunity to also consider a public art program which may enhance the heritage story telling of the Shire through footpath signs | Low      |
| Maintenance of the Two Boys Dreaming site | Infrastructure has already been created on the site including an open sided kiosk with interpretive signage and a number of pathways etc. This area needs securing as well as ongoing maintenance | Indigenous communities and Council | By 2014 | N/A    | - To liaise with the local Aboriginal community on how best to secure the site to maintain it and where appropriate, enhance it  
- To identify other sites where interpretive signage and other infrastructure could be warranted  
- To ensure that sites are able to be promoted on the new website | Medium   |