



HVH GROUP



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1 Introduction & Scope

HVH Group has been engaged by Destination Marketing Store (DMS) to facilitate the development of a Visitor Services Strategy. This strategy is intended to provide an evidence-based foundation for Tamworth Regional Council's efforts to secure government funding for the creation of a new Visitor Experience Precinct (VEP), as well as a Visitor Experience Centre (VEC).

The Visitor Services Strategy has played a pivotal role in formulating the functional brief and performance requirements for the VEC and its associated precinct. This brief will encompass the identification of key components within the precinct, outline their functional and operational objectives, and define the composition of each component.

Our work includes drafting a comprehensive description of the precinct, establishing key design and operational principles, and developing performance criteria and standards for all components within the precinct.

2 Context

Tamworth Regional Council (TRC) has earmarked a greenfield site currently part of the Tamworth Regional Sporting Complex located at the southern entrance of Tamworth city for the development of the Tamworth Regional Tourism Precinct. TRC's vision is to establish a world-class and innovative visitor experience in the New England and Northwest region, aiming to bolster Tamworth's position as the primary regional centre and reinforce its identity as the 'Capital of Country NSW.' This endeavour leverages Tamworth's well-established reputation as the Country Music Capital of Australia, as well as its rich agricultural and equine history. To realize this vision, TRC recognizes the need to create new experiences and expand its services.

TRC has created a reference scheme for the Visitor Experience Centre, which serves as an aspirational document and a placeholder for facilitating discussions and alignment among stakeholders. It's worth noting that this scheme was developed at a highly conceptual level, lacking the benefit of research, consultation, and a detailed scope of requirements.

This document builds upon the Stage 3 Precinct Analysis, where existing visitor experience assets and museums were assessed against two options:

- Maintaining the current visitor centre, museums, and the Country Music Hall of Fame in their current location and format (the base case).
- Enhancing or modifying these facilities in their existing location to meet the future requirements of a purposeful visitor experience centre.

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis was also conducted on these facilities for each scenario to inform a Fitness for Purpose analysis aligned with the future needs of a purposeful visitor and tourism experience. This analysis included the integration of the Country Music Hall of Fame, Wax Museum, Guitar Museum, and Guitar Photo Gallery.

The outcome of this analysis has underscored the case for developing a new, fit-for-purpose Visitor Experience Centre that seamlessly integrates the Country Music Hall of Fame, Wax Museum, Guitar, and Photo Gallery Museum, and introduces essential regional elements that underscore Tamworth's status as Australia's Capital of Country.

Furthermore, the Tamworth Regional Visitor Economy Plan's (Plan) 'Roadmap to Success' supports this endeavour and specifically identifies the following:

- *"A critical success factor will be to increase resources to strengthen the development and promotion of a sustainable visitor economy.*
- *This is coupled with an integrated governance model within Council that unites marketing and high-quality visitor services with destination planning and management as well as industry engagement and development.*
- *It will be critical to strategically invest in infrastructure and precincts that deliver shared benefits to the local community and visitors to the region. For example, expanding or revitalising sporting, recreational and outdoor event facilities and enhancing the performing arts, cultural and culinary offering of the region. It means adopting a commercial focus to realise the true potential of the region's infrastructure and assets."*

The Plan also highlights a priority action specifically for a Country Music and Tourist Precinct to:

- *"Prioritise investment and funding of Tier 1 precincts, based on the likelihood of achieving a positive return on investment faster. Prioritise investment and funding of Tier 1 precincts, based on the likelihood of achieving a positive return on investment faster".*

3 Purpose

This document serves the purpose of defining the operational and functional criteria for the development of a new Visitor Experience and Information Centre within a larger Visitor Precinct. These criteria are informed by insights derived from TRC, DMS research, community consultation, gaps identified through SWOT analyses, and the established principles outlined for the Visitor Experience Centre within this document.

The brief provides a comprehensive outline of requirements, designed to serve as guidance for a multidisciplinary consultant team responsible for creating a contemporary Visitor Experience and Information Centre that seamlessly integrates with a museum, regional, and First Nations experience. Additionally, this document presents a Quantity Surveyor's cost estimate covering the planning, development, and delivery of a purpose-built facility to this specification and its associated public domain.

The cost estimate represents a financial and quantitative comparative assessment between the ongoing maintenance expenses and capital upgrade costs associated with retaining or enhancing the existing visitor experience centre and museums, versus the investment required for the development of a purpose-built visitor experience and museum. This analysis ensures that the visitor experience remains in alignment with the goals and key principles identified throughout this process and associated TRC strategic plans.

The Functional Brief section of this document outlines both general requirements applicable to design solutions and specific imperatives that must be addressed within the foundational design framework. Furthermore, this document adopts a forward-looking perspective, emphasising the essential requirements necessary for advancing this project of regional significance. The combined content of this brief, along with the associated service delivery model and cost estimate, establishes the foundation for the detailed business case and any future funding requests.

3.1 Policy Alignment

This brief has been prepared in alignment with the following Council strategies.

- Tamworth Regional Cultural Plan 2018-2023
- Blueprint 100
- Country Music Hall of Fame Strategic Plan
- Regional Museums Engagement Strategy
- TRC Visitor Economy Plan 2022-2027
- TRC Public Art Strategy
- TRC Economic Development and Investment Strategy, Tamworth Tomorrow
- Community Strategic Plan, Our community Plan 2023-2033

3.2 Planning Framework

Zoning for the Visitor Experience Centre site is classified as SP3 - Tourist. The proposed site is bounded by MU1 – Mixed Use land to the north, SP2 Public Utility / infrastructure to the east and surrounded by SP3 lands to the west and south as shown in figure 1 below.

The key objectives of this zone are:

- a) To provide for a variety of tourist-oriented development and related uses.*
- b) To facilitate the development that recognises the unique characteristics of the nationally and regionally significant tourist precincts that are the Australian Livestock and Events Centre (AELEC) and the Tamworth Regional Racing Precincts.*

The following are permitted with consent.

Amusement centres; Animal boarding or training establishments; Aquaculture; Boat sheds; Camping grounds; Car parks; Caravan parks; Charter and tourism boating facilities; Centre-based child care facilities; Community facilities; Electricity generating works; Entertainment facilities; Environmental facilities; Food and drink premises; Function centres; Helipads; Highway service centres; Information and education facilities; Kiosks; Markets; Medical centres; Office premises; Passenger transport facilities; Recreation areas; Recreation facilities (indoor); Recreation facilities (major); Recreation facilities (outdoor); Registered clubs; Respite day care centres; Retail premises; Sewage treatment plants; Signage; Tourist and visitor accommodation; Veterinary hospitals; Water recreation structures; Water supply systems

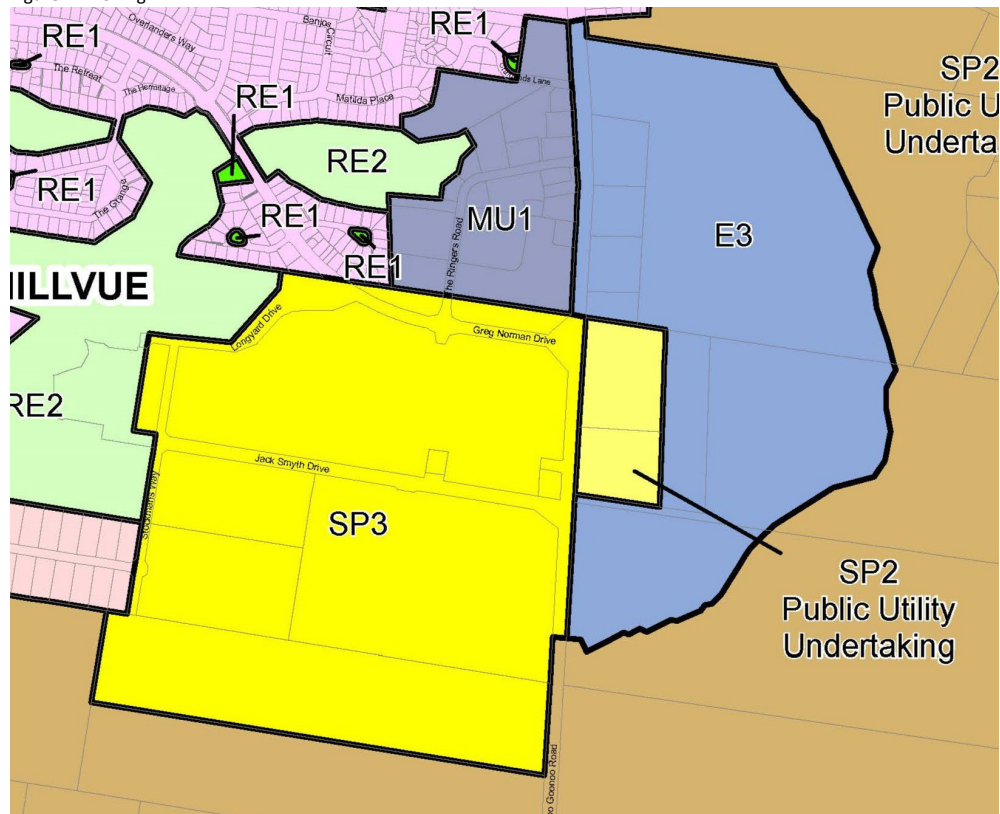
The following are Prohibited.

Cellar door premises; Garden centres; Hardware and building supplies; Landscaping material supplies; Plant nurseries; Roadside stalls; Rural supplies; Shops; Specialised retail premises; Timber yards; Vehicle sales or hire premises; Any other development not specified.

Source: Tamworth Regional Local Environmental Plan 2010

The components of the larger Proposed Visitor Experience Precinct are largely permissible with consent as identified in the LEP.

Figure 1 – Zoning



3.3 Assumptions

The following are key assumptions in the development of this brief for a new VEC and Museums.

- Zoning for the preferred site is SP3.
- Tamworth Visitor Information Centre in its current location will be decommissioned.
- The existing visitor centre lease will not be renewed for a further term upon expiry of its current term.
- The following Museum functions and facilities will be reimagined as part of the new the New Visitor Experience Centre:
 - Wax Museum
 - Guitar Museum and Photo Gallery
 - Country Music Hall of Fame Museum
- Artefacts / exhibitions that are not required in the new VEC will be stored off site which is outside the parameters of this brief and assumed Council has or will source a suitable property for this storage.
- The Golden Guitar structure has the integrity to allow it to be removed and relocated to a new visitor centre location.

- The Country Music Hall of Fame building will either be leased to a third party, repurposed, or divested to create this new asset associated with Council commercial objectives.
- Exclusive, coach, car parking, RV, caravan, motorcycle, and bicycle parking will be provided for the VEC, overflow parking will utilise the broader visitor tourism precinct car parking.

3.4 Exclusions

The following venues will not be considered as part of the VEC precinct or building:

- Tamworth Powerhouse Museum
- Tamworth Regional Gallery

4 Design Brief

4.1 Vision and Objectives

The Tamworth Regional Council (TRC) is committed to delivering an unparalleled visitor experience by establishing a new Visitor Experience Centre (VEC) including integrated museum experience, aiming to firmly establish Tamworth as the 'Capital of Country' and positioning it as an indispensable destination, serving as the gateway to the New England Region of NSW.

In pursuing this goal, TRC has thoroughly examined possibilities for the future and the location of a Regional Visitor Experience Centre within Tamworth. The Primary objective of TRC is to create a comprehensive Visitor Experience Precinct that integrates essential components such as a Visitor Information and Tourism Centre, Country Music Hall of Fame, Wax Museum, Guitar Museum Guitar Photo Gallery, Regional and Cultural hub. This precinct will serve as a warm and engaging welcome, information hub, and entertainment venue for both visitors and residents of the region.

As such the VEC and museums will be strategically positioned to:

- Elevate Tamworth's status as the 'Capital of Country'.
- Function as a knowledge centre for the region's visitor economy, offering comprehensive services to guide visitors and residents through the region.
- Showcase regional products and produce to highlight the region's identity as the 'Capital of Country'.
- Conserve, display and interpret the rich history of Australian country music, featuring artefacts, textiles, figures, musical instruments, and audio-visual exhibits, through relocation and re-imagining its current country music museums.
- Educate a diverse audience about the cultural significance of the region, including its First Nations history and connection with country.
- Serve as a national hub for country music education.
- Accommodate live entertainment, with state-of-the-art infrastructure supporting both outdoor amphitheatre and indoor spaces.
- Offer contemporary public amenities accessible to all.
- Act as a catalyst for increased visitation to Tamworth and its surrounding towns, establishing a clearly defined visitor experience precinct.
- Create a regional hub, facilitating a hub-and-spoke tourism visitor information delivery model.

- Consolidate existing aging assets and facilities into a purpose-built, state-of-the-art infrastructure.
- Unify four existing museums into a single comprehensive and integrated experience.

Additionally, the VEC will incorporate essential back-of-house office spaces and facilities to manage the venue effectively, encompassing both front-of-house and behind-the-scenes operations. These will include critical areas such as loading docks, conservation rooms, archive exhibit storage, workshops, cleaning and support facilities, staff and public amenities, consumable collateral storage, and a commercial kitchen.

This Brief has been developed to support the design, development, and delivery of the TRC Vision and Visitor Economy Strategy, ensuring the realisation of a best practice contemporary visitor experience centre.

4.2 Site Context

The TRC proposed location of the VEC precinct is located adjacent to the Australian Equine and Livestock Event Centre (AELEC), and Tamworth Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre (TRECC) and is proposed to be located on the site of the grass running track currently identified as part of the Tamworth Regional Sporting Complex in Figure 3, affronting the New England Highway (Goonoo Goonoo Road).

The site identified as #3 in Figure 2 and 3 of the precinct lot subdivision below is the proposed location of the VEC Precinct, located at the corner of Greg Norman Drive and Goonoo Goonoo Road.

A private Ampol roadhouse petrol station is adjacent to the site in the southeastern corner of the precinct, and the Tamworth Truckers Memorial is located north of the Ampol roadhouse adjacent to Goonoo Goonoo Rd.

The western edge of the precinct identified as Lots 1, 2, 4 and 5 are the proposed subdivisions which are earmarked for two accommodation hotels (lots 1 and 2), large format retail (lot 4) with open plan car parking located between Lots 3 and 4.

This site is located 6.4km south of Tamworth City Centre and 1.1km south of the current location of the Visitor Information Centre, Guitar and Wax museums and Guitar Photo Gallery.

Figure 2 – Precinct Lot Subdivision

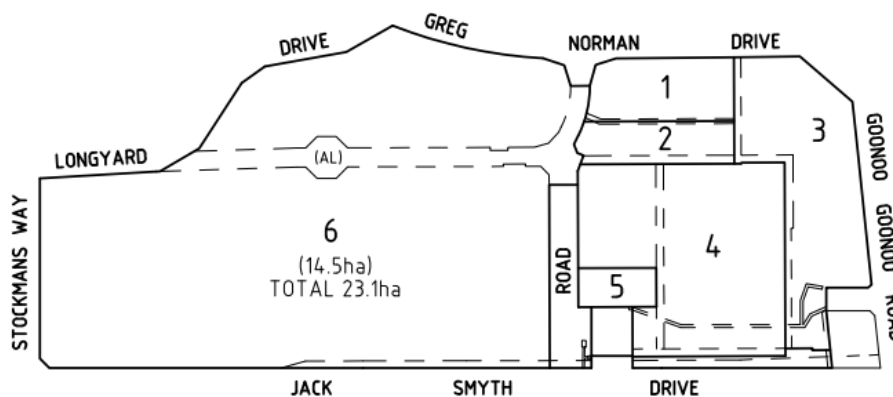


Figure 3 – Aerial View



Figure 4 – Distance from Site to CBD

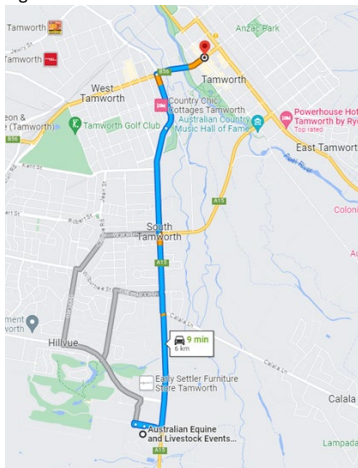
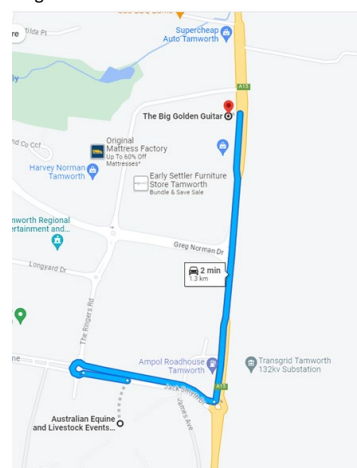


Figure 5 – Distance to VIC



4.3 VEC & Museum Aspirations

The VEC precinct is envisaged to become Tamworth regions main visitor experience hub and recognised nationally as Australia’s Capital of Country as well as for its country music affiliation and annual festival appealing and connecting with the local community, national and international visitors. The VEC will offer a unique opportunity as a significant regional destination due to its location, transport accessibility, entertainment, and history appeal.

Flexibility and adaptability in the design, specification and sizing of elements and equipment will be paramount to maximising the building life span. Incorporating flexibility in the design will assist in achieving TRC’s operational requirements assisting the building to respond well to the variety of changing operational needs.

Museum and exhibition spaces will incorporate flexibility through design such as maximising column free space, separation, and provision of temporary walls, hanging and lighting systems, consideration of ceiling heights, ceiling, and floor loading for suspending items of weight, technology, audio, and service conduits, and security.

The visitor information space is to be complemented by the museums as well as auxiliary spaces for smaller regional and cultural exhibitions, community engagement, and front of house functions, café, and retail, and supported by back of house facilities, storage spaces and service provision.

Building infrastructure will need to be designed with the ability to be upgraded over time as the expectations of users and operational requirements change. Design and sizing of plant rooms and services risers, conduits and loadings should consider the potential for change including the ability to upgrade as environmental, operational, materials and technological advancement create opportunities in the future.

4.4 Design Parameters

- **Site Location:** Decision on the optimum location to achieve the visitor economy expectations as well as accessibility, visibility, and proximity to the Tamworth Town Centre, key attractions and/or points of interest.
- **Architectural Aesthetics:** Agree the desired architectural style and aesthetics that align with the region's character and cultural identity as well as designing an iconic and recognisable building. Incorporate finishes, materials and fittings that are appropriate for a high-profile public building with a 50-year minimum design life.
- **Space:** Calculating and designing to the optimum spaces and functions, including exhibition areas, visitor information reception and display, management offices, amenities, storerooms, food and beverage and efficient back of house logistics areas to achieve Council's vision and objectives whilst meeting budget/funding constraints
- **Single Story Facility:** for efficiency and cost the VEC and museums will be delivered in a single storey building.
- **Sustainability:** Setting sustainability goals and design parameters related to energy efficiency, water conservation, materials selection, and green building certification. Additionally, materials, furniture, fixtures, and equipment must be reasonably accessible i.e., must not be sourced from manufacturers/suppliers requiring long term delivery. Access/procurement of replacement materials must be easily and quickly replaced to ensure continuity of service and safety.
- **Visitor Experience:** Define the desired visitor experience, including key themes and storylines, interactive exhibits, accessibility features, and opportunities for community engagement.
- **Cultural and Historical Integration:** Incorporation of design elements that reflect the cultural and historical significance of the region, such as heritage preservation, and indigenous perspectives.
- **Accessibility:** Ensure that the facility is fully accessible to individuals of all abilities, adhering to accessibility standards and guidelines.
- **Exhibit Design:** Specifying requirements for exhibit design, interactive displays, audio-vision elements, and storytelling that are balanced and provide an engaging visitor experience.
- **Budget and Funding:** Establishing a project budget based on obtaining funding and successful grant applications as well as defining on-going recurrent operating budgets that will preserve the building and operational outcomes.

- **Regional Inclusion:** Incorporating elements that reflect cultural, regional councils and historical significance of the region, not just Tamworth.
- **Infrastructure:** Ensuring services calculations can be provided to the site to achieve optimal operational functionality.
- **Museum Standards:** The design, collection, quality, and functionality of the facility operation of the museum's exhibits, storage, conservation, collection, climate control and displays must comply with the *National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries; second edition 2023* and align with international performance space, museum, and gallery standards.
- **Safety in Design:** Proposed design solutions must be considerate of reasonably foreseeable hazards that may occur as the structure is built, commissioned, used, maintained, repaired, refurbished, modified, or decommissioned.
- **Building Code Compliance:** The VEC will need to achieve compliance with all relevant planning and building approvals and codes including:
 - The National Construction Code and Australian Standards
 - Requirements for Places of Public Entertainment
 - National and International Museum and Gallery performance codes.
 - National Standards for Disability Services.

4.5 Sustainability Design Objectives

The VEC building and fit out works are to achieve sustainable and best practice design solutions. As such, the project is to strive to achieve the following:

- Natural ventilation in front of house areas and wherever possible and achieve low energy use in its ongoing operation.
- Designed consistent with Climate Positive Principles:
 - To be Carbon neutral.
 - To be Water positive.
 - To achieve Waste Minimisation in construction and operation; and
 - To provide Community Wellbeing
- Include infrastructure such as:
 - Water and recycling
- Car parks, walkways, and paved areas will be designed in line with minimising urban heat island effect.
- Connect to a rainwater reuse system.
- All WCs and the like to connect to the water reuse system.
- Achieve low-energy use for ongoing operations.
- Eliminate the use of gas or fossil fuels from the site/design.

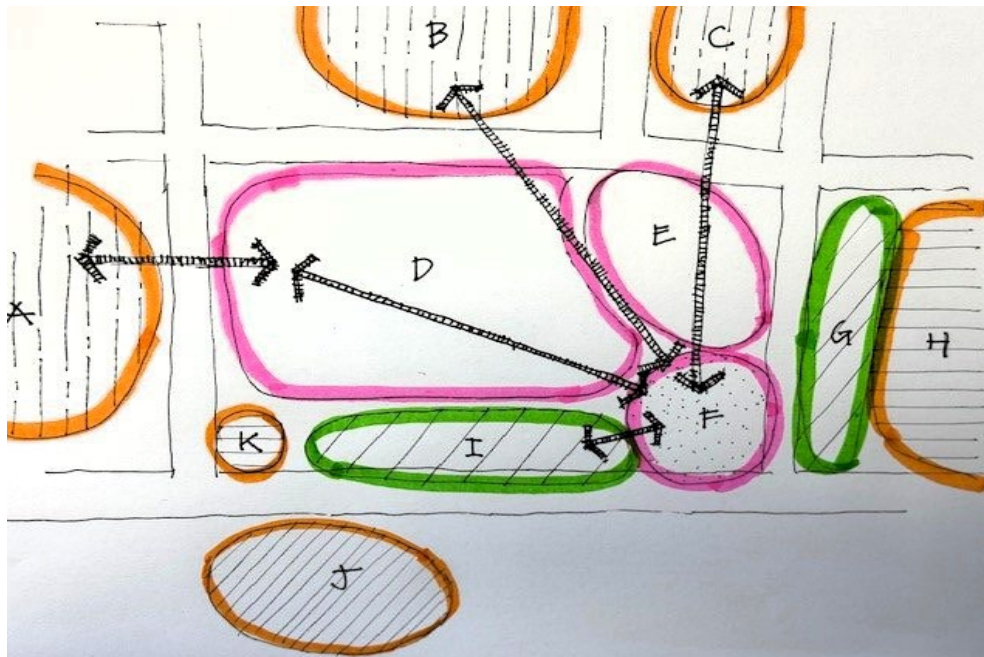
4.6 Integration with the Greater Visitor Precinct

An indicative concept has been prepared for the wider visitor precinct by a third-party prospective developer. This concept masterplan outlines the various components of the wider visitor precinct, including retail, a hotel, food and beverage precinct and car parking.

The proposed strategic location of the VEC and new museums within the larger visitor precinct needs to maximise its benefits and connectivity with not only the larger precinct but with the existing council facilities namely the TRECC and AELEC.

The diagram below outlines key linkages that must be made to ensure the cohesive integration of the VEC with the wider precinct and existing facilities.

Visitor Precinct Key Connections Diagram



- a) The existing AELEC including car parking within its site. This facility is separated from the visitor precinct site by Jack Smyth Drive. Strong pedestrian and cycleway connections are to be made from both the visitor precinct and the new VEC and museum location.
- b) The Tamworth Hockey Association, Basketball and Athletics Facilities
- c) The existing TRECC located opposite the proposed visitor precinct. Car parking for the TRECC is located on the proposed visitor precinct site. There is an opportunity to provide a direct pedestrian connection and strong visual connection between the TRECC and VEC.
- d) The proposed location of the broader visitor / tourism precinct comprising, retail, food and beverage and hotel accommodation.
- e) Existing TRECC car parking that could be used for the VEC and museums.
- f) The potential location for the new visitor experience centre, country music museums and golden guitar, located prominently on the corner of the New England Highway and Greg Norman Drive.
- g) Existing Landscape buffer between Greg Norman Drive and Retail precinct.
- h) Existing retail precinct, with footpath and cycle way connection to it.
- i) Existing landscape buffer zone along New England Highway and the Truckers memorial.
- j) Current and future infrastructure – Tamworth substation.
- k) An existing Ampol service station exists on the southern corner of the visitor precinct site.

4.7 Key Functional Relationships and Adjacencies VEC

The following diagram has been prepared to illustrate the key conceptual relationships or adjacencies and connections to the wider visitor precinct and the VEC and museums.

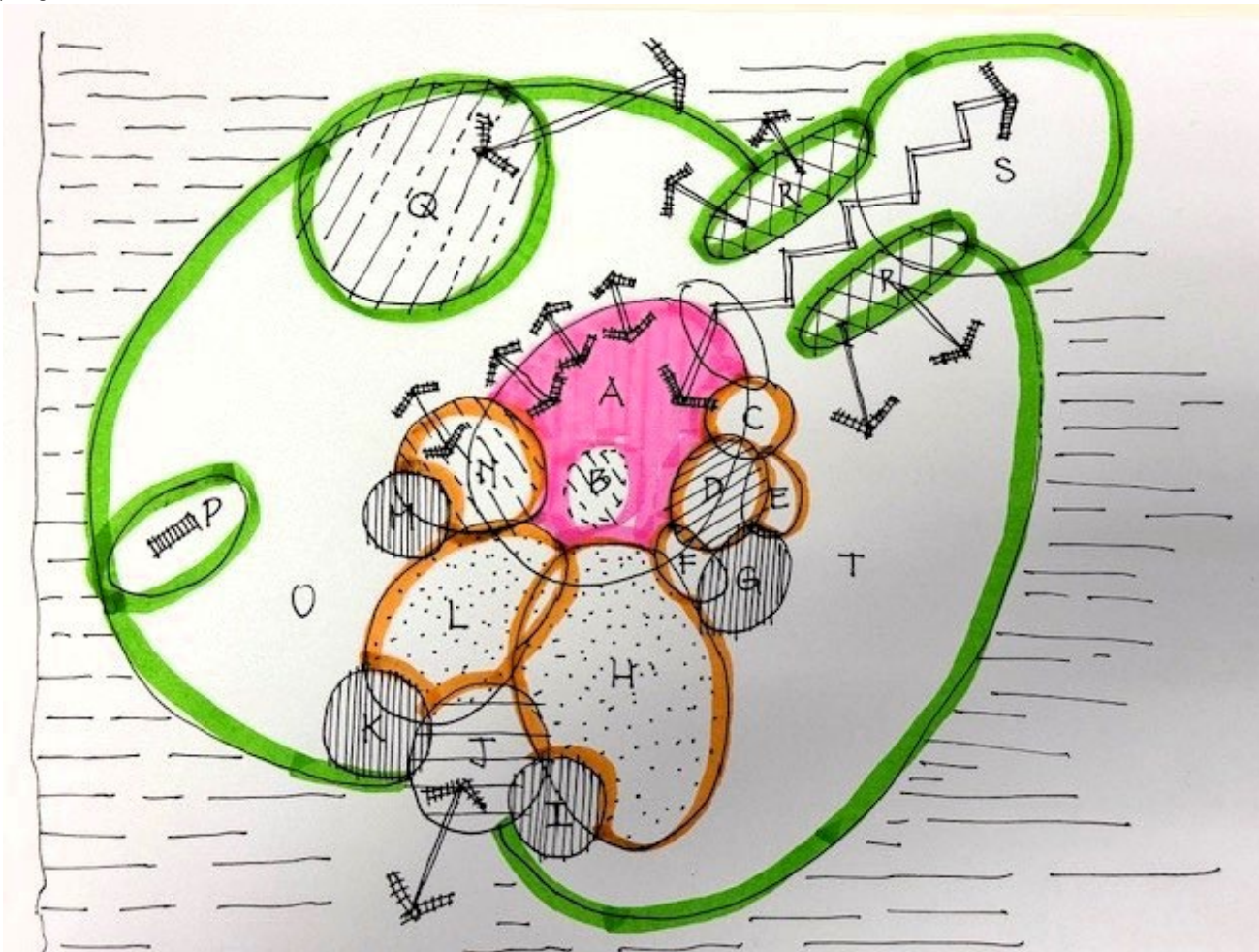
VEC & Museums Relationship Diagram

- a) A central atrium space that is light and airy and is the arrival space that welcomes visitors to the building, all other functions are connected to this space. This space can be opened to the outside in warmer weather and closed off at other times. This connects from the car park or and is the main entry to the building. This is a flexible space that can be used for temporary regional exhibitions, showcasing ARLEC and TRECC and other attractions in addition to being able to house events or small gallery exhibitions.
- b) A retail space is located within the central atrium space, this activates the atrium and is optimally positioned to capture visitors existing from the museum experience. Its central / open location also draws visitors into the space. There are direct connections to Back of House storage areas to support retail.
- c) Amenities located near the entry doors, as these are often one of the first things that a traveller looks for when entering a facility like this. Bathrooms are inclusive with provision of an accessible toilet.
- d) The visitor information zone, this does not consist of a formal counter arrangement, but creates an area off the central atrium where visitors can engage profession visitor services staff, volunteers, digital information, traditional tourism collateral and book regional attractions. This area seamlessly connects to the atrium allowing visitor information staff to actively engage with visitors in the atrium area.
- e) Staff amenities with kitchenette, staff lockers and dining space, bathrooms, with connection from visitor information and a connection to the staff meeting room / green room.
- f) Staff meeting room suitable for up to 12 people, AV technology enabled. This room is required movable furniture as it will be utilised as a green room when music events are held in the amphitheatre. This meeting room is to have a direct connection the central atrium space to enable the green room function to operate independently from the visitor services and administration.
- g) Storage space for collateral or equipment associated with ticketing and visitor information / services. This is to be connected to the loading dock via a back of house corridor.
- h) Main country music exhibition space this is to be a dark room to enable theming, specialist lighting and soundscape associated with the re imagined country music museums. There is to be a transitional space between the central atrium and museum exhibition space to enable the exhibition to be showcased and provide help set the scene for the museum experience that someone is about to experience. This also helps activate the central atrium. This allows access control of this space for separate ticketing if required. The exhibition space is to be acoustically isolated from the main atrium and adjoining exhibition space. The main exhibition space is to be able to be operated and ticketed independently to the flexible exhibition space, in addition to being able to be combined with the flexible exhibition space to be operated or ticketed as a single exhibition space, if required.
- i) Climate controlled storage space with direct connection to the main exhibition space and the adjacent loading dock. This allows for secure and conditioned space control and movement of artefacts in and out of the museum. This space is to include a small

- conservation area for the preservation and management of artefacts, this space is to be independently accessed from the loading dock, however connected to the storage area.
- j) Loading dock suitable for a medium rigid vehicle i.e., furniture removal vehicle. The loading is to have secure covered access with a dock leveller that allows ease of loading and unloading. Access is to be provided to be provided direct from the dock to the museum holding storage / holding rooms (K and I). Corridor access is to be provided to storage area (M) for food and beverage and waste removal from the food and beverage offering. The loading dock is to house the small workshop that services the two exhibition spaces (L & H) in addition to a waste holding room for the facility. Waste and food and beverage operations are to be segregated from access to the exhibition holding rooms. There is also direct access to be provided to the central atrium area to facilitate bump in and out of equipment / sculpture / art / commercial displays etc.
 - k) Climate controlled storage space with direct connection to the flexible exhibition space and the adjacent loading dock. This allows for secure and conditioned space control and movement of artefacts in and out of the museum.
 - l) Flexible exhibition space, this is smaller, however identical in its technical requirements to the main exhibitions space. This space is also accessed from the main atrium space and able to be ticketed separately. This space is approximately one third of the main country music exhibition space and can be used for showcasing the region, hosting temporary country music exhibitions, indigenous culture, regional industry, or housing a temporary art exhibition. This space can be interconnected with the main exhibition space if required.
 - m) Storage space for the food and beverage operator, this houses dry goods, cool room etc for food and beverage. There is a direct connection to the loading dock and to the exterior landscaped terrace area to enable equipment / mobile bar etc to be moved when a music event is being hosted in the amphitheatre.
 - n) This is the food and beverage offering / café / restaurant, this includes a small commercial kitchen that can cater for retail food and beverage requirements in addition to supporting functions and events in the amphitheatre and main atrium. The food and beverage offering are located strategically away from the entry to draw visitors into the Atrium, it plays a key function in activating the central atrium space and provides a seamless linkage between the interior and exterior allowing dining to flow uninterrupted between the interior and exterior landscaped terrace space.
 - o) Outdoor landscaped terrace. This space integrates seamlessly with the café and main atrium to maximise visitor flow and connection with the outdoors. Permanent shade structures or awnings provide weather protection outside the café and atrium area. This space is a combination of soft landscaped area, featuring indigenous species that are representative of the region, in addition to providing a connection with the region's agriculture. This area has shade trees and plantings that frame distant views, screen undesirable views, and help intuitive wayfinding to the golden guitar sculpture and the amphitheatre.
 - p) The relocated Golden Guitar sculpture this purposefully set into its landscape surrounds, to maximise the photographic opportunity, while being a recognisable landmark from the road. The base of the Golden Guitar is to be accessible to provide equity in access to its base and included feature uplighting at night.
 - q) This is a 200-300 seat theatre, that includes stage area to enable performances to be held regularly. Shading is provided through a combination of natural vegetations and shade structures. Wheelchair accessible seating is to be provided. The amphitheatre will have vehicle access from the main carpark to facilitate the bump in and out of performance

- equipment. Although its proximity to the main atrium and food and beverage offering are important, the amphitheatre is to be created to reflect a bush setting.
- r) Landscaped arrival sequence that sets the scene for the overall visitor experience. This starts with a decompression area, where the visitor has made their way from the carpark and is a transitional landscape space where visitor meet and make decisions, this provides access to the remainder of the visitor precedent, retail, hotels and eat street and more importantly is the commencement of the visitor experience. The visitor proceeds towards the Visitor Experience Centre and Museums. The landscape treatments, including ephemeral water course, representing the water sensitive environment, elements of sculpture, soundscape, sensory landscape planting, and materiality embody a deep connection with country, signifying that this is the beginning of their 'Capital of Country' experience.
 - s) As above
 - t) Are landscape buffer plantings that screen the rear of the VEC from car parking and help anchor the VEC into the landscape. This area would also house plant and services associated with operating the VEC.

Function Relationship Diagram



4.8 Design Constraints

- **Zoning and Sub-division:** Complying with local zoning regulations and working with the precinct developer to ensure the sub-division does not hinder the desired architectural and operational objectives of the VEC.
- **Site Conditions:** Addressing site-specific conditions including archaeological history as well as site contamination from possible historic waste disposal, environmental sensitivities, and drainage.
- **Funding Limits:** Achieving grant funding and adherence to budget constraints and cost limitations throughout the design and delivery phases.
- **Program:** Meeting timelines and project deadline constraints, considering construction schedules and milestones.
- **Space Limitations:** Working within the site and site configuration to achieve design and functional outcomes and objectives of the VEC.
- **Sustainable Design:** Complying with environmental regulations and best practice sustainability standards, such as Green Star certification.
- **Accessibility:** Ensure compliance with and exceeding National Australian Standards for Disability Services.
- **Stakeholder Input:** Accepting and addressing feedback and concerns from industry consultation, community, and regulatory authorities throughout the design process.
- **Safety and Security:** Implementing adequate security measures and safety standards to protect visitors, staff, and the exhibition collection.

4.9 Operational Requirements

The ability for the venue to be adaptable in function and size must be considered and opportunities maximised within the overall functional areas, operations, and budget.

The Primary functions of the Visitor Experience Centre will be managed by TRC's visitor Information team for this business as usual (BAU) operations and include:

- Visitor, and regional tourist information services
- Museum exhibitions
- Variable exhibitions/displays
- Café dining
- Retail sales.

In line with the design aspirations and to ensure the design is fit for purpose, additional TRC management will support the VEC to curate and manage exhibit collections and exhibits, coordinate and sell a potential range of activations and activities. As such, the TRC has identified the following activities as examples of additional services and operations in addition to the primary functions:

- A staged musical performance externally for up to 200-300 people
- A small staged musical performance internally for roving visitors or small cocktail functions of up to 25-50 people.
- Musical performance associated with the Tamworth Country Music Festival.
- A major national or international exhibition that may be part of the TCMF, an indigenous display, or regional exhibit.

- Immersive native public domain and gardens

4.10 Key Visitor Experience Centre Elements and Components

The key VEC elements and components of the precinct and facility within and around the building have been described relative to their function and include:

- External Areas
- Front of House Areas
- Exhibition Areas
- Back of House / Service Areas
- Management Offices

Each of these elements and components have been described in function and performance below to inform the design and development of the VEC and precinct.

5 Service Model Governance

The VEC Structure will be governed by TRC as asset owner and operator.

VEC Service Model Governance key principles are:

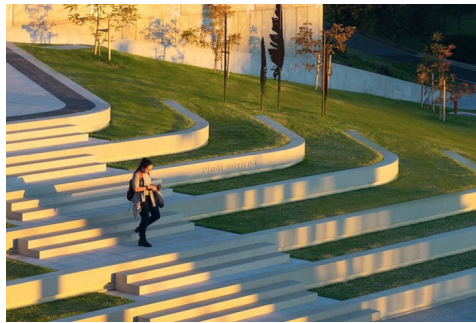
- **Ownership and Responsibility:** TRC will maintain ultimate responsibility as the owner and operator of the VEC precinct.
- **Division Management:** The VEC will be managed under the TRC's Growth and Prosperity Division.
- **Professional and Volunteer Staff:** Professional council staff will manage the VEC, supported by trained and qualified volunteer staff.
- **Visitor Services:** VEC staff will handle tasks such as museum and exhibition entry fee collection, queue management, and conducting tours.
- **Curatorial Expertise:** Dedicated TRC museum curatorial staff will oversee the curation and production of exhibitions within the VEC.
- **First Nations Representation:** The VEC Curatorial department will include representation from First Nations advisors who will provide guidance on exhibitions, indigenous tours, public art, and regional Aboriginal history.
- **Outsourced Food and Beverage:** Food and beverage operations will be outsourced to a professional catering business with expertise in the industry.
- **In-House Catering:** Functions within the VEC will be serviced by an in-house caterer.
- **Event Booking Services:** Event booking and management for the VEC precinct will be provided by online event booking software which is located at the VEC.
- **Maintenance and Management:** Planned preventative and reactive maintenance, asset management, and capital improvements for the VEC will be overseen by the TRC Regional Services Division.
- **External Expertise:** The VEC will have the flexibility to draw upon external stakeholders and advisors as needed to enhance its operations and offerings.
- **Sponsorship/Philanthropic Funding:** Capital and operational contributions will be sought from private sponsorship and/or philanthropic giving. These entities may have a role in organisational governance of the VEC.

Position	Days	Hours
Visitor Information Staff 1	Monday – Sunday	9:00am – 4:00pm
Visitor information Staff 2	Monday – Sunday	9:00am – 4:00pm
Visitor information Staff 3	Monday – Friday	9:00am – 4:00pm
Visitor information Roving 1	Sat, Suns and Public Holidays	9:00am – 5:00pm
Management		
Venue Manager 1	Monday – Friday	
Curator 1	Monday – Friday	
Event Manager 1	Tuesday – Sunday	
Contractor Hot Desk 1 (F&B)	Monday – Sunday	
Contractor Hot Desk 2		
Volunteer Hot Desk 1	Monday – Sunday	

Note: Hours listed above are estimated business as usual hours of operations. It is anticipated that a separate staffing structure will be established to accommodate special events in the amphitheatre, functions and special exhibitions within the VEC. Refer to section 7.1.2 Hours of Operations for additional information.

5.1 Service Model Governance Assumptions

- The VEC will operate as its own cost centre.
- Recurrent operating budget: resources, planned preventative and reactive maintenance, asset management and lifecycle management plans will be established.
- The VEC will be actively staffed by paid Council professionally trained staff members and supported by trained volunteers. and supported by a venue manager, curator, and Council facilities (Asset) management for maintenance.
- VEC Staff will be responsible for the controlled access to the museums, ensuring a smooth and secure experience for visitors.
- Council will provide maintenance staff responsible for both planned preventative maintenance and prompt response to reactive maintenance needs, ensuring the facility remains in optimal condition.
- For special events, Council will provide additional maintenance services staff at established rates to accommodate event-specific requirements.
- Cleaning services will be entrusted to a reputable third-party contractor, maintaining the highest standards of cleanliness throughout the VEC.
- The provision of food and beverage services, encompassing the Café and functions, will be outsourced to a third-party contractor, with a focus on showcasing regional produce.
- Event management will be facilitated by Council, ensuring seamless execution of events at the VEC.



Amphitheatre



Outdoor dining

6 Performance Brief

6.1 Overview

The performance brief establishes the key performance requirements and specifications for the design including the operational principles, assumptions, and operational design considerations to be addressed in the design development of the VEC precinct.

The performance brief identifies both general requirements that may be met by different design solutions, as well as specific requirements that must be met within the base design.

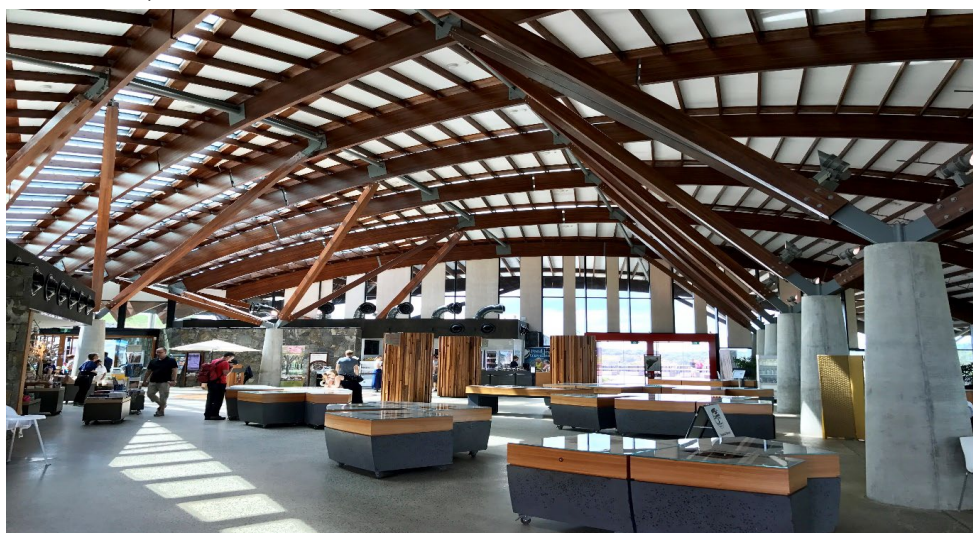
6.2 Primary Functional Objectives

- To create a visitor experience centre that is destinational and a “must see” of all visitors to Tamworth.
- Design an attractive, fit for purpose facility, that accommodates the operational principles.
- To provide management office space and associated operational spaces to support the functions of the VEC.
- Minimise staffing resource requirements by consolidating the visitor information, and Museum operations to enable flexibility in resourcing.
- Facilitate the collection of museum admission fees at the VEC.
- Establish a clear separation between the functions of visitor information and museum areas, ensuring climate control and controlled access to these areas.
- Create an engaging self-guiding museum experience.
- Incorporate hidden and visible power and data points in floors, walls, and ceilings within the museum exhibit halls for state-of-the-art digital and audio-visual exhibits.
- Procure materials, surfaces, furniture, fixtures, and equipment that are durable, safe, easy to clean, and cost-effective to maintain.
- Include a contemporary, versatile kitchen capable of producing café food, beverages, and supporting special events.
- Deliver a visitor experience that is highly engaging, relevant, immersive, and interactive.
- Serve as a temporary venue for events and festivals like the Tamworth Country Music Festival to generate commercial revenue.
- Provide infrastructure throughout the building, external amphitheatre, and grounds for pop-up spaces supporting Visitor Information, activations, exhibits, and ancillary festival activities.

- Incorporate intelligent spaces with smart technology that optimise efficiency, comfort, health, and safety and promotes visitation to the precinct.
- Include separate and secure storage rooms on site for the functional components of: Food and Beverage, visitor information collateral, conservation exhibit room, exhibit / artefact archive, cleaning consumables and equipment, maintenance equipment, waste, and office).
- Ensure clear separation between back of house and front of house activities.
- Create an accessible venue exceeding the Australian Disability Discrimination Act standards with all gender, changing places, child and changing room amenity.
- Support security and safety through physical and technological infrastructure.
- Enable “plug and play” activations and musical events in and external to the VEC.
- Provide ample parking for coaches, recreational vehicles, motorcycles, cars, and disabled patron vehicles.
- Establish pedestrian and wheelchair access to the Golden Guitar for photo opportunities.
- Develop green space parkland with accessible foot paths, street furniture and shade elements that integrates with the surrounding agricultural land and embeds a strong connection with Country.
- Develop an interpretative narrative that allows the design of a music exhibition museum that integrates the Wax Museum, Guitar Museum and Photo Gallery, and Country Music Hall of Fame as one integrated museum experience.
- Include an interactive music and sound experience to play, sing, record and produce outputs (Recording of the interaction) as a commercial revenue output.
- Provide a secure building, and robust pest management operation to eliminate pest infestation that could affect the exhibit collection and/or archive.



Rural Pavilion Style Architecture



National Arboretum – Canberra – Creative Commons

6.3 Principles and Assumptions

6.3.1 General

- **Iconic:** A design that serves as an iconic architectural statement, becoming a symbol of the region and a point of pride for residents and visitors alike
- **Historic and Cultural:** Incorporate elements of the local culture, Indigenous and heritage into the design, reflecting the region's identity and agricultural and equine history.
- **Sustainable and Environmental:** Aspire to achieve green building certification and adopt sustainable design principles, incorporating energy-efficient systems, rainwater harvesting, and renewable energy sources and achieve minimum 5-star Green Star Rating.

- **Innovative Use of Materials:** Explore innovative and locally sourced materials that not only enhance aesthetics but also contribute to the building's sustainability and durability, prioritising materials that embody integral finishes within the material.
- **Visitor Engagement:** Create spaces that encourage visitor engagement, whether through hands-on exhibitions, digital and sound experiences, or immersive storytelling.
- **Accessible and Inclusive for All:** Ensure that the design is fully accessible to individuals of all abilities, including those with disabilities, with consideration of ramps, elevators, and sensory experiences.
- **Community Gathering Space:** A facility that is designed to serve as a community gathering space for events, performances, and local celebrations, fostering a sense of unity and shared experience.
- **Museum Exhibit Halls:** Design flexible exhibit halls with infrastructure to incorporate interactive exhibits and installations within the museum that engage visitors, encouraging participation and a deeper understanding of the region's history and culture.
- **Design Excellence:** Design through the process of design excellence.
- **Natural Light Integration:** The use of natural light throughout Visitor Information and non-museum parts of the building, creating well-lit, inviting spaces that reduce the need for artificial lighting during the day.
- **Cultural Diversity:** The design should allow for cultural exchange and diversity by featuring rotating exhibitions that showcase different aspects of the region's culture, history, and contemporary life as well as music history.
- **Indoor – Outdoor Transition:** a seamless transition between indoor and outdoor spaces, offering visitors the opportunity to connect with the surrounding landscape.
- **Sustainable construction practices:** Resource efficient, energy efficient, water efficient, indoor air quality, waste reduction, adaptable and resilient.
- **Flexible Interior Layout:** Design flexible interior spaces that can adapt to various exhibitions, events, and visitor needs over time, ensuring the building remains versatile and relevant as user needs and experiences change over time.
- **Museum International and National Standards:** A design that meets International Museum Standards.
- **Futureproofing:** Consider the future needs of the facility, incorporating technological advancements, digital integration, and adaptable infrastructure to remain relevant and up to date.
- **Economically Sustainable:** Project delivery within approved capital and recurrent operation budgets.
- **Seamless Integration:** A design that creates operational efficiencies through intelligent design by blending visitor information, museums, and activation into a single facility that operates as one entity, delivering staff resourcing efficiencies.
- **Integrated Workspace:** A design that accommodates the management and support spaces to maintain, manage, curate, and rotate and mobilise its collections and collections from visiting exhibitions.
- **Conservation and Preservation:** Efficiently designed climate control to exhibition halls, back of house conservation workspace, storage to preserve existing and visiting collections and exhibitions.
- **Balance:** Form that is appropriately balanced with function.
- **Integrated Fit out** – The base building and VEC / Museum fit out will delivered and an integrated development.

- **Architecturally Embedded in the Rural Setting and Aesthetic Appeal:** The building's architectural design will integrate with its rural surroundings.
- **Innovative Visitor Experience:** The interior design and visitor experience at the VEC will be shaped through inclusive consultation and will incorporate innovative, best-practice visitor service models.
- **Uniquely Recognisable Facility:** The VEC will establish itself as a distinct and recognisable visitor experience facility, reflecting the character and identity of the region.
- **Regional Character and Consistency:** It will convey a sense of character and experience that aligns with the distinctive qualities of the region.
- **Efficient Wayfinding and Information:** The VEC will provide clear and intuitive wayfinding and information resources to guide all visitors, including tourists, operators, performers, contractors, and the public to their intended destinations within the facility.
- **Operational Efficiency:** The design will prioritise operational efficiency, enabling the Visitor Information component to efficiently manage museum entry, ticket sales, retail, and general tourism information.
- **Third-Party Café Management:** The café will be outsourced to a third-party operator responsible for its management and operation, including hosting indoor commercial functions.
- **Connection to Country:** The VEC's design will foster a profound and authentic connection with the local Indigenous culture and the regional environment.
- **Exceptional Visitor Experience:** Exhibitions, programs, spaces, and operations will consistently deliver an exceptional experience to all visitors.
- **Pedestrian and Cycle Linkages:** Strong pedestrian and cycle linkages will be established to directly connect with the town centre and adjacent facilities.
- **Accessible Public Transport:** A permanent bus stop adjacent to the precinct will be provided to enhance public transport accessibility.
- **Golden Guitar Sculpture Relocation:** The existing Golden Guitar sculpture will be relocated to the new VEC precinct, enhancing its visibility from both north and south directions along the highway.
- **Front-of-House and Back-of-House Separation:** There will be clear separation between front of house and back of house activities.
- **Electronic Access Control:** The venue will implement electronic access control measures for security.
- **Regional Museums Strategy:** The Museum component will align with the Tamworth Regional Museums Engagement Strategy 2019-2024, particularly focusing on the thematic collection principle of "Music City" exemplified at the Australian Country Music Hall of Fame, National Guitar Museum, Country Wax Museum.
- **Diverse Activation Program:** The VEC's activation program will encompass temporary curated museum exhibitions, cultural exhibits and performances, commercial events (e.g., live music, cocktail parties, fundraising functions), and support for not-for-profit events.
- **Tourism Industry Accreditation:** The VEC will achieve accreditation from the Australian Tourism Industry Council to uphold high-quality tourism standards.
- **Licensed Premise:** The building (Café, museum spaces) will be licensed to sell alcohol. Alcohol served in the outdoor amphitheatre will be served via caterers licensed by the service provider.



Outdoor seating and planting

6.3.2 External Areas

- **Clear Brand Visibility:** The VEC brand and signage will be highly visible and well-illuminated day and night from both north and south approaches from the New England Highway. This visibility will extend to those traveling by vehicle, bicycle, or on foot. The location will be strategically positioned at the primary entry/exit point off Greg Norman Drive.
- **Intuitive Wayfinding:** Intuitive wayfinding and signage will guide all visitors seamlessly to the VEC, ensuring a smooth arrival experience.
- **Diverse Parking Options:** The VEC car park will offer dedicated spaces for various needs, including VEC parking, coach parking, recreational vehicle parking, accessible parking, and electric vehicle charging stations.
- **Power and Services for Events:** The infrastructure will be designed to accommodate multiple musical instruments, amplifiers, and associated sound and lighting equipment. Weatherproof distribution boxes at the stage and sound control areas of the amphitheatre or designated area will ensure seamless event operations.
- **User-Friendly Infrastructure:** The infrastructure will prioritise ease of use for all users. It will minimise the need for temporary event overlay, thereby reducing the cost of producing events in the amphitheatre and indoor exhibit areas.
- **Shade for Outdoor Events:** Any outdoor amphitheatre or area used for public musical events/activations will provide shade through natural vegetation, trees, or engineered shade solutions to enhance visitor comfort.
- **Safe Stage Access:** The infrastructure will provide safe access to an identified stage area in the amphitheatre, meeting appropriate load requirements for small and medium rigid vehicles.

- **Retail and F&B Support:** Additional weatherproof water and power infrastructure will be readily available to support pop-up retail and food and beverage vendors for functions and events in the amphitheatre, enhancing the overall visitor experience.

6.3.3 Front of House Areas

- **Versatile Space Design:** Create a flexible and adaptable space capable of accommodating both permanent and temporary fixtures, exhibits, and displays.
- **On-site Ticketing:** The VEC will establish an on-site ticketing and sales office for museum entry and efficient front-of-house event/function administration.
- **Enhanced Public Amenity:** the VEC will provide public amenities, including comfortable seating areas and well-maintained toilets, to enhance the visitor experience.
- **Local Produce and Products:** The VEC will integrate a café-style offering within the VEC, showcasing, and offering local produce for on-site consumption or as takeaways, promoting the region's culinary heritage.
- **Seamless Interior-Exterior Integration:** The VEC design will ensure that the interior fit-out seamlessly integrates with the building's exterior landscape, creating a harmonious connection between indoor and outdoor spaces.
- **Clear Front-of-House and Back-of-House Separation:** There will be clear demarcation between front-of-house and back-of-house areas, allowing one-way viewing from back-of-house to front-of-house for crowd monitoring.
- **Digital Display Infrastructure:** There will be adequate wall space and associated power and data infrastructure to accommodate both large and small format digital displays, including a wall-mounted interactive regional map display.
- **Maintenance Equipment Access:** The design will allow maintenance equipment and vehicle access to the entry for repair and maintenance.

6.3.4 Museum Areas

- **Seamless Museum Integration:** Seamlessly integrate the Australian Country Music Hall of Fame, Walk a Country Mile, the Tamworth Country Music Wax Museum, and the National Guitar Museum into the new VEC, creating a cohesive and immersive visitor experience.
- **Flexible Versus Fixed:** Two thirds of the museum space will be fixed displays that can be adapted or changed over time with artefacts from the collection and one third of the space will be flexible allowing for international / national travelling exhibitions, or the opportunity to showcase Tamworth equine, agricultural or industry exhibitions and promotions.
- **Versatile Exhibition Infrastructure:** The VEC design will include a robust base building infrastructure within museum exhibition areas that supports the suspension of items from ceilings and walls, as well as floor loading capable of accommodating heavy items, art, tools, and artifacts.
- **Sound Efficient:** The walls, ceilings and installations produce a sound balance and sound attenuation where required to ensure the interactivity of the exhibitions do not interfere with a low sound ambient visitor experience. E.g., no sound bleed or reverberation issues throughout the exhibition space.
- **Floor Surfaces:** The design will include polished concrete floors or similar materials throughout all museum areas to maintain a sleek and contemporary aesthetic.
- **Contemporary Museum Open Ceilings:** The Museum ceilings will be black open profile ceilings, adding a modern and visually striking element to the museum spaces.

- **Flexible Power and Data Accessibility:** Exhibit floors will incorporate power troughs or strategically placed floor boxes to ensure convenient access to power, AV, and data requirements, facilitating dynamic exhibit installations.
- **Integrated Rigging and Trussing:** The Museums ceilings will include appropriate rigging and trussing structures seamlessly into the museum design to support lighting, sound, plant, and personnel access. This allows for flexible installation and reconfiguration of lighting, sound systems, and other thematic elements as needed for various exhibitions.

6.3.5 Back of House Areas

- **Efficient Loading Dock Design:** The loading dock/area, links to the main driveway, and can accommodate small to medium rigid vehicles and create a direct connection to retail, food and beverage and exhibition spaces.
- **Contemporary Staff Amenities:** There will be contemporary staff amenities to support operations management and staff, including restrooms, change rooms, showers, a breakroom.
- **Effective Waste Management:** There will be purpose-built waste management/holding facility adjacent to the loading dock to effectively manage waste generated from the Visitor Information, Museums, Café, and external areas, ensuring cleanliness and sustainability.
- **Functional and Flexible Museum Spaces:** The museum spaces will be able to accommodate the capacity, live loads, and logistics facilities that are required to manage the venue.
- **Storage Solutions:** The VEC will provide storage for the following:
 - Food and Beverage (Dry storage)
 - Food and Beverage (Cold storage)
 - Tourism collateral storage
 - Museum archive storage
 - Retail storage
 - Office storage.

6.3.6 Management Offices

- **Centralised Management Office:** There will be provision for dedicated space for a centralised Visitor information and museum management office to efficiently oversee VEC operations, including administration, marketing, sales for events, functions, and museum operations.
- **Shared Building Amenities:** There will be shared building amenities, including a break room, restrooms, change rooms, and showers, to promote collaboration and convenience among staff, volunteers, and contractors. Shared Amenities will be utilised a green room during performances to maximise flexibility in asset utilisation.
- **Office Support Areas:** there will be utility space for supporting office activities such as photo copiers, administrative storage, IT Communication room and meeting room.

7 Operational Functions and Facilities Requirements

7.1.1 Overview

Operational functions and facilities requirements have been described to their relative function and intended functional relationships and include the following elements and components:

Area	Room/Space	Area (sqm)	Total Area (sqm)
External Areas	Car Park entry(s)		

	Car Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cars • Recreation Vehicle Parking • Coach Parking • Electric Vehicle Charging • Accessible Parking 	As per council requirements / considering existing TRECC parking	
	Amphitheatre + Stage (Seating capacity 200-300 pax)	350-500m2	
	Golden Guitar	50	
	Landscape/Parkland/Public Domain	3000	
Visitor Experience Centre			
Public Indoor Areas	Main Entry / Atrium	250	
	Visitor Information	100	
	Amenities – Public (includes separate changing places and accessible toilet)	65	
	Retail	35-55	
	Café (servery + seating)	150	
Back of House Areas			
	Loading Dock	80	
	Conservation Room	25	
	Digital record	4	
	Exhibition Storage	60 and 30	
	Visitor Collateral Storage	5	
	Retail Storage	6	
	Commercial Kitchen (Regeneration Kitchen)	40	
	Food and Beverage Cold Storage	6	
	Food and Beverage Dry Storage	10	
	Cleaners Room	15	
	Audio Visual Control Room	12	
	Waste Room	20	
	Workshop	15	
Exhibition Areas			
	Museum, Regional, First Nations, other Split 2/3 fixed exhibitions and 1/3 rotating / flexible	1500*	
Management Office			
	VEC Office	80	
	Amenities – Staff	40	
	Staff Breakroom	20	
	Utility room	4	
	Meeting Room	20	
	Communications / Data / Security	6	
	Storage	5	

* This is an optimal figure and could be reduced to a minimum viable product size of between 800-1000sqm, split 1/3 flexible space and 2/3 fixed exhibitions. This needs to be tested by the design consultant team when curatorial storylines are defined along with a program of possible temporary / travelling exhibitions.

7.1.2 Hours of Operation

The following are the anticipated hours of operation.

Time of Year	Days	Hours
Autum – Spring	Monday – Sunday	9:00am – 4:00pm
Summer	Monday – Friday	9:00am – 4:00pm
	Saturday – Sunday	9:00am – 5:00pm
	Public Holidays	9:00am – 5:00pm
Tamworth Country Music Festival	Event Days	8:00am – 8:00pm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Events (indoor or outdoor) • Functions • Commercial • Educational 	TBD	5:00pm – Midnight

8 External Use Areas

The external use areas consist of the entrance to the car park, car park, main entry to the VEC, amphitheatre, landscape and parkland, and Golden Guitar.

The external use areas are immediately adjacent, integrate and envelope the VEC built structure.

These consist of:

- Car park/precinct entrance
- Public domain /landscape
- Amphitheatre
- Golden Guitar

8.1 Car Park Entry – Functional Requirements

8.1.1 Vehicle Entry Points

- Visible in both southerly and northerly aspects; night and day, while driving at 60km/hr. and providing time to see, slow down and turn into the access streets to the car park.
- Immediately adjacent to the New England Highway.
- Accessible by all modes of transport vehicles (Coach, Recreational Vehicle (RV), motorcycle, car)
- Intuitive wayfinding with branded colours and wording for visitor information, Golden Guitar, Guitar Museum, Country Music Hall of Fame, Wax Museum parking.
- Code compliant public street and feature lighting.
- Free access to vehicle parking area.

- The Information sign and/or Golden Guitar must be able to be seen at least 100metres before having to turn off to the VEC entry day or night.
- Vehicle entry/exit points must be able to accommodate turning sweep paths for coaches, medium rigid delivery vehicles, long articulated recreation vehicles without crossing over street lanes or driveway lanes.

8.2 Car Park

8.2.1 Car Parking

- Parking must be adjacent to the VEC precinct area.
- Car parking must be marked to identify where to park for the VEC.
- The car parking area must be covered / shaded car parking for regular vehicles to reduce urban heat island effect.
- Solar panel roof structure should be explored to cover car parking with power going to VEC building and to meet sustainability objectives and reduce urban heat island effect.
- Parking must be free of charge parking for the VEC.
- Vehicle circulation must be able to accommodate all modes of traffic e.g., turning radius, double or single lane traffic.
- The parking lot and circulation must be appropriately marked to indicate direction.
- The car park must be appropriately illuminated for public domain safety.
- Security CCTV cameras must cover the entire car park to enable identification of damage, theft, vandalism, and accident.

8.2.2 Motorbike/Scooter Parking

- Motorbike parking should be provided more than Australian Standard parking requirements given the number of motorbikes that visit Tamworth, the home of National Thunder Motorcycle Rally, and home of the Powerhouse Motorcycle Museum as well as touring motorcycles to the region.
- Clear identification and location of motorbike parking must be in proximity to the VEC e.g., no more than 50 metres away.

8.2.3 Accessible Parking

- Accessible parking should be provided to meet code requirements and located immediately adjacent to the VEC main entrance and identified as per Australian Standards.

8.2.4 Electric Vehicle Charging Parking

- Four commercial electric vehicle charging stations must be installed adjacent or near (no more than 50 metres) from the VEC.
- Electric charging stations must accommodate charging for all types/brands of electric vehicles.

8.2.5 Coach Parking

- One coach drop-off area to be located adjacent to the main VEC entry.
- Coach parking must be within 50 metres walking distance from the VEC building entry.
- Coach parking for up to 5 coaches at one time.

8.2.6 Recreational Vehicle Parking

- RV parking must be included in directional and informational wayfinding to the car park, marked and signed to indicate where to park for the VEC.

- RV (long vehicle or vehicle towing) parking must be within 100m of the VEC building entry.
- Recreational long vehicle parking for up to 10 vehicles parking at any one time

8.3 Public Domain

8.3.1 Footpaths

- Footpaths through the VEC precinct to be designed as hardstand material, washed concrete, or another smooth surface durable and decorative surface treatment.
- All footpaths through the VEC public domain must be wide enough to allow wheelchair access and passing of wheelchairs/people while on the hard stand surface.
- Public domain footpaths must be slip resistant to Australian Standards for outdoor public areas.
- An accessible footpath must extend to the Golden Guitar for photographs as per Australian Standards.
- VEC precinct public domain footpaths must be interconnected to the public council footpath/cycle path from Tamworth city to the precinct for residents to access the precinct to provide safe and seamless access to and from the precinct.
- Footpaths must be interconnected to the VEC car parking, amphitheatre, VEC, Golden Guitar and through the landscaped parkland area of the VEC.

8.3.2 Cycle paths

- Cycle paths at the VEC must be connected to the Council's cycle paths along the New England Highway and surrounding streets of Greg Norman Drive and Jack Smyth Drive.
- Cycle parking must be located outside and immediately adjacent to the VEC.
- Cycle parking must be provided for up to 10 bicycles at any one time to enable cyclists to park and lock their bikes whilst visiting the VEC.
- Clear separation must be provided between pedestrian and cycle paths.

8.3.3 Public Domain Furniture (Street Furniture)

- Furniture includes bench or other seating, waste bin stations, drinking fountain/water stations, shade structures within the parkland area, light poles, and fixtures.
- All park and street public domain furniture must be fit for purpose and security installed within the VEC public domain.
- Furniture must be easy to access, easy to maintain, and must not cause any staining to pavement.
- Furniture must be easily accessible to replace e.g., locally/regionally sourced, and not take longer than 10 business days to receive upon order.
- Bin stations must have a suitable enclosure that is sympathetic to the VEC design and its surrounds. The bin stations must have a cover over the openings to avoid vermin and ingress of rain.
- The bin stations must be lockable and able to accommodate 2 x 120ltr bins; one for general waste and one for co-mingled waste (red and yellow top bins) with lids folded over in open position.
- Bin stations must include animal waste bag dispensers which can be refilled by VEC staff.
- Light poles must be able to accommodate additional features and fixtures such as CCTV camera mounts and power/data, lockable all weather rated and grounded power outlets for special event power requirements e.g., show lighting, pop-up food carts.

- Parkland lighting must be appropriately spaced for safety and lux levels must meet Australian Safety Lighting standards for nighttime safety.
- Shade structures must be designed and engineered to respective wind modelling for the VEC area.
- Shade structures must be easy and safe to access for maintenance, cleaning, repair, and replacement.



Winery -Pialligo Estate



Production Garden

8.3.4 Water Stations

- Potable water and drainage must be provided for water drink and refill stations in the public domain.
- Water refill and drinking stations will be designed in the south parkland area and adjacent to the VEC for public hydration and convenience.
- Water refill and drinking stations must be accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities by adhering to Australian Standards.
- Water refill stations must include a dog bowl and refill accessory.
- Water refill and drinking stations must be designed for easy cleaning and maintenance reducing operational efforts and costs and ensuring hygienic equipment is always available.
- Integrate water fountains seamlessly into the overall design and aesthetics of the facility, and parkland area, ensuring they complement the architectural style and enhance the overall visual appeal.
- Strategically position water fountains in high-traffic areas, both indoor and outdoor, to maximise their utility and accessibility for visitors.
- Incorporate bottle refilling stations within or near the water fountains to encourage the use of reusable water containers and reduce single-use plastic waste.

- Ensure the water stations include water filtration or purification systems to guarantee the highest water quality standards for consumption.

8.3.5 Parkland / Landscape

- Develop a small parkland area adjacent to the VEC, designed as a green space where visitors can relax, decompress from travel, and connect with nature.
- Create a biodiverse environment within the parkland, featuring a variety of native plants and trees to promote local wildlife habitat and urban biodiversity.
- Include strategically placed seating and gathering spaces, providing opportunities for picnics and respite.
- Design accessible pathways throughout the parkland, ensuring easy navigation for individuals of all abilities, including those with mobility aids.
- Implement sustainable landscaping practices, such as water-efficient irrigation systems and drought-resistant plant species, to minimise water usage and maintenance costs.
- Incorporate shade elements, such as trees or shade structures, to offer relief from the sun and ensure year-round usability.
- Inclusion of public art installations or sculptures that enhance the park's aesthetic appeal and cultural significance of the region and or country music notoriety.
- Provide informational signage or interactive elements that educate visitors about local flora and fauna, sustainability practices, or the history of the area.
- Ensure proper lighting for evening use and incorporate safety features, such as well-maintained paths and security cameras, to enhance the park's safety.
- Integrate landscaping and vegetation that align with the natural surroundings.
- Landscape and turf area should be sympathetic to the climate and region, resistant to drought and irrigated throughout the parkland area.
- Garden beds areas throughout the parkland area must include Indigenous flora inclusive of edible plants and other species for the purposes of teaching and tasting and compliment the VEC building.
- Plantings that assist in providing a connection with country.
- Shade trees are to be planted to soften architecture and provide amenity to visitors in public domain and car park areas.
- Trees and vegetation are to be used to frame views and screen out undesirable features.
- Vegetation should be informed by connection to country and potentially include bush tucker species.
- Mulch is to be used for all garden bed areas to suppress weeds and retain soil moisture.

8.4 Amphitheatre

8.4.1 Seating

- Create a permanent outdoor amphitheatre with a seating capacity of 200-300 people over multiple levels or contoured downward to the stage to accommodate audiences for various cultural, entertainment, and community events.
- Ensure that the amphitheatre is accessible to individuals with disabilities, with designated seating areas, ramps, and accessible pathways.
- Integrate shade structures, canopies, and vegetation to shield spectators from sun and light rain, extending the usability of the amphitheatre during various weather conditions.

- Design the amphitheatre with flexibility in mind, allowing it to host a variety of events, including concerts, and community events.
- Implement sustainable design practices, such as rainwater harvesting, energy-efficient lighting, and environmentally friendly materials, to minimize the environmental footprint of the amphitheatre.
- Seating structure to be concrete, recycled, or composite materials, bench seating or similar, that require low maintenance.
- The amphitheatre must be on a grade so people can see over the top of people in front of them.
- The amphitheatre stepped seating must incorporate LED aisle and stair lighting for evening event safety on ingress and egress of patrons.
- The amphitheatre seating structure must be easily cleaned and maintained e.g., by gurney.
- The bottom of the amphitheatre must include drainage to storm water to capture wet weather event excess water and not cause flooding and capture runoff from cleaning.
- Outdoor amphitheatre lighting controls must be able to be controlled (dimmed, turned on/off) by via external control box associated with the amphitheatre and building management control systems internally (BMCS).

8.4.2 Stage

- Create a versatile and well-equipped stage area or area to assemble a stage and accessible infrastructure to accommodate a wide range of performances, from concerts and theatrical productions to lectures and presentations. E.g., stage area to accommodate up to a 6-piece band with equipment, amplified instruments, sound, and lighting.
- Create a permanent roof/shade stage structure for weather protection. The roof structure should be 4metres or higher to accommodate lighting and sound equipment and enable viewing of the stage area from the back of elevated amphitheatre seating area. This may be integrated into the VEC building or standalone.
- Ensure adequate infrastructure to include lighting and sound equipment for evening events, providing optimal visibility and audio quality and safety.
- Recycled water hose cocks must be located around or near the amphitheatre to enable connection to hose for cleaning.
- Provision of multiple 20amp power to stage and sound control areas in weatherproof distribution board box or other. Power outlets to be designed such that they cannot be seen when there are no events taking place in the amphitheatre.
- The location of power should facilitate connection with third-party equipment to minimise cable trays and trip hazards in the area.
- Cabling from stage to control box areas should be in conduit underground or way that there are minimal cables in the public domain.
- Hard Stand flat areas adjacent to the stage area should be included to be used for erecting larger stage structures and containers (temporary storage) for longer periods of time to protect equipment from weather elements. E.g., Country Music Festival over 10 days.
- The stage should be slightly elevated so cabling can be distributed under the stage to key areas for sound, lighting, and musical amplifiers.
- Ramps to stage from back of house and front of house areas.
- Up to a medium rigid truck access from parking lot/loading dock area to stage.
- Ability to turn medium rigid truck around to ability for truck to back down and drive out of the stage area after bump in/out.

8.4.3 Event Support Areas

- Provide hardstand area(s) and infrastructure plug in points to install temporary concessions stands and food and beverage options in the front of house areas of the amphitheatre to enhance the visitor experience and prolong their stay during events.
- hidden in the landscape to accommodate event infrastructure.
- Design the parkland to accommodate small-scale events, such as outdoor performances, exhibitions, or community gatherings.
- Provide direct access to and from a designated stage area to the main VEC precinct Car Park for production vehicles up to Medium rigid and an allowance of space to reverse, turn around and drive out.
- Ensure the access road accommodates multiple small to medium vehicles at any one time including anticipated load weights.
- 3000mm x 3000mm area behind the amphitheatre seating in direct view of centre stage area for a temporary control that does not block stage view for patrons.
- Power to include minimum four to six weather rated 20A outlets.
- Separate circuits for lighting.
- Conduit from stage to space for a control booth area to run cable underground or flown to avoid excess cables in public domain areas.
- Temporary green rooms are to utilise the VEC staff amenities and meeting room to create efficiencies in building space and function.
- Stage Trussing to hang speakers and lighting with appropriate load capacity.



Cradle Mountain Visitor Centre – Image Cumulus Architecture

8.5 Golden Guitar Display

8.5.1 Golden Guitar Sculpture

- The Golden Guitar sculpture footing and placement must take into consideration the height, weight and wind load when designing the final location of the sculpture.
- The sculpture must be oriented so it can be clearly identifiable by drivers travelling 60km/hr and a minimum of 300metres from both a northerly and/or southerly aspect from the New England Highway.
- The Golden guitar is to include feature uplighting to ensure that it is visible at night from the road.

8.5.2 Photo Plinth

- The Golden Guitar is to be integrated into the landscape to provide an exceptional photographic opportunity and context.
- Integrate an interactive photo plinth adjacent to the sculpture, allowing visitors to engage with the Golden Guitar by taking photos and sharing their experiences.
- Integrate the Golden Guitar into a prominent place in the VEC precinct considering placement, vegetation, adjacent structures, and roads.
- Include informative signage and/or QR codes or new technology that offer insights into the history and cultural significance of the Golden Guitar
- Design appropriate lighting that highlights the sculpture's details and enhances its visibility during evening hours.
- The photo plinth must not conflict with active cycling or vehicle pathways.

8.5.3 Access Path

- Design the area around the sculpture and photo plinth, to be wheelchair-accessible and safe, providing clear pathways and ensuring compliance with accessibility standards.
- Design wayfinding signage from the VEC to the Golden Guitar that highlights recommend routes and accessible routes.
- The access path must be hard stand surface that will not deteriorate with inclement weather and must accommodate wheelchairs, walking frames and other accessible equipment to allow access to the Golden Guitar photo plinth.
- Access to and from the Golden Guitar must be always pedestrian and wheelchair friendly.
- Access to and from the VEC car park / VEC Loading dock must be provided to accommodate maintenance equipment such as elevated work platforms that may need to access the sculpture for maintenance and/or repair.
- The access path must include path safety LED lighting to enable access to and from the Golden Guitar during the evening.

8.6 Areas for Additional Studies External Areas

- Event audio and lighting infrastructure engineering to accommodate third-party rigging and control room/tent equipment in the outdoor amphitheatre environment, will need to be developed during the design process.
- Structural engineer for structures for load specifications to allow hanging of third-party lighting and sound equipment for an event.

- Structural engineer for the Golden Guitar footing and installation as well as wind loading modelling.
- Coach and Recreation vehicle sweep path analysis for entry/ exits to parking areas.

9 Public Indoor Areas

The Public Areas consist of the functions, spaces, rooms, amenities, and service areas that the public can freely access. These public areas must be accessible by visitors, staff, tourists, local community, and contractors.

The Front of House Areas consist of:

- Main Entry / Central Atrium
- Visitor Information
- Public Amenities
- Retail/Merchandise
- Café

9.1 Main Entry / Central Atrium

9.1.1 Entry

- The entry must have aesthetic appeal and intuitive as to how to access and where to enter.
- The entry must be wheelchair accessible including ramp, handrails, and clear signage to Australian Standards.
- The entry sequence must provide clear signage and wayfinding elements to help visitors navigate their way to the information centre.
- Wayfinding and facility signage must be provided in written form and braille.
- The entry doors should be designed as sliding electric doors with an accessible electric opening door beside to maintain indoor climate control as well as provide a hands-free entry into visitor information service space.
- The entry ramp or entry sequence should provide some weather protection and shade in the event of outdoor queuing to protect patrons from the elements.
- The entrance must allow for CCTV coverage of the entry way to capture patron ingress/egress.
- Allow space for branding and digital signage display.
- Landscape treatments, plantings and sculptural elements are to be used to create context and contribute to the arrival sequence and experience.
- Sensory elements include fragrant vegetation, soundscape and feature lighting should enhance the arrival experience.
- The arrival sequence should be defined by a strong connection to country.

9.1.2 Entry Foyer

- The foyer must convey a sense of character that is consistent with the overall VEC experience.
- Acts as a transition zone between entry sequence, visitor information, museum entry and orientation.
- Free public access to the visitor information area 365 days per year.
- General power outlets every 25 meters for cleaning equipment and servicing.

- Code compliant lighting and architectural feature lighting.
- Lounge and seating for the entrance for patrons to rest and orientation.
- Provision of free Wi-Fi access for visitors who may need to connect their devices to access online resources or services.



Native Planting – Camden Botanic Gardens

9.2 Visitor Information Area

9.2.1 VEC Service Area

- There is no traditional visitor reception counter, VEC staff will roam and move freely through the atrium and visitor information and retail zones assisting visitors as required. These staff will be professional trained in customer service and will actively greet visitors and offer advice and assistance. Ticketing will be processed via a handheld device.
- A small cabinet, wall unit will be integrated into the VEC area display joinery to allow a printer to be housed, charging stations for POS machines etc. 100sqm of space to accommodate interactive floor displays, collateral displays, circulation.
- Space near the reception counter with joinery for holding maps, brochures, and tourism collateral of regional points of interest, activities, entertainment, and accommodation.
- Allow for circulation for pedestrian and wheelchair access.
- Acoustically treated to allow for VEC Staff to communicate effectively with visitors.

- Allow for wall space, power, and data to accommodate large format interactive digital map display of the region.
- Wall space, power, and data to accommodate other digital programming displays.
- Include high quality audio for background music throughout the VEC space that can be controlled from the management office.
- Four floor boxes with power and data to allow for flexibility and interactive or displays requiring power or data.
- Data to be controlled by a head end system located in the management office.

9.2.2 Visitor lounge area

- Allow for 10sqm for visitor lounge immediately adjacent to the entry and access to the public amenities within the VEC, this is an open area with seating provided in the main atrium.
- Furniture must be comfortable accessible and in configurations to accommodate a single person and multiple person lounges.

9.3 Public Amenities

- Amenities must be accessible from the entry foyer and visitor lounge area.
- Clear identification signage and wayfinding from the entry and entry foyer to the amenity location.
- Materials and finishes must be of high quality and durable.
- The number of toilets must service visitors to the information centre, museum, and visitors in the VEC precinct (Golden Guitar, water play and parkland) and accommodate maximum capacity allowable for the whole indoor part of the building (museum, café, visitor information, retail).
- Provision of a baby change and parent room/toilet amenity.
- Provision of changing places amenity.
- Provision of all gender toilet facilities.
- Provision of accessible and ambulant toilet facilities.
- Provision of vanity stations for washing hands.
- Power for and supply of electric hand dryers and hand towel dispensers.
- Sensor tapware (sink) and dispensers (foam soap) for water and product dispensing efficiency.
- Jumbo roll toilet rolls dispensers.
- Provision of floor drains.
- Cleaners' spigot in each amenity for access to water for cleaning.
- Provision of mechanical ventilation.
- Vanity mirrors and full height mirrors.
- Coat hooks to the back of cubical doors.
- Space to accommodate sanitary bins adjacent to toilets.
- Waste bins 60 litre either stand alone or integrated into joinery.
- Speakers to allow for house music.
- Storage must be built into joinery (i.e., under counter/vanity) in each amenity to accommodate replacement consumables (toilet paper, hand towels, soap) and cleaning products for easy of servicing the bathrooms.
- Stall/cubical joinery, doors must be anti-graffiti surface.
- Power outlets, 300mm from floor level, in each amenity to accommodate cleaning equipment.

9.4 Retail Area

9.4.1 Retail Display

- 35-55sqm of retail display space.
- Retail space to be centrally located towards the museum exhibition end of the main atrium. This allows retail space to flex as required and as particular exhibition merchandise requirements demand.
- Floor space to accommodate purpose built merchandising display units for product display.
- Under bench and lockable storage for excess products.
- Joinery to be sympathetic to the building design and character.
- Floor surface polished concrete for ease of cleaning and maintenance to match the remainder of the Atrium.
- Feature lighting to product displays
- Localised house sound system through the retail space.
- Security to the area to include CCTV pointing to Points of Sale at the Visitor reception counter and product display area.
- Product displays to be on lockable castors to allow products to be moved out of the space for special functions/installations.



Palm Springs – Art Museum Entry

9.5 Café

9.5.1 Commercial Kitchen

- Kitchen and food preparation areas designed to AS4674 – Design, Construction and Fit out of food premises.
- Kitchen and café location adjacent to or near back of house loading dock to avoid deliveries being carted through visitor, museum, and public areas.
- Café and Kitchen to be located on ground floor level to avoid goods lift and double handling.
- Kitchen will serve as the main café as well as accommodate the production of food for small functions and events.
- Kitchen to be designed and fit out as a regeneration kitchen including a cooking line of combi oven, cooktop, griddle top, fryer, and pasta boiler.
- All kitchen equipment is to be electric.
- Food preparation for washing and preparing food with appropriate sink, wash arms and tapware.
- Ware washing of crockery, cutlery, glassware, and kitchen equipment.
- Food pass e.g., plating up and service food to be plated, kept warm before service pickup and delivery to table. Can be through service window or entry to and from the kitchen.
- If through the kitchen, Double swing doors required to ensure two-way traffic in and out of the kitchen.
- Storage within the kitchen for appropriate par level of crockery, cutlery, glassware to service the peak load of the BAU café operations.
- Waste holding for different waste streams.
- Drinks storage
- Food storage
- Equipment and crockery storage
- Space for additional catering equipment to be brought in from outside for special catering functions and associated power to plug equipment in e.g., Hot boxes.
- Cool room and freezer room storage of food and beverage (can be in loading dock with smaller under bench fridges and freezer holding in the kitchen)

9.5.1.1 Commercial Kitchen Specific Requirements

- Order printer from orders taken or sent through (10a power)
- 1 x 3-door under bench refrigeration with over bench preparation bench to support cooking line.
- 1 x 2-door under bench refrigeration with over bench preparation bench to support food preparation and over bench shelving.
- 1 x upright freezer for storage a freezer product.
- Space for cleaners sink, tapware as well as shelving for storing cleaning consumables.
- large hose for washing floors and kitchen equipment.
- Wall mounted stainless steel shelving to store pots pans and equipment over the kitchen line.
- Space for 3 x mobile hot boxes with (10amp or 15amp power GPO for each hotbox)
- Provision of a grease arrestor commensurate with the kitchen equipment and operation.
- Allow for pump out coupling area in suitable location i.e., in the loading dock, away from public accessible area.
- Stainless steel benching with sink (hot and cold water) spray rinse arm for food preparation area.

- Handwash stations as per code requirements.
- Kitchen exhaust / extraction to AS 1668 – The use of Mechanical Ventilation in Buildings. The kitchen extraction hood to have a UV treatment system installed and electrostatic filtration.
- Ware washing including stainless steel benching with (hot and cold water) spray rinse arm inlet with under bench and over bench shelving for dish racks. Stainless steel outlet bench for cleaned crockery.
- 1 x 10 tray combi oven with stand with 3 phase power.
- 1 x 4 burner electric cooktop with 3phase power.
- 1 x 400mm electric griddle with 3 phase power.
- 1 x double electric basket fryer with 3 phase power.
- Spreader benches between (300mm) between cooktop and combi oven.
- Spreader bench (400mm) between griddle and fryer.
- Floors, walls, and ceilings as per AS4674 – Design, Construction and Fit out of food premises.
- Floor drains
- Waste holding for waste streams; Organic, co-mingled, soft plastics, recyclables, in the kitchen. Cardboard to be brought to main waste holding in the loading dock.
- Kitchen lighting as per AS4674 – Design, Construction and Fit out of food premises.

9.5.2 Café

- Café design should complement the buildings architecture and theme of the VEC.
- Café to be fit out integrated into the VEC with input by the service provider.
- Café to serve breakfast and lunch BAU.
- Café operator to apply for licence for sale of alcohol through the café and functions.
- Assumption is the café operator is also the caterer for functions.
- Acoustically treated to ensure no transfer of sound to exhibition halls.
- No odour transfer to exhibit halls.
- Proximity to public toilets i.e., located on the same floor.
- In house and takeaway service of gourmet food prepared on site.
- Ability to turn the servery into a bar for small functions and or events.
- Café to be separated from Museums but can be integrated with front of house Visitor Information areas.
- The café service style will be semi table service e.g., patron's order at the counter and obtain a number or pager, or service may be an order from a QR code from tables.
- Include an integrated hot and cold food display to the front counter showcasing the food on offer.
- Bar style seating to be incorporated into the front counter which can be used as bar space or bar servery for functions.
- Coffee machine, grinders, jug rinse to be located at the front counter so barista is looking at patrons.
- Cupboard space for consumables (take away coffee cups, trays, glasses, coffee cups)
- The Coffee pass must be adjacent to the coffee production and separate to the POS.
- Grab and Go fridges adjacent to the front counter to allow patrons to pick up drink or other products and pay for them at the Point of Sale (POS).
- Front servery counter must have an integrated DDA level service counter.
- The front counter must allow for surface space for quick grab and go foods, displays and merchandising as well as space for the POS and pass of food.

- A self-serve water station with shelving and cupboard for glassware and water jugs can be incorporated into the front counter or placed in a separate area in the dining area.
- A back counter i.e., behind the servery counter, must accommodate food heating and for sandwich press, toaster, and high-speed microwave.
- Over counter feature lighting.
- Natural lighting and views from the dining area.
- The café should incorporate outdoor seating, and the café interfaces both the internal central atrium area to activate this space in addition to opening out to the outdoor terrace and landscaped area.
- The outdoor seating area to include integrated outdoor heating equipment.
- The outdoor seating area to include fixed shading cover or auto retractable shade cover.
- Digital screen menu displays to be included and viewable from the patron side of the servery counter with menu upload and control in situ.

9.5.2.1 *Café Specific Requirements*

- Space for two points of sale to be iPad (or similar) type point of sale with 2 x Eftpos POS unit capable of Wi-Fi operation.
- Access to data and Wi-Fi.
- Café space to include the following:
 - Servery area
 - Food assembly
 - Undercounter space for cold storage
 - Above counter hot and cold food displays.
 - Space for storage of consumables, and café equipment
 - Access to power for kitchen equipment 10A, 15A and single phase 20A and 3 phase 32A.
 - Access to distribution boards
 - Services and utilities separately metered.
- Air-conditioned indoor space.
- Café equipment to be lockable.
- Security to include:
 - Base building CCTV coverage of Café POS, dining areas, bar areas.
 - Electronic Access Control to back of house areas.
 - Duress Alarm to POS counter.
- Points of sale to include undercounter cash drawers connected (plug) to POS units.
- Each point of sale to include space and power for receipt printers.
- POS to be connected to or Wi-Fi to kitchen order printer.
- Three Group Coffee machine (240V).
- Two Coffee Grinders (one for decaf and one for regular coffee) (2 x 10a power) e.g.
- One Pugpress (10a power)
- One x 2 door under bench Juggler (jug rinse/ two tap milk dispenser; 10a power, drainage).
- Open deck grab and go fridges (10a power).
- One x double door upright drink display fridge (10a).
- Sandwich toaster (10a power).
- Hot and Cold integrated food displays (10a each power).
- High speed microwave (15a power).
- Front of house self-serve water station (Water supply, drainage).

- Two x digital menu displays (10a each + data).
- Glass washer for coffee and glassware (3 phase, water, drain).
- Cleaners GPOs every 25 metres; 300mm above floor for floor cleaning equipment.
- Hard stand easy to clean and easy to maintain flooring e.g., polished concrete to match museum exhibit flooring.
- Seating area to include house speakers for house audio (controlled by VEC management).
- Café counters, walls, and ceiling to comply to AS4674 – Design, Construction and Fit out of food premises where required.

9.6 Areas for Additional Studies Public Indoor Areas (Concept Design)

The following are identified as requiring further detailed study and analysis during the concept design process.

- Café branding and signage and advertising.
- Main cold (cool room) storage location i.e., loading dock.
- Waste Management strategy for café vs VEC and Museum, defining, waste and sustainability targets.
- Grease arrestor location and pump out.



Warrumbungle visitor centre – Image National Parks NSW

10 Back of House Areas

The Back of House Areas (BOH) consist of the service areas that support and enable the front of house operations and functions of the VEC. The BOH areas are located out of public view with access restricted to staff and volunteers, third-party service providers (Café and Kitchen), and facilities management. The back of house areas must have access to the front of house areas via

service corridors and doors located in strategic locations to allow movement of goods and exhibit displays.

The BOH Areas consist of:

- Loading dock
- Cleaners room
- Storage
- Conservation room
- Waste room
- Workshop

10.1 Loading Dock

10.1.1 Loading Dock Functional Requirements

- Access management into the loading dock via video intercom and security roller door.
- Loading Dock intercom to be connected to the VEC office and staff on duty mobile number and can be remotely controlled via mobile application.
- The VEC management and Café provider can control the loading dock.
- Pump out location for the kitchen grease arrestor will be immediately adjacent and external to the loading dock.
- Vehicle access for up to 1 medium rigid vehicle inside the loading dock at any one time.
- Waste pick-up and removal.
- Space for contractor equipment drop off/pick up.
- Storage/parking for light loading and access equipment (forklift, EWP) including charging stations for these.
- Level dock for off-loading and loading of goods, plant, equipment, exhibit pieces.
- Chemical spill management.

10.1.2 Loading Dock Specific Requirements

- Approximately 80sqm
- Loading dock entry via roller security door.
- Loading dock entry and ceilings to 4m high.
- Task appropriate lighting via motion activation.
- Level dock for easy off-loading and loading with forklifts and or trucks with liftgates.
- CCTV inside and external to the Loading Dock.
- External overhang to allow for off-loading under cover for vehicles that can't fit in the loading dock.
- Direct access to BOH storage areas.
- Provision for circulation space to offload with a forklift (side load as well as back unload), pallet jacks.
- Emergency vehicles to be received in the loading dock area.
- The loading dock will have the ability to receive a Tamworth standard waste truck for waste removal or in proximity (no more than 10m) to the loading dock entry.
- Permanent storage/parking for light loading and access equipment (forklift, EWP) including associated charging stations.
- Allow for space for loading dock logistics equipment such as a pallet jack and 2 x trolleys.

- Charging points (4 x 10A GPOs) that may be able to utilise the space when not being used for events, functions, or other logistics.
- Quick coupling points for the pump out of the kitchen grease arrestor adjacent to the loading dock.
- Located to accommodate seamless back of house service support e.g., continuous access to main access road, egress, and ingress without negative traffic impacts, and not conflict with the precinct or visitor experience.
- Water and floor drain to enable cleaning of the loading dock.
- Allow for space for a Spill Kit (240ltr bin size) located adjacent to, or near the loading dock managers office and load zone.
- Design with clear signage posted to and from the access from the entry to the loading dock.
- Allow for impact safety bollards at edges or corners of offices, stairs and in front of goods lifts (if located in the loading dock area near vehicle sweep paths).
- Clear safety zone line marking for both vehicle and pedestrians.
- Provision of vehicle height indicator at the entrance to the Loading Dock.
- Allow for security provisions:
 - 100% CCTV coverage
 - Entry point
 - Intercoms
 - Electronic Access Control System (EACS)
 - Safety and rated vehicle impact bollards

10.2 Storage

10.2.1 Storage Functional Requirements

- Dedicated storage for specific functions and functional areas of:
 - Museum exhibit/archive storeroom
 - Food and beverage cold store
 - Food and beverage dry store
 - Retail store
 - Visitor information store
- Separate and dedicated single space/room for each storeroom i.e., no splitting of rooms i.e., retail storage needs 6sqm of one single space.
- EACS access controlled to each storeroom.
- Double door access to each control room.

10.2.2 Storage – Museum Exhibit/Museum Archives Specific Requirements

- Direct access from / through the loading dock.
- 2 x rooms approximately 60 and 30sqm
- Large corridors e.g., 2m to allow easy transport of goods, exhibits from the loading dock via pallet jack, trolley, or another large item mover.
- Sealed concrete floor or polished concrete.
- Kick-plates to inside and exteriors of storage doors.
- Climate controlled room to ensure protection of old textiles and museum items.
- Humidity controlled and monitored.
- Pest controlled space.
- Task lighting activated via motion detection.

- High Ceilings 3.5m
- Slab to ceiling walls.
- Fire isolated space
- General power to the storage space 4 x DGPOs

10.2.3 Storage - Food and beverage Cold Storage Specific Requirements

- Cool room space approximately 6sqm for holding cold food product prior to transferring to the kitchen.
- Walk in cool room adjacent to or in the loading dock for the storage of food stuffs.
- Door widths suitable for pallets.
- Allow for cool room compressors and condenser units.
- Allow for sub-floor to accommodate cool room.
- Task lighting activated via motion detection.

10.2.4 Storage - Food and Beverage Dry Storage Specific Requirements

- Approximately 6sqm to hold food and beverage dry goods.
- Task lighting activated via motion detection.
- EACS access / lockable storage.
- Sealed concrete floor or polished concrete.
- General power to the storage space for 2 x DGPO

10.2.5 Storage – Retail Specific Requirements

- Approximately 6sqm of storage space.
- EACS access / lockable
- Task lighting activated via motion detection.
- Mechanical ventilation
- Near to the Loading Dock.
- Sealed concrete floor or polished concrete.
- Shelving for storing boxes of merchandise Non-perishable items or items with a long shelf life i.e., shelf life of 3 months.
- General power to the storage space for 2 x DGPO

10.2.6 Storage - Visitor information Specific Requirements

- Approximately 5sqm of storage space.
- EACS access / lockable
- Task lighting activated via motion detection.
- Mechanical ventilation
- Sealed concrete floor or polished concrete.
- Near to the Loading Dock.
- Shelving for storing boxes of merchandise Non-perishable items.
- General power to the storage space for 2 x DGPO

10.3 Conservation Room

10.3.1 Conservation Room Functional Requirements

- Process incoming and outgoing museum exhibit items; open boxes, containers, crates with museum exhibit artefacts for inspection and condition.

- Inspection of exhibit items for condition, infestation, or other conditions.
- Isolate or treat museum artefacts.
- Digitally record, assign an ID museum pieces for digital recording/archiving.
- Prepare exhibit items for display or package items for storage and archiving on site.
- Located adjacent to Exhibit storage.
- Double doors to accommodate large exhibit pieces.
- Accessed directly from the loading dock.

10.3.2 Conservation Room Specific Requirements

- Approximately 25sqm.
- Climate controlled room for humidity and temperature.
- Space to open boxes, crates, cases.
- Desk height space to closely inspect museum artefacts for condition, infestation, authenticity.
- Desk space adjoining wall space with photo backdrop to photograph/record museum pieces for digital recording.
- Space for museum piece treatment from infestation e.g., freezer.
- 1 x workstation with large scanner and small laser printer (6 x GPOs)
- 4 x DGPOs for other conservation equipment (freezer or lighting).
- Dimmable task lighting.
- Space to repackage, log and prepare exhibit pieces for storage or display.
- Polished concrete floors or similar.
- Appropriate base coving to seal for pest control.
- Slab to slab walls to facilitate climate-controlled space.
- Appropriate fire suppression system as to not ruin the collection if fire occurs.



Natural Materials - Architecture

10.4 Workshop

10.4.1 Workshop Functional Requirements

- Dedicated storage for materials, products, spares, and tools to assist in the maintenance of the VEC.
- Assembly, minor building, and maintenance of VEC assets, furniture, fixtures, and equipment.
- Receipt and dispatch of materials, equipment, parts.

- Workshop and associated storage must be co-located, accessed directly from the loading dock.
- Space to conduct minor repairs, assembly and storage of tools used daily.
- Double doors.
- Painting.

10.4.2 Workshop Specific Requirements

- Approximately 15sqm.
- Mechanical ventilation to the workshop.
- Task lighting activated with movement sensor.
- Workshop space is to be accessible and lockable.
- Space to accommodate 3000mm long works bench.
- Task lighting to be allowed for, over workbench areas and to the space.
- Allow for 3 x double GPOs above Bench (1300mm above FFL approx.)
- Allow for 3 x double GPOs to room.
- Level smooth and sealed concrete flooring.
- Solid walls – blockwork or similar.
- EACS access control to the workshop.
- Kickplates to doors and up to 1m high on walls within the workshop.

10.5 Waste Room

10.5.1 Waste Room Functional Requirements

- Consolidation of waste from the outdoor areas, indoor areas, Café, common spaces, museums, and office spaces for the VEC precinct.
- Separation of waste streams into Organic, Recycled (co-mingled), General Waste, Cardboard, Soft Plastics.
- Washing bins.
- Collection of crates and pallets for collection.
- Weighing of waste.

10.5.2 Waste Room Specific Requirements

- Approximately 20sqm single dedicated waste management room to be provided, near the loading dock.
- Bin wash station bunded, drained with Hot and cold water.
- Impervious wall and floor finishes, coved at the wall floor junction.
- Floors falled to drainage connected to floor drain.
- Doors either double doors (lockable) or a roller shutter directly accessible from the exterior of the loading dock area for ease of access (must be able to vermin proof the room)
- Waste rooms to be mechanically ventilated.
- Waterproof GPO 10A power to be provided.
- Signage to doors identifying the waste room.
- Additional 15A power provided to enable a cardboard compactor or other equipment to be provided if required.
- Task lighting movement sensor operated.
- Allow for security-controlled access via EACs, CCTV external to the waste room.

10.6 Cleaning Room

10.6.1 Cleaning Room Functional Requirements

- Storage of and mixing cleaning products.
- Storage of consumable stock (toilet paper, hand towels, air freshener, soap).
- Storage of spare parts (dispensers, mop heads).
- Staff coordination and management.
- Two-way radio distribution, storage, and recharging.
- Storage of cleaning signs (slippery when wet, closed for cleaning).
- Storage of cleaning equipment (scrubber, vacuums, brooms, mops, buckets, umbrella cover stands).
- Storage of cleaning trolley.
- To be collocated with the VEC amenities

10.6.2 Cleaning Room Specific Requirements

- Approximately 15sqm single room space.
- Provision for a cleaning room space for cleaning coordination, materials and chemicals, and storage of cleaning equipment for the VEC.
- Allow for solid lockable double door access into the cleaning room with steel kick plates.
- Provision of space for at least 2 x par levels of consumables to ensure amenity stocks can be replenished immediately e.g., toilet rolls, hand towels, soap, bin liners, air freshener for every dispenser x 2.
- Provision of a separate wet area with bunded and sealed non-porous covered floor with floor drain, for mixing of chemicals and cleaning equipment.
 - Allow for 1 x cleaners sink with hot and cold water.
 - Allow for additional hot and cold-water point and associated power for a commercial grade washing machine and dryer.
 - Allow for space for racking or storage cupboards for dirty and clean rags, bulk chemicals, mop heads.
- Allow for wall space away from the wet area to hang 2 x commercial grade backpack vacuums.
- Allow or floor space for 1 medium sized burnisher and 1 small walk behind scrubber
- Allow for floor space for 1 x cleaners carts (example: Rubbermaid High-Capacity Cleaning Cart Model 9T72).
- Allow for GPOs for charging of large battery-operated equipment/vehicles.
- Allow for space for coordination of up to 4 x staff standing, wall space for posting cleaning duties white boards for duty rosters, work orders, safety information and special notices.
- Allow for space for 2 x 4 drawer filing cabinets, charging station for 4 x two-way radios, and sign in/out.
- Mechanical ventilation in all areas of the cleaning rooms.
- Task lighting activated by a movement sensor.

10.7 Areas for Additional Studies – BOH Areas

The following are identified as requiring further detailed study and analysis during the concept design process.

- Climate Control specifications for conservation room and museum exhibit space.

- Plant room areas will need to be determined based on detailed systems design, i.e., HVAC systems etc.



Three Blue Ducks Dining Melbourne



Mosman George Visitor Centre



Shade Structure



Native Landscape Planting

11 Exhibition Areas

The exhibition areas consist of an exhibition space that incorporates an integrated Country Music Hall of Fame, Guitar Museum, Wax Museum, Music Photo Gallery, and separate exhibition spaces that accommodates flexible Regional and Indigenous Exhibition Space.

This section describes the physical and functional parameters required for the exhibition spaces, it does not describe curatorial or experiential theming. This would be required during the concept phase.

The museum areas will comprise two thirds fixed space and one third flexible space to accommodate temporary or travelling exhibitions. These spaces can be operated independently or can be interconnected to form a large single experience.

The Museum spaces require separate controlled entry from the front of house and Visitor Information area with entry to the museum requiring an admission fee. These will be accessed from the main atrium space.

The Exhibition spaces are to be treated as separate spaces with respite and transition space between each exhibition space to promote increased dwell time.

Exhibition spaces must meet the needs of both visitors and curators.

Visitor Information will facilitate museum admission sales and entry to the exhibition spaces. The Regional and Indigenous exhibition spaces are free access areas.

The Key Exhibition Themes / Areas consist of:

- Country Music Hall of Fame
- Guitar Museum
- Wax Museum
- Music Photo Gallery
- Regional Exhibition Space
- Indigenous Exhibition Space
- Flexible travelling exhibitions

11.1 Museum Exhibit Spaces

11.1.1 Museum Exhibit Functional Requirements.

- Public viewing of country music exhibits and artefacts.
- Accessible exhibit spaces.
- Flexible layout to accommodate various types of exhibits and installations.
- Divided into distinct zones with clear theme, activation, or topic.
- Adequate wall space to display exhibit pieces.
- Adjustable /track lighting to ensure appropriate lighting to highlight specific exhibits.
- High quality audio system for playing of country music / soundscape. Able to be zoned for specific exhibitions and changing themes.
- Minimal natural light to protect sensitive exhibit pieces and highlight exhibits through theatre and exhibit lighting.
- Climate controlled for exhibit preservation and protection.
- High ceilings to display large format exhibits and/or exhibit sets 3500mm-5000mm height.
- Flexible mounting and hanging systems and ceiling structures (Trussing and I-beams) to accommodate load bearing exhibits that may be hung for long periods of time.
- Digital display technology (e.g., screens and projectors or other new technology) should be integrated for interactive exhibits.
- Clear signage and intuitive wayfinding through the exhibition spaces.
- Security (CCTV) and alarms to protect the exhibits.
- Appropriate and adequate fire suppression systems to protect the collection.
- Soundproof and acoustic measures to minimise noise from adjacent spaces.
- Robust IT infrastructure for interactive exhibits, Wi-Fi, and audio-visual presentations.

11.1.2 Exhibition Space Specific Requirements

- LED or low-heat lighting sources with adjustable intensity and colour temperature.
- Power and mounting for museum and gallery lighting spotlights.
- Climate control systems to maintain temperature and humidity for collection preservation.
- High ceilings 3500mm to 5000mm high to accommodate large and small and hanging pieces.
- UV-filtering film to windows and glazing to protect museum pieces, art, and exhibition items.

- Each light fitting is to have individual control for adjustability and configurability.
- Lighting control panel to be in a secure location with buttons to provide basic functionality.
- Tablet control with simple user interface is required for more complex control and adjacent of the lighting.
- Sensors may be utilised for afterhours control of lighting outside of event times.
- The system and luminaires should be capable of a smooth fade and transition.
- Floor boxes with 10A GPO and data throughout the exhibition spaces flush to the floor to allow pedestrian and equipment trafficking.
- Wall mounted 10A GPOS at differing heights to suit variable exhibition displays.
- Ceiling mounted 10A GPOS and 15A GPO to accommodate ceiling mounted exhibits as well as mounted chain motors to assist with elevating exhibits into place.
- Polished and sealed concrete floors throughout the exhibit areas to allow ease of movement of exhibit pieces with motorise equipment as well as ease of cleaning and maintenance.
- Open ceiling painted black.

11.2 Areas for Additional Studies – Exhibition Areas

The following are identified as requiring further detailed study and analysis during the concept design process.

- Museum/Art Gallery audio visual engineering specifications and equipment to suit this type of museum application.
- Control room or wall mounted panels, tablet control systems for both lighting and sound.
- Museum curatorial industry consultation for further detail in exhibition specifications not addressed in this brief.
- Appropriate climate control systems for preservation of artefacts, museum, and art pieces.
- Development of curatorial and experiential themes and narrative for the exhibition.



Cobb & Co Museum – Toowoomba WEB



Indoor / Outdoor Transition

12 Management and Administration Offices

The Management and Administration offices consist of the back of house office areas that provide permanent workspace, utility rooms, meeting room, breakroom, and amenities for the VEC staff, volunteers, and third-party contractors.

The offices are to be located immediately adjacent to Visitor Information area of the facility with a separate entry from the information area and areas out of view of the public.

The offices are open plan and include workstations supported by appropriate IT, power, data, office lighting, and systems to control manage, monitor, and quickly respond to the VEC, exhibition spaces and precinct.

The BOH Areas consist of:

- VEC Office
- Meeting room
- Utility room
- IT room
- Amenities – Staff
- Breakroom
- Storage

12.1 Principles of Management and Administration Offices

The key principles of the Management Offices consist of the following:

- Office spaces will be purpose built to manage the VEC and its public domain.
- The VEC office will be open plan for flexibility.
- The Management offices staff and volunteers share a common breakroom, amenities.
- The VEC Management and Administration office are for operational site-based resources to manage and coordinate the information operations, museum operations and outdoor activations.
- VEC Management are responsible for the promotion, booking/programming/hiring of the museum and amphitheatre for event and functions.
- VEC Management and Administration, promote, book, program, and curate the museum regional and First Nations exhibitions.
- TRC Services team service, maintain, and provide support to events in the VEC and Amphitheatre to include cleaning, security, landscape, and general preventative maintenance.
- Provides Emergency Management of the VEC and associated public domain.

12.2 VEC Office

12.2.1 VEC Office Requirements

- Contemporary open plan office accommodation for up to 6 people to accommodate Management administration, and third-party café hot desk and 2 hot desk workstations to accommodate event/festival/entertainment staff that come in to run specific events.
- Office space and services should, to the best possible standard, be future proofed (e.g., by allowing for additional workstations, workspace, or equipment connection)
- The Office will be designed to provide for flexibility to scale up for events or other museum/exhibition activities.
- Readily and easily accessible for staff and volunteers.
- One way viewing from the office space to the public foyer of the Visitor Information area to monitor crowd flow and service requirement.
- Provision for a utility space/room for file storage and administrative equipment including photocopiers, and office supplies and waste area (secure document waste).

12.2.2 Meeting Room

- Meeting room for up to 12 people, acoustically treated for on-site meetings, and video internet meetings with clients, Council headquarters, and other stakeholders.
- Wall mounted large screen for video conferencing and presentations.
- The meeting room is to be able to be accessed directly from the central atrium area as well as the offices to enable this space to be utilised as a green room when events or concerts are being hosted.

12.2.3 Utility Room

- Provision for a utility space/room for file storage and administrative equipment including photocopiers, and office supplies and waste area (secure document waste).
- Cupboard space above counter for storage of materials and administrative equipment

- Working counter with cupboard space undercounter for working and assembling documents and other administrative tasks.

12.2.4 IT Room

- Lockable room with EACS access requirements
- Space for Server Rack x 1 to store all IT administrative servers, security CCTV camera and control servers.
- Space for master house (Visitor Information, Exhibition spaces, café, and general outdoor sound and lighting controls.
- Power – to be specified by IT, Security, Audio, Lighting engineers.

12.2.5 Breakroom

- Room and facilities for staff breaks, dining, lounging.
- Food & beverage preparation; heating of food, and food storage.
- Kitchen ware washing crockery, cutlery, glassware.
- Kitchen equipment storage: crockery cutlery, glassware.
- Storage of consumables.

12.2.6 Staff Amenities

- Change room, toilets separate / male and female will be provided as per the BCA / NCC requirements.
- Allow for general waste bins to each bathroom area.
- Allow for vanities with hot and cold running water / benches and grooming areas to bathroom areas.

12.2.7 Storage

- Lockable room within the office area for storage of consumables, office supplies, additional office equipment; whiteboards, chairs.

12.3 VEC Management and Administrative Office Specific Requirements

12.3.1 Office Space and Workstations

- Standard office lux lighting
- Acoustically treated to ensure office sound does not bleed into public space.
- Natural light with tinted windows and window treatments
- Each workstation and hot desk to include at a minimum:
 - Above desk
 - 2 x 10A GPO
 - 1 x USB-A
 - 1 x USB-C
 - 1 x wireless charger
 - Below Desk
 - 4 x 10A GPO
 - 1 x RJ45
- General 10A GPO along the walls for cleaners' equipment
- Flooring – office style carpet tile

- Access control EACS entry.

12.3.2 Meeting room

- Ceiling and table mounted microphone and speakers.
- Meeting room table
 - Table Box
 - 4 x 10A GPO
 - 2 x USB-A
 - 2 x USB-C
 - Compartment for data cable reticulation
 - Umbilical
 - Floor grommet
 - Wall Mounted
 - Data for Video conferencing
 - 2 x 10A GPO

12.3.3 Utility Room

- Power
 - 2 x 10A DGPOs above counter
 - 2 x 10A GPO for photocopier
 - Data port for photocopier
- Lighting – office lux lighting
- Flooring – office style carpet tile.
- 1 x 10A GPO just above the floor and accessible for cleaners' equipment

12.3.4 Breakroom

- Allow for a kitchenette, and dining facilities equipped with:
 - Sink, with hot and cold water and zip type / instantaneous water boiler,
 - Under bench commercial grade dishwasher,
 - Bean to cup or pod type coffee machine
 - Kitchen bench for food preparation with sandwich presses and toasters.
 - Appropriate extraction over food preparation area.
 - Overhead and under bench storage cupboards, lockable.
 - Cabinetry provided for microwave for food reheating.
 - Single door 800ltr upright fridge.
- GPOs provided to benches for food prep equipment (10A and 15A)
- Power for zip tap 10A.
- Power for under bench dishwasher 20A
- Multiple 10A GPOs and USB charging ports dispersed around the breakroom for smart phone and equipment charging.
- Wall space and GPO for wall mounted television with live network broadcast.
- Provision of space for dining tables, chairs, benches, and lounge space to cater to the number of staff and volunteers approximately 6 people at any one time.
- Allow for waste bins for up to 5 waste streams.

12.3.5 Amenities

- Provision of above bench double 10A GPOs to grooming station and vanities for grooming equipment.

- Allow for a cleaner's tap to each bathroom area.
- Allow for 15A hand driers as well as hand towel dispenser.
- Allow for Accessible staff toilet with shower.
- 1 x 10a GPO per bathroom for cleaners' equipment.
- Provision of cupboard or storage within the vanity or benches for the storage of minor consumables.
- Jumbo roll toilet rolls dispensers.
- Foam hand soap dispensers
- Integrated waste bins 60ltr capacity each.
- Toilet stalls and walls to have anti-graffiti application.

13 Quantity Surveyor Costing

The following information outlines the costing for the planning and development of a VEC and Museum space with associated enabling works, landscape treatments etc. The table below is a summary of costings, full costing information is available in appendix B.

The Quantity Surveyor opinion of probable 2023 cost for the building landscape and fit out of the new VEC, museums and landscape is \$31,890,000 excluding GST. This includes:

- External works
- Visitor experience centre and museums
- External services
- Professional and authority fees
- Design contingency

The total rate per sqm based on the area of 2,623sqm is \$12,158/sqm.

The ongoing cost of maintenance is approximately \$293K/annum excluding GST calculated based on 1% of estimated capital cost of \$29.30M.

Please refer to Appendix A – Northcroft QS Report for a detailed breakdown of costs.

14 Qualitative Assessment / Fitness for purpose

14.1 Strengths / Weaknesses / Opportunities / Threats (SWOT)

The SWOT below qualitatively assess the proposed VEC and Museums in the context of a purpose building that integrates with existing Council sporting, tourism, and entertainment assets.

Table X SWOT – Purpose Built Facility

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit for purpose facility tailored to providing an engaging visitor experience. • Prominent location on the New England Highway • New pedestrian and cycleway connection along the Highway. • Fit for purpose parking accommodating Parking for Coaches, Articulated RV, • Electric Vehicle Charging station. • General vehicle parking • Creating flexible exhibition spaces • Located adjacent to the AELEC and TRECC and Regional Sporting Complex, helps link these key facilities. • Visible from the Highway. • 2 entries (one North and one South) • Safe opportunity for photographs with the Big Golden Guitar, provided in a contextual setting. • Separation of front of house from back of house operations. • Efficient operating model through integration of museums and VEC. • Creating a platform to showcase the region. • Café with kitchen that can accommodate small functions within the museum i.e., additional revenue stream. • Adjacent to 2 new hotel concepts for a captured audience. • Ability to host visiting exhibitions from around the world with purpose built back of house and exhibition space. • Sustainably constructed i.e., 5-star Green Star or better • Amphitheatre to attract and use as a venue for the Music festival, weekends, and holidays to drive revenue (F&B, museum visits) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding to enable off-site storage requirement for excess museum collection (conditioned space will be required) • 6km south of the CBD • Power station view corridor opposite the site • Future infill residential development will reduce the current rural setting of the site. • AMPOL Petrol Station attached at the South end limiting views into the precinct. • There is a reliance on a third-party developer realising the potential of the broader tourism precinct. • Sufficient funding available to develop the VEC and Museum redevelopment
Opportunities	Threats

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private wealth donation or sponsorship funding to build the VEC. • Access to apply for State and Federal Grant funding. • Unique architectural design as an attractor • Leveraging Tamworth’s Sister city relationships to facilitate global or on loan touring country music exhibitions (e.g., Nashville) • Provides a facility and landscape that supports an annual activation program. • Divestment of existing facilities to help fund the new VEC and museums. • The VEC and Museum(s) could be delivered by the broader tourism precinct developer as ‘works in kind’. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing recurrent operational budget requirement • Competition for Grant Funding • Potential lack of community support • Lack of continuity of marketing platforms throughout Council and Tamworth community i.e., Lost opportunities for additional visitation/ticket sales etc. • Cost to build optimal venue against funds available. • Ability to relocate the Big Golden Guitar. • Exhibition entry fees. The exhibition must be worthy of entrance fees. • Limitations and relevance of the museums over time as an attraction and revenue stream. • Deteriorating collection. • Finding a Third-party catering operator that will open 7 days per week. • There is a reliance on the adjacency of the larger tourism precinct development for the success of this precinct, noting that the Tourism precinct may be staged over several years.
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14.2 Recommendation - Qualitative statement

The initial benchmarking documentation provided in the HVH Stage 2 report along with the situation analysis report prepared by DMS clearly established the context and benefits that visitor information centres and museums can deliver for a region’s tourism.

The stage 3 situation analysis identified the limitations of the current visitor centre and museum experiences, particularly in relation to the facilities that they are located within. In their current state these do not provide a highly engaging visitor and museum experience, as they have had to make do with leased and repurposed facilities.

When aligning the current visitor centre and museums to the strategic regional tourism objectives of the council and the strategic direction of the museums. The development of a purpose-built Visitor Experience Centre and Country Music Museums is the most appropriate option. Retrofitting or repurposing existing assets has the potential to require significant capital investment and risks still providing a compromised service delivery and experience. This would be particularly evident in the existing visitor information centre, which is a leased premises, which is subject to a lease term.

As most visitors to visitor information services and museums are tourists, they are often travelling by car, RV or towing a caravan, car parking and ease of site access is an important factor in making the decision to visit. The current facilities identified in stage three do not provide adequate car parking or an engaging arrival experience.

The overall benefits and advantage of developing a purpose-built facility:

- a) Adequate car, bus/coach, caravan carparking and circulation can be provided, delivering greater opportunities for visitation of the museums and VEC by eliminating the current carparking barriers to visitation.
- b) Purpose built facilities, maximise the opportunity to deliver a highly engaging visitor experience, in lieu of retrofitting existing buildings that would remain a compromised solution.
- c) Co-location of the VEC and Museums within a larger Visitor and Tourism precinct, encourages increased dwell time and maximises the opportunities to provide strong linkages with existing council tourism, sporting, and entertainment assets.

- d) The opportunity exists to create a destinational experience through innovative architecture and a range of fixed and flexible curated museum experiences.
- e) Key relationships can be developed between the building interior and exterior, ensuring that a genuine connection with country is delivered.
- f) Contemporary visitor information services can be delivered through the delivery of flexible infrastructure, supported by sound systems, technology and omni channel marketing.
- g) Optimal storage and preservation of museum artefacts is provided through proposed build climate-controlled environments and infrastructure with appropriate fire protection systems.
- h) The iconic Golden Guitar Sculpture can be relocated to a more prominent location, acting as a marker for visitors to Tamworth.
- i) Flexible internal and external spaces, including a 200-300 seat amphitheatre lend themselves to activating the facility, enabling functions, events, and music performances to be hosted.
- j) Integrated and purpose-built services and infrastructure for events and activation reduce the cost for set up of event, through 'plug and play solutions.
- k) A high-quality integrated food and beverage café / restaurant with seamless indoor / outdoor dining opportunities, encourages dwell time, enhances the visitor experience offering, and support temporary event and concert activations.

15 Appendices

15.1 - VEC Indicative Equipment References

The following are references for minimum standard equipment that is to be used for the fit out and operation of the VEC.

item	Area / Zone of installation	Type of Equipment	Hyperlink / Product literature
01	Visitor Information	Interactive digital Map	Interactive Map Display
02	Commercial Kitchen	Under bench refrigeration	3 door under bench refrigeration
03 & 04		Under bench refrigeration & Over shelf	2 door under bench refrigeration , Over bench shelving
05		Upright Freezer	Upright Freezer
06 & 07		Cleaners sink and Taps set	Cleaners sink , Cleaners sink tap set
08		Hose reel	Hose & Hose reel
09		Shelf	Pots and Pans storage shelf
10 & 11		Sink bench and rinse arm	Stainless Steel Sink and bench , Spray / rinse arm for sink
12		Handwash station	Knee operated handwash station
13		Dishwasher	Dishwasher with outlet bench
14		Electric Oven	https://petraequipment.com.au/rational-icc101-icombi-classic-10-tray-electric-combi-oven , 10 Tray Combi Oven
15		Cook top	4 element electric cooktop
16		Electric Griddle	Electric Griddle
17		Fryer	Double basket electric fryer
18		Café outdoor seating	Heaters
19	Cafe	Coffee Machine	Commercial 3 Group Coffee Machine
20		Coffee Grinders	Coffee Grinder
21		Coffee Press	Automatic coffee tamper / press
22		Auto milk dispenser	Juggler automatic milk dispenser

23		Open front display fridge	Grab n Go display fridges
24		Upright drinks display fridge	Upright drinks display fridge
25		Sandwich Toaster	Sandwich press
26		Food Display	Glass Food Displays
27		Microwave	High Speed Microwave
28		Water station	Waterstation
29		Menu boards	digital menu board screens
30		Dishwasher	Dishwasher
31	Cleaners store	Floor polisher	Walk behind Floor Burnisher
32		Floor scrubber	Walk Behind Floor Scrubber

– Quantity Surveyor Costing Information



Construction Consultants

HVH Group Pty Ltd

Tamworth Regional Tourism Precinct Strategy & Business Case
Stage 4 – Visitor Experience Centre Fit Out
Cost Plan Report

1st December 2023

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Stage 4 New Visitor Experience Centre and Visitor Information Centre
Cost Plan Report



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Stage 4 New Visitor Experience Centre and Visitor Information Centre
Cost Plan Report



1.0 Introduction

This report has been prepared in response to HVH Group's request for the provision of high level cost plan of a new Tamworth Visitor Experience Centre and Visitor Information Centre.

This costing exercise is used for a financial and quantitative comparison against ongoing maintenance expenses and capital work costs associated with the area's existing visitor information centre and museums.

Should any further information regarding this report be required, please do not hesitate to contact:

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Stage 4 New Visitor Experience Centre and Visitor Information Centre
Cost Plan Report



2.0 Summary of Estimated Costs

2.1 Construction Works

The following table outlines an opinion of probable costs (GST exclusive) based on the information provided to us at the time of estimate preparation. Further detailed breakdown of these costs may be found in Appendix A to this report.

No.	Description	Total (\$)
1	EXTERNAL WORKS – CARPARK, AMPHITHEATRE, GOLDEN GUITAR AND LANDSCAPING	3,039,000
2	VISITOR EXPERIENCE CENTRE – VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE AND MUSEUMS	23,371,000
3	EXTERNAL SERVICES – POWER, SEWER, WATER AND COMMUNICATION	420,000
4	PROFESSIONAL/AUTHORITY FEES	2,160,000
5	CONTINGENCY	2,900,000
	TOTAL FORECAST COSTS (Excl GST)	31,890,000

The total cost has been estimated at \$31,890,000 (GST exclusive) including contingency.

The total rate per m² based on the area of 2,623 m² is **\$12,158/m²**.

2.2 Maintenance Cost

The estimated annual maintenance cost of the building will be \$293,000 (GST exclusive).

The above maintenance cost is calculated based on 1.00% of the estimated capital cost of \$29.30M.

Stage 4 New Visitor Experience Centre and Visitor Information Centre
Cost Plan Report



3.0 Description of Project

Tamworth Regional Council has identified a greenfield site at the Tamworth Regional Sporting Complex for the construction of a new Visitor Experience and Information Centre. The new centre will comprise a visitor information centre, museums, retail, café and associated carpark, amphitheatre, landscaping and public domain.

The purpose-built centre will integrate the current Country Music Hall of Fame, Wax Museum, Guitar Museum, Guitar Photo Gallery and Visitor Information Centre into one location.

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Stage 4 New Visitor Experience Centre and Visitor Information Centre
Cost Plan Report



4.0 Scope of Estimate

This estimate is for all building related works including:

1. Site formation works
2. Excavation and substructure
3. Superstructure
4. General finishes, windows, doors and all architectural works
5. Sanitary fittings and fixtures
6. Hydraulic installation including plumbing and drainage
7. Electrical installation including power & light, data, AV, soundscape, security and telephone
8. Light fittings
9. Fire services
10. HVAC installation
11. Fixed and loose furniture, exhibition displays, showcases
12. Relocation of exhibits and artefacts
13. Equipment including electrical appliances, shop fittings
14. External works including stormwater drainage, external services, pavings and landscaping
15. Professional/Authority service fees
16. Contingency sum

The estimate is based on the following information:

Dwg No.	Title	Rev.
	Tamworth Regional Tourism Precinct Strategy & Business Case – Stage 4 Visitor Experience Centre Fitout	1

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Stage 4 New Visitor Experience Centre and Visitor Information Centre
Cost Plan Report



5.0 Limitations

The estimate excludes:

1. Defitting of current facilities
2. Land costs
3. Holding charges
4. Storage of excess exhibits and artefacts
5. Venue operating costs
6. Maintenance costs
7. Works outside site boundary
8. Accelerated program and out of hours work
9. Diversion of existing utilities or services
10. Infrastructure works on electrical reticulation, sewage treatment plant and connecting services along public roads
11. Finance and legal expenses
12. Revenue generated from the venue
13. Regulation changes
14. Escalation cost

The high-level estimates are based on limited information and CURRENT at November 2023.

Allowances for all cost elements are subject to further review should further information become available.

Several assumptions and exclusions have been made in establishing these cost estimates.

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Stage 4 New Visitor Experience Centre and Visitor Information Centre
Cost Plan Report



6.0 Appendix A

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Full Estimate Summary



Project: HVH Group Pty Ltd	Details: S24008_VEC_01
Building: Tamworth Regional Tourism Precinct	High Level Cost Estimate Stage 4 Visitor Experience Centre

Autocode	Trade Description	Quantity	Unit	Rate	Trade Total
1	EXTERNAL AREAS	2,623	m2	1,159	3,039,000
2	VISITOR EXPERIENCE CENTRE	2,623	m2	8,910	23,371,000
3	EXTERNAL SERVICES	2,623	m2	160	420,000
4	PROFESSIONAL/AUTHORITY FEES	2,623	m2	823	2,160,000
5	CONTINGENCY SUM	2,623	m2	1,106	2,900,000
	TOTAL ESTIMATED COST EXCL GST	2,623	m2	12,158	31,890,000

GFA: 2,623.00 m2

31,890,000

Estimate Details



Project: HVH Group Pty Ltd	Details: S24008_VFC_01
Building: Tamworth Regional Tourism Precinct	High Level Cost Estimate Stage 4 Visitor Experience Centre

Code	Trade Description	Quantity	Unit	Rate	Factor	Trade Total
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EXTERNAL AREAS

	The following high level estimated cost components are an opinion of probable costs as at November 2023		note			
	Prices include preliminaries and margin		note			
	External Works:					
	Carpark entry upgrade	1	item	50,000.00		50,000
	Reconfigure and upgrade existing carpark	6,700	m2	86.00		576,200
	Amphitheatre and stage, including AV and lighting support	500	m2	2,250.00		1,125,000
	Golden Guitar area, including relocation of existing guitar	50	m2	1,624.00		81,200
	Landscaping, parkland and public domain	3,000	m2	402.00		1,206,000
	R/O					600
	EXTERNAL AREAS					3,039,000

VISITOR EXPERIENCE CENTRE

	The following high level estimated cost components are an opinion of probable costs as at November 2023		note			
	Prices include preliminaries and margin		note			
	Public Indoor Areas:					
	Main entry/atrium	250	m2	4,070.00		1,017,500
	Visitor information	100	m2	3,450.00		345,000
	Public amenities including separate changing places and accessible toilet)	65	m2	6,003.00		390,195
	Retail space	55	m2	5,092.00		280,060
	Cafe	150	m2	5,721.00		858,150
	Back of House Areas:					
	Loading dock	80	m2	3,842.00		307,360
	Conservation room	25	m2	4,327.00		108,175
	Digital record	4	m2	5,088.00		20,352
	Exhibition storage	90	m2	4,070.00		366,300
	Visitor collateral storage	5	m2	4,438.00		22,190
	Retail storage	6	m2	3,708.00		22,248
	Commercial kitchen	40	m2	11,029.00		441,160
	Food and beverage cold storage	6	m2	5,088.00		30,528
	Food and beverage dry storage	10	m2	3,768.00		37,680
	Cleaners room	15	m2	4,643.00		69,645
	Audio visual control room	12	m2	9,776.00		117,312
	Waste room	20	m2	5,388.00		107,760
	Workshop	15	m2	5,118.00		76,770

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Estimate Details



Project: HVH Group Pty Ltd	Details: S24008_VEC_01
Building: Tamworth Regional Tourism Precinct	High Level Cost Estimate Stage 4 Visitor Experience Centre

Code	Trade Description	Quantity	Unit	Rate	Factor	Trade Total
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VISITOR EXPERIENCE CENTRE (Continued)

Exhibition Areas:						
	Exhibition space including relocation of exhibits from current locations	1,500	m2	11,782.00		17,673,000
Management Office:						
	VEC office	80	m2	7,009.00		560,720
	Staff amenities	40	m2	5,376.00		215,040
	Staff breakroom	20	m2	4,842.00		96,840
	Utility room	4	m2	3,588.00		14,352
	Meeting room	20	m2	6,409.00		128,180
	Communication/Data/Security	6	m2	7,476.00		44,856
	Storage	5	m2	3,838.00		19,190
	R/O					437

VISITOR EXPERIENCE CENTRE 23,371,000

EXTERNAL SERVICES

	Substation	1	item	250,000.00		250,000
	Sewer/Water headworks	1	item	150,000.00		150,000
	Communication lead in	1	item	20,000.00		20,000

EXTERNAL SERVICES 420,000

PROFESSIONAL/AUTHORITY FEES

	Professional/Authority fees	27,000,000	item	0.08		2,160,000
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PROFESSIONAL/AUTHORITY FEES 2,160,000

CONTINGENCY SUM

	Contingency sum	29,000,000	item	0.10		2,900,000
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CONTINGENCY SUM 2,900,000

15.2– Roadmap to success.

15.1 Road Map – VEC & Museum Development

This section is standalone and outlines the key activities that need to be planned and delivered to move the delivery of the VEC and new museums forward. These are key recommendations that will facilitate TRC in the delivery of their vision for the VEC and greater visitor precinct.

15.1.1 Assessment of Benchmarking

A visitor information and experience centre benchmarking exercise and case studies have been developed by HVH and DMS. These comprise a range of visitor facilities and museums. Local and global, representing a range of comparable facilities to benchmark against. The scale of each development, costing and key learnings have been identified for these.

Recommendation: It is recommended that these benchmarks are reviewed by Council as a reference point to align expectations, budget requirements and extent of development that TRC is willing to undertake. The learnings from the benchmarks can be used as critical success factors to assess the success of the Tamworth Visitor Experience Centre and Museums.

15.1.2 The Reference Scheme – VEC Design

A potential developer has formulated an initial concept design for the larger visitor precinct, this includes an indicative concept for the proposed Visitor Experience Centre. This concept is a high-level interpretation of the requirements for the facility and has not been informed by a detailed brief, research, or a set of detailed requirements.

Recommendation: It is recommended to consider the initial concept design primarily as a reference scheme, in conjunction with the HVH Benchmarking exercise, and not as a physical representation of the potential facility or its components

The HVH Group operational and functional performance brief should serve as the principal guide for shaping the design and functional specifications for the development of a new VEC and museum experience.

15.1.3 Costing of the Reference Scheme

The developer responsible for the VEC reference scheme has provided an initial lump sum budget estimate for the delivery of the VEC and Museum building. Their scope of works focuses on delivering a cold shell, which pertains to the building's exterior structure. Fit out cost estimates are not included. However, it is uncertain the inclusions or the extent of this budget estimate, particularly if it includes elements like the car park or landscaping or public domain development.

Recommendation: To establish a better understanding of the cost implications, it is advisable to obtain a comprehensive cost estimate from an independent Quantity Surveyor. This estimate should include all aspects of the reference scheme's planning, design, and construction, incorporating additional costs, underlying assumptions, and exclusions.

15.1.4 Integrated development

Councils current approach to the delivery of the VEC and museums is to potentially deliver a base building cold shell, with the fit out to be designed and delivered independently. The success of the new VEC and Museums is reliant on creating a seamless visitor experience and journey, from the arrival to the site, transitioning through the landscape and entering the building to the VEC and museums. An integrated fit out as part of the base building would maximise the opportunity to get this right, an independent fit out to the base building often leads to coordination issues for services, potential reworking of spaces and services that would add cost to the project. An integrated development puts the onus on the contractor to coordinate works and has the potential to enable an expedited delivery of the project.

Recommendation: it is recommended that the VEC and museums are designed and delivered with an integrated VEC and Museum Fit out for the reasons identified above.

15.1.5 Artefact / Archive Inventory

TRC is in the process of transitioning the current museum artefact collection from volunteer ownership to council ownership and administration.

Recommendation: It is recommended that this process is expedited and that a complete inventory of artefacts is developed / established to allow the planning of the new museums.

15.1.6 Multi-disciplinary Design Team / Experienced Contractor

Council has approached market through an Expression of Interest (EOI) to seek interested parties that may be interested in the design and development of the visitor precinct. To enable Council to realise its vision for the VEC and Museums the detail brief (this document) should be used to inform any consultancy team re the minimum requirements for the design and documentation of the VEC and Museums.

Equally important is the construction contractors proven experience in the delivery of similar visitor experience related facilities and museums.

Recommendation: it is recommended that the Current EOI process is closed, and suitable proponents are informed of future opportunities for the design and documentation of the VEC and Museums.

It is recommended that design and documentation consultancy of the VEC and Museums is Architecturally led, with the explicit requirement in any procurement documentation for the engagement of interior design, specialist lighting, audio visual, and museum exhibition designer / interpretative consultants, Landscape architect, indigenous designer / connection with country expert to be specified as mandatory requirements. The relevant experience of the team, individuals, and proven examples of their work in interactive, highly engaging visitor experience facilities and museum development is to be clearly demonstrated.

The proven capabilities and experience of the consultancy team should be a key assessment criterion when assessing procurement documentation for the preferred consultant team.

It is also recommended that an experienced building contractor with subcontractors is engaged to deliver the VEC and Museums. Part of the assessment criteria for selecting the successful contractor

must relate to the proven experience in museum delivery and fit out of visitor related and interpretative facilities.

15.1.7 Spatial requirements verification.

The stage 4 documentation – Visitor Experience Centre Fit out Brief includes recommended spatial allocations for the components or functional areas that make up the VEC and museum spaces. These have been based on the existing benchmarks and anticipated future needs of the VEC and Museums. These areas are indicative for briefing purposes and to obtain a costing for the fit out and development of the facility.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the first exercise that the consultant design team are required to do is to verify and test the spatial requirements prior to commencing detailed design. This should be assessed based on a bare minimum product requirement, and then an optimal solution that accommodates future growth of the facility.

15.1.8 Connection with Country

A key object of the new VEC and museums facility to include a high level of inclusion and engagement with First Nations people and a strong 'Connection to Country'. To achieve this best requires Aboriginal expertise to co-lead the design process, providing a Country Centred approach to design. To best guide this process, it is recommended that the NSW Government - Connecting with Country Framework is adopted as a means of ensuring that a genuine connection with country is achieved in the design and development of the new VEC and Museums.

<https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/projects/designing-with-country>

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Consultant Design Brief explicitly requires the consultant team to actively demonstrate and engage with the Aboriginal community utilising the NSW Government Connecting with Country Framework

15.1.9 Project Delivery Methodology

There are several delivery methodologies for the planning, development, and construction of the new VEC and Museums. These should be explored by Council to determine the most appropriate approach that will deliver upon Council expectations.

Works in Kind

The VEC could be delivered by the Developer of the wider tourism precinct as 'works in kind' under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, Councils have the power to require development contributions toward the cost of providing services and facilities to meet the demand created by development.

In the case of the VEC this could include the developer of the wider tourism precinct constructing the VEC in lieu of making a monetary contribution.

This could also be limited to the developer providing trunk infrastructure to the site or enabling works and the remainder of the VEC delivery to be managed by Council from the Development Contributions.

This has the potential to expediate delivery of the VEC and Museums as this capitalises on the already established contractor delivering the wider tourism precinct.

Full Documentation / Construct only Delivery

This would involve the Council managing the design and documentation of the VEC and museums against an agreed brief and scope of work. Council would need to procure a multidisciplinary design team to design and document the project, arrange for independent costing for the design.

Then Council would be required to procure the services of a Building Contractor with the appropriate experience to deliver the Base building VEC and Museums with an integrated fit out. This approach would ensure that Council has full control over it required scope of works and costs.

Design and Construct

A detail brief would be prepared that encompasses Councils requirements for the VEC and Museums, this would be developed with Councils procured consultant team to a particular point, then Council could approach market for a suitable Design and Construct Contractor to finalise the design and construct the project.

This has the advantage of the construction contractor being able to use their trade partner expertise in finalising the design and meeting councils' requirements, potentially expediting the delivery of the facility, however, would require considerable resources from Council to input into the design and ensure that their contracted requirements are delivered to expectation.

Recommendation: it is recommended that council investigates the most appropriate delivery model for the VEC and Museums, this should be considered against a set of key criteria, to be established by Council to weight the opportunities and risks of each delivery method against their criteria, including but not limited to timing for delivery; ability to control cost; experience of the delivery team etc.

15.1.10 Temporary Exhibition Planning and Activation.

The success of the museums, particularly the flexible exhibition museum space, multifunctional atrium spaces and the amphitheatre are reliant on a curated program of exhibitions, events, and activations. The exhibitions and activations have the potential to drive visitation to the museum and attendance at events.

Recommendation: it is recommended that an annual exhibition and events /activation calendar is established, and operational funding is allocated to support hosting temporary or travelling exhibitions, events, and activations.



CAPITAL OF COUNTRY TOURISM PRECINCT

STAGES 1, 2 & 3

OCTOBER 2023

This project is proudly funded by
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Acknowledgment of Country



We acknowledge the Kamilaroi/Gomeroi peoples of the Kamilaroi Nation, the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which Tamworth region is located. We recognise their continuing and inherent connection to Country and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

This report was prepared by:

Destination Marketing Store & HVH Group



Document Set ID: 2186467
Version: 1, Version Date: 30/05/2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report contains stages 1, 2 and 3 of the Tamworth Regional Council (TRC) Capital of Country Tourism Precinct project:

- Stage One – Situation Analysis (DMS)
- Stage Two – Benchmark Visitor Information Centres (HVH Group)
- Stage Three – Precinct Analysis (HVH Group)

The most significant findings from across all three stages are summarised below:

1. The VEC should reinforce Tamworth's positioning as the Capital of Country Australia. A key to success will be to create more than just a museum experience and/or visitor information centre. The precinct should showcase the region's thriving agricultural industry, heritage, arts, sports, and cultural sectors, as well as integrating more immersive and interactive experiences and performances. It should incorporate opportunities to acknowledge the inherent connection to country of the region's First Nations communities. In this way, the precinct will enable the successful delivery of a hub and spoke model for visitor servicing.
2. Integration and revitalisation of the three museums' offering is required to create an overarching narrative and compelling story that reaffirms Tamworth's rightful place as the home of country music in Australia.
3. Focus on the place, people, and systems. Enable opportunities for both interpersonal and virtual engagement with visitors and customers. This requires a detailed understanding of the customer journey for each target market segment as well as the needs of the 'back-end' (both systems and spaces) to facilitate a truly omnichannel approach to visitor servicing and enhance the overall customer experience.
4. The VEC should be 'uncluttered', feel uplifting and inspiring, and encourage curiosity. It should enable a more sensory experience, including through utilising new technology such as VR or AR. Achieving this balance will require careful (and potentially restrained) curation of permanent and temporary displays, reimagined interpretation as well as consideration of the functional needs and purpose of the facility, its design or appearance and its connectivity with the outdoor space and broader precinct, among other things.

The key insights set out below are drawn from each of the stages to provide a high-level summary of this report.

STAGE ONE - Key Insights:

1. It is essential that the VEC reflect the vibrancy and positioning of Capital of Country Australia in several ways:
 - Showcase the region's thriving agricultural industry, heritage, arts, sports, and cultural sectors, as well as integrating more immersive and interactive experiences and performances.
 - Acknowledge the inherent connection to country of the region's First Nations communities.
 - Design, fabric, and appearance of the building, including the way in which it relates to the surrounding landscape. This includes appropriate design of spaces to host events, exhibitions, and performances.
 - Retail offering and other opportunities to showcase local produce, producers, artists, and artisans. This could include catering.
 - Enable connectivity between the indoor and outdoor spaces of the precinct, including for events and performances as well as with other nearby precincts, including AELEC, TRECC and sporting facilities.
 - Achieve the right balance between the inspirational and functional enabling the successful delivery of a hub and spoke model.
2. Strengthen and facilitate opportunities for collaboration with visitor information outlets, across all Council-owned and managed assets as well as with surrounding LGAs to provide more reasons for visitors to stay longer, explore further and see more in the broader region.
3. Integration and revitalisation of the three museums' offering is required to create an overarching narrative and compelling story that reaffirms Tamworth's place as the home of country music in Australia.
 - Integrate the currently diffuse storylines relating to people (for example, country music stars) and country music.
 - Streamline and curate the collection to showcase the best of the collection. Ensure interpretation aligns with best practice and audience preferences and expectations. Provide opportunities for audiences who have a deeper interest in country music to explore further through access to online or digitised collections.
 - Create immersive and interactive experiences, shifting away from the current static and one-dimensional nature of the three separate collections – enable a more sensory experience, utilising new technology such as VR or AR.
 - Facilitate ease of access for bumping in and out temporary exhibits, performances, and events.

STAGE TWO - Key Insights:

1. Multiple funding sources should be investigated, Local, State and Federal Governments
2. Community fundraising and the establishment of a Foundation be a valuable way of raising initial funds and then providing long term operation support for a community asset.
3. Clustering functions or interrelated facilities is beneficial in providing a critical mass of activity, integration into broader precincts is beneficial to visitation.
4. Facilities are resourced with paid professional visitor experience staff, colocation of visitor information and a gallery, museum or retail maximises staffing efficiencies.
5. Retail should showcase regional products and there is scope to increase this opportunity.
6. Signature building design needs to account for exhibition and usable wall space.
7. Adequate covered loading dock and storage facilities are important building functional components.
8. Incorporation of sustainability initiatives into the building fabric or the inclusion of photovoltaic cells, create a more efficient building and can reduce running costs.
9. Any food and beverage offering needs to be substantial to attract or retain visitors, therefore a commercial kitchen is essential to facilitate this.
10. Traditional visitor information counters are undesirable, space should be provided for visitors and visitor experience staff to engage.
11. Regular changeout of exhibitions or displays drives visitation and encourages repeat visitation.
12. Outdoor amenities are important, picnic areas, BBQs', and flexible outdoor performance spaces / amphitheatre areas.
13. Opportunities exist to embed education and flexible learning spaces within these facilities.
14. Clarity and ease of wayfinding and the arrival sequence is critically important in setting up the visitor for a positive and engaging experience.
15. Inadequate vehicle and coach parking is a barrier to visitation.

STAGE THREE - Key Insights:

1. Repurposed facilities, non-purpose-built facilities are challenging to adapt for visitor experience and museum purposes, they require significant compromise.
2. Themed architecture, i.e. the guitar shaped building adds nothing to an engaging visitor experience as this is only obvious from the air. This is not the typical way visitor experience the ACMHF.
3. To create a successful experience, key functions, and sequencing of the entire experience, to plan / curate way that a user experiences the facilities is required.
4. There is a requirement for appropriate lighting and soundscape to enhance the exhibitions and visitor experience, repurposed commercial lighting provides a poor experience.
5. The current museums are very linear and do not offer a variety or diversity of experience.
6. Audio visual presentations unless high quality detract from the overall experience.
7. Adequate operational funding is required for professionally trained and paid staff to manage the Visitor experience and museum experiences, supported by volunteers.
8. Volunteers play an important support role in imparting knowledge to visitors, however there is a requirement to ensure consistency in messaging, not just a means of conveying an individual's personal interests. There needs to be consistency in messaging.
9. Dedicated off site storage facilities are required to support museum facilities and operations.
10. Appropriate climate and temperature control systems are essential to ensure efficient operation and the longevity of the collection.
11. Adequate fire protection and separation within facilities is essential to ensure that the collection is protect from fire risk.
12. The inclusion of a quality food and beverage offering assists with dwell time and driving local visitation.
13. Clear wayfinding and clarity of the arrival sequence is important as this is a key part to the overall visitor experience.
14. Ease of car parking and pedestrian flow is an important factor in visitors attending a visitor centre or museum.
15. Facilities should be designed to be inclusive and equitable, bathrooms, access to the building etc.

16. A cluttered visitor centre / experience centre with ad hoc elements that have been added overtime detracts from the overall experience, not providing clarity or ease obtaining information.
17. A relationship with the indoor and outdoor environment is equally important in setting the scene for the visitor experience and anchoring the building to the landscape.

STAGE ONE

Situation Analysis prepared by:

Destination Marketing Store



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DESTINATION
MARKETING
STORE

CAPITAL OF COUNTRY TOURISM PRECINCT SITUATION ANALYSIS

October 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

The **Tamworth Regional Tourism Strategy & Business Case** is about setting the direction for Tamworth Regional Council (TRC) to guide the development of a new **regional visitor servicing model** that extends across the Tamworth, Gunnedah, Liverpool Plains and Walcha local government areas.

The central piece of this model is the development of **new purpose-built tourism infrastructure precinct**. Within the new tourism precinct will be a new **Visitor Experience Centre (VEC)** which will be the location of Tamworth's existing museum collection, reimagined and augmented with engaging exhibitions and immersive experiences.

The aim is to sustainably grow the region's visitor economy by establishing Tamworth as the "Capital of Country NSW", leveraging of its reputation as the Capital of Country Music and extensive agricultural and equine history, and creating a compelling visitor proposition that drives both longer stays and repeat visitation to the region. This ambition requires the retention and expansion of existing visitor segments, development of visitor segments, and development of new experiences and services.

The development is also aimed at celebrating the region's significant rural heritage that spreads across the Gunnedah, Walcha and Liverpool Plains Local Government Areas (LGA) and creates the opportunity for a wider visitor dispersal throughout the region.

The Tamworth Regional Tourism Strategy has been developed around eight guiding principles.

1. **Inclusive** of the whole region and all communities.
2. **Informed** - evidence-based.
3. **Showcasing** the destination's existing and emerging **strengths**.
4. **Customer-centric** - putting the visitor first.
5. **Future-focused and sustainable** - understanding a dynamic industry and the importance of protecting the destination's values and attributes.
6. **Collaborative** - across sectors and between industries and stakeholders and with surrounding LGAs.
7. Demonstrate **leadership** through effective implementation, partnerships and communication - including through alignment with NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 & Destination Country and Outback NSW Destination Management Plan (DMP) 2022 – 2030.
8. **Measurable** in terms of both deliverables and outcomes - in line with available resources while identifying opportunities to attract investment.

The **Desktop Review and Situation Analysis** is designed to inform the Tamworth Regional Tourism Strategy and Business Case by providing insights from which we can determine the most effective strategies to evolve and elevate the region as a destination of choice.

CURRENT VISITOR SERVICING ASSETS ACROSS THE TAMWORTH REGION & PARTNER LGA'S

Tamworth

As outlined in HVH Group's Precinct Analysis, the Tamworth VIC comprises of a visitor information centre, the Golden Guitar Café, National Guitar Museum, Country Music Wax Museum, and the Big Golden Guitar located to the front of the facility. Tamworth Regional Council operates the VIC and museums; however, it does not own the visitor information centre building.

The Australian Country Music Hall of Fame (ACMHF) originally housed the regional tourism and visitor information centre for Tamworth and operated as a coach station. However, the building was repurposed in 2016 to house the Australian Country Music Hall of Fame, incorporating the existing Walk a Country Mile exhibition.

TRC also has a number of Visitor Information Outlets (VIO):

- Nundle has a visitor information outlet that is moving location in the next 12 months to Nundle Library.
- Manilla has a visitor information outlet. However, there have been discussions to move this to the TRC customer service building.
- Barraba use to have a visitor information outlet. However, this is closed and now operates from the TRC customer service area.
- There have also been discussions to create another VIO in Moonbi at the Museum.

There are also three significant assets that should be considered in the context of the development of the new tourism precinct. The below three assets are situated on the adjoining parcels of land to the proposed development and attract large numbers of visitors to the Tamworth region:

- Australia Equine and Livestock Events Centre (AELEC) – a state-of-the-art facility that hosts more than 50 events each year, including the Tamworth Agricultural Show, Cattle events, Motorcycle Rallies, Rodeos and Corporate Events.
- Tamworth Regional Sporting Complex and sporting facilities – Tamworth's sporting facilities include an international level athletics track and field facility, a seven court indoor sporting venue, and premier turf fields and pitches. The sporting venues attract thousands of visitors to the region annually for events and competitions.
- Tamworth Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre (TRECC) – seating up to 4,800 in concert mode, 800 for a sit-down dinner or exhibition space with up to 100 booths. This venue hosts large scales events and includes dressing rooms and separate break-out rooms.

The Tamworth Regional Gallery and other museums will also play an important role in visitor servicing and will encourage visitors to explore the rest of the city and broader region.

Surrounding LGAs

Tamworth LGA is the centre of the North West NSW region. It borders a number of other LGAs including: Walcha, Uralla, Gwydir, Narrabri, Gunnedah, Liverpool Plains and Upper Hunter LGAs. However, this project specifically looks at the development of a new regional visitor servicing model that extends across the Tamworth, Gunnedah, Liverpool Plains and Walcha LGAs.

- Gunnedah has a VIC that services their region. It is operated by Council staff 7 days a week and includes an art gallery and souvenir shop.
Website: <https://www.visitgunnedah.com.au/>
- Located in Quirindi, Liverpool Plains VIC offers some historical displays to learn about the agriculture of the region. It is also open 7 days a week and offers the opportunity to purchase local gifts and souvenirs.
Website: <https://www.facebook.com/visitoliverpoolplains/>
- Also operating 7 days a week, the Walcha VIC offers free loan-a-bikes for visitors to explore the town.
Website: <https://walchansw.com.au/>

First Nations Offerings

There are several First Nations sites of significance across the broader region. Acknowledging the inherent connection to Country of the Kamilaroi/ Gomeroi peoples of the Kamilaroi Nation will be critical piece in visitor servicing and will encourage greater regional dispersal.

All of the above assets have the potential to link in with the VEC to reinforce Tamworth as the Capital of Country Australia. Creating more than just a museum experience and showcasing the region's thriving agricultural industry, equine, heritage, arts and cultural sectors, as well as integrating significant experiences, will enable the successful delivery of a hub and spoke model for visitor servicing.

THE CURRENT MUSEUM OFFERING

The Tamworth region offers a wide range of arts and cultural attractions, including multiple museums that showcase the regions rich history in equine, agriculture and country music. The museums are run both professionally and by volunteers and tell the stories of the people, places and events that have been instrumental in shaping the region.

The [Tamworth Regional Museums Engagement Strategy 2019-2024](#) outlines a framework for the support of ten public museum and social history collections located in the Tamworth Regional Council catchment area. Across the ten collections, each museum model is slightly different, with different organisational structures ranging from Section 355 Committees through to independent, incorporated bodies and some co-locating with Visitor Information Services, as demonstrated below:

1. Tamworth Powerstation Museum (Council Owned)
2. Australian Country Music Collections (Council Owned)
3. Nandewar Historical Society (Incorporated Body)
4. Manilla Heritage Museum (Incorporated Body, co-located with a Visitor Information Outlet)
5. Rocks, Gems, Minerals and Fossil Collections (Council Owned, co-located with a Visitor Information Outlet)
6. Moonbi Museum (Council Owned)
7. Tamworth Regional Film and Sound Archive (Council Owned)
8. Tamworth Historical Society (Incorporated Body)
9. Tamworth Regional Astronomy Club (Incorporated Body)
10. Tamworth and District Family History Group (Incorporated Body)

The quality of the visitor experience and interpretation of these museums varies significantly. A revitalisation of the region's museum offering is required to create an overarching narrative that links the existing museums to create a compelling story of Tamworth's history and heritage.

The museums proposed to be brought into the new VEC include:

- Australian Country Music Hall of Fame
- The Country Music WAX Museum
- National Guitar Museum & Gallery

Australia is the world's No. 3 market for country music, behind only the U.S. and Canada. Aussies clicked play on country music 1.1 billion times in the first half of 2023, based on the top 500 songs in the genre.¹

¹ See: <https://themusicnetwork.com/australians-country-music-stream-luminate-report/#:~:text=According%20to%20Luminate's%20data%2C%20Australia,500%20songs%20in%20the%20genre>

Australian Country Music Hall of Fame

The Australian Country Music Hall of Fame, including Walk a Country Mile, features an unmatched collection of memorabilia from Australian country music artists and depicts Tamworth's musical history. The museum displays focus on the performers and their unique stories, including many stage outfits, musical instruments including a Glockenspiel, handmade leather and bush works from Gordon Parsons and Rodney Walkers one man band festival ensemble.

The Museum's Displays includes:

- **Walk A Country Mile** - Beginning in the music brought to Australia through colonisation from 1788 and presented in highlights of the ensuing decades, this permanent and interactive installation leads visitors through a retelling of the story of Australian country music.
- **Australian Country Music Foundation Exhibitions** - Highlights from the foundation's extensive collection are changed regularly but bring the personalities and stories of Australian country music to life for visitors of all ages.

The Country Music Wax Museum

The Wax Museum is housed within the Tamworth Visitor Information Centre (VIC) at the Big Golden Guitar complex. Established in 1983, the museum moved to its current location 1988 and was opened by the one-and-only Slim Dusty. It features the likenesses of some of Australia's best recognised and most influential country music personalities in costume.

The Country Wax Museum collection is historically significant because it contains objects and outfits from key events and personalities in Australian country music. The Country Music Wax Museum is one of the only wax museums in Australia and it is the only wax museum dedicated to Australian country music. However, the Museum's collection has not been updated since its opening at its current location in 1988.

National Guitar Museum & Gallery

Also located in the Tamworth VIC, The National Guitar Museum was established in 2020, featuring more than 45 guitars, including the likes of Smoky Dawson, QUEEN's Brian May, Tommy Emmanuel, KISS' Paul Stanley, Keith Urban, Dolly Parton, Brooks & Dunn, Kenny Rogers, The Eagles etc. With a special focus on rock and country, the collection is made up of famous guitars, replicas of famous guitars, signed guitars and profiles on the Australian and international stars who played them all.

The collection of guitars is complimented by a world-class photographic exhibition, by Chuck Bradley. The exhibition, titled "*Instrumental*" is an illuminating picture collection of guitars and other instruments from country and rock icons such as Midnight Oil, INXS, Guns 'n' Roses, Troy Cassar-Daley, Archie Roach and more. This collection is continuously growing as Bradley is still photographing.

TAMWORTH REGIONAL COUNCIL VISITOR ECONOMY PLAN 2022 - 2027

With the development of the new purpose-built tourism precinct and Visitor Experience Centre (VEC), there is the opportunity to bring together three of the region's key museums under the one roof and create a reimagined museum offering with engaging exhibitions and immersive experiences.

Music, Arts & Culture is identified as a key precinct group for the Tamworth region in the Tamworth Regional Council Visitor Economy Plan (VEP) 2022 – 2027.

There are two Priority Actions related to Museums in the VEP:

1. Revitalise the Tamworth museums and interpretation

- Create an overarching narrative that links the individual sites (museums) to bring a more compelling story of Tamworth's history and heritage to life. It should focus on stories of innovation and creativity (that align with and reinforce a new place brand)
 - Utilise this narrative to underpin development and positioning of heritage trails incorporating the museums that extend into and around the region
- Both the Tamworth Regional Gallery and the Golden Guitar Museum provide a high-quality visitor experience - utilise insights to enhance the collective museums' offering
 - Use the opportunity of the proposed *Country Music and Tourist Precinct* to provide more interactive and immersive interpretation and experiences within the Golden Guitar Museum
- Proactively strengthen opportunities for best practice interactive and immersive interpretation of the region's museums and heritage sites
 - Integrate more opportunities to enhance active participation
 - Utilise new and emerging technology, such as AI to further enhance signature interpretation sites or displays
- Identify new experiences such as 'behind-the-scenes' tours, workshops or masterclasses or 'meet-the-expert' sessions/ functions (e.g. lunches and dinners)

2. Introduce a Tamworth Multiple Attractions (TMA) ticket

- Design the TMA to permit unlimited entry to any of Tamworth's museums and attractions over a seven (7) day period (or similar)
 - TMA shouldn't prevent visitors only paying to visit one attraction at the standard entry rate
- Agree a simple revenue-sharing system based on the relative size and/or capacity of each institution as well as providing a percentage (commission) to Tamworth's Visitor Information Centre for the implementation, sales and promotion of the single ticket
- Offer local residents a discount on the TMA ticket or an annual subscription that that can used at any time throughout the year, including but not exclusively when they bring guests from out of town. This could feature as part of a VFR campaign

2. VISITOR SERVICING/ REGIONAL TOURISM DELIVERY MODEL

A new visitor servicing model has been proposed based on a **hub and spoke model** to ensure the effective visitor engagement, experience, dissemination of information and tourism services. This presents the opportunity for the Visitor Experience Centre (VEC) to become a flagship visitor information centre for the wider region.

The hub and spoke model is a distribution network that resembles a bicycle wheel. The 'hub' sits in the centre and serves as a primary point for visitors to converge, while the 'spokes' represent the routes or connections between the central hub and the various secondary destinations. In the context of this project, the VEC serves as the hub for visitor servicing and connects visitors with other key assets across the broader region as identified in section 1 of this situation analysis.

Whilst the main exhibition focus would be around the theme of Country Music, with the amalgamation of the Australian Country Music Hall of Fame, National Guitar Museum and the Country Music Wax Museum, there is also an opportunity to tell a small slice of each museum or collection's significant stories, acting as a push point for visitor engagement throughout the region.

Beyond the museums, bringing to life the broader context for positioning Tamworth region as the 'Capital of Country Australia' is critical. This should not be limited to recent history but acknowledge the inherent connection to Country of the Kamilaroi/ Gomeroi peoples of the Kamilaroi Nation as well as celebrating the Tamworth region as a contemporary and vibrant place to live, work and visit. It should showcase and enable connectivity with the region's thriving agricultural and equine industry, exciting arts and cultural sector and significant experiences, such as AELEC, the Tamworth Regional Gallery and myriad sporting and outdoor recreation pursuits.

There is a need to ensure that the architectural brief, including things such as environmental control, electrical plans and lighting, acoustics and sound requirements, delivery and loading dock, public accessibility needs, etc., is well informed so that the "build" and the "fit out" work cohesively.

A clear insight from both the primary research as well as the case studies presented below is while it is important to bring the positioning of 'Capital of Country Australia' to life, ensuring the VEC remains 'uncluttered', feels uplifting and inspiring and encourages curiosity are critical to success. Achieving this balance will require careful (and potentially restrained) curation of permanent and temporary displays and interpretation as well as consideration of the functional needs and purpose of the facility and its connectivity with the outdoor space around the building, among other things.

BEST PRACTICE

The primary goal of visitor servicing should be to adopt a **customer-centric approach**. A common challenge faced by visitor services is to be seen within the local industry as providing equitable promotion of all businesses in the region. However, by adopting a customer-centric approach and implementing strategies that assist in targeting relevant information, remarkable content, or services to the right audience (or target market) through the right channels to reach them, a destination is more likely to lift its economic performance for the benefit of all.

Fundamental to a customer-centric approach is understanding your audience or target market segments and their customer or visitor journey. It should involve developing personas that unpack their identity, motivations, interests, pain points or barriers as well as the most effective ways to reach and engage them.

A common issue for many destinations is that they try to appeal to 'everyone', instead of carefully considering and focusing on the ideal or aspirational target market for their destination. This approach underpins the guiding principle of the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 of 'putting the visitor first' and will ensure the most effective use of limited resources.

Today's travellers have evolved from those generations who travelled before them. Their motivations, interests, behaviours, and mindset for travel are reflective of many factors, from their travel party to broader generational, demographic, and psychographic influences. Understanding these influences and making informed decisions about your target markets is the most effective way to reach, inspire, engage, and connect with them.

There are now six generations who are involved in travel, specifically: Builders (Age 78+); Boomers (Age 59 – 77); Gen X (Age 44 – 58); Gen Y (Age 29 – 43); Gen Z (Age 14 – 28); and Gen Alpha (Age 13 and under). A critical consideration is ensuring that the way we engage with them and the experiences we offer are designed to create lifelong advocates of the destination.

REIMAGINING VISITOR SERVICING

Reimagining the VIC into a Visitor Experience Centre (VEC) to create ways to inspire more people to walk through the door is about re-thinking the experience, the services and the retail offering to appeal to a more substantial proportion of people visiting your region as well as being the go-to place for locals. This includes investigating the role of technology within the VEC, such as Augmented Reality (AR) or Virtual Reality (VR) along with contemporary collateral and outstanding and memorable retail experiences and products.

As highlighted above, developing customer personas and understanding their customer journey is critical to a wholistic visitor servicing strategy. However, as critical is understanding the 'back-end'. This can be achieved through developing 'user' personas and journeys, whether they be for the staff responsible for visitor servicing or industry who are integral to the visitor experience or those responsible for the curation and operations of the VEC itself. These user journeys should

consider all aspects of operations and management, from technology to the design and operations of exhibitions and events.

People still play a very important role in visitor servicing, whether that is through a multichannel contact centre or face-to-face within the VEC. However, the value is in the interaction between the visitor and the local who share genuine and authentic insights and help to shape the most memorable of experiences. This also extends to the way in which those within the VEC interact with the community and businesses who deliver the services or products and underpin the culture of the destination.

Branded content and design elements (from place-making to space-making) that reinforce the values and essence of your destination and bring it to life in a tangible way is also important. Identifying opportunities to improve the visitor experience through providing information at a variety of visitor touch points with and within your destination is key. Whether that is in accommodation, cafes, clubs, retail stores, newsagents, art galleries, real-estate agencies etc. This sits at the heart of an effective 'hub and spoke' model of visitor servicing.

Finally, providing good quality information that is easy to access and helps visitors to be inspired and make informed decision about their experience choices will always be central to the purpose of the VEC. However, the opportunity for Tamworth Regional Council is not just to 'jazz up' the traditional VIC model using technology such as an AR or VR or selling local product (although technology will help). It is about shaking up the entire VEC experience and the space itself by making it the place-to-meet, a place to relax and plan out the day's activities and a showcase for Tamworth, Gunnedah, Liverpool Plains and Walcha local government areas.

In essence, the model is about transitioning from a focus on the bricks-and-mortar VEC to focus on visitor touch points.

Technology & the Customer Journey

The future implications of technology for visitor servicing are also very significant. Best practice visitor servicing is now omnichannel and includes effective partnerships with local businesses. This will need to be supported by high-quality online and digital systems to enhance engagement and distribution of information; at all touchpoints along the customer journey – including e-commerce functionality.

While people will continue to play an important role in visitor servicing, the new model will need to consider how to take information out of the VEC, including through mobile VEC services, and deliver it directly to the visitor. Wherever they are.

This reinforces the importance of understanding the customer journey and the value of addressing all touchpoints along it. It also reinforces the need for user journey mapping, as outline above.



A great opportunity, and one that is mostly ignored or at least undervalued, is the gap between people booking and people arriving in-destination. This is an ideal time to ‘arm’ your visitor with the information that could persuade them to see more, travel further and in the process, spend more.

At a time where resources are limited, considering efficient and effective ways for delivering visitor servicing will be critical. Providing information to visitors before they arrive in destination will assist in building awareness and preference to experience other offerings and drive increase length of stay and regional dispersal.

The destinations that will succeed in the future are those that seamlessly integrate the human side of visitor servicing with the technology side (in essence, adopting an omnichannel approach). Only then will destinations be able to meet current visitor expectations, deliver a positive visitor experience and attract new or retain existing markets.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Generative AI (GenAI)

As mentioned above, technology has influenced the way consumers experience travel and a new era of digitally enabled travel is upon us.

A recent report from SKIFT Research and McKinsey & Company called ‘The Promise of Travel in the Age of AI’² outlines that “digital technology, machine learning (ML), and artificial intelligence (AI), including generative AI (GenAI), are equipping the industry to reimagine what it means to plan, book, and experience travel. This surge of innovation sets the stage for companies to rethink how they interact with customers, develop and deliver products and services, and manage people and operations.”

Examples of how this is being applied by travel organisations include, AI-enabled trip planning, to individually tailored communication during disruptions, to live simulation models and virtual reality (VR) training to improve frontline decision making.

There is no doubt that AI and GenAI are being increasingly used across the tourism sector and stand to disrupt not just travel planning searches – and with that performance advertising – but it may also upend searches for travel inspiration as well. With that would come changes in how all sales and marketing throughout travel is done, as well as have the potential for huge gains in operational efficiency³.

² The Promise of Travel in the Age of AI – SKIFT Research and McKinsey & Company, September 2023

³ SKIFT – Generative AI’s Impact on Travel, April 2023

Omnichannel Approach

Efficient and effective omnichannel visitor services are connected and integrated across all channels. It differs from multi-channel, which often relies on multiple systems that potential become 'silos' and can lead to inconsistent or fragmented customer or visitor servicing.

An omnichannel approach relies on several factors, including but not limited to:

- **Consistency in messaging** and communication, including in the tone of voice and manner that underpin the destination's brand
- **Integration of channel management** (if possible, aim for a cost-effective omnichannel strategy) across voice, email and digital/online channels and with capacity for an effective interface with face-to-face information servicing and retail sales – this includes the ability to triage and re-direct queries to those with specialist or more detailed knowledge of a specific topic or area within the broader region. It should also consider opportunities for LiveChat or use of interactive video platforms for enriching visitor services (one-on-one to small group sessions)
- Access to and capacity for distribution and management of **remarkable and relevant content**, which leverages local information and is up-to-date and responsive to current circumstances, from weather to road closures or serious incidents such as wildfires or floods (localised or more wide-spread impacts). It is critical that distribution of content across channels is consistent.
- Well-managed procurement and fulfilment processes associated with **retail strategies** or other commercial services offered through the region's visitor servicing function, including for the local community.
- Ongoing knowledge management.
- Consistency of experience across all touchpoints.

A destination-wide omnichannel hub should also consider the following with regard to the way information and services are positioned and delivered:

- Provide **high-quality customer service across all channels**, which will enhance the visitor experience, appeal of the destination and word of mouth worthiness because the recipient has received timely, relevant and expert advice. It should be integrated to enable a holistic and consistent view of the customer or visitor across all systems or channels – this means avoiding 'silos' created by different, unintegrated systems that potentially serve or deliver different information to the same customer or visitor.
- In order to deliver on visitor expectations, destinations should consider integrating the advice or services of **local experts**, especially those who have local knowledge relating to special interest or niche markets. This could cover such areas as nature-based activities, health and well-being itineraries and sporting events through to art and culture and food and drink.
- Create an **opportunity to 'upsell'** the destination by offering up experiences and reasons (e.g. products) for a visitor to consider extending their length of stay as well as an opportunity to increase their spend within the region.
 - Promoting **buy-local initiatives** provides another way for destinations to promote their brand, reinforce their values and distinguish their point of difference. This will be enhanced through **e-commerce**. For

example, a retail strategy for a 'destination store' should focus on local products or experiences, including those offered by local artists, artisans or produce suppliers while also offering products that deliver a functional use, albeit destination-branded. These are unique mementos of a destination or gifts that may help to raise awareness of the destination or local businesses. From a purely business perspective, e-commerce enables ways for generating revenue, which can support the visitor servicing function.

- Provide a service to **personalise the information and the experiences**. This could be through developing itineraries, packages and bundling experiences to meet the needs of the individual visitor. The opportunity to achieve this will be further enhanced with advances in generative AI and it becomes both more widely available and cost effective. This specialised service will assist showcase the diversity of the region, encourage regional dispersal and increase length of stay.
 - Likewise, local experts would be able to assist in providing local tips and developing more-remarkable content for distribution (especially across digital and online channels), such as hints on what to pack, favourite spots or hidden gems.
- Address 'moments of truth' to ensure positive outcomes.

CASE STUDIES

The following two case studies⁴ highlight best practice in omnichannel experiences. While these case studies are for global businesses, there are clear learnings for all destinations and businesses about shifting to an integrated, omnichannel approach to visitor or guest servicing.



- **Disney: The champion of omnichannel experience**

As Hubspot describes it, "Disney gets [omnichannel experience](#) right, down to the smallest details." A visitor's experience starts with the website, then moves on to the **My Disney Experience tool** that can be used to plan every detail of the trip.

⁴ Both case studies are extracts from the online article by Moengage – see: <https://www.moengage.com/blog/7-brands-who-mastered-omnichannel-marketing-campaigns/>

Once at the park, a visitor can use the app to figure out the rides and attractions and even see the wait times for popular rides. But that's not all: The MagicBand is a wristband that lets visitors:

- Unlock hotel room doors
- Enter the parks
- Check in at FastPass entrances for rides
- Get photos
- Charge food and goodies to their hotel room

And every aspect of it is **consistently branded, effortless to use**, and an example of omnichannel taken to new heights.



- **Singapore Airlines:
Unparalleled Omnichannel
Marketplace**

Singapore Airlines sets a good example of offering a seamless experience to their customers. They have always been lauded for their innovation, and for a while, they have been creating a powerful, customer-oriented omni experience.

This flagship airline is partnering with AOE-integrated airports and shopping malls by fusing online and offline experiences. With this partnership, customers can easily shop, pre-book, enhance in-flight options and earn loyalty in real time.

Key outtakes from the case studies:

An omnichannel strategy unifies consumer or visitor experiences across channels. This could include social media, mobile web, push notifications, etc. Sales, marketing, and service platforms are likewise connected. The benefit is a deeper, more enriched engagement with your visitors as well as enhanced customer or visitor servicing.

A primary consideration is ensuring that content that is distributed across channels is consistent, reinforcing your brand and positioning in the marketplace.

3. MUSEUMS

The landscape for museums is changing. Smaller museums and galleries are being challenged by larger institutions, who have adopted new technologies, such as virtual reality and more actively involve their visitors as participants.

The value of integrating user-generated content (UGC) is increasingly critical, not just for engaging the audience in a more personal way but to support marketing efforts by utilising the voice of those who people trust the most, their peer group. In fact, research by Nielsen Global found that 92% of consumers trust word of mouth marketing and UGC more than traditional forms of advertising (Nielsen Global Report, Trust in Advertising, September 2015).

There are many ways to more actively engage or involve your audience. This may start long before a visit. It could be through an opportunity to participate in an online panel discussion, which may include leaders in their respective fields, or a reminiscence session, where people can contribute their memories and stories of their involvement. Beyond the virtual world, workshops or events with special guest speakers can provide opportunities for volunteers, visitors and experts to connect in an inspiring setting. All these ideas can contribute to new revenue streams and help to build a loyal community of supporters.

Best practice in interpretation is essential and includes:

- **Encouraging active involvement** and participation, including leveraging first-hand experiences and facilitating imagined reality. For example, through interaction with local characters or using technology to allow them to step into the shoes of a country music star.
- **Optimising all the senses.** Interpretation is enhanced through creating more sensory experiences.
- **Inspire curiosity** and a desire to find out more, including allowing for moments of self-discovery and incorporating elements of surprise. It is about engaging your visitor on a journey of discovery, especially in the context of their leisure time.
- **Personalisation** based on your visitors' own interests, memories or stories. In this way, the exhibition or gallery can enrich a visitor's perception, participation and experience by making it more relevant to them.
- Ensuring that the **use of technology** enhances while not displacing the purpose or meaning of the exhibition or gallery. Start by creating the story you want to share and then develop the elements to bring this to life in a meaningful and compelling way.

Attractions and museums should consider partnerships and collaboration to reinforce their part in the broader story. This might involve the visitor in various elements, such as being immersed in an interactive exhibit, participating in a special-interest workshop or participating in an event as part of a broader experience of which the museum or attraction is a part.

CASE STUDY 1 – ABBA Museum (Stockholm, Sweden)



Website: <https://abbathemuseum.com/en/>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lr7hsH35NNM>

The ABBA Museum in Stockholm, Sweden, offers a unique and immersive experience for fans of the iconic Swedish pop group ABBA. Here are some of the experiences you can expect to have when visiting the ABBA Museum:

1. **Interactive Exhibits:** The museum features interactive exhibits that allow visitors to explore the history and music of ABBA in an engaging way. You can listen to their music, watch videos, and learn about the group's journey from their early days to global stardom.
2. **ABBA's Wardrobe:** One of the highlights of the museum is the display of the famous costumes worn by the members of ABBA during their performances and music videos. You can see some of their most iconic outfits up close.
3. **Sing and Dance:** Visitors can sing and dance along with holograms of ABBA members on a virtual stage. It's a fun opportunity to feel like you're performing alongside the band.
4. **Recording Studio:** Experience what it's like to be in a recording studio and even record your own version of an ABBA song. You can also take home a recording of your performance as a souvenir.
5. **ABBA Memorabilia:** The museum houses a collection of ABBA memorabilia, including fan art, merchandise, and personal items belonging to the group members.
6. **Timeline and History:** Explore the timeline of ABBA's career, from their early days to their Eurovision victory and their rise to international fame. Learn about the stories behind their hit songs.

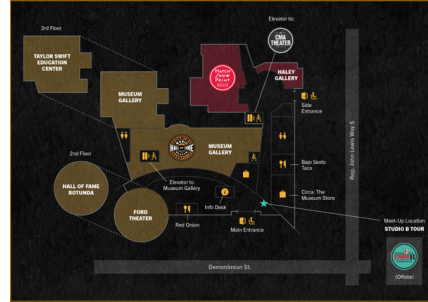
7. **Costume Try-On:** You may have the opportunity to try on ABBA-style costumes and take photos to capture the moment.
8. **Temporary Exhibitions:** The museum often hosts temporary exhibitions related to ABBA's history, music, and influence on pop culture. These exhibitions provide fresh insights into the band's legacy.
9. **Gift Shop:** Like many museums, the ABBA Museum has a gift shop where you can purchase ABBA-themed merchandise, music, and memorabilia.
10. **Café and Restaurant:** You can relax and enjoy Swedish cuisine at the museum's café and restaurant.
11. **Events and Special Programs:** The museum occasionally hosts special events, performances, and programs related to ABBA and their music.

The ABBA Museum provides an interactive and entertaining experience for fans of the band, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in the world of ABBA and relive their music and history.

Key Outtakes:

- Exhibits encourage active participation in a fun and engaging way.
- There are a variety of experiences on offer that are suitable for different demographics and offer diversity – it helps to engage an entirely new generation with the music and performance of ABBA.
- Integration of technology to seamlessly record your performance and have it to take home with you. This creates a personalised experience for participants and is a great example of user generated content (UGC). It also provides visitors with the opportunity to share the content they have created which is a great way to encourage word of mouth marketing.
- Different sensory experiences are on offer – hearing yourself singing ABBA karaoke, seeing the exhibits or trying on some of the ABBA costumes.

CASE STUDY 2 – Country Music Hall of Fame (Nashville, USA)



Website: <https://www.countrymusichalloffame.org/>

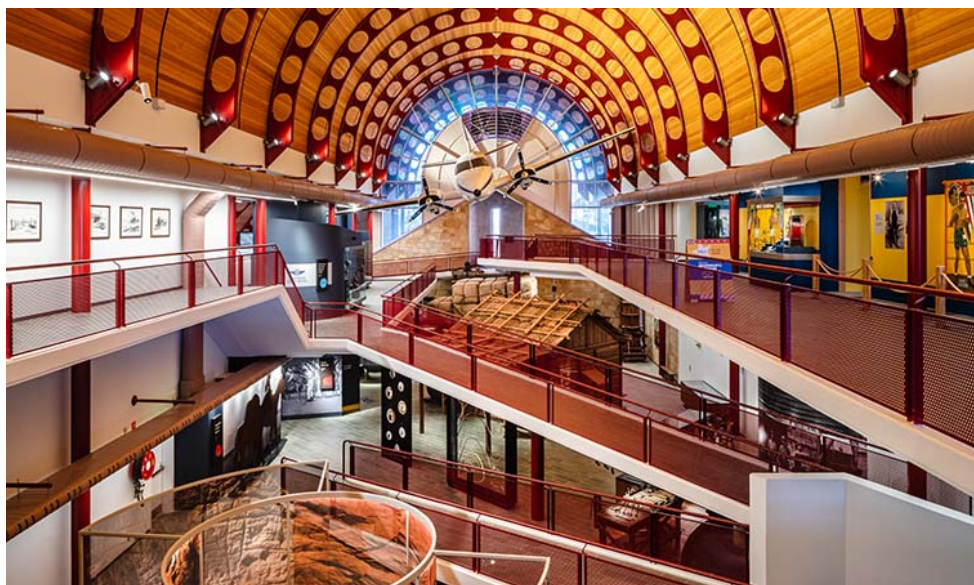
Nashville's Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum offers a wide range of experiences for visitors interested in country music and its history. Some of the key experiences you can have when visiting the Country Music Hall of Fame include:

1. **Exhibits:** The museum features a rotating collection of exhibits that showcase the history and evolution of country music. These exhibits often include artifacts, costumes, instruments, and multimedia displays that tell the stories of country music legends and the genre's development over the years.
2. **Special Exhibitions:** In addition to its permanent collection, the museum often hosts special exhibitions that focus on specific themes, eras, or artists within the country music genre. These exhibits provide fresh perspectives and highlight different aspects of country music.
3. **Performance Spaces:** The museum often hosts live music performances and special events in its various performance spaces. Visitors can enjoy concerts, song-writing sessions, and educational programs featuring both established artists and up-and-coming talent.
4. **Archives and Research:** The museum houses an extensive collection of country music-related documents, recordings, and photographs. Scholars and researchers can access these resources to study the history of country music in greater detail.
5. **Educational Programs:** The Country Music Hall of Fame offers educational programs for all ages, including school groups. These programs aim to teach visitors about the history, culture, and significance of country music through guided tours, workshops, and interactive learning experiences.
6. **Interactive Exhibits:** Many exhibits are interactive, allowing visitors to engage with the history and culture of country music in unique ways. You might find touchscreens, listening stations, and hands-on activities that provide a deeper understanding of the genre.
7. **Gift Shops and Dining:** The museum has gift shops where you can purchase country music-related merchandise and a dining area where you can enjoy Southern cuisine.
8. **Events and Galas:** The Hall of Fame hosts various events and galas throughout the year, attracting country music industry professionals, artists, and enthusiasts.

Key Outtakes:

- An integrated floorplan/design means visitors can seamlessly move between the different exhibits, performance spaces and workshops areas without ever having to leave the precinct.
- Exhibits are accompanied by interactive tools such as touch screens or audio to enhance the experience.
- Workshops and masterclasses appeal to specific interest groups and offer a high level of engagement.
- A purpose-built education space allows a number of different programs to be run and takes people on an experiential journey.
- Integrating an archives and research element to enable hard-core enthusiasts to dive deeper is a great way to satisfy this interest group, but also means that information on the displays can be kept short and engaging (with the option to research further if desired)
- As with any experience centre, dining experiences have an important role to play and if there is an opportunity for it to align with the themes of the centre this adds to the overall experience.

CASE STUDY 3 – Australian Stockman’s Hall of Fame (Longreach, Australia)



Website: <https://stockmanshalloffame.com.au/>

The Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame in Longreach, Queensland, is a museum dedicated to honouring the history and culture of Australia's pioneering stockmen and women, who played a significant role in shaping the nation. When you visit the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame, you can expect to have a range of experiences that highlight the Australian outback, its people, and their way of life. Here are some of the experiences you can enjoy:

1. **Museum Exhibits:** The museum features a series of exhibits that showcase the history and stories of stockmen and women, indigenous people, and settlers who lived and worked in the Australian outback. These exhibits often include artifacts, photographs, and interactive displays.
2. **Stockman's Show:** The Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame often hosts live stockman shows where visitors can watch skilled riders demonstrate traditional outback skills, such as cattle herding and whip-cracking.
3. **Theatre Presentations:** The museum offers theatre presentations that provide an in-depth look at the lives and challenges faced by those who worked in the outback. These presentations use multimedia elements to engage visitors.
4. **Historical Buildings:** The Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame includes historical buildings or reconstructions that offer a glimpse into the architecture and lifestyle of early outback settlements.
5. **Unique Architecture:** The building itself is quite impressive and was designed by Feiko Bouman Architecture in the 1980s. It is an example of late

twentieth century Australian postmodernism. It is referred to as “Opera House of the Outback.”

6. **Outback Landscape:** The museum is located in the heart of the outback, and the surroundings themselves provide an authentic outback experience. The landscape, flora, and fauna are often part of the visitor's experience.
7. **Educational Programs:** The museum offers educational programs for school groups and visitors interested in learning more about Australian history and the outback way of life.
8. **Events and Festivals:** The Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame often hosts special events and festivals that celebrate Australian culture and traditions, such as rodeos, country music festivals, and more.

Visiting the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame is a great way to immerse yourself in the history and culture of the Australian outback and gain a deeper understanding of the people and stories that have shaped this rugged and unique part of the world.

Key Outtakes:

- The incorporation of a live stockman's show creates a sensory and unique experience for visitors. There is the opportunity to do something similar to this in collaboration with Australian Equine and Livestock Events Centre (AELEC).
- Unique architecture can also be a draw card for visitation and enrich the visitor experience.
- Integrating the design with the nature landscape also lends to an authentic experience for visitors and enables you to highlight unique traits of the region.
- A combination of static exhibits, live shows and theatre presentations broadens the experience and again offers a more sensory experience.

CASE STUDY 4 – The Royal Flying Doctor’s Centre (DUBBO, AUSTRALIA)



Website: <https://dubbo.experience.flyingdoctor.org.au/#gref>

The Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) Visitor Experience in Dubbo, New South Wales, offers visitors a fascinating glimpse into the world of one of Australia's most iconic and essential organizations. The RFDS provides medical care to people in remote and rural areas of Australia, and the visitor experience in Dubbo provides insight into their work and the challenges they face. Here are some of the experiences you can expect to have when visiting the Flying Doctor Visitor Experience:

1. **Interactive Exhibits:** The museum features interactive exhibits that allow visitors to learn about the history and operations of the Royal Flying Doctor Service. These exhibits often include multimedia presentations, hands-on activities, and simulations.
2. **Virtual Reality:** Some experiences include virtual reality simulations that give you a first-person perspective of what it's like to be part of a flying doctor mission, providing emergency medical care to remote communities.
3. **Historical Displays:** Explore the history of the RFDS through displays of artifacts, photographs, and documents that highlight the organization's development and achievements over the years.
4. **Aircraft Display:** You can often see actual RFDS aircraft on display, including historic planes that were once used for medical evacuations in remote areas. These aircraft play a central role in the organization's mission.
5. **Behind-the-Scenes Look:** Learn about the day-to-day operations of the RFDS, including how medical staff provide care to patients in isolated locations. Gain an understanding of the challenges they face and the equipment they use.

6. **Telehealth Demonstrations:** Discover how telehealth technology enables the RFDS to provide medical consultations and advice to people in remote areas via video and telecommunication systems.
7. **Emergency Simulations:** Some exhibits may include simulations of emergency scenarios, allowing visitors to experience the types of situations that the RFDS responds to and the procedures used to provide medical care.
8. **Visitor Centre:** The RFDS Visitor Experience typically has a visitor centre where you can obtain more information, purchase souvenirs, and learn about the organization's ongoing work.
9. **Educational Programs:** The museum often offers educational programs for school groups and visitors interested in learning more about the RFDS, remote healthcare, and aviation in Australia.
10. **Stories of Survival:** Hear inspiring stories of individuals who have been helped by the RFDS and learn about the impact of the organization on remote communities.
11. **Gift Shop and cafe:** You can find a café where you can enjoy refreshments, as well as a gift shop featuring RFDS-themed merchandise. There is also an online store for you to be able to purchase merchandise and gifts.
12. **Events and Workshops:** The RFDS Visitor Experience hosts special events, workshops, and lectures related to healthcare, aviation, and the outback. They also offer the experience centre as an events venue to hire.

Visiting the RFDS Visitor Experience in Dubbo provides a unique opportunity to appreciate the vital role that the Royal Flying Doctor Service plays in Australia's healthcare system, especially in remote and rural areas. It's an educational and inspiring experience that highlights the dedication of the RFDS staff and the organization's impact on the Australian outback.

Key Outtakes:

- The use of simulations is a fantastic way for visitors to really 'feel' like they are part of the experience. It connects them with the experience on an emotional level. Virtual Reality is increasingly being used to create these experiences in museums across the world.
- Real-time data and information being displayed offers a truly unique experience as visitors feel they are in the moment and involved in the operations.
- The experience centre allows for event venue hire after 4pm, offering event organisers a space to host a distinctive and memorable event. This is a fantastic example of having a flexible and dynamic space that can be used for different purposes, whilst also creating another revenue making stream for the business.
- Providing an online store enables visitors to engage before they visit the centre, as well as after they have visited the centre. A retail strategy that speaks to your visitors is another great way to generate revenue.

CASE STUDY 5 – PDX Next: Portland International Airport's New Main Terminal (Oregon, USA)



Website: <https://pdxnext.com/about>

PDX Next, the new International Terminal in Portland, Oregon, USA is due to open in 2025. While it is a five-year, two-billion-dollar (USD) project, it is worthwhile considering some of the core principles that have influenced its design and the way in which it will reflect and reinforce a sense of place, the landscape and culture of Portland to all those who visit or arrive in the region through this signature gateway centre. More importantly, it has already become a great source of civic pride and is delivering benefits to local businesses.

Key Outtakes:

- The structure features a series of skylights and an expansive timber roof made from sustainably sourced regional wood. The design draws inspiration from nature and the 'signature greenery' of Oregon as well as the scale of Portland's downtown blocks, from foliage to natural materials, finishes and furniture.
- Local businesses have been involved – and not just the 'big' companies. Smaller suppliers and makers have been involved to ensure greater equity in the distribution of income and benefits from the design to supply of materials and construction.
- It's easy to navigate; bright, open spaces; and flexible, to meet the needs of the region for decades to come.
- Local shops and restaurants from Portland will be incorporated into the terminal – it will include a women-owned, women-run distillery, a popular Portland pasta spot, craft cocktails, wood-fired pizza, a craft beer hall (for

which Portland is famous), renowned retailers and more. Likewise, local artists have been engaged to create artworks for installation throughout the terminal. Essentially, it captures the sense of Portland through showcasing local producers, produce, products, artists, and artisans.

- Everything in the interior space is about putting you in a good mood, from leafy foliage to common areas where you can de-stress. It's all based on research that proves access to nature makes us happier and healthier.
- Connectivity through light rail and cycle trails to the city will facilitate access while new technology will enhance the overall customer experience.

The core principles underpinning the design, construction, and future operation of PDX Next highlight the benefits of creating a world-class, future-focused, and customer-centric gateway centre; one that delivers benefits to the local community, reinforces a strong sense of place and well-being, and showcases the best of the region. These principles can be applied at scale to Tamworth's VEC.

4. CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT INSIGHTS

Over twelve stakeholder sessions (face to face workshops, small group and one-on-one meetings and video-conferencing sessions) were conducted across Tamworth in August and September 2023.

Overall, the workshops reinforced the value of adopting a whole-of-region approach that was future-focused.

There were many challenges, opportunities and potential actions raised by stakeholders. We have grouped these into 11 broad themes; recognising that many suggestions are relevant to multiple themes.

While the summary below is by no means exhaustive, it does reflect the critical areas that need to be addressed if the Tamworth Regional Tourism Precinct Strategy is to deliver a more sustainable Return on Investment (ROI) for the visitor economy in Tamworth, Gunnedah, Walcha and Liverpool Plains LGAs.

The primary themes identified are:

1. Collaboration, cooperation and coordination

Stakeholders raised a range of collaboration opportunities. Both within and across the LGA as well as between neighbouring LGAs.

This collaboration, cooperation and coordination could range from something as simple as streamlining the region's events calendar, through to participating in cooperative marketing opportunities. It could also involve collaborating with industry to create road trip itineraries or more accessible and richer touring experiences for visitors.

In short, collaboration was seen as a strategy with the potential to not only raise the profile of the region but to address key issues and challenges such as seasonality, visitor dispersal and delivering a more positive visitor experience.

2. Unbalanced Tourism & Events

Many participants spoke about Tamworth as a thriving events destination, with both sporting events and the Tamworth Country Music Festival bringing in huge numbers of visitors. However, managing the challenges of unbalanced tourism - including seasonality and regional dispersal - was seen as an important part of building a more resilient and sustainable visitor economy. It was also considered important in delivering a better experience for both visitors and locals.

Three specific areas for focus were raised:

- The need for a **regional events calendar** to enable smaller events to plan around the larger events and to assist other service providers such as accommodation.
- **Better communication and marketing** of what is happening across the region to be able to promote regional dispersal
- The desire for the **VIC to be able to sell tickets for events**

3. Ticketing & booking systems

As mentioned above, there were a lot of stakeholders who commented about the ticketing and booking systems. Capitol Theatre is the only venue where you can go to purchase tickets for events and they have a specific booking system that Council staff are not trained on.

VIC and accommodation stakeholders informed us that visitors often ask about where to go to find out what's on and where to buy tickets.

There is a desire for these systems to be integrated and connected so that they can be used at multiple outlets.

4. Marketing, content & socials

It was identified that the marketing team within Council looks after all of the marketing and communications channels for TRC and that VIC or events staff are not adequately informed or engaged in what is being posted/shared. This has caused some issues with visitors asking about things they have seen on socials when visitor servicing staff are unaware of what has been posted.

Other important topics that were raised:

- The tourism team are not contributing or having input towards the content strategy and what is being posted about Tamworth and the surrounding regions
- The primary website is hard to navigate and offers a poor experience – noting a new staff member has been employed to work on this. However, added to this is the challenge presented by numerous websites reflecting a 'siloed' approach to engaging visitors in the experience offering of the Tamworth region.
- Information about what is happening across the region is often only found out by VIC after the fact
- There are huge opportunities for marketing and advertising at the Tamworth Regional Airport
- There are very limited or no marketing activities conducted outside of the region to attract visitors to Tamworth and the surrounding regions. Marketing is being focused on the local community and the marketing spend primarily dedicated to distribution through the Visitor Information Centre.

5. Cross-regional visitor servicing

There is a desire from VIC staff in Tamworth and surrounding LGA's to be well connected and to learn from one another to be able to promote each other's regions.

Suggestions on ways to achieve this were:

- Conduct famils for staff to be able to explore neighboring regions
- VIC staff exchanges to get a deeper insight into the operations and experiences had at each of the VIC's
- Having integrated systems and booking platforms for accommodation and experiences
- Building cross-regional experience itineraries such as road trip itineraries between the LGA's to promote to visitors

6. Adequate facilities and storage

It was mentioned by many stakeholders that the current VIC is not fit for purpose. Parking and traffic were raised as major concerns, as well as storage being an issue across the different museum sites.

Discussions were had about the new VEC and the need to ensure things such as environmental control, electrical plans and lighting, acoustics and sound requirements, delivery and loading dock, public accessibility needs, etc. are considered.

7. Curation and storytelling

It was felt that there was curatorial overload in some of the museum spaces and that some of the collections are disparate. There is a huge opportunity to pull some of the exhibitions together to be able to create more meaningful and engaging stories. A primary consideration highlighted was the opportunity to be more selective in terms of the exhibitions (permanent and temporary) as well as crafting interpretation that doesn't overload the visitor in the first instance while exciting the curiosity of those who wish to find out more.

8. Visitor Experience Centre (VEC) fit-out

There were a lot of comments about things that should be considered for the proposed VEC. These include:

- Accessibility
- A performance space / Amphitheatre
 - This should also be designed for events and tours
- Indoor and outdoor connectivity
- Plenty of storage space
- Back-office facilities for VIC staff

9. Indigenous Tourism

First Nations tourism is a growing trend and should be incorporated into the design thinking of the VEC. The stories of country bring all of the places together and form the connections with the surrounding LGAs (and beyond).

It was noted that the VEC should consider:

- A performance space for cultural shows
- A space to do workshops and educational programs
- Provide an opportunity to utilise the outdoor space to acknowledge and reflect the timeless connection to Country of the First Nations communities through references to significant sites found across and within the landscape of the broader region

10. Governance

A number of external stakeholders to Council mentioned the difficulty in knowing who to contact at Council in relation to tourism matters. Resourcing within Council is an issue, coupled with high staff turnover.

Staff within Council also identified that the various different teams or departments are quite fractured and disjointed. Teams have separate budgets, operating systems

and priorities which effects how projects and outcomes are delivered. There is an opportunity to work more cohesively together to strengthen the visitor economy.

It was also highlighted that core tourism assets that Council own and manage are sometimes not perceived as tourism assets. As mentioned above in marketing, the focus is often on engaging with locals or visitors already in-region rather than attracting visitors to the region.

11. Industry Engagement

Industry engagement (or the lack of a consistent and dedicated effort) is a major barrier that was raised on a number of occasions. There are a number of stakeholders who aren't aware or do not think they have a role to play in the visitor economy. Staff within Council also expressed their difficulties with trying to engage with industry.

There is an opportunity to focus on industry engagement to strengthen relationships and build trust within the sector and to work more cohesively in developing incredible experiences. This reflected a core priority identified within Tamworth Region's Visitor Economy Plan 2022 – 2027.

5. CONCLUDING COMMENTS & NEXT STEPS

This project is about developing a new regional tourism delivery model for visitor servicing that extends across the Tamworth, Gunnedah, Liverpool Plains and Walcha local government areas, and positions Tamworth as the 'Capital of Country Australia'.

The proposed new Visitor Experience Centre (VEC) will be the hub for visitor servicing across the region, and the new location for a revitalised museum-style experience incorporating the Tamworth's Australian Country Music Hall of Fame, The Country Music WAX Museum and the National Guitar Museum & Gallery.

It has been made clear through the research and stakeholder consultations that the quality of the visitor experience and interpretation of the three museums is not up to industry standards nor meets contemporary market expectations. The opportunity is to reimagine the visitor servicing and museum offerings in line with evolving global trends such as AI and generative technology and driving factors for visitation such as experiential travel.

The new VEC will need to be carefully designed and curated to satisfy the functional needs of visitors whilst also inspiring people to visit the centre as a destination. Understanding the customer journey is critical, and it is recommended that TRC develop detailed personas for both visitors and users to identify their motivations, interests, pain points or barriers as well as the most effective ways to reach and engage with them.

To successfully deliver an omnichannel approach, TRC will need to consider integrating both consumer-facing and back-end systems. This will need to be supported by a strong industry engagement program and a collaborative approach to destination development.

Next steps:

This Situation Analysis, along with the Benchmarking report (Stage 2) and Precinct Analysis (Stage 3) developed by HVH, will be used to inform stages 4, 5 and 6 of this project – being the Tourism Precinct Visitor Experience Strategy, the Tourism Precinct Business Case and the Regional Tourism Service Delivery Mode.

APPENDIX 1

Tamworth Qualitative Research Forums

Situation Analysis

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TAMWORTH QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FORUMS

Introduction to the research

Qualitative research uses smaller sample sizes to explore in-depth responses which lead to richer insights. It is widely used in the market research industry as it provides valuable insights for the development of marketing, communications and branding strategies. However, it has principal differences to quantitative research, which utilises surveys and large representative samples. The smaller sample sizes in qualitative research provide results which are more subjective, and situation specific – in this case looking at the perceptions of visitors to Visitor Information Centres and Museums⁵.

Web-based focus groups

This research stage involved two separate web-based focus groups, where 18 participants entered into a dialogue around their motivations to visit a Visitor Information Centre (VIC) or Museum. The details of the 18 participants are shown below representing a range of ages, residence and relevant travel experience. Older couples, solos and families were primarily chosen as they aligned with target segments demonstrated in the recent Tamworth Fast Facts.

FORUM PARTICIPANT ATTRIBUTES

Attribute	VIC	Museum
Age	35- 70+ years	35- 70+ years
Lifecycle	Primarily “older couples” “solos” and “family” segments	Primarily “older couples” “solos” and “family” segments
Residence	Sydney (# 6), Melbourne (#3), QLD (#4), SA (#3) Regional NSW (#2)	Sydney (# 5), Melbourne (#3), QLD (#5), SA (#3) Regional NSW (#2)
Relevant travel experiences	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Travel in country area within Australia in last year <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Used VIC while travelling	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Travel in country area within Australia in last year <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Visited museums in Australia or overseas

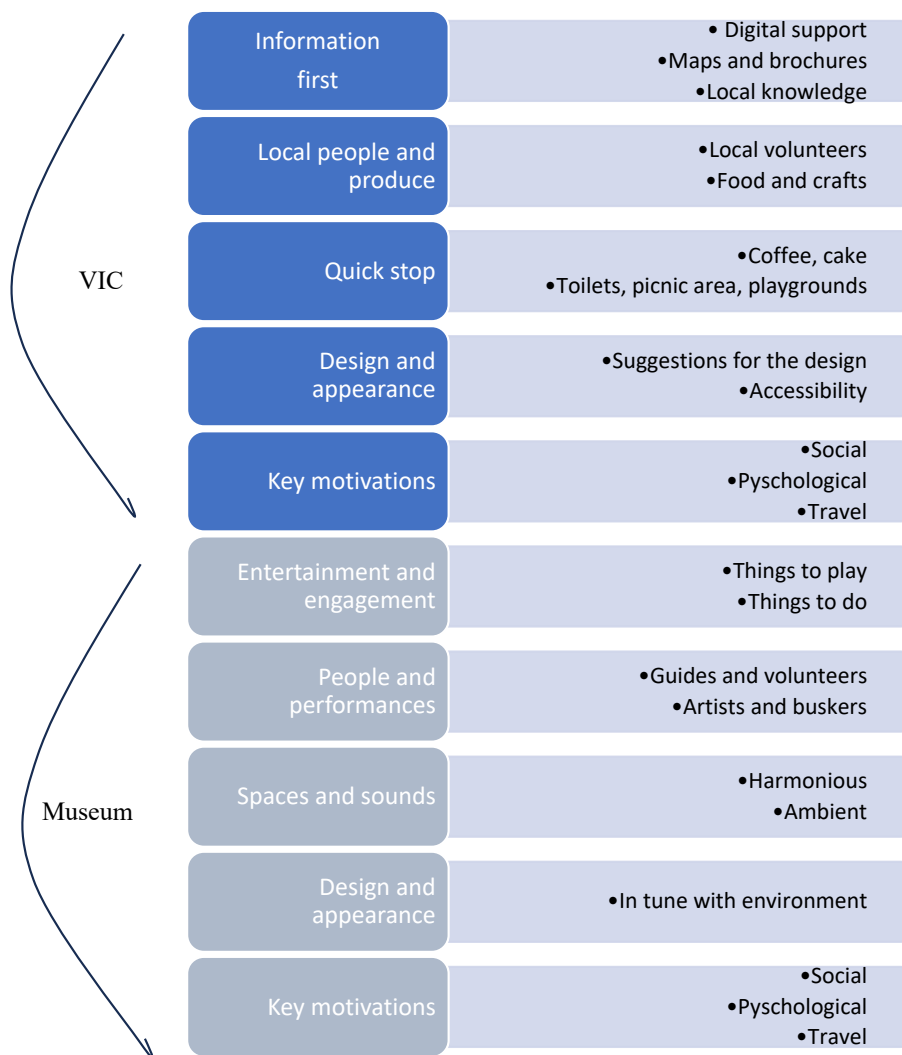
⁵ For more information on qualitative research see <https://dictionary.apa.org/qualitative-research>

Analysis

Thematic Analysis was undertaken by DMS to further understand the experiences of visitors. The results of both forums were coded and compared to identify the differences and similarities between participants. Analysis of the forum conversations led to the emergence of key themes in each forum which set the framework for further analysis and exploration.

Key result areas

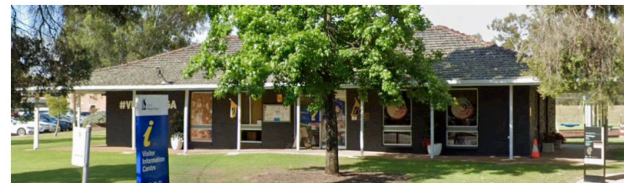
The results for both forums have been grouped into the following results areas, discussed further in under each section for the Museum and VIC. The key result areas represent the main themes that have emerged from the study as well as other important considerations from the perspective of the traveller.



1.1 Experiences at Visitor Information Centres

Participants were asked to reflect on their experiences using a Visitor Information Centre (VIC) in Australia, or elsewhere, and the reasons and circumstances for using them. The following places were given as examples of their travels.

- Armidale, NSW
- Bathurst, NSW
- Blue Mountains, NSW
- Fleurieu Peninsular, SA
- Gloucester, NSW
- Kuranda, QLD
- McLaren Vale, SA
- Mittagong, NSW
- Orange, NSW
- Port Fairy, VIC
- Urunga, NSW
- Wagga Wagga, NSW



While all participants had visited a VIC in the past 3 years, there was divided opinion about their likeliness to use one again in the future. While the majority felt they were a very useful addition to their visit, those who are less likely felt they can find enough information on-line.

Likely to use in the future	Unlikely to use in the future	Unsure
12	3	2

“Yes, I often check out Visitor Information Centres for maps, ideas & directions.”

“No, we feel we can get information on the Internet and are unsure of the better offering that visitor information Centre would have.”

1.2 Key themes related to VIC experiences

Thematic Analysis of all responses led to a more in-depth understanding of the experiences of visitors to VICs. Analysis of the forum conversations led to the emergence of three themes as 1) information first, 2) local people and produce and 3) quick stop⁶.



INFORMATION FIRST

Digital
support

Maps and
brochures

Local
knowledge



LOCAL PEOPLE AND PRODUCE

Local
volunteers

Food and
crafts



QUICK STOP

Coffee,
cake

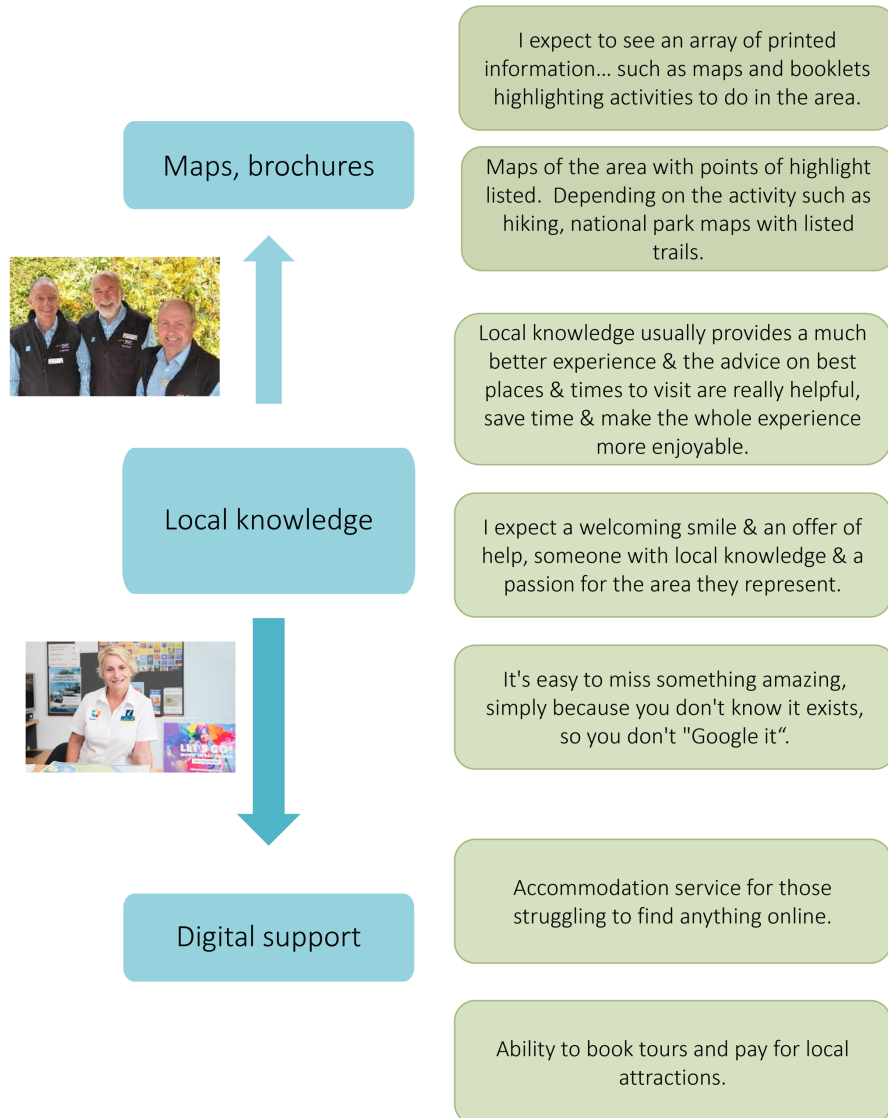
Toilets, picnic
area,
playground
(kids and
dogs)

⁶ Images credit to <https://www.visitnsw.com/visitor-information-centres>

1.3 Theme 1: Information first

It may seem obvious, but the primary reason to stop at a visitor information centre is for information. Maps and brochures are still preferred by many, although help is also needed to make sense of digital information, where it is either hard to decipher, or missing current information. Digital maps provided by Google or Waze are very useful but sometimes have their limits in finding remote accommodation properties or tracks in national parks.

Participants felt information about events (tickets and times) would also be very relevant in Tamworth.



1.4 Important functions of the VIC

Participants were asked, “From your own perspective what would be the most important functions of a visitor information centre?” Maps continue to be the most important function of the VIC, often in regard to current road conditions and directions.

Most important functions of the Visitor Information Centre	
Rank	
1	Maps
2	Amenities (toilets, waste and water)
3	Directions to regional activities like hiking in National Parks
4	Local attraction information (playgrounds, dog parks etc)
5	Tickets to the Entertainment Centre shows
6	Accommodation information
7	Local produce like honey and jams
8	Accommodation bookings
9	Aboriginal culture information
10	Historical or local story books

“The information is often far more up to date at Visitor Information Centres: accurate prices, recent changes to opening hours, accessibility etc.”

“I think a visitor centre is an essential part of a country town. It's somewhere that everyone knows they can go to find out more about where they are.”

“It is a one stop shop.”

1.5 Theme 2: local people and produce

The second theme relates to local people and produce: Finding a connection with the local culture either through talking to volunteers or watching craft demonstrations. Many visitors were also interested in accessing local produce, tasting local wines, jams and fruits and getting local insights on local food stops.



ARTISANS

Selling local products that you can rarely buy elsewhere”.

LOCAL PEOPLE

Love local artisan homemade by the artists things, they are unique and beautiful.

VOLUNTEERS

Demonstrations would be amazing or having local makers discuss their specialty would be a bonus.



I’m looking for uniquely crafted or made food items and souvenirs; ones that make me proud to say I’ve visited the area.

FOOD AND WINE

...local snacks like fudge, cookies , cheese or olives, local wine are handy to pick up as presents or treats to enjoy after a day's travel.

LOCAL PRODUCE

Wines, jams and preserves, locally made snacks, hand knitted goods, crafted wood and ceramic items, nonperishable foodstuffs that can be safely transported while travelling.



MARKETS

I could possibly be tempted by some unique artwork, but it's not something I focus on.

1.6 Interactions with people

Participants shared their experiences with individual VIC staff. This interaction can prove the difference between a mediocre and a memorable impression of a destination.

Examples of interactions with VIC people
It's nice to have a chat & get a local perspective on attractions.
The staff manning the centre were very friendly and engaging.
Nothing like talking to someone local who knows where everything is and how to get to it.
[The volunteer] was enthusiastic & really helpful, paid attention to my queries & spent time answering my questions.
The attendant was excellent, very knowledgeable with great alternative solutions.
One lady was 80 and just loved volunteering for the centre. She was incredible. We came out of there so excited and feeling valued as travellers to Armidale.
Sometimes the visitor information centre staff just find it an effort to be helpful and friendly. When that happens, we just get in the car and get out of there!
It is nice to have a place where you can chat through your ideas and understand what suits your holiday best. A nice way to talk to the local community.
I have always had a positive experience with Tourist Information Centres, and they have staff that are well familiar with their local area.
I really like chatting with the information assistants because they know the local area and they can recommend a really good eating place. ⁷



⁷ Images credit to <https://www.visitnsw.com/visitor-information-centres>

1.7 Theme 3: Quick stop

The third theme relates to taking a quick stop or break in a long road trip. Being in a visible location and offering easy access to toilets and other facilities such as a kids' playground, a dog's rest area, and a picnic area.



1.8 Design and appearance

In terms of design, participants reflected on the design of other information centres they had visited and made suggestions for the new Tamworth Visitor experience centre.



The Brambuk Cultural Centre in the Grampians National Park was highlighted for its ambient design which fits with the local landscape, as well as incorporating the indigenous heritage of the area.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE DESIGN
I think it would be amazing if the doorway was through a large guitar!
Have a cool kids' area where it shows all the activities for families.
A brown brick visitor centre with old heritage style interior. Lots of cool pictures of the local area and community spirit pictures.
Reference country music visually. E.g., shaped like the giant guitar. There are some cool examples in NZ, e.g., Matamata which is shaped like a house in Hobbiton.
Needs to have good parking space, an outdoor kids play area, and toilets.
A landscaped green area with shelters, and opportunities for visitors to have picnics & gatherings.
The design of the building could be a national design competition with input from for the brief by local people/stakeholders including the Kamilaroi/Gomerioi peoples.
ACCESSIBILITY
Having a ramp to the entrance as well as in the centre, if the centre is multi-storeyed, to cater to disabled people in wheelchairs.
Braille. Extended operating hours during peak holiday season.
Wheelchair and pram ramps, translation services for important information.
Wheelchair accessible and on one level for those who use walking sticks, wheeley walkers or have difficulty with steps.
Accessible for cars, caravans and motorhomes.

1.9 Obstacles to using a VIC

Participants were asked about any negative experiences, and what obstacles they face in enjoying a VIC experience. The majority of answers revolved around access, (especially for caravans), but opening hours were also a consideration.

We both tow the van, and we find that a few places we would have an issue getting into.

Maybe a sign at the entrance to a property or event to say that there is sufficient space to turn the caravan around, so we knew it was safe to enter.

Accessing without a car. We often travel using the train or bus.

Regionally they are not always open.

Sometimes they are cluttered and hard to move around.



1.10 Making new VICs relevant for current travellers

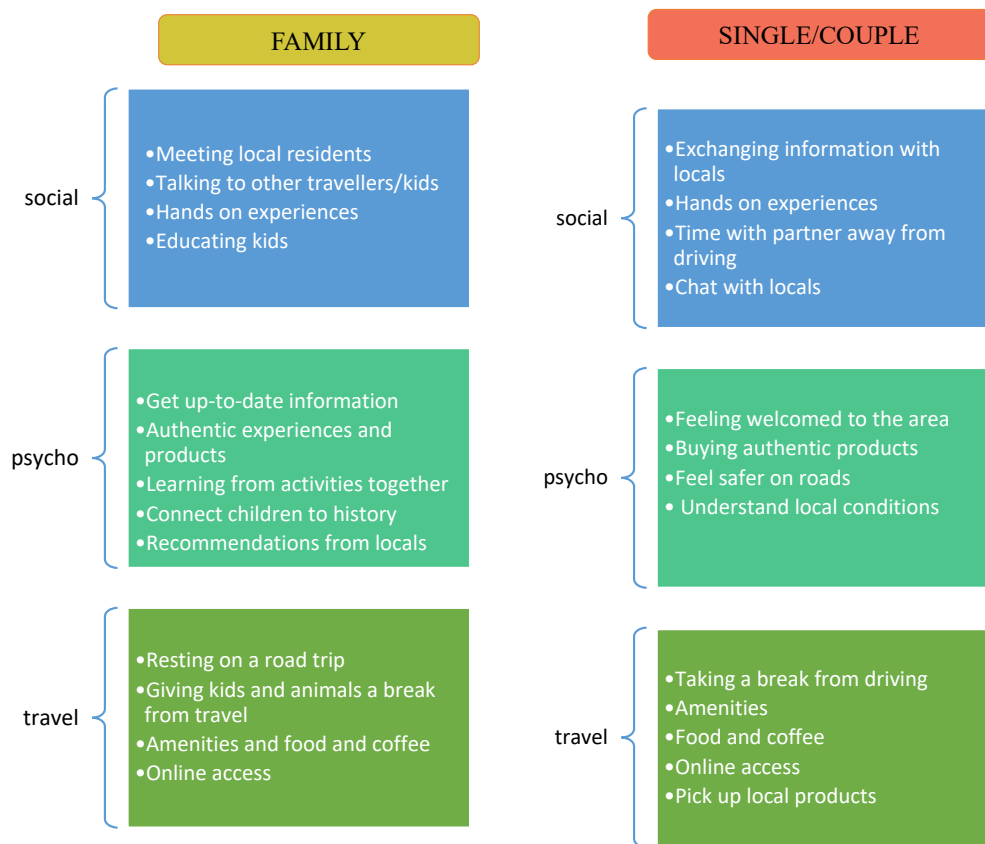
Importantly, most participants felt that VICs have a very relevant and useful purpose in their journeys and would like to see them continued. While they may need to modernise, the basic elements of information, people/produce and amenities are still a welcome and familiar element of current and future travel. It was felt that the design of a new VIC has many new possibilities while upholding these core functions.

Considering the ways that you currently look for visitor information online, how relevant do you think it is to have a visitor centre at all?
I think it's still quite relevant as I feel a Visitor Information Centre gives a sense of identity to a particular town, where visitors can stop by for a short rest whilst finding out information about the place, and to ask questions face-to-face with a centre staff (which provides more engagement and personalization).
The VIC website will be a vehicle to encourage people to the experience centre and the region - the VIC is an experience centre - so activities conducted there will require visitors to experience it live.
I think it is always a reassuring sight to see the familiar "I" when you enter a new town or region. I get a great sense of comfort knowing that I am going to get relevant, interesting and current knowledge from welcoming, friendly staff. So yes, I think it is highly relevant. But I think this might be generational. Younger people would probably prefer to use the internet on their phones to seek this information.
I think a visitor centre is an essential part of a country town. It's somewhere that everyone knows they can go to find out more about where they are. Not everyone is comfortable searching for information online anyway, so it caters for them.
For the road traveller it is a place to stop and have a break for coffee or light meal and use the bathroom facilities. You don't have to worry about finding a public bathroom, a parking spot and somewhere to eat. It is a one stop shop. You can pick up brochures of the area or if passing through possibly your onward destination.
I think it's very relevant and would be good and useful.
There are lots of people who still utilise centres. Particularly if they have useful amenities.
I think it's becoming less relevant, but it is nice to have a place where you can chat through your ideas and understand what suits your holiday best. A nice way to talk to the local community. I think it also represents that there are things to do in the town.
Not everyone is tech savvy so having a physical centre for visitor to seek information is important. Also is nice stop for visitor to take a break and rest.
I think when a Visitor Information like the one we saw in the video is available at many major attractions and it contains all the things shown in the video, people will be happy to visit, talk, buy things, spend time walking around, familiarize themselves with local news and history of the place, have a nice coffee with jam scones - I think this is more useful than looking online.
I tend to use Google to tell me about local info.
I think it is vital and must remain.
Definitely a Centre is a must. Nothing like talking to someone local who knows where everything is and how to get to it.
It's still important to have it so visitors feel more welcome, just in case people can't find some information online
It's very important to have a visitor centre because it builds a mountain of information to the local area and also, it's important to be greeted upon entering the area.
Having all the local information in one spot, together with local knowledge will always be superior to trying to track down information online, it's easy to miss something amazing, simply because you don't know it exists, so you don't "Google it" The information is often far more up to date at Visitor Information Centres, accurate prices, recent changes to opening hours, accessibility etc.
I still think there is a place for it, to physically hold something still has some meaning.

1.11 Key motivations to use a VIC

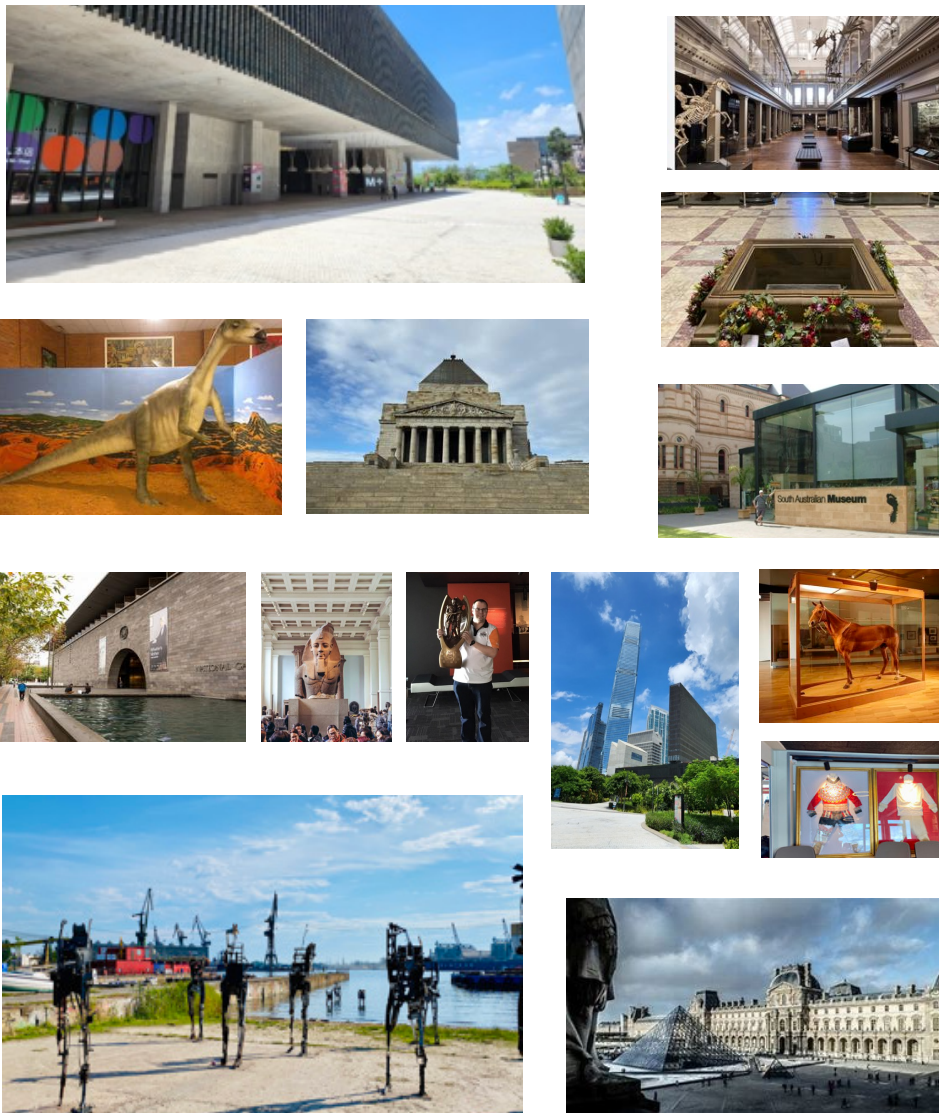
The motivations for families are often different from singles/couples when using a VIC. Analysis of the results throughout the forum suggested that the visit satisfies both social and psychological needs. The opportunity to meet local people makes visitors feel more welcome, while the access to local knowledge alleviates stress and fear, by being more certain about travel conditions, ticketing or weather patterns. Other travel motivations were also analysed as relating to accessing important amenities and information.

Planners should ensure they consider social, psychological and travel motivations in designing the travel experience to the new Centre.



2.0 Experiences at Museums

Participants were asked to reflect on their own experiences in museums around Australia and the world and to identify the aspects which made it a great museum experience. Participants shared photos of the diverse range of museums they had visited in Australia and overseas. From this point, they were then asked to think about the elements that could make a great new Country Music Museum in Tamworth.



2.1 Key experience themes

We often expect museum experiences to be interactive, but what do we mean by interactive? Which elements of the experience can be interactive and how do we achieve that? The responses from participants generated themes around the experience within the museum, as well as the spaces around the structure itself. The main themes from the study, which emerged from the web forum, revolve around **people and performances, entertainment and engagement** and the **spaces and sounds** of the building itself.

The image of Tamworth as a centre for country music brings **expectations** that this will be a fun dynamic and **entertaining place**. It is hoped, and somewhat expected, that the music festival will continue its atmosphere throughout the year.



Entertainment and engagement

Things to play

Things to do



People and performances

Guides and volunteers

Artists and buskers



Spaces and ambience

Harmonious

Ambient

2.2 Theme 1: Entertainment and engagement

Participants were asked to reflect on their own experiences to suggest ideas for a new museum in Country Music Museum in Tamworth. The first theme that emerged from the discussion related to an **expectation of entertainment and engagement** at a museum to enhance their experiences. Their responses highlighted the desire to be **ACTIVELY engaged**.



When asked to rank the most “important functions of the museum”, participants felt they would like to be “entertained” by exhibits and music. This was equally matched by “Learning about Country Music”. There was a sense that the best type of learning came mostly from active engagement.

From your own perspective what would be the most important functions of the museum		
Average Rank		
1	2.5	Be entertained by exhibits and music
1	2.5	Learn more about Country Music
3	3.4	Expand your horizons and knowledge
4	3.6	See something cool and exciting
5	4.8	Take photos of the iconic golden guitar
6	5.5	Take time out to de-stress
7	5.8	Buy mementos of the big golden guitar



“Play different instruments unique to country music.
 Use digital media to ‘compose’ a country song
 Sing along room.”

Entertainment ideas	Listening to stories can be a great way to learn more about what you may have already read.
	Video corner or room, headphones if people want to listen, [with] childhood photos or stories of some famous singers.
	Rotate displayed items regularly in the museum so that there is always something new in each visit.

“How awesome if you could even pay to record and keep a 3–4-minute tune.”

2.3 Theme 2: People and performances

While most experiences are expected to be active, some are also passive. Participants identified guides as an important element of the experience and recounted other museums where they made the visit special and personal. Small performances by buskers and musicians also offer opportunities for passive engagement to stop and listen.



2.4 Taking it all in...

Museum visitors appreciate different ways of information delivery, and it is important that museums cater for varying preferences. Participants were asked: *How do you like to receive information whilst in a museum, e.g., headsets, reading, videos, tour guide? Which do you prefer?*

As shown, a smaller ratio of participants prefers a guided experience, while others prefer to see things at their own pace.

Guided experience	I would prefer to receive relevant information via headsets, since I believe it would offer more of an immersive experience.
	Some reading, but not too detailed, a little map to hold, to generally find where things are.
	Often a tour guide is good as they have the information that is otherwise very hard to maintain in the time or manner for when you are in the museum. A brochure is always good to have as a guide. On occasion we have had ear plugs to guide us and that is okay, but you of course can't ask questions.
	I prefer tour guide info—I remember a very nice man at the Royal Flying Doctor Museum in Dubbo. He spent ages with us showing the museum and explaining all the hands-on exhibits.
At our own pace	Unless there are some intense or long stories behind, I don't want to use headsets. I prefer sometimes listening to the faint background music or watching the free video at a corner. Don't need tour guide unless I come with a tour. Just want to take my time and feel free .
	We always look into what is provided before we visit. So, if there is no guided tour /self-guided tour, then we will research the museum via sites such as Wikipedia or other people's posts on Trip Advisor or Google.
	...not really, always preferred to discover things for ourselves .
	Videos and interactive displays are always fun. Tour guides can be a bit frustrating because you have to go at their pace . I like to really take my time in museums.
	I like to get a pamphlet, so I get something to keep to help me tell people what we saw. When away, I like to keep my family and friends updated and this helps me to let them know exactly what we saw.
	Headsets are good as they allow you to proceed at your own pace .
I prefer to do my own thing during each visit. I seldom used a headset or followed a guided tour.	

2.5 It's the people that make the difference

The role of people in a museum cannot be underestimated. Whether they are volunteers, professional guides, artists or actors they interpret and educate the experience for visitors.



Volunteers and staff can make the difference between a mediocre experience and a memorable one.

Examples of important interactions with people

I overheard a guide in the Louvre talking about the Mona Lisa which was quite interesting. She was talking about the Mona Lisa smile and how it was an expression of pure contentment. The interest in the painting made more sense then.

The volunteer at the National Rugby League Museum was a tremendous help. Because my mother and I were the only ones there, he was really able to go through the displays.

At The Tower of London, they have free yeoman guided tours.

A very nice man at the Royal Flying doctor museum in Dubbo. He spent ages with us showing the museum and explaining all the hands-on exhibits.

2.6 Theme 3: Spaces and sounds

The third theme relates to the design of spaces and sounds in and around the museum. Many participants felt the outside design of the building needed to blend in, or be harmonious to the area, to reflect the history and culture of Tamworth.

Inside the museum it was very important to get the ambience right. As a museum of music, the sounds of the centre are an important part of the design: Creating the right look, feel and sound that relates to the immediate surroundings of the area.



2.7 Design and appearance

The design and appearance of the museum can be an important aspect in the total museum experience. Participants reflected on the impressive design of museums they had visited and made suggestions for the new Tamworth Visitor Experience Centre and Museum.

“My favourite is the Guggenheim Museum in New York. More so for the architecture than the actual stuff in the museum.”



The Guggenheim is world renowned for its unique and imaginative design. It attracts over 1.2 million visitors per year.

“M+ is one of the newest museums in Hong Kong. Its exhibitions were interesting, and the building was clean and modern.”



M+ is a slender tower raised atop a square podium. The monolithic form blends the design with the surrounding cityscape.

Suggestions for the design

I would love it to be built in a 'country style' — not modern.

A collection of memorabilia, outfits, album covers, gold records and other awards.

It could look like a big country shed.

I believe the Country Music Visitor Centre should look modern and incorporate other genres.

interactive displays, lots of photos about musicians and their music, with music playing.

Indoor and outdoor space would enhance the country music experience.

Lots of musical items and interactive displays.

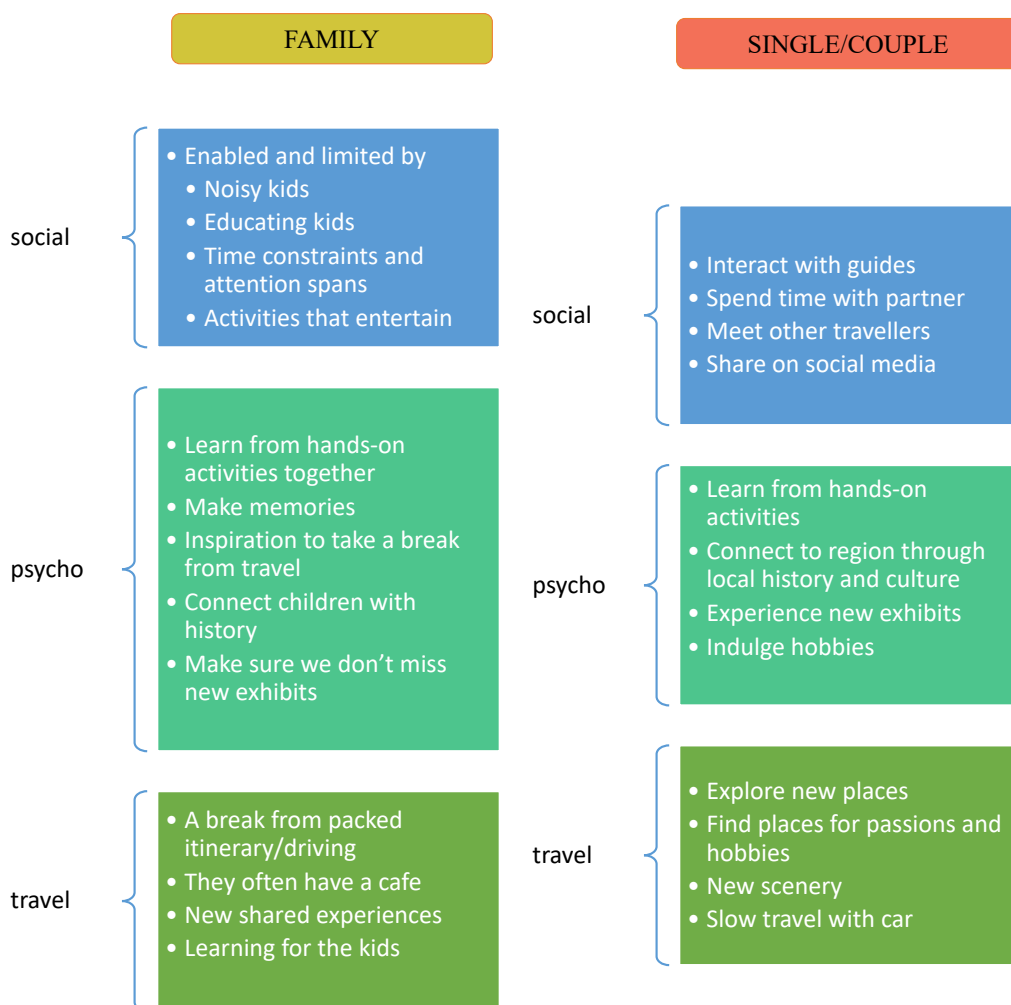
Unique building; Unique photographic opportunities.

2.8 Key motivations to visit museums

Analysis of the forum data reveals different motivations for families and older couples. Participants were asked: “What motivates you to visit museums when travelling in Country NSW?” The results relate to social motivations, as well as psychological motivations, particularly around learning and connection.

For families, the primary motivation relates to keeping the kids happy and entertained, and that includes visiting museums. Their visit may be limited by short attention spans, and a need for engaging entertainment.

For couples (and singles) the itinerary is slower, and driven by a desire to see something new, learn from hands-on experiences and indulge interest and passions—such as Country Music.



2.9 Travelling to museums

We explored the concept of travelling to see a good exhibit; asking whether visitors had travelled specifically to see a museum. The results showed us that not many participants would travel specifically to see an exhibition or museum, but some “fans” or specialist travellers will include it in an itinerary before they depart, or during a visit.

One participant told us about the popular new Punk Rock Museum in Las Vegas, which has people travelling to it from all over USA. The tour guides are ex- punk rock musicians.



nevenlatimer Was so stoked with Lil' Joe's tour, learnt alot and he was really interesting. worth changing my flight to Vegas to make it. Cool to see you briefly in the Jam Room 🙌

11w Reply

# responses	Which type of visitor are you likely to be to the new museum in Tamworth?
4	I'll be in Tamworth for a few days and am quite interested in looking at the golden guitar and museum. I'll probably spend a few hours there and look forward to getting to learn more about the history of Country Music.
3	I'll only be in Tamworth for a few days, while I visit friends and relatives in the region. I might stop in at the visitor centre to get some souvenirs for the kids.
2	I'll be in Tamworth overnight as I'm on my way to Brisbane/Sydney. I might stop at the visitor centre for a quick cup of coffee and take a photo of the big golden guitar.
1	I'll be in Tamworth for a whole week, while we take a good look around the region. I'll definitely spend a few hours at the museum as I'm a country music fan and I look forward to seeing the new exhibits they have there from Nashville.
3	I'm unlikely to be in Tamworth again anytime soon.

BARRIERS AND OBSTACLES

Participants were asked about any negative experiences, and what obstacles they face in enjoying a museum experience. While there were very few barriers mentioned, affordability and transport were the main concerns.

“[I would go if] I could afford it but may try to tie it in with a visit to family or friends to make it work.”

PRICING






Participants were asked about the cost of entry to museums and how much they would expect to pay. Taking their comments into consideration, the overall average cost was \$30.

“Most I'd pay is \$20, but really depends on the museum or exhibit.”

2.10 Traveller Journey Mapping (museums and VICs)

Participants were asked what sources they used for information and booking throughout their recent experiences. While friends' opinions were important at the inspiration stage, online sources were most used at the booking stage, and VICs were appreciated while participants were travelling.

As shown below, these trends were similar for both VIC (green row) and museum (red row) travellers.

	 Inspiration	 Shopping	 Booking	 Pre-trip	 In-trip
	Inspiration	shopping	booking	Pre-trip	In-trip
	Where did you look for inspiration?	Where did you compare offers/read reviews?	How did you book accomm & tickets?	How did you look for and prepare a list of must do's	How did you look for dining or activities
Friends	XXXXXXXX	X		XX	X
	XXXXXX	XX		XXX	X
Websites ^	XXXXX	X	XXX	X	X
	X	XXXX	XXXXXXXX	XXXX	XX
Google	XXXXXXXXXX	XX	X	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
	XXXXX	X		XX	XXXX
Trip advisor	XX	XXXXX		X	X
	X	XX		XXXX	
OTA *	XXX	XXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXX		
	X	XXX	XXXXXX		
Maps					X
	XX			X	XXX
VIC	X				XX
	X			XX	XXXXXX
Other	Xxxx Social media Magazines x TV x		Xxx Phone direct		
	X TV	XX Books	XX Phone direct		X @ Accom

X = number of mentions in this question

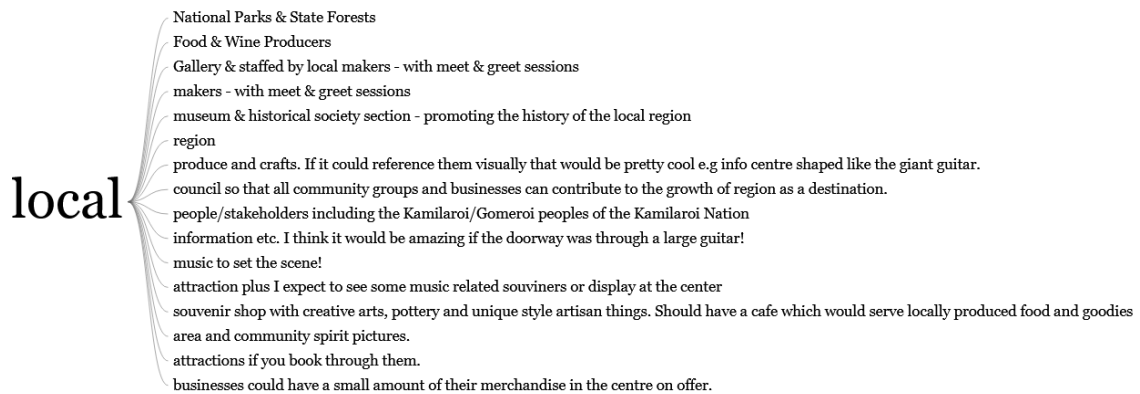
^ Websites included: State and regional tourism, accommodation, airline sites, tours

* OTA/booking included: Wotif, Booking.com, Agoda, Expedia, Wikicamps

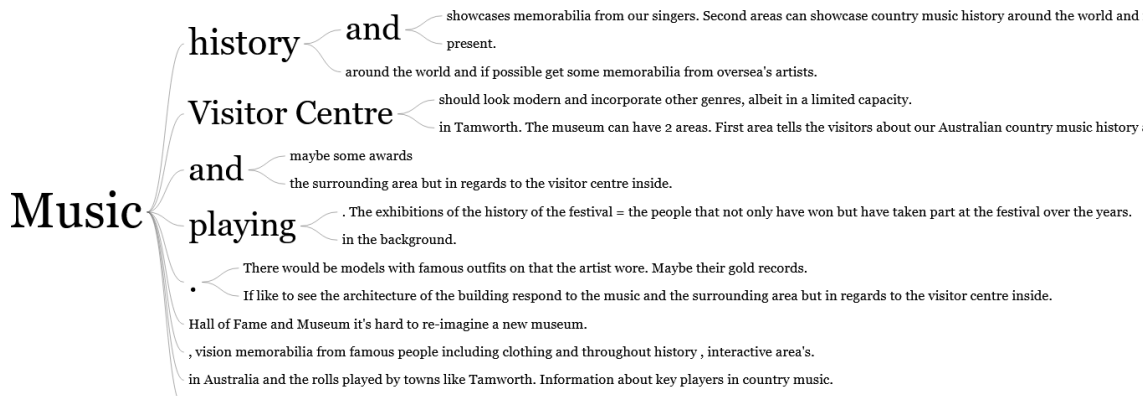
Imagining a new experience centre

Participants in both forums were asked to consider the design of a new experience centre (the Centre) in Tamworth that would create a connection between a VIC and Country Music Museum and Hall of Fame. The following comments contribute to an understanding of what will be important from a visitor's perspective.

The VIC participants stressed the importance of having a **strong local flavour** and physical **local presence** at the new Centre. Analysis of the way in which local elements can influence the design are shown in the word tree figure below, and include music, history, indigenous people, food, wine, crafts, produce, souvenirs and businesses.



Museum participants highlighted the importance of the music and the new centre that emanates a feeling that – **“this place is about music”**. The Centre as a whole should offer opportunities to listen, play and learn more about Country Music. It should be fun and lively while also reflecting the local atmosphere. The word tree below illustrates these ideas, and a full list of comments has been provided in a separate document.



KEY INSIGHTS

These online qualitative research forums offer some great primary insights on the perceptions of visitors to Visitor Information Centers (VICs) and Museums.

Some of the key insights to note are:

1. The importance of the customer journey

As shown in the figure 2.10 under traveler journey mapping, during the inspiration and booking phases, people predominantly used online sources such as websites, Google and OTAs to make their travel decisions. This highlights the number of touch points that a potential visitor can be engaged before arriving in the destination, and the importance of communicating with them early and consistently.

2. The local experience

Connecting with the “locals” was a theme that showed up throughout the research and this is reinforced by global trends that show strong desires by travellers to have authentic experiences. It is important to capture the essence of the region from design through to the product and experience offerings. Having local experts involved in the VEC is a great way to deliver this experience. Local also includes indigenous experiences.

3. Building Design

The design and appearance of the building can be a huge value add to the customer experience. Ensuring that the architecture integrates with the surrounding landscape, inspires imagination, and leverages the opportunity to incorporate locally sourced materials in the design will be an important consideration. Portland's [new airport terminal building](#) sets a great example for integrating local materials and how design thinking can lead to a world-class facility.

4. Functional vs Inspirational

There is no doubt that visitors are after a more engaging and immersive experience. However, it was also highlighted that things such as appropriate amenities and access to key information is still very important to the visitor. Getting the balance right with a carefully curated space will be critical in creating a positive experience.

5. Retail Offering

A well-thought-out retail strategy is another important element in designing a successful VEC. Having local artisan products and tastings are of high interest to visitors and can be an essential revenue stream for the facility.

Current travelers still feel VICs have an important role to play in visitor servicing and that the people who run these centers (staff, volunteers and guides) are critical to making the experience more relevant. Overall participants were very positive about the concept of combining the museum and visitor servicing experience, so long as they were still able to access the information they needed with ease.

STAGE TWO

Benchmark Visitor Information Centres prepared by:

HVH Group



2023

Benchmark Visitor Information Centres

TAMWORTH REGIONAL COUNCIL BUSINESS CASE

Document Set ID: 2186467
Version: 1, Version Date: 30/05/2024

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1. Introduction

HVH Group has been engaged by Destination Marketing Store (DMS) to support the strategic business case development for the construction and fit out of a new Visitor Experience Precinct (VEP). The precinct is to incorporate the current functions of the Visitor Information Centre (VIC), and consolidation / reimagination of the Country Music Hall of Fame, Wax Museum and Golden Guitar Museum and Photo/Instrument Gallery.

This undertaking serves as a benchmark exercise, strategically conducted to inform Tamworth Regional Council (Council) with a range of designs, fit outs, and associated costs to assist in defining a desired development baseline for a fit for purpose VEP that supports the Council's visitor experience strategy and expectations.

Five Visitor Centres were selected as benchmarks based on best practice in design, materials, content, amenity, service, and operations. These centres have also been chosen to assist the Council in its journey to develop an optimal VEP for Tamworth and that supports its regional partners.

The five visitor centres include:

1. Orange Visitor Information Centre
2. Mudgee Visitor Centre
3. Mossman Gorge Visitor Centre
4. Shepparton and Goulburn Valley Visitor Centre
5. Penguin Parade Visitor Centre

2. Background

This benchmarking exercise has been developed as part of the strategic development for the *Tamworth Regional Tourism Strategy & Business Case* for Council.

The project includes the development of a new regional visitor servicing model that extends across the Tamworth, Gunnedah, Liverpool Plains and Walcha local government areas celebrating the region's significant rural heritage that spreads across the Gunnedah, Walcha, and Liverpool Plains Local Government Areas, and creates the opportunity for a wider visitor dispersal throughout the region.

The central piece of this model is the development of new purpose-built tourism infrastructure precinct.

A possible greenfield site has been identified at the at the southern entrance to Tamworth city for develop the Tamworth Regional Tourism Precinct. The precinct project goals are to provide a world-class and innovative visitor experience in the New England and Northwest Region, grow Tamworth and consolidate its role as the primary regional centre, and secure its status as the *Capital of Country*.

Initial aspirations for the *Tamworth Regional Visitor Tourism Precinct* identified the following key elements:

- Visitor information and experience centre
- A consolidated museum, attraction, and exhibition space (relocating and incorporating the existing Country Music Hall of Fame, Country Music Wax Museum, National Guitar Museum collections and new regional based attractions)

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- Public space and amenities
- Commercial tenancies including retail and food and beverage (daytime and cocktail function).
- Amphitheatre
- Education initiatives including Indigenous culture as well as protein capital and historical Information.
- Relocation of the golden guitar and hands of fame displays to the new precinct.
- Purpose built back of house and support facilities.
- Car parking including the accommodation of coach and caravan parking.

A new visitor servicing model has been proposed based on a *hub and spoke model* to ensure the effective visitor engagement, experience, dissemination of information and tourism services for the region.

3. Methodology

The visitor centres were chosen based on the following criteria:

- Signature design as destination driver i.e., a facility of appeal, materials, structure, engaging visitor experience.
- Multi-functional facilities e.g., Visitor information combined with a gallery, educational experience, and/or museum, and amenity (café, retail, electric charging, parking, and proximity/location to town).
- Delivery of a high-quality visitor experience
- Regional in location.
- Connection to Country.
- Innovation e.g., green star accredited.
- Accessibility.
- Diverse operational models.
- Range in size, development and fit out cost.

Each venue (excluding Penguin Parade*) was contacted to obtain information regarding general information of the facility and operations, key decision-making processes regarding design, fit out, space, success factors and drivers, challenges, and opportunities as well as operating model. More specifically, the following was requested.

- Design development process
- Funding sources
- Site identification
- Land ownership or acquisition
- Building; size, components, amenities (public, car parking, changing places)
- Planning, build and fit out cost.
- Operational Model (Permanent vs Volunteer)
- Café and retail offering
- Curatorial methodology
- Visitation per year
- Office and administration facilities
- Loading/unloading areas.
- Storage
- Security

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- Operating costs (Approximate)
- Maintenance costs (Approximate)
- Exhibition climate control systems

4. Orange Visitor Information Centre (NSW)

4.1 Overview

The Orange Regional Museum and Cultural Square was funded jointly by the Federal Government which provided \$4 million, Orange City Council matched this with \$2 million, the State Government has provided the land, valued at \$1 million and it's planned another \$1 million will be provided through community fundraising.

A variety of robust public spaces lend themselves to engagement and activation and every surface of the architecture becomes a programmable element. The building's roof forms a stepped amphitheatre for events at the heart of a civic precinct and a folded lawn provides views back across the town.

Visitor Information Centre is co-located with the Orange Regional Museum cultural precinct neighbouring the public library and art gallery, and creating a precinct environment of buildings, landscape, and events.

*The Penguin Parade was chosen purely as a reference for its modern design, use of space, interpretations, amenities (including car parking, coach parking), and its destination appeal.

4.2 Site Details

Table 1 Orange VIC Details

Title	Detail
Contact:	Scott Maunder, Director Community and Cultural Services
Email:	SMAunder@orange.nsw.gov.au
Phone:	(02) 6393 - 8000
Website:	https://www.visitnsw.com/destinations/country-nsw/orange-area/orange/visitor-information-centres/orange-visitor-information-centre
Location:	Orange/Wiradjuri Country: 151 Byng St, Orange, NSW 2800
Population:	42,000
VIC Visitation	39,000/annum
Facility Details:	AREA: 1300m2 Built 2016 \$4 million from the Federal Government \$1million land donated by the State Government, Total cost to build at \$8.2million. Fit out cost for Visitor Information portion \$300,000 (160m2). Crown Land.
Architect:	Crone Architects. Sulman Medal Award winner in 2017 – Public Architecture.
Features/Functional Areas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-functional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Information ○ Café ○ Retail ○ Museum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Permanent exhibit

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- Temporary exhibit
 - Loading area
 - Workshop
 - Amphitheatre (outdoor)
 - Access to rooftop garden (grass lawn)
 - Public Toilets
 - Public Domain Art
 - Street Parking
 - Adjacent to Art Gallery and Library (precinct)
 - Electric vehicle charging point.
 - Coach parking

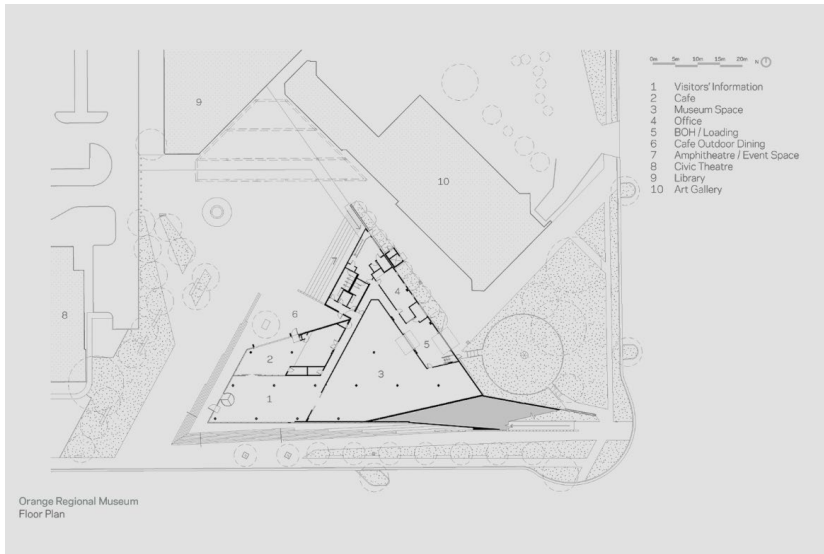


Image: Floor Plan – Visitor Information Centre

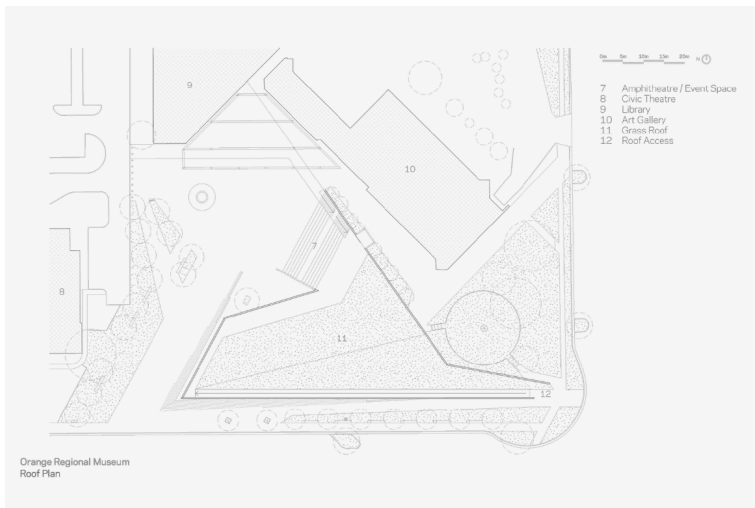


Image Roof & Landscape Plan – Orange Visitor Centre

4.3 Images

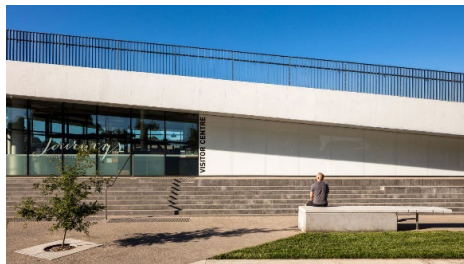


Image: Courtesy of Crone Partners

Image Courtesy of Troy Pearson



Image: Courtesy of Crone Partners

Image: Courtesy of Crone Partners

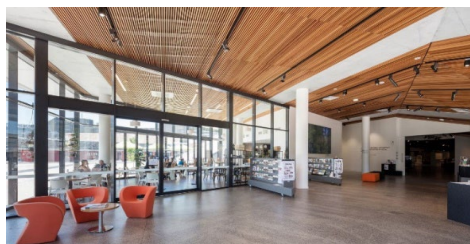


Image: Courtesy of Crone Partners

Image: Courtesy of Crone Partners

4.4 SWOT

The following table lists the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the Orange Visitor Information Centre (NSW).

Table 2 – SWOT Analysis - Orange VIC

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The VIC is located at the edge of the city. It is integrated with a museum and entertainment arts precinct with library and performing arts centre. Paid Council staff for VIC which double as Museum Front of House Staff Museum entry is free. Separate permanent museum staff (curator, marketing) Existing Visitor Site for 30yrs and was rebuilt in the same location i.e., people know where it is. Design assists with thermal regulation/insulation of the museum i.e., minimal specialist climate control required i.e., Grass roof and minimal windows. Outsourced café operator (6yrs) Coach Parking available Car parking available Active outdoor amphitheatre Integrated Public art. Attractive unique architectural building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unique architecture can be difficult with configuring displays. Lack of curatorial and management staff to manage the curating and logistics of visiting exhibitions.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail is representative of regional products only and marginal revenue driver. Could do more. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational tension at times with Space divided between VIC and Museum and who “owns” what.

4.5 General Commentary / Key Learnings

4.5.1 Organisational Structure

- VIC / Museum is on Crown land (Council Manages):
- Council funds 10 (4 FTE) staff 7 days per week.
- Visitor information centre staff double as museum front of house staff and sells retail items.
- Council funds 4 separate professional paid museum staff for curation, marketing, logistics for rotating exhibitions.
- Council also funds 3 paid professional staff, Curator, Education, Marketing and Sales.
- Café operations are outsourced with a rental fee. Current operators have been in place for 6 years.
- No Volunteers only paid professional staff.

4.5.2 General

- VIC counts 39,000 annual visitors (approximately 750 people per week) for visitor centre and museum.
- Only closed 2 days per year.
- Museum entry is free.
- The VIC colocation with the museum was operationally driven i.e., using VIC staff to operate museum.
- Café is outsourced by Council. Council conducted a rigorous tender process and was “pretty hard” on the process and operator to get the right fit.
- VIC sells local produce and wine, focused only on regional representation. They encourage people to visit the wineries and attractions. As a result, retail accounts for \$200K in revenue with cost of goods at \$160K.

4.5.3 Facilities Building and Operations

- The original VIC has been in the current location for 30yrs. Council wanted to integrate the museum within this precinct and in the process included the VIC within the museum as the main driver to capitalise on operational efficiencies, location and land controlled by Council.
- Council developed a “brief of their requirements”, conducted an EOI process that required conceptual design returns and then conducted a tender process with short listed entities.
- The process from end to end had a 10-years duration, for the design, planning and funding process.
- The design includes a grass roof top, minimal windows which assists with climate control within the facility. The main entry has a revolving door which also aids in climate control within the building and was the first revolving door installed in Orange.
- VIC portion of the facility occupies approximately 160m².
- There is a shared loading dock for museum and operations (café, VIC).
- The unique space, its architectural form is a positive as an attractor, however, can be challenging to fit exhibits within the museum due to the challenging obscure spaces and angles of the building.
- The site and building are inclusive of Car parking, Coach parking, Electric Vehicle parking, changing places amenities, loading dock and workshop.

4.5.4 Cost Information from the Facility

High-level costs are highlighted in Table 3 below and include VIC and Museum operations and facilities costs per annum unless specifically identified.

Table 3 Costs – Orange VIC

Costs	
Capital Costs	
Building	\$9m
Fit out (VIC portion only 160m ²)	\$300K
Annual Operating Costs	
Inclusive of Salaries and Wages, Maintenance, Retail, VIC Stock, Cleaning, Outgoings, Rates, Administration, Operations (curatorial etc.)	\$350K - \$400
Revenue	
Retail and Food and Beverage	\$150K - \$ 170K

5. Quantity Surveyor – Costing

The Quantity Surveyor opinion of probable 2023 cost to construct and fit out the Orange Visitor Information Centre is approximately \$13.629m.

Please refer to Appendix A – Northcroft QS Report for a detailed breakdown of costs.

6. Mudgee Visitor Centre (NSW)

6.1 Overview

The Mudgee’s Midwestern Regional VIC is in the centre of Northwestern NSW. The building is a reacquired heritage building (Cudgegong Shire Facility) originally owned by Council and given to the State over 30yrs ago. The State operated this as offices for 20yrs then was empty for an extended period and in recent times, Council asked for the building back and it was purchased for \$1.

The transformation in 2021 has paid off – Mudgee Region Tourism took the gold medal for visitor information services at the Australian Tourism Awards.

The original location of the old VIC was a half block away from its new site but is now located in a prevalent site on the highway and walking distance to Mudgee Town Centre.

The old Cudgegong building has been fitted out into office spaces, workshops, and meeting spaces across two levels, and a new modern architectural building has been attached which contains art exhibition space for visiting collections, visitor information and tourism centre.

The facility is leased to Mudgee Regional Tourism Inc. (MRT) who manages and operates the facility under a lease agreement with Council. Midwestern Regional Council provide professional staff to the VIC (managed by MRT) and manages all exhibitions. Council is also responsible for leasing and managing the on-site café space.

6.2 Site Details

Table 4 Mudgee VIC Details

Title	Detail
Contact:	Simon Jones, Director Community, Midwestern Regional Council Renee French, Visitor Centre Manager
Email:	admin@visitmudgeeregion.com.au council@midwestern.nsw.gov.au
Phone:	(02) 6378 - 2850
Website:	https://www.visitmudgeeregion.com.au/#home
Location:	Mudgee/Wiradjuri Country: 90 Market Street, Mudgee
Population:	12,559
VIC Visitation	33,000
Facility Details:	Cost \$8.1m. Year built: 2021. AREA: 1,244m2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSW Government Regional Visual Cultural Grant Fund \$2.3m • Mid-Western Regional Council \$3m • Federal Government \$1.5m through Building Better Regions Fund
Architect:	BKA Architecture https://bka.com.au/
Features/Functional Areas:	Mullit-functional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor Information • Co-located with at the Mudgee Arts Precinct • Multi-level • Cultural Workshop • Retail – local produce and wines • Cafe • Toilets

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exhibition for visiting collections.• Administration offices• Car Park parking• Coach parking is nearby but not at the centre.• Electric vehicle charging station is nearby, but the centre is investigating putting in 2 charging stations.• Solar power• Public Art
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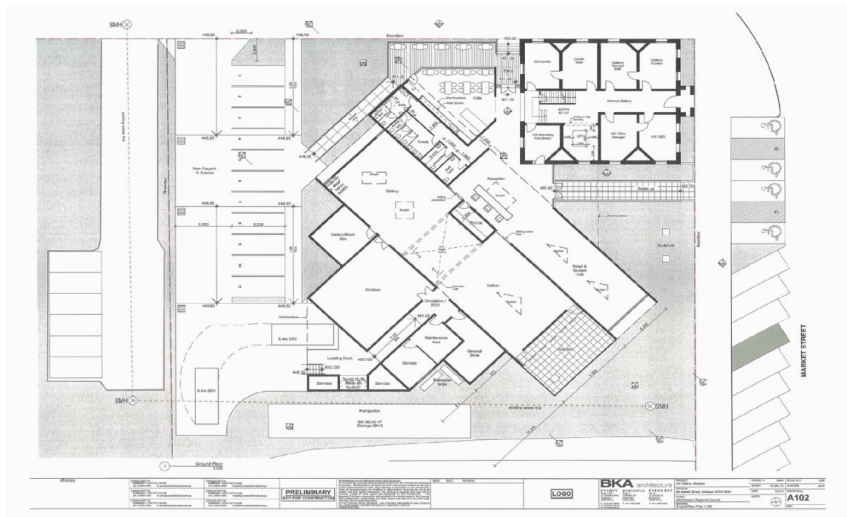


Image: Architectural Plan – Mudgee Visitor Centre

6.3 Images



Image: Heritage building and Integration of the New Structure



Image: Main Entry and feature Artwork



Image: View of Gallery Space



Image: Aerial view of new VIC

Photos: by Brett Boardman

6.4 SWOT – Mudgee VIC

Table 5 – SWOT Analysis – Mudgee VIC

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VIC is visibly located at the edge of town right on the highway (walking distance from the town centre) • Paid professional staff by council, managed by Tourism body that leases the space. • Professional curated art exhibits by council providing additional visitation that normally would not pass through a VIC. • Sale of local produce and wine • Must be a paying partner to supply produce or wine. • Separate loading dock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two levels are a barrier to access. • Lack of storage for produce and wine for retail, visitor collateral. • Zoning constraints • Café offering and operational constraints due to Zoning. • No commercial kitchen limits catering options. • Minimal food and beverage offering • Expensive outgoings due to climate control requirements for gallery • Parking nearby but not directly at the VIC • No Coach parking but nearby
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of Electric Vehicle Charging stations • Hiring additional staff for the gallery exhibitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to lease café space due to zoning / trade restrictions. • Loss of visitation due to poor food and beverage offering

6.5 General Commentary / Key Learnings.

6.5.1 Organisational Structure

- VIC / Gallery is leased and managed by a Not-for-Profit organisation:

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- **Mudgee Region Tourism Inc.** (lead for local tourism, Destination Marketing, industry development and visitor servicing for the midwestern local government area: est. 2001)
- Governed by Constitution; operates under the Association and Corporations Act 2009.
 - Objects of the Constitution:
 - Work with its members to be the leading Tourism organisation for the region.
 - Maintain the region status as a prime destination in NSW.
 - Deliver and unforgettable experience for our customers.
 - Deliver consistent and exceptional services to enable economic development in the region while also maintaining the cultural integrity of the region. Ref: *Mudgee Region Tourism Incl Constitution*
- Governance Board of 8 Volunteers included 1 elected Counsellor.
- Managed by a CEO and supported by a team of 10 professionals.
- Memberships/Partnerships and sponsorships
 - Joining fee initially then annual subscription fee.
- Funded by Partnership Organisations and Council
- Council funds paid staff 7 days per week.
- Council also funds 3 paid professional staff, Curator, Education, Marketing and Sales.
- No Volunteers
- Represents 3 small regional areas who have small satellite town specific information centres.

6.5.1.1 General Front of House Operations

- VIC counts 33,000 annual visitors for visitor centre which is done manually and measured by engagement however, they are investigating door counters to assist with overall numbers.
- More visitors go through the gallery, but VIC does not count them unless there is engagement with the VIC staff.
- Gallery is free.
- Gallery integrated with VIC provides a diverse range of visitors and culture.
- Visitation drops after a while, but when a new exhibition arrives, visitation increases significantly which drives more VIC engagement.
- Café is outsourced by Council.
- “Design is Beautiful and appealing”
- VIC sells local produce and wine.
 - Must be a partner to have products in the VIC for sale.
 - VIC buys produce and wine wholesale.
- Gallery has separate storage to VIC.
- VIC store is too small, would like additional storage for produce, wine, and tourism collateral.
- Offices are closed from public which does not allow for collaboration with public.
- Would prefer a smaller fixed information desk and more open dynamic space near brochures to engage with the public in a more relaxed and open communication.

6.5.2 Facilities Building and Operations

- Site was located ½ a block away and on the highway now and much better location with being in the town.
- New design commissioned to build and to incorporate the heritage building.
- Power is supplemented with Solar powered but no battery. Therefore, annual operating cost for electricity alone at \$120-\$130K/annum.
- Total maintenance and operating costs (excluding S&W) is \$450k/yr.)

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- Gallery is 220sqm plus additional storage space; both are climate controlled due to the gallery exhibitions.
- There is an appropriate loading dock.
- Construction included the base build and fit out including the Café.
- Three (3) dedicated Council staff for the Gallery, Curator, Marketing and Education. Council stated was not enough due to the time to curate 4 to 5 exhibitions per year, but the exhibitions drive more visitation.
- Café is outsourced and council leases the space.
 - Due to Zoning issue, the café is restricted to hours of operations i.e., 9am – 5pm (VIC hours)
 - A commercial kitchen could not be built due to zoning, so food offer and quality is limited.
 - Unfortunate shortfall. As patrons want a more substantial offering.
- Recommendation if anything is to keep the gallery/museum on 1 level. They had to install a lift into the heritage building which turned out great but costly for accessibility.

6.6 Cost Information from the Facility

High-level operational.

Note: All financials presented are an opinion of probable operating costs (unless described otherwise).

Table 6 Costs Mudgee VIC

Costs	
Capital Costs	
Building (Total Building)	\$8.1m
Fit out (Total Building)	\$300,000
Annual Operating Costs	
Other Operational Cost	Not provided
Salaries and Wages (VIC only)	Not provided
Maintenance (Council maintenance budget is separate)	\$450K/yr.
Revenue	
Retail (F&B & Retail)	Not provided
Admissions	N/A

7. Quantity Surveyor - Costing

The Quantity Surveyor opinion of probable 2023 cost to construct and fit out the Mudgee Visitor Information Centre is approximately \$10.376m.

Please refer to Appendix A – Northcroft QS Report for a detailed breakdown of costs.

8. Shepparton & Goulburn Valley Visitor Centre (VIC)

8.1 Overview

The Shepparton & Goulburn Valley Visitor Centre shares a purpose-built facility that accommodates the Visitor Centre, The Shepparton Art Museum Gallery, the Kaiela Art Gallery, a Children's area, gallery as well as café and retail for each area.

The Shepparton Art Museum (SAM) is the first museum in Australia to achieve a 6 Star Green Star (Design & As Built) rating, leading this type of public development in sustainable design.

The Sustainable features include Passive House principles to deliver an energy efficient, thermally comfortable, healthy indoor environment.

The Visitor Centre is the only accredited VIC providing visitor information and services for the Shepparton & Goulburn Valley region including Mooroopna, Tatura, Murchison, Dookie and Merrigum area. The VIC was designed to:

- Be a permanent home for the Visitor Centre and an exciting entrance for visitors to Shepparton.
- Be an inspiring, community hub for all to meet and socialise with friends and family.
- Present contemporary, international exhibitions of relevance to the diverse cultural communities.
- Provide opportunities for learning, be challenged, think about, emotionally engage with, and directly create art.
- Provide access to the art collections and significant ceramics collection in unique and engaging ways.
- Provide a home for Kaiela Arts to present Indigenous art and support local Indigenous artists.
- Support local artists in the development and presentation of their art.
- Provide engaging experiences of nature and art in the areas surround the Victoria Park Lake Precinct.

8.2 Site Details

Table 7 Shepparton & Goulburn Valley Details

Title	Detail
Contact:	Anthony Nicolaci, Manager - Economic Development Ingrid Thomas – Team Leader Visitor Economy Maree Glasson – Visitor Experience Coordinator
Email:	Anthony.nicolaci@shepparton.vic.gov
Phone:	(03) 5832 - 9848
Website:	https://sheppandgv.com.au/see-and-do/greater-shepparton-visitor-centre
Location:	Shepparton/Yorta Yorta Country: 530 Wyndham St, Shepparton VIC 3630. Located at the edge of town on the Goulburn Valley Hwy. (A39)
Population:	67,000
VIC Visitation	32,693 (1/7/22 to 31/6/23)
Facility Details:	AREA 5,300m2. Final budget included funding, grants, and private donation from: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. \$15.35m – Greater Shepparton City Council 2. \$10m – State Government 3. \$15m – Federal Government

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	<p>4. \$7m – SAM Foundation (plus additional \$8m for investment endowment to support future operational costs). Total cost \$49 million. Opened Nov 2021</p>
Architect:	Denton Corker Marshall https://dentoncorkermarshall.com/
Features/Functional Areas:	<p>Multi-functional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor Centre • Arts Studio • Artist in Residence • Art Gallery/Museum • Café • Retail (selling souvenirs and regional produce/products includes alcoholic products) • Childrens Gallery • Community Gallery • Workshops • Terrace Bar and Multi-function Space • Library • Administration offices • Boardroom • Research laboratory • Outdoor amphitheatre • Multi-Level • Loading Dock • Bike parking • You can charge your electric vehicle at our EV charging stations in the carpark.

8.3 Images

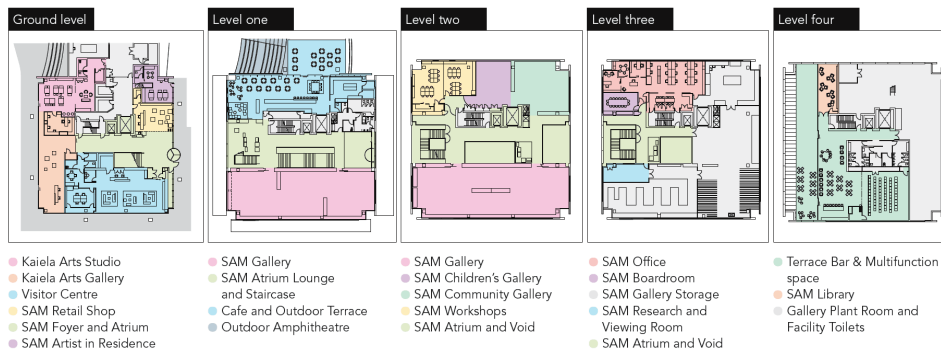


Image: Floor plans of the VIC and Gallery

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Images Courtesy of Denton Corker Marshall



Images Courtesy of Denton Corker Marshall



Images Courtesy of Shepparton Council



Image courtesy of Shepparton Council

8.4 SWOT Analysis

Table 8 – SWOT Analysis – Shepparton & Goulburn Valley VIC

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location on the highway at the edge of town. • Kerb appeal, Architectural signature building • Walking distance to town and cycling track. • Destination facility due to art galleries and changing exhibitions. • Accessible, Changing Places, • Electric vehicle charging, shared coach, and car park on site. • Loading Dock. • Discounts for Seniors Card and Carers Card holders (some exclusions apply) • Assistance dogs welcome • Café and Function space as part of the whole SAM/VIC. • Long Vehicle and disabled parking. • Picnic area / BBQ and playground. • Outdoor performance/event space. • Viewing deck/lookout. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough power points • Limited wall space for interpretive displays • Architecturally designed wayfinding signage (external and internal) - which while it looks nice and complements the building design, is frequently missed by visitors and source of common complaints. • Not enough accessible parking • Not enough parking for Conferences when capacity is over 150 pax. • Art Gallery Lighting, low lounges, and polished concrete floors not suitable for VIC. • The building was designed for seamless flow between the spaces, but the 4 different building tenants have not been able to align their opening times. Needed to be grater separate entries and space differentiation between the tenancies. • VIC does not have control over centrally controlled lighting, climate control and doors
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider what digital displays will be part of the VIC early in Design to ensure adequate wall space, power, and data. • Intuitive wayfinding improvements. • Increased accessible parking and immediately adjacent to the building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of revenue due to lack of parking for conference goers • Loss of budget due to diminishing SAM Foundation dollars and ability to continuing to raise funds. • Gallery entrance fees may need to be charged in the future for the Gallery Spaces.

8.5 General Commentary / Key Learnings

8.5.1 Organisational

- Shepparton & Goulbourn Valley Council owns the site and building and sub-leases space to:
 - Shepparton Art Museum Ltd. For:
 - The Shepparton Art Gallery,
 - Sub-leases Café and Function spaces
 - Kaiela Arts, an incorporated not-for-profit organisation for:
 - Indigenous Art Gallery and workshop spaces.
- Council operates the Visitor Information Centre
- VIC is staffed by both paid staff and volunteers.
- Philanthropic organisation established in 2013 as a company ltd by guarantee.
- Council funds the Visitor Centre
- Funds raised by the Foundation are used for:
 - Contribution towards building works.
 - Ongoing running of the museum
- Appeals, targeted campaigns, including “Tree of Giving” for public pledges (Gold (\$300), Silver (\$200) or Bronze (\$100) leaf); New SAM' lapel pins for \$20.
- Large individual donations were pledged from local philanthropists including:
 - Copulos Family – 1.5m over 10 years (the main entry foyer to the SAM building is named in their honour).
 - Anne and Peter McAmish - \$250,000 (the building's board room named after Anne McAmish, recognising this and her contribution as a SAM Foundation board member))
- Grants e.g.
 - Hugh D.T. Williamson Foundation - \$450,000
 - William Buckland Foundation - \$500,000
 - Margaret Atwood Testamentary Trust - \$500,000 (local charity)
- Foundation continues to fundraise for the ongoing operations of the building.
- The destination brand “Shepparton & Goulbourn Valley” sees their Visitor Centre with a primary focus on the Greater Shepparton municipality, but also leveraging major attractions / interest points in surrounding municipalities – both in the print materials they display, and their digital activities (Website, social media, etc). They also assist visitors with information on other Victorian regions, and limited interstate information.

8.5.2 General

- Planning, consultation, approvals, and build took 5.5 years.
- The site was chosen based on a feasibility study/business case, which formed the basis of a report to Council which identified 5 site options and discounted 3 others. After public consultation, Council endorsed the recommended location at the selected site.
- Shepparton Council owned the land with part of the land commercially leased. The lease coming to an end facilitated this space becoming the final location.
- The fit out of the Visitor Centre was included in the total costs.
- All galleries are currently free of charge for entry however each gallery charges for workshops.
- There are three retail outlets each operated by their respective tenants.
- VIC owns and operates general Visitor retail.
- Kaiela retail
- SAM retail

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- Retail suppliers must submit an EOI to sell products. Registration is online on the VIC website.
- The SAM sells at 35% above wholesale on consignment only.
- Products/suppliers are given a three-month trial, if products don't sell, they are returned with any payment of sold stock.
- Any display, stands must be of high quality and approved by SAM.
- All suppliers must become a registered supplier of Shepparton City Council

8.5.3 Facilities Building and Operations

- 6 Star Green Star construction
- The building has been built on a floodway. To overcome this obstacle the site, has a small footprint and built over five levels. Sustainable features include Passive House principles to deliver an energy efficient, thermally comfortable, and healthy indoor environment.
- Landscaping included 80 mature trees and 35,000 tube stock.
- Building maintenance is covered by the Council and its respective budget.
- VIC portion of the building is 223sqm (excluding staff toilets which are shared with Art Museum shop staff)

8.6 Cost Information form the Facility.

Table 9 Costs

Costs	
Capital Costs	
Building (Total Building)	\$49m
Fit out (Total Building)	
Annual Operating Costs	
Other Operational Cost	\$19,800
Salaries and Wages (VIC only)	\$245,365
Maintenance (Council maintenance budget is separate)	
Revenue	
Retail (F&B & Retail)	\$27,000
Admissions	N/A

8.7 Quantity Surveyors - Costing

The Quantity Surveyor opinion of probable 2023 cost to construct and fit out the Shepparton and Goulburn Valley Visitor Information Centre/Art Gallery is approximately \$56.336m.

Please refer to Appendix A – Northcroft QS Report for a detailed breakdown of costs.

9. Mossman Gorge (Qld)

9.1 Overview

The Mossman Gorge Visitor Centre was contracted by the Indigenous Land Council to redevelop a two-hectare former sugar cane field into a new Visitors and Training Centre. Located adjacent to the Mossman River on the edge of the Daintree Rainforest, the project involved a variety of works carried out for the construction of three separate buildings.

The Visitor Centre is a destination experience to introduce visitors to the Daintree and culture of the Kuku Yalanji people, as an Indigenous ecotourism development into Mossman Gorge World Heritage site.

The Centres' facilities include Visitor information, Indigenous art gallery, café and gift shop, parking, a shuttle service, an Indigenous training centre team (National Indigenous Training Academy (NITA)). The training centre has been designed to provide market leading training and employment programs for empowering and growing an Indigenous workforce.

A key driver of establishing the Visitor Centre was to address the major problems that faced the Mossman Gorge area was the high amount of tourist traffic that would use the roads leading into the Gorge. With the area part of the World Heritage Listed Daintree Rainforest, it was vital that every effort is made to ensure the protection of this beautiful landmark for future generations.

The Gorge is a carefully choreographed tour that enables the Mossman Gorge Team to keep the area protected and provide information and education to visitors.

9.2 Site Details

Table 10 Mossman Gorge Details

Title	Detail
Contact:	Bryce Madgwick
Email:	bryce.madgwick@voyages.com.au
Phone:	(07) 4099 - 7000
Website:	https://www.mossmangorge.com.au/
Location:	Mossman / Kuku Yalanji Country 212r Mossman Gorge Rd, Mossman Gorge QLD 4873
Population:	1,937
VIC Visitation	300,000/yr.
Facility Details:	AREA: 2,252m2 \$20m June 2012, inclusive of fit out. 90% indigenous staffing
Architect:	Fisher Buttrose (No longer in Business) Construction contractors FKG Group https://www.fkg.com.au/construction/
Features/Functional Areas:	Multi-functional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodates 20 students. • 90% Indigenous employment rate • Indigenous Art Gallery • Café • Retail (indigenous artwork and products) • Commercial training kitchen • Parking for 250 cars

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bus/Coach parking for 14 Coaches• Electric car bays x 2• Restroom and showers• Business events and team building• Shuttle bus (Fee)• Green Travel leader accreditation• Eco Tourism certified
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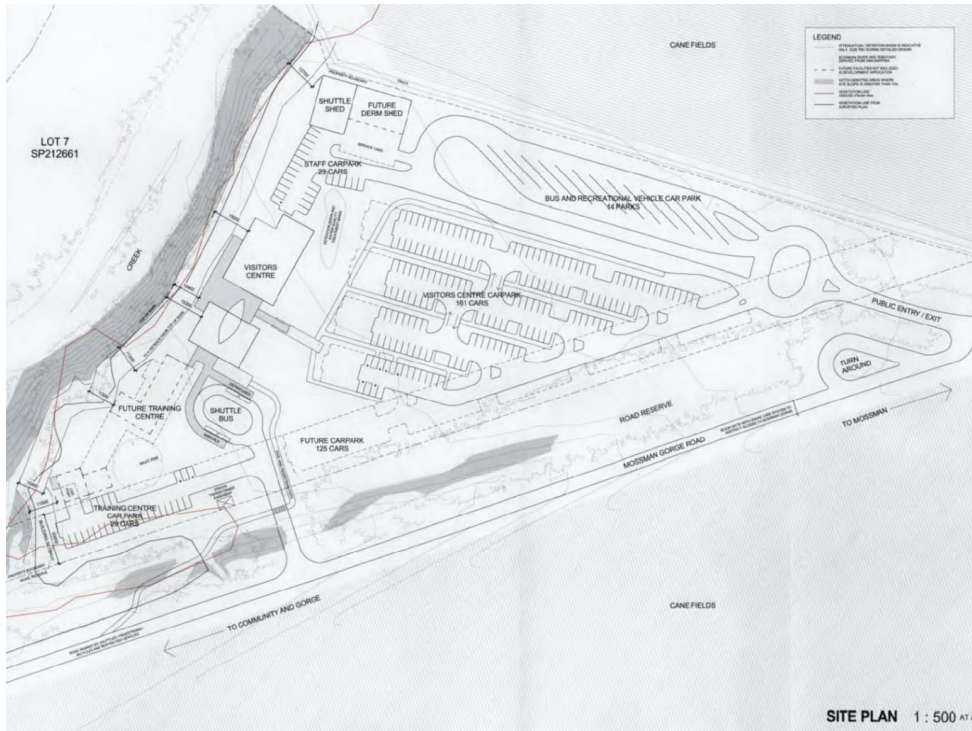


Image: Visitor and Training Centre Site Plan

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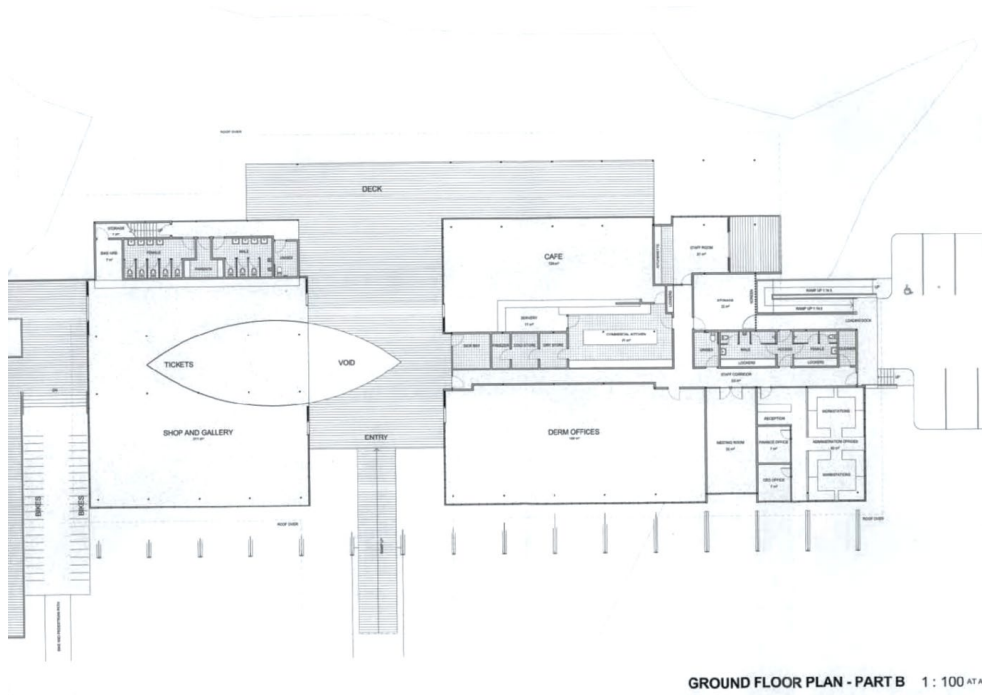


Image: Visitor Centre Main Gallery and Information Centre Building



Image: Training Centre Ground Floor Plan

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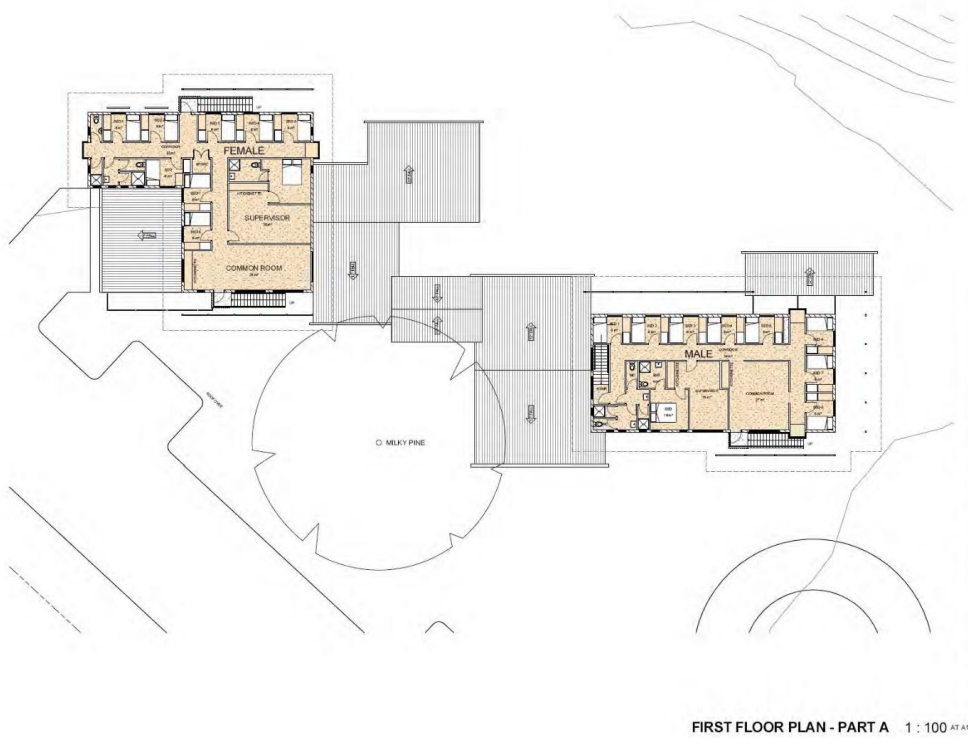


Image: Training Centre First Floor Plan

9.3 Images



Image by: FKG Group



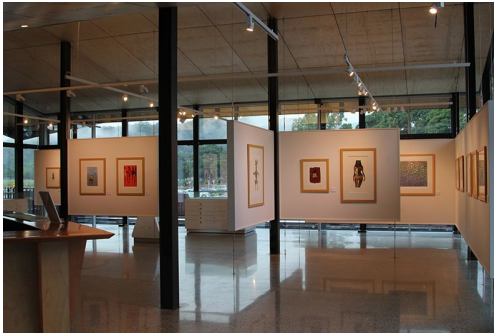
Image by: FKG Group



Image by: FKG Group



Images courtesy of Mossman Gorge Visitor Centre



Images courtesy of Mossman Gorge Visitor Centre

9.4 SWOT Analysis

Table 11 – SWOT Analysis – Mossman Gorge

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Architectural design kerb appeal. • 66% Aboriginal staff (currently, has been as high as 90%). • Easy to maintain facility. • Art sales goes back to artists. • Recreation Vehicle Parking • Coach Parking • EV charging station. • Guided Tours • Accredited Training Facility • Solar powered • Recycled water (roof run off capture and storage) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage for all components. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Art ○ Consumables Tourism ○ Consumables Facilities ○ Food Stores • Had to convert a staff disabled toilet into storage until mezzanine storage can be built.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of any students that wish to be tourism certified, not just indigenous students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding staff within the region

9.5 General Commentary / Key Learnings

9.5.1 Organisational

- 75 paid staff (currently 66% indigenous, lost some staffing numbers during Covid)
- No volunteers
- Accredited training facility for Tourism Certificate III
- Retail managed in-house.
- Café managed in-house.
- Art Gallery managed in house.
- Art curated by in-house staff from local Indigenous Community

9.5.2 General

- Land donated by local Cane farmer in 2008.
- Commercial training kitchen used for café and training.
- On-site accommodation for training

9.5.3 Facilities Building and Operations

- On-site maintenance team
- 336 Solar panels and 4 inverters that covers almost all power on site.
- Water capture system with water storage under the café that flushes all toilets and irrigation around the building.
- Easy to maintain building. They have only had to replace Air Conditioning units since 2012.

9.6 Cost Information from the Facility

Table 12 Costs

Costs	
Capital Costs	
Building	\$20m
Fit out	
Annual Operating Costs	
Salaries and Wages	Unavailable
Maintenance	Unavailable
Revenue	
Retail (F&B & Retail)	Unavailable
Admissions	Unavailable

9.7 Quantity Surveyor – Costing

The Quantity Surveyor opinion of probable 2023 cost to construct and fit out the Mossman Gorge Visitor Information Centre is approximately \$35.093M.

Please refer to Appendix A – Northcroft QS Report, for a detailed breakdown of costs.

10. penguin Parade Visitor Centre (VIC)

10.1 Overview

The Penguin Parade Visitor Centre is included as a benchmark primarily for its Architecture, circulation space, materials, and features in common to that of a regional Visitor Information Centre.

The Penguin Parade Visitor Centre is in Phillip Island Nature Park in Victoria. It is a conservation organisation that carries out education, research and is primarily funded through the visitor attractions, food and beverage and retail/merchandise. Profits generated by the commercial activities go directly to conservation, research, ecotourism, and educational initiatives within the park.

Additionally, the Penguin Foundation (“adopt a penguin”), established in 2005 has raised over \$1.8m helps raise funds to protect Phillip Island’s natural habitat and penguin colony.

10.2 Site Details

Table 13 Penguin Parade Details

Title	Detail
Contact:	N/A For Information Only
Email:	N/A
Phone:	N/A
Website:	https://phillipislandtour.com.au/attractions/penguin-parade-visitor-centre/
Location:	Summerlands VIC 3922
Facility Details:	AREA: 4785m2. Cost \$58.2M Year built: 2019
Architect:	Terroir https://terroir.com.au/
Features/Functional Areas:	<p>Design Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulation was the primary element due to volume of visitors (up to 2,500 at a time) • Clad in Zinc to endure weather. • Commercial (Fee Based entry) • 700K visitors per year • 666 Solar power • Recycle rainwater. • Double glazed windows • Roof and floor insulation • Low carbon materials <p>Functional Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor Information • Education & Multi-purpose spaces • Interactive interpretive zones (displays, digital and physical) • Care • Retail • Loading Dock and service area • Meeting room • Theatre • Kitchen (Commercial) • Restaurant

- | | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viewing deck • Toilets • Changing places facility • Sensory-inclusive (headphones, weighted lap pads) • Administration offices • Car Park and coach parking |
|--|--|

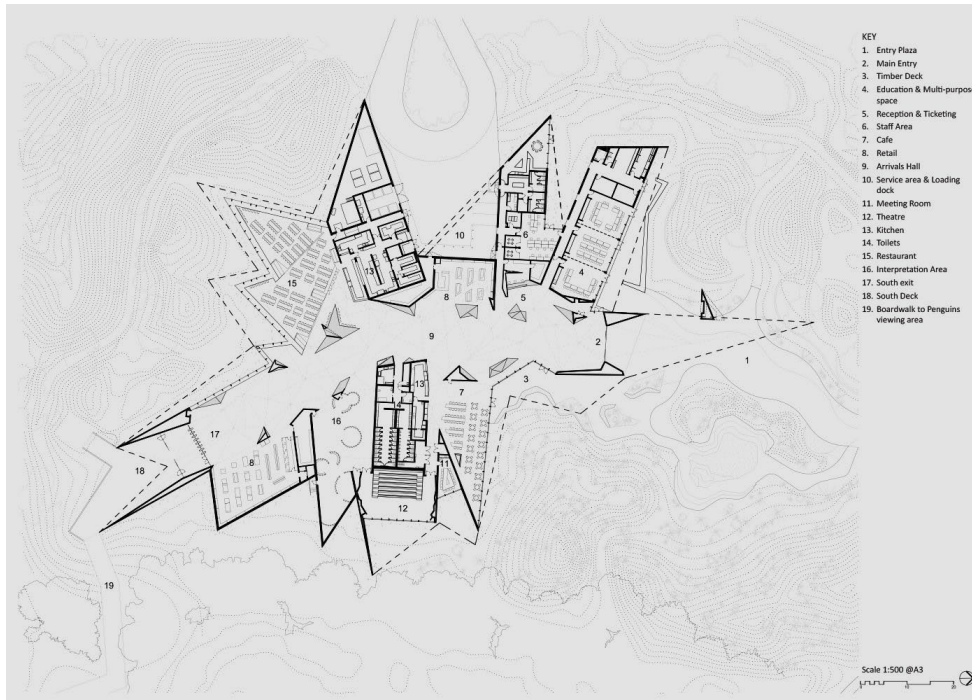


Image: Architectural plan

10.3 Images

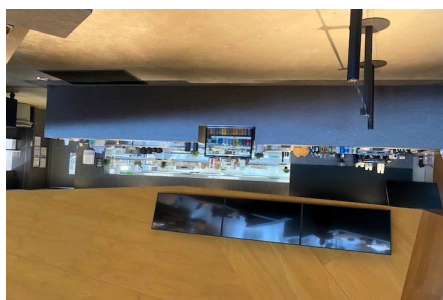


Image: Architectural plan



Image: internal presentation space

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Image: Aerial View of the facility

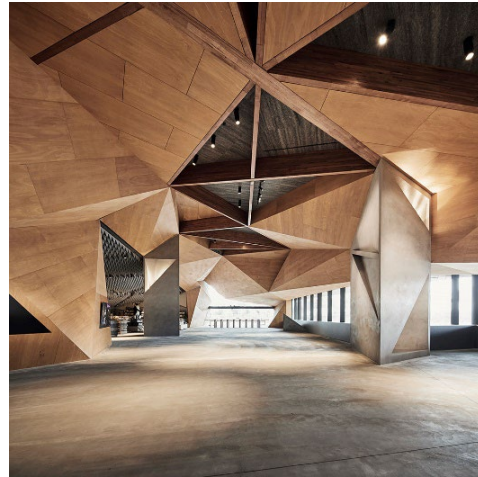


Image: Internal feature architecture

11. Key Insights

The benchmarking exercise has identified several key insights and learnings that can be applied to the Tamworth Visitor Experience Centre these include:

1. Multiple funding sources should be investigated, Local, State and Federal Governments
2. Community fundraising and the establishment of a Foundation be a valuable way of raising initial funds and then providing long term operation support for a community asset.
3. Clustering functions or interrelated facilities is beneficial in providing a critical mass of activity, integration into broader precincts is beneficial to visitation.
4. Facilities are resourced with paid professional visitor experience staff, colocation of visitor information and a gallery, museum or retail maximises staffing efficiencies.
5. Retail should showcase regional products and there is scope to increase this opportunity.
6. Signature building design needs to account for exhibition and usable wall space.
7. Adequate covered loading dock and storage facilities are important building functional components.
8. Incorporation of sustainability initiatives into the building fabric or the inclusion of photovoltaic cells, create a more efficient building and can reduce running costs.
9. Any food and beverage offering needs to be substantial to attract or retain visitors, therefore a commercial kitchen is essential to facilitate this.
10. Traditional visitor information counters are undesirable, space should be provided for visitors and visitor experience staff to engage.
11. Regular changeout of exhibitions or displays drives visitation and encourages repeat visitation.
12. Outdoor amenities are important, picnic areas, BBQs', and flexible outdoor performance spaces / amphitheatre areas.
13. Opportunities exist to embed education and flexible learning spaces within these facilities.
14. Clarity and ease of wayfinding and the arrival sequence is critically important in setting up the visitor for a positive and engaging experience.
15. Inadequate vehicle and coach parking is a barrier to visitation.

12 Appendix A – Northcroft QS Report



Construction Consultants

HVH Group Pty Ltd

Tamworth Visitor Centre Precinct
Benchmark Visitor Centre Venues Costing

12th October 2023



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Tamworth Visitor Centre Precinct
Benchmark Visitor Centre Venues Costing



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Tamworth Visitor Centre Precinct
Benchmark Visitor Centre Venues Costing



1.0 Introduction

This report has been prepared in response to HVH Group's request for the provision of cost estimates for various visitor centre venues in Regional Australia.

The following sections describe Northcroft's methodology in preparing the cost estimates including definitions of the inclusions and specific limitations within estimates.

Should any further information regarding this report be required, please do not hesitate to contact:

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Tamworth Visitor Centre Precinct
Benchmark Visitor Centre Venues Costing



2.0 Summary of Estimated Costs

The following table outlines an opinion of probable costs (GST exclusive) based on the information provided to us at the time of estimate preparation. Further detailed breakdown of these costs may be found in Appendix A to this report.

No.	Description	Total (\$)
1	ORANGE VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE	13,629,000
2	MUDGE VISITOR CENTRE	10,376,000
3	SHEPPARTON AND GOULBURN VALLEY VISITOR CENTRE	56,336,000
4	MOSSMAN GORGE VISITOR CENTRE	35,093,000

Tamworth Visitor Centre Precinct
Benchmark Visitor Centre Venues Costing



3.0 Description of Project

HVH Group have identified five existing visitor centres in regional areas of Eastern Seaboard Australia that could be used as a baseline for the development of the Tamworth Visitor Centre Precinct.

The five visitor centres are as follows:

1. Orange Visitor Information Centre
2. Mudgee Visitor Centre
3. Shepparton and Goulburn Valley Visitor Centre
4. Mossman Gorge Visitor Centre
5. Penguin Parade Visitor Centre

Penguin Parade Visitor Centre has been eliminated from this exercise.

The information has been extracted from the Benchmark Visitor Venues report in preparation of high level cost estimate for each of the above visitor centre.

Tamworth Visitor Centre Precinct
Benchmark Visitor Centre Venues Costing



4.0 Scope of Estimate

This estimate is for all building related works including:

1. Site formation works and demolition
2. Excavation and substructure
3. Superstructure
4. General finishes, windows, doors and all architectural works
5. Sanitary fittings and fixtures
6. Hydraulic installation including plumbing and drainage
7. Gas services
8. Electrical installation including power & light, data, security and telephone
9. Light fittings
10. Fire services
11. HVAC installation
12. Vertical transportation where applicable
13. Fixed and loose furniture
14. Equipment including electrical appliances, shop fittings
15. External works including stormwater drainage, external services, pavings and landscaping
16. Professional service fees

The estimate is based on the following information:

Dwg No.	Title	Rev.
	Benchmark Visitor Centre Venues Report – September 2023	1

Tamworth Visitor Centre Precinct
Benchmark Visitor Centre Venues Costing



5.0 Limitations

The estimate excludes:

1. Land costs
2. Holding charges
3. Exhibits
4. Venue operating costs
5. Third Party fitout costs
6. Maintenance costs
7. Works outside site boundary
8. Accelerated program and out of hours work
9. Diversion of existing utilities or services
10. Infrastructure works on electrical reticulation, sewage treatment plant and connecting services along public roads
11. Finance and legal expenses
12. Revenue generated from the venue
13. Contingency

The high level estimates are CURRENT at October 2023.

Allowances for all cost elements are subject to further review should further information become available.

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The findings of this report must be viewed in the context of the entire report including, without limitation, any assumptions made, and disclaimers provided.

Tamworth Visitor Centre Precinct
Benchmark Visitor Centre Venues Costing



6.0 Methodology

We visited the site via Google Maps to determine first hand the complexity of the works, interfaces with existing structures and surfaces, specifically to note the available site access or limitations thereto.

Drawings and cost data provided in the Benchmark Visitor Centre Venues report have been utilised for measurement of the scope of work and/or cost escalation.

Industrial publication book such as Rawlinsons Australian Construction Handbook and internal cost data have been used as pricing guide with escalation of pricing to reflect forecast costs at October 2023.

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Tamworth Visitor Centre Precinct
Benchmark Visitor Centre Venues Costing



Appendix A - Estimate Details

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TRC – Benchmark Visitor Centre Venues V03 – November 2023
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Estimate Details



Project: HVH Group Pty Ltd	Details: S24008_BENCHMARK_ORANGE
Building: Tamworth Regional Tourism Precinct	High Level Costing as at October 2023

Code	Trade Description	Quantity	Unit	Rate	Factor	Trade Total
------	-------------------	----------	------	------	--------	-------------

ORANGE VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

	The following high level estimated cost components are an opinion of probable costs as at October 2023		note			
	Preliminaries	1,300	m2	1,606		2,087,800
	Substructure	1,300	m2	206		267,800
	Columns	1,300	m2	47		61,100
	Roof	1,300	m2	1,074		1,396,200
	External Walls/Windows/Doors	1,300	m2	957		1,244,100
	Internal Walls	1,300	m2	385		500,500
	Internal Screens	1,300	m2	70		91,000
	Internal Doors	1,300	m2	115		149,500
	Finishes	1,300	m2	915		1,189,500
	Fittings	1,300	m2	433		562,900
	Services	1,300	m2	1,348		1,752,400
	External Works	5,909	m2	534		3,155,406
	Professional/Authority fees	1	item	1,170,000		1,170,000
	R/O					794
	TOTAL ESTIMATED COST EXCL GST	1,300	m2	10,484		13,629,000
	Notes:					
	Areas scaled off plans provided					
	Prices as at October 2023					
	Exclusions:					
	Goods and services tax					
	Land costs					
	Holding charges					
	Exhibits					
	Operating costs					
	Third Party fitout costs					
	Maintenance costs					
	Revenue					
	Contingency					

ORANGE VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

13,629,000

Estimate Details



Project: HVH Group Pty Ltd	Details: S24008_BENCHMARK_MUDGEE
Building: Tamworth Regional Tourism Precinct	High Level Costing as at October 2023

Code	Trade Description	Quantity	Unit	Rate	Factor	Trade Total
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MUDGEE VISITOR CENTRE

	The following high level estimated cost components are an opinion of probable costs as at October 2023		note			
	Preliminaries	1,244	m2	1,235		1,536,340
	Demolition	1,244	m2	96		119,424
	Substructure	1,244	m2	185		230,140
	Columns	1,244	m2	32		39,808
	Upper Floor	1,244	m2	196		243,824
	Staircase	1,244	m2	98		121,912
	Roof	1,244	m2	358		445,352
	External Walls/Windows/Doors	1,244	m2	1,196		1,487,824
	Internal Walls	1,244	m2	296		368,224
	Internal Screens	1,244	m2	54		67,176
	Internal Doors	1,244	m2	88		109,472
	Finishes	1,244	m2	832		1,035,008
	Fittings	1,244	m2	453		563,532
	Services	1,244	m2	1,678		2,087,432
	External Works	2,576	m2	396		1,020,096
	Professional/Authority fees	1	item	900,000		900,000
	R/O					436
	TOTAL ESTIMATED COST EXCL GST	1,244	m2	8,341		10,376,000
	Notes:					
	Areas scaled off plans provided					
	Prices as at October 2023					
	Exclusions:					
	Goods and services tax					
	Land costs					
	Holding charges					
	Exhibits					
	Operating costs					
	Third Party fitout costs					
	Maintenance costs					
	Revenue					
	Contingency					

MUDGEE VISITOR CENTRE

10,376,000

Estimate Details



Project: HVH Group Pty Ltd	Details: S24008_BENCHMARK_SHEPPARTON
Building: Tamworth Regional Tourism Precinct	High Level Costing as at October 2023

Code	Trade Description	Quantity	Unit	Rate	Factor	Trade Total
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SHEPPARTON AND GOULBURN VALLEY VISITOR CENTRE

	The following high level estimated cost components are an opinion of probable costs as at October 2023		note			
	Preliminaries	5,300	m2	1,535		8,135,500
	Substructure	5,300	m2	428		2,268,400
	Columns	5,300	m2	156		826,800
	Upper Floor	5,300	m2	678		3,593,400
	Staircase	5,300	m2	246		1,303,800
	Roof	5,300	m2	458		2,427,400
	External Walls/Windows/Doors	5,300	m2	1,540		8,162,000
	Internal Walls	5,300	m2	312		1,653,600
	Internal Screens	5,300	m2	124		657,200
	Internal Doors	5,300	m2	112		593,600
	Finishes	5,300	m2	807		4,277,100
	Fittings	5,300	m2	971		5,146,300
	Services	5,300	m2	1,813		9,608,900
	Transportation	5,300	m2	96		508,800
	External Works	5,300	m2	742		3,932,600
	Professional/Authority fees	1	item	3,240,000		3,240,000
	R/O					600
	TOTAL ESTIMATED COST EXCL GST	5,300	m2	10,629		56,336,000
	Notes:					
	Areas obtained from the report					
	Prices as at October 2023					
	Exclusions:					
	Goods and services tax					
	Land costs					
	Holding charges					
	Exhibits					
	Operating costs					
	Third Party fitout costs					
	Maintenance costs					
	Revenue					
	Contingency					

SHEPPARTON AND GOULBURN VALLEY VISITOR CENTRE

56,336,000

Estimate Details



Project: HVH Group Pty Ltd	Details: S24008_BENCHMARK_MOSSMAN GORGE
Building: Tamworth Regional Tourism Precinct	High Level Costing as at October 2023

Code	Trade Description	Quantity	Unit	Rate	Factor	Trade Total
------	-------------------	----------	------	------	--------	-------------

MOSSMAN GORGE VISITOR CENTRE

	The following high level estimated cost components are an opinion of probable costs as at October 2023		note			
	Preliminaries	2,252	m2	1,996		4,494,992
	Substructure	2,252	m2	482		1,085,464
	Columns	2,252	m2	113		254,476
	Upper Floor	2,252	m2	527		1,186,804
	Staircase	2,252	m2	118		265,736
	Roof	2,252	m2	530		1,193,560
	External Walls/Windows/Doors	2,252	m2	1,648		3,711,296
	Internal Walls	2,252	m2	393		885,036
	Internal Screens	2,252	m2	156		351,312
	Internal Doors	2,252	m2	131		295,012
	Finishes	2,252	m2	1,041		2,344,332
	Fittings	2,252	m2	966		2,175,432
	Services	2,252	m2	2,707		6,096,164
	External Works	36,100	m2	230		8,303,000
	Professional/Authority fees	1	item	2,450,000		2,450,000
	R/O					384
	TOTAL ESTIMATED COST EXCL GST	2,252	m2	15,583		35,093,000
	Notes:					
	Areas scaled off plans provided					
	Prices as at October 2023					
	Exclusions:					
	Goods and services tax					
	Land costs					
	Holding charges					
	Exhibits					
	Operating costs					
	Third Party fitout costs					
	Maintenance costs					
	Revenue					
	Contingency					
	MOSSMAN GORGE VISITOR CENTRE					35,093,000

STAGE THREE

Precinct Analysis prepared by:

HVH Group



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Image title page: Midland Live +

Image - Midland at the Tamworth Town Hall 29 August 2023 – HVH Group



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1 Introduction & Scope

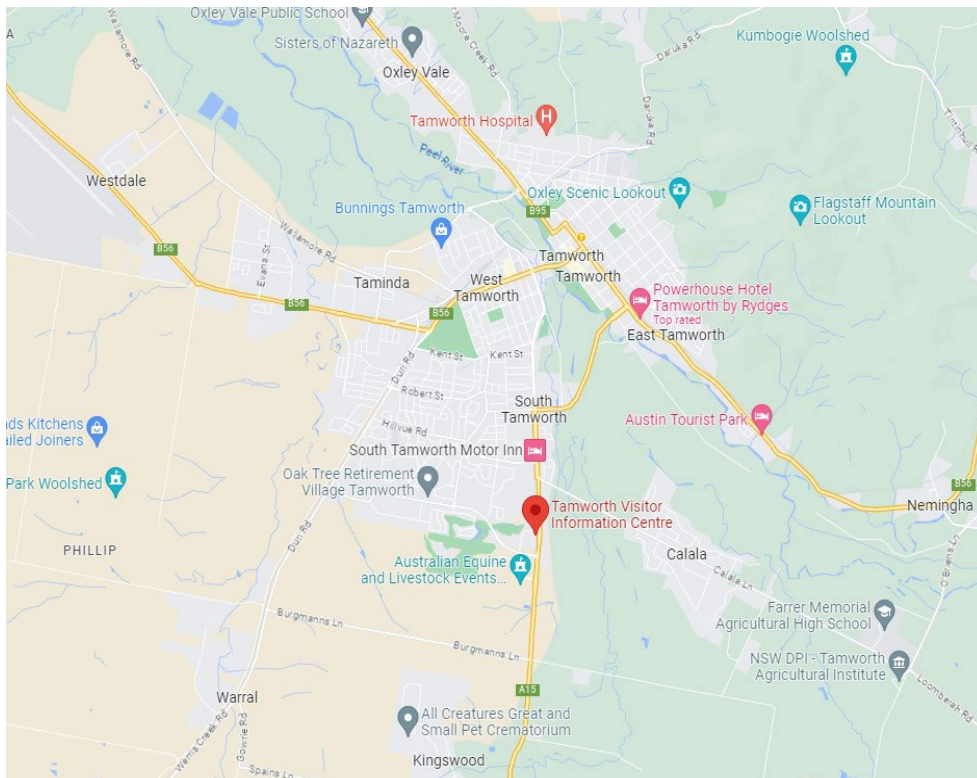
HVH Group have been engaged as part of the Destination Marketing Store (DMS) team to determine the strategy for the delivery of a New Visitor Experience Centre (VEC). The VEC is to amalgamate 3 existing museums within this experience: the Australian Country Music Hall of Fame, the National Guitar Museum and the Country Music Wax Museum and the functions of the current Tamworth Visitor Information Centre (VIC).

This report addresses the retention of the current assets and their functions as they exist today. The report also looks at the suitability of the current assets to be augmented or adapted to meet the objective of creating an engaging visitor experience.

The report contains a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threat (SWOT) analysis for these options in addition to a high-level costing for necessary maintenance, upgrades, or augmentation of these facilities to create an improved and highly engaging visitor experience.

2 Part A1 – Visitor Information Centre (VIC) – Maintain Current Asset

2.1 Existing Asset



Location Map – Tamworth Visitor Centre (image Google Maps)



Image: Cadastre Information: Tamworth Visitor Information Centre (source NSW Planning Spatial View)



Aerial Image: Tamworth Visitor Information Centre (image Google Maps)

2.1.1 Description / Ownership / Titling / Zoning.

The VIC comprises visitor information centre, the Golden Guitar Café, National Guitar Museum, Country Music Wax Museum, and the Big Golden Guitar located to the front of the facility.

Tamworth Regional Council (Council) operates the visitor information centre and museums; however, it does not own the visitor information centre building.

Council currently has a 7-year lease over the premises (June 2019-May 2026) with the option to renew for an additional term of 7 years with the maximum term of 21 years under the current agreement.

Council is responsible for the building outgoings, Council rates, and charges including maintenance and or any upgrades of the building.

Limited car parking is provided to the front of the VIC with the ability for longer vehicles and caravans to park in a car park located behind the Longyard Hotel.

The land that the current VIC and museums are located on is zoned as MU1 – Mixed use.

The VIC and surrounding lots are outlined below:

Lot 21/DP1027598 – Golden Guitar Motor Inn

Lot 22/DP1027598 – VIC / Golden Guitar and car park

Lot 3/DP1012007 – Fast-food and Carpark

Lot 11/DP1026460 – Long yard Hotel and Carpark

Lot 12 / DP1026460 – Brewery Building

2.1.2 Location / Proximity to Attractions and Amenities.

Location: 2 The Ringers Road, South Tamworth NSW 2340

Visitor Information Centre - Hours of operation: 9am – 4pm (7 days a week excluding Good Friday and Christmas Day)

Café: Hours of operation: 9am – 2pm (Monday to Friday) 9am – 1pm (Saturday), closed Sunday and public holidays.

This facility is located on the corner of The Ringers Road and the New England Highway. The New England Highway is the primary inland road that connects Sydney with Brisbane.

The VIC is in a gateway location to the City of Tamworth. It is near amenities, including service stations, adjacent hotels and accommodation, retail, and fast-food outlets.

The VIC is situated near some of the key attractors within in Tamworth including the Tamworth Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre (TRECC), The Tamworth Sports Dome and Athletic Centre, and the Australian Equine and Livestock Events Centre (AELEC).

A cycleway and footpath network connect the site with other attractions and Council has plans to further increase the cycleway network.

2.1.3 Building Fabric

The building comprises a double brick façade with glazed section facing the entry. The original building has been extended on at least 3 separate occasions. Aluminium framed glazing and automatic sliding doors form the entry to the VIC and Museums. The roofing material is Colourbond with guttering and downpipes.

Colourbond is also utilised in vertical profile as a cladding to the front façade of the building below a hip roof structure. This has been created to give height and scale to the front façade, indicative of a barn structure or rural outbuilding. This detail is faux and serves no other purpose than as an aesthetic detail. The roof structures behind comprise 2 gable roof structures with a skillion roof structure to the southern elevation. These appear to be reflective of the staged additions to the built form over time.

Photovoltaic solar panels and associated support structure have been added to most of the roof area.

The entry portico to the VIC is finished in a red rendered / textured coated material. This portico also has a small steel structure and Colourbond clad awning that provides limited weather protection to the entry doors.

The main entry to the building from the carpark is at grade while the secondary rear access to the VIC is via steps or a brick ramp that has no handrails.

2.1.4 Photographs – Exterior Context



Image 1: View of the Visitor Information Centre Entry and Golden Guitar



Image 2: View of the Shade Structures and Information Signage to the front of the Visitor Information Centre



Image 3: View North showing car parking and the entry Driveway to the Visitor Information Centre



Image 4: View Northwest to the motel adjacent the Visitor Information Centre



Image 5: Rear Lane view of the western façade of the Visitor Information Centre



Image 6: View of the Southern façade of the Visitor information Centre



Image 7: View South rear façade of Visitor Information Centre along rear lane



Image 8: view along northern Façade of Visitor Information Centre adjacent to motel



Image 9: Golden Guitar adjacent to KFC rainwater tank



Image 10: Visitor Information Centre glazed Eastern Façade



Image 11: Visitor Information Centre Front Entry and artificial grass arrival space



Image 12: Visitor Information Centre Southern Façade from KFC carpark with PVs on the roof.

2.1.5 Building Interior / Elements contained within the Facility.

Generally, the interior of the building is comprised of exposed face brick walls (particularly in the gallery section), painted plaster board or rendered walls and painted brick. Floor coverings range from painted epoxy flooring in the gallery space, vinyl planking to the café and dining area, carpet tiles to the Wax Museum and VIC area, and a grouted brick paver to the Guitar Museum area.

Ceilings are generally low and comprise a long run powder coated aluminium / steel panel to the visitor information centre area, office, and the Gallery extension. The remainder of the ceilings present in the café area, Wax Museum and Guitar Museum are set plasterboard ceiling with cornice.

There is a level change between the guitar museum and photographic gallery, as this extension steps up, this transition is made by a temporary ramp.

There is ducted air conditioning throughout the building that is delivered to the various spaces via ceiling swirls / diffusers. However, this system is not a purposed designed climate control system suitable for museum or gallery spaces. The photographic gallery section of the building is serviced by split cycle wall mounted air conditioning units; a ducted system is not included in this area.

Humidity and environmental control are monitored manually via wall mounted sensors; however, these are independent to the HVAC system.

The VIC and museums have dry fire systems installed which include thermal and smoke detection and emergency lighting and exit signage. There are also extinguisher and hose reels located throughout the building.

Window coverings comprise retrofitted automatic roller blinds to the VIC area as the east facing faced appears to be glare impacted in the mornings.

The building is alarmed with movement sensors in rooms and reed switches to doors with limited CCTV coverage.

Interior light is largely provided by a combination of Troffer style LED fluorescent lighting either recessed or surface mounted and batten lighting. It is unclear if these have been re-lamped with LEDs.

Lighting to the Wax Museum is via a dated track spotlight system.

The interior of the VIC is zoned into 5 areas comprising:

- Visitor Information Centre (VIC),
- Country Music Wax Museum,
- National Guitar Museum,
- Photographic Gallery, and
- Café

2.1.5.1 Visitor Information Centre

The VIC layout is very traditional and reflects an outdated visitor services model. There is a traditional information reception counter located directly opposite the entry doors, with numerous brochure holders and displays.

Key to the area is a large raised regional map table with a glazed top. This takes up a substantial footprint and is constructed at a height that makes it difficult to see into the centre of the map, particularly when dealing with glare from the windows. However, there is substantial storage that is built into the unit.

The interior comprises a range of built-in joinery and moveable retail display stands.

There are a range of movable elements including a visitor information touch screen display located directly adjacent to the main doors, free-standing hand sanitizer units, wall-mounted instrument displays and screens, and freestanding phone charging stations. Services to these elements are generally exposed or surface-mounted, detracting from the overall aesthetics for the space.

2.1.5.2 Country Music Wax Museum

The Country Music Wax Museum entry is via a set of timber batwing doors. The interior of the wax museum has been created by a series of corridors that fold back on themselves with dividing plasterboard walls creating a linear experience where the visitor follows a path viewing dioramas with country wax museum figures creating a localised contextual setting.

A post and rail standoff fence separates the visitor from the exhibitions.

Walls and ceilings are painted back to accentuate the diorama and wax figures. Two-dimensional information signage is provided outlining the history and information about the respective country artists.

Once through this part of the experience, the museum then transitions into the National Guitar Museum. The entry and exit from the Wax and Guitar museums are from the same point.

2.1.5.3 National Guitar Museum

The National Guitar Museum located within a space behind the Wax Museum, comprises a range of guitar displays that are either wall mounted or within free standing temporary dividing walls or freestanding display cases located against walls. A number of these display cases have exhibit feature lighting built into them.

The guitars are generally displayed behind an acrylic / Plexi glass screen, however the fluorescent batten style lighting causes reflection and obscures the view of the object.

Dated audio-visual displays have been created on some of the walls, which have been retrofitted. These are actuated by a push button with DVD / tablet source device located behind a freestanding joinery or wall mounted joinery units coupled with an iPad or similar operation system.

2.1.5.4 Photographic Gallery

The entry to the photographic gallery is via retrofitted timber ramp from the Guitar Museum and comprises a space that is partially divided off by a temporary wall/curtain. The area behind the curtain is used for storage.

The gallery space is rectangular with large format photos mounted to the wall.

There is no feature gallery style lighting to accentuate the photographs, light is provided by fluorescent ceiling mounted batten lighting and generally does not add to the overall viewing experience.

A soundscape / music is provided to this space via a portable rechargeable speaker.

2.1.5.5 Café

The café space is accessed from the main VIC reception area and is open plan. The dining area is large across two interconnected areas with the café servery and kitchen in the middle of the space.

There is a kitchen with kitchen equipment, extraction hood, displays and food preparation and service areas.

Movable furniture including tables, chairs and some banquette seating is provided to the café space.

2.1.5.6 Office

A small office with 3 x workstations is located off the main VIC space. There is a one-way glazed panel that provides overview to the VIC area from the office.

There is no separate staff break room associated with this office, however a makeshift small tea station has been set up in one corner including a refrigerator.

A large freestanding storage unit takes up a significant amount of space within the office.

2.1.6 Amenities

The toilets located within the facility are accessed through the café space. Separate male and female toilets are provided, however there is only an ambulant toilet, no fully accessible toilet facilities are provided.

2.1.7 Photographs – Interior Context



Image: VIC reception counter, with guitar displays to the rear.



Image: VIC, general view of retail displays and one way glass window to office.



Image: VIC, view of large area map table

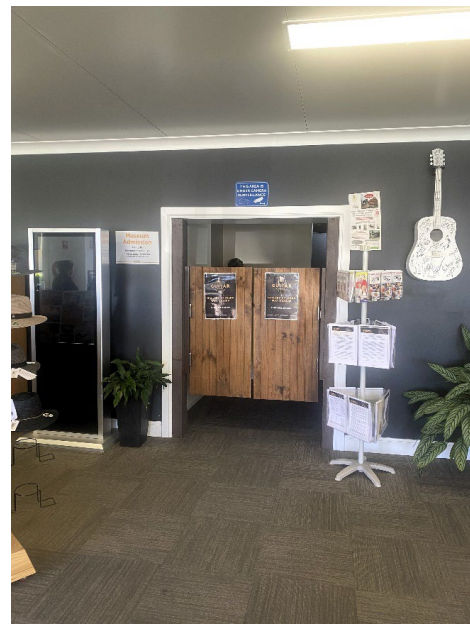


Image: VIC, view of entry to the Country Music Wax Museum



Image: VIC, back of house office space and collateral storage



Image: View of main café dining area with kitchen and servery to the rear



Image: VIC main counter, map table and view to café area



Image: View of dining area, temporary dividing wall to wax museum.



Image: Typical wax museum diorama and figure



Image: Typical wax museum diorama and figure



Image: Typical display National guitar Museum

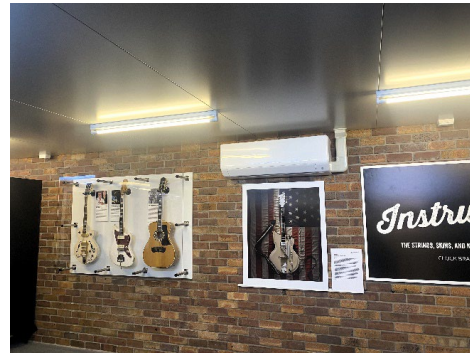


Image: National Guitar Museum and Photographic gallery, with split cycle air conditioning

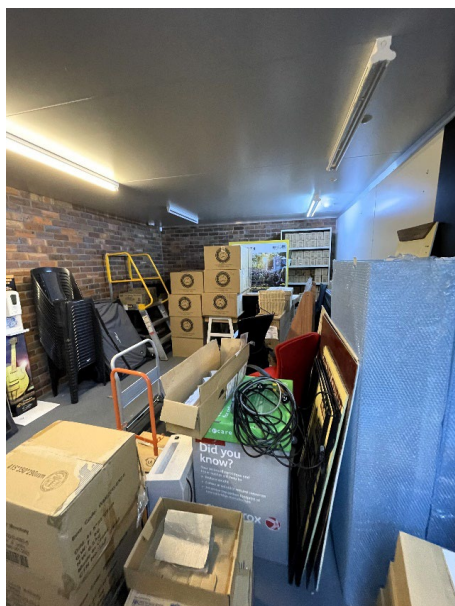


Image: Temporary storage to the rear of the photographic gallery

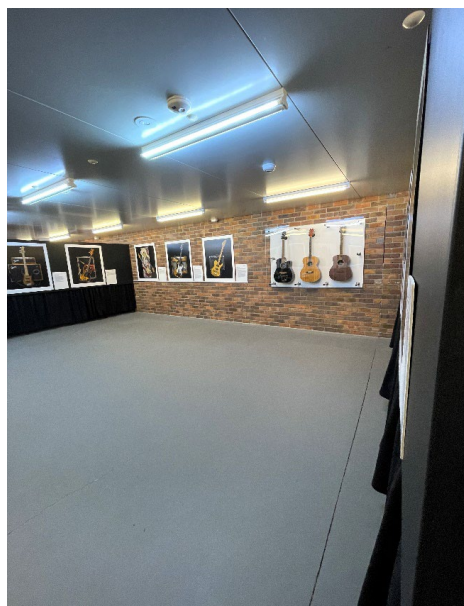


Image: Photographic Gallery typical image

2.2 Current Operations / Function / Challenges

2.2.1 Parking & Vehicle Circulation

Carparking on site is limited to 17 carparks incl 1 x accessible and 4 x separate motorcycle parks with no dedicated bicycle parking. There is currently no electrical vehicle charging station provided on site.

The popularity of the café offering within the visitor centre has meant that car parking is often occupied by residents that have driven to the VIC to dine in the café. This further impacts the limited availability of car parking for visitors.

The main driveway into the VIC is shared access with the adjacent fast-food outlets. These fast-food outlets also freely utilise the limited carparking associated with the VIC while attending one of the restaurants.

There is no large vehicle (recreational vehicle), coach or caravan car parking provided on site. Car parking for these vehicles informally utilises the Longyard Hotels car parking. This car park has no access control and therefore is freely used by patrons of the hotel and VIC and Museums. Signage discourages non hotel patronage, however this is not currently enforced.

There is also no coach parking provided at the VIC and Museums, this has resulted in coaches not stopping at the VIC.

2.2.2 Safety

The shared driveway to the VIC with the adjoining fast-food outlets is entered directly off The Ringers Road. Long vehicles, i.e., a vehicle towing a caravan are physically not able to access the limited car parking available at the VIC, nor can they pass through the fast-food outlet drive through in a forward direction requiring them to reverse out of the driveway and back onto The Ringers Road. This poses a safety risk given the proximity of the driveway entrance to The Ringers Road and New England Highway.

There is no segregation of pedestrians from vehicles other than a pedestrian crossing over the shared entry driveway. This poses a possible safety hazard between vehicles and pedestrians as visitors are often distracted while taking photographs of the Golden Guitar.

The carparking directly to the front of the VIC has no wheel stop or kerb to prevent vehicle pedestrian conflict between the carparking and the synthetic turf area to the front of the VIC.

2.2.3 Asset ownership

The current VIC is a privately owned asset and is leased by council. Any improvements that are made to the site or building are at the cost of the lessee i.e., public funds, and ultimately benefit the Landlord.

The current 7-year lease term expires in 2026 with the option to extend for an additional 7-year term with a maximum term of 21 years.

There is the risk that the current asset owner could divest the property with vacant possession requiring the TRC to vacate the VIC at relatively short notice.

2.2.4 Arrival Experience / Equity of access

The main arrival experience and sequence are very poor, there is little curtilage given to the building or decompression space for relaxation prior to entering the VIC and museums. There is some outdoor seating, a covered area with seating and a reference map, however the VIC and museums are largely entered from a shared driveway with fast food outlets.

There is minimal shade or weather protection for the visitor arriving at the VIC.

Visitors to the VIC or museums that are unable to park directly in front of the building, often park behind the VIC in the Longyard hotel carpark. These visitors are required to find their way around the Longyard hotel via the rear paved laneway and enter the building through the café space dining area, or via the footpaths on The Ringers Road to arrive at the VIC. Neither of these are signposted or have wayfinding identified and provide for a poor arrival experience as the visitor enters the rear of the building.

Additionally, if patrons miss the turn off the highway, they tend to continue driving and not stop at the VIC due to the difficulty of turning off and returning to the facility.

2.2.5 Services and Utilities

The building has a photovoltaic solar system, installed, by council, to assist in reducing the electricity operating costs. However, there is no battery storage provided within in this system meaning that

there remains a reliance on the grid as the air conditioning for the museums operates 24 hours / 7 days a week.

The current electrical demands for the facility are at capacity limiting any further opportunity for expansion or upgrade to exhibition areas without substantial electrical infrastructure upgrades.

2.2.6 Prominence /Wayfinding

The VIC has largely become engulfed by surrounding development. The building is setback from adjacent developments and is not immediately obvious when approached by vehicle along the New England Highway. The Golden Guitar is the obvious wayfinding landmark that drivers look for, however this is largely lost in a forest of signage from adjoining fast-food outlets, service stations and retail premises.

The primary approach to the visitor centre by vehicle is from the New England Highway (Goonoo Goonoo Road) via a left turn into The Ringers Road, this is not intuitive, as it appears that the Entry to the VIC is the entrance to the Golden Guitar Motel due to the location of their signage. If the turn into The Ringers Road is missed by a driver, then the vehicle is required to proceed north up the New England Highway to the Calala Lane Roundabout, approximately 1 kilometre up the road and return to the VIC. The first street past The Ringers Road is Craigend's Lane, this lane permits a left only turn upon exit in a Northerly direction.

Anecdotally the driver generally keeps on driving and does not return to the VIC.

2.2.7 Staff and Volunteers

Traditionally the VIC and museums in the Tamworth region have largely been operated and or resourced by passionate groups of volunteers that have taken it upon themselves to establish these museum collections. A number of these museums and organisations have been managed through the establishment of independent incorporated bodies and Section 355 committees under the Local Government Act. The council has taken a leading role in transitioning these operations from a largely volunteer managed museum to a council owned and managed collection, still drawing upon the support and resources of the volunteers.

Council only has approximately 1.5 FTE staff to manage these museums and remains reliant on the support of the volunteers for the museums and the VIC.

Inadequate financial resourcing is the current barrier to providing professional staffing to support the existing VIC and Museums.

The VIC has 1 paid FTE plus 1 trainee staff and 2 part time staff on the roster.

There is a pool of 14 volunteers that support the VIC and museums. However, the current volunteer base largely organises themselves into pairs that like working together; these are often on select days and is generally difficult to get them to work on weekends. This can limit the value that the volunteers provide to operations.

2.2.8 Perceived Value Proposition / Visitor Centre Museum Co location

The VIC and museums are collocated. It is unknown what the primary driver for visitors is to gain information from the VIC, view the Golden Guitar or attend the Country Music Wax Museum or National Guitar Museum. However, the combination of these elements in addition to a well patronised café, collectively deliver an attraction. When visiting the VIC, the entry point to the Country Music Wax Museum is not obvious, nor is it obvious that the Wax Museum leads to the National Guitar Museum and Photographic Gallery. Admission to the museums is \$10 for adults, \$7 concession with children under 12 free entry.

Anecdotally this appears to deliver a great value proposition for visitors, as the admission pricing for entry to the wax museum is modest, and the visitor gains entry to 3 attractions within the single admission price. The visitor perceives this as great value. What isn't known if this perceived value proposition has a direct influence on general visitor feedback that the museum experience exceeded their expectations was this due to the value of seeing 3 attractions for a single admission fee or the overall experience of the 3 attractions.

2.3 Building Fabric Assessment

2.3.1 Condition of fabric - Exterior

The current exterior fabric of the building is in good condition. There is no noticeable deterioration or damage to the external fabric of the building.

The landscaped areas surrounding the VIC are in reasonable condition. The main access drive is constructed of a tar spray and chip seal that has some areas that have been patched.

There is an area that is synthetic turf to the front of the building in reasonable condition.

The car park line markings and pedestrian crossing are well worn and require repainting.

The sign and signage plinth adjacent the New England Highway are in good condition, however this plinth forms part of the access to the cycleway and the stepped and ramped structure currently pose a potential trip hazard. There are no handrails or tactile indicators to this location.

The plinth and paved surrounds of the Golden Guitar are in poor condition and poses a trip / minor fall hazard as there are in appropriate barriers to protect wheelchair access, and paving is uneven in several locations. There are no tactile indicators to stairs or ramps and ramp entry is via synthetic turf; not paved surface.

There is no dedicated waste management collection or holding facilities on site, which has resulted in 2 x mobile steel front lift bins being in the public domain adjacent to the Golden Guitar Motel sign. This detracts from the overall aesthetics and kerb appeal of the arrival experience.

2.3.2 Condition of fabric - Interior.

The interior of the visitor centre is in fair condition. The layout and fit out are dated and has been augmented with additional displays, retail, and minor technology element upgrades overtime.

The museum exhibitions are very traditional displays and are well maintained. However, the exhibitions are dated in their presentation.

The interior walls are generally in good condition as are the ceilings. However, there are internal temporary dividing walls that have been installed to form part of the wax museum.

The condition of the ceilings within the Wax Museum have been impacted in certain locations by downpipes that have leaked which are most likely associated with box gutter locations from the roof.

The bathrooms are average condition and there appears to be an issue with the sewer as there is a constant odour emanating into the café seating area when the doors are opened.

2.4 Operator feedback (Asset and Operator) / Visitation

TRC management and staff state that current museums experiences receive positive feedback, with typical comments from visitors stating *'that it exceeded their expectations'*. The VIC and museums are widely visited from across the region, state, and interstate based on post code collection which have determined geographic spread of visitors.

Current visitation of the VIC and museums is typically reflective of the national average for visiting a visitor centre, whereby only 5% of tourists visit these centres. There are approximately only 2% of all visitors that are international tourists.

Broadly, visitation to the Tamworth VIC and National Guitar and Country Music Wax Museums can be categorised as follows:

- a) Average daily attendance 120-150 PAX / Day
- b) School Holiday / Holiday Periods up to 300 Pax / Day
- c) During the Tamworth Country Music Festival 1500 / Day

2.5 Existing Council Budgets / Maintenance / operational budgeted inputs.

Table 01 Visitor Information Centre Budget

Item	Budget
Revenue	
Office Rent – Admin Buildings (Income)	
Expenses	
Freight	\$228
Sales Expenses	\$135,000
Storage	\$3,380
Building Maintenance	\$3,034
Cleaning	\$14,196
Depreciation	\$1,410
Electricity	\$12,400

General Expenses	\$2,060
Grounds Maintenance	\$4,500
Insurances	\$900
Lease Rental Expense	\$196,260
Equipment Hire	\$515
Printing & Stationery	\$1,030
Cash Collection	\$1,545
Security	\$1,545
Subscriptions/Accreditations	\$2,575
Telephone and Communication Charges	\$1,050
Wages & Salaries	\$54,354
Furn & Fittings M & R	\$6,059
Volunteer expenses	\$5,322
NAB Bank Fees	\$773
Total	\$448,136

2.6 Recommendations against strategy / visitor experience

2.6.1 General

Anecdotally the TRC have stated that visitors that have attended the VIC and museums have said that their experience either met or exceeded their expectations.

The Tamworth Regional Museums Engagement Strategy (Strategy) identified 5 Key Focus areas of:

1. Sustainability of collections – Documentation and Storage
2. Succession planning and Sustainability for Volunteers
3. Quality Exhibition Development and Cultural Tourism
4. Strategic Partners and developing a coordinated museum approach.
5. Creating a level playing field – structural adjustment and risk minimisation

These are detailed in the table below. A qualitative assessment of the current VIC and Museums facilities alignment with the Strategy is provided after the table.

2.6.2 Museums – Strategic Focus

Table: 01 Key Focus areas



Key Focus Areas (KFA), Goals and Impacts

	Key Focus Area	Goal	Impacts/Outcomes
1.	Sustainability of Collections – Documentation and Storage	To ensure best practice care and sustainability of Tamworth’s collections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved collection systems and facilities Improved facilities, including exhibition, storage and workshop spaces Collection sustainability
2.	Succession Planning and Sustainability for Volunteers	To ensure sustainability of the collections and staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training opportunities and capacity building Adequate resourcing Providing social opportunities for volunteers
3.	Quality Exhibition Development and Cultural Tourism	To use Tamworth’s stories, embedded in dynamic quality exhibitions, to engage with our audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased attendance Improved visitor experience Excellence of product/exhibitions Increased appreciation of significant heritage stories and collections
4.	Strategic Partners and Developing a Coordinated Museums Approach	To maintain collaboration between volunteers, council staff, external networks and other key stakeholders by fostering a coordinated museums approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building and developing networks Meeting expectations of stakeholders Sharing resources and information Communication Creating sustainable networks
5.	Creating a Level Playing Field – Structural Adjustment and Risk Minimisation	To invest in our collection stories and collaborating for a sustainable future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimising risk Equity of support for heritage collections Strong operational models and clear governance

Although the table above indicates impacts and outcomes in relation to key focus areas, it should be noted that this has been outlined as a base case scenario and that in most cases impacts and outcomes can be applied far more broadly than indicated above.

Source: Tamworth Regional Museums Engagement Strategy 2019-2024.

Table 02 Alignment with Key Focus Areas

Key Focus Area	Alignment with Goals, Impacts and Outcomes.	Can be achieved	Partially Achieved	Can not be achieved
1 Sustainability of Collections – Documentation and Storage	Systems and collection content assessment can be implemented regardless of location.		✓	
	As the current building is leased and footprint is entirely utilised, accommodating appropriate storage and workshop areas are not possible within this facility.			✗

		Sustainability of the collection is difficult as almost the entire collection is on display, meaning that it has potential to deteriorate more rapidly due to imperfect environmental conditions that it is housed in.			X
	Key Focus Area	Alignment with Goals, Impacts and Outcomes.	Can be achieved	Partially Achieved	Can not be achieved
2	Succession Planning and Sustainability of Volunteers	Limited funding for training and difficulty recruiting and training volunteers makes consistent volunteer support challenging.		✓	
		Resourcing for the VIC and museums is inadequate and reliant on traineeships due to lack of funding.			X
		Social opportunities can be provided for volunteers; however, rostering is difficult, and volunteers pick and choose their own rosters.		✓	
	Key Focus Area	Alignment with Goals, Impacts and Outcomes.	Can be achieved	Partially Achieved	Can not be achieved
3	Quality Exhibition Development and Cultural Tourism	The ability to increase attendance is limited by location and lack of car parking.			X
		The current VIC and museums are dated in their layout and approach, limited funding makes it difficult to improve the visitor experience.			X
		The current facilities, location and layout and neighbouring properties make it very difficult to improve exhibitions or provide a 'must see' attractor to help drive Cultural Tourism.			X
		The available space in the current building makes it		✓	

difficult for the visitor to access the stories and collection, therefore other than the operator it is difficult to increase provide a great exposure to the visitor and therefore an enhanced appreciation.

Key Focus Area	Alignment with Goals, Impacts and Outcomes.	Can be achieved	Partially Achieved	Can not be achieved
4 Strategic Partners and Developing a Coordinated Museum Approach	Networks can be developed and are independent of physical museum location	✓		
	Meeting ongoing expectation of stakeholders will be difficult as the VIC and museum are antiquated in their presentation and approach, with little funding to change.			✗
	Sharing resources and information can be facilitated by council staff, volunteers and identified stakeholders, independent of location.	✓		
	A communications strategy and framework can be established and implemented, independent of location.	✓		
	Establishing sustainable networks can be achieved, the only limitation is the draw upon limited resourcing to foster and maintain these.		✓	
Key Focus Area	Alignment with Goals, Impacts and Outcomes.	Can be achieved	Partially Achieved	Can not be achieved
5 Creating a Level Playing field – Structural adjustment and Risk Minimisation	The ability for council to minimise risk associated with the VIC and Museums is largely up to the available paid professional resourcing		✓	

available, which is currently very limited.	
Equity in support of heritage collections is difficult as there is a reliance on volunteers and limited paid professional staff.	✓
A strong operational model and clear governance can be developed, however legacy committees are currently a barrier to this.	✓

2.6.3 SWOT Analysis

The table below is a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis of the current VIC and museums housed in their current leased facility.

Table 03 SWOT Augmentation

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colocation of visitor services and museum allows resource sharing. The current café offering is of a quality that is destinational. The Long yard Hotel hosts large events during the Tamworth Country Music Festival, attending patrons visit the VIC and museums. Perceived value proposition and visitor expectations met by experiencing 3 attractions (Country Music Wax Museum, National Guitar Museum, and photographic gallery) for a minimal admission fee. The external build fabric is in good condition. Colocation with The Big Golden Guitar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current dedicated TRC staffing positions (1.5 FTE) and reliance on trainee / cadet staff due to limited available budget. The operation of the museums is reliant on enthusiastic volunteers. The building is leased and not council owned, there is the risk that divestment of the asset may require the council to vacate the premises. The facility is difficult to find and has lost its prominence due to adjoining fast food operations. Limited carparking that is often full is a deterrent to visitation. Council is currently required to maintain the base building fabric in addition to their fit out. Poor arrival experience and sequence for visitors, lacks any sense of interest other than the Golden Guitar. No coach parking available had led to lost visitation. Lack of immersive soundscape currently provided by a portable device for playing music. Lack of an appropriate climate control / HVAC system for museum exhibitions, current risk of advanced deterioration to wax figures, clothing, and other artefacts. Re purposed building with internal fit out that is not equitable in the experience that it provides. The museum displays are dated and not engaging to a diverse visitor audience. Commercial lighting fixtures and non-specialised exhibition lighting detract from the museum's experiences. Café operations do not align with the VIC hours of operation, contributing to a diminished experienced when the café is closed. Ad-hoc interior fit out that has been added to, mismatched joinery and displays. Technology or

	<p>electronic information signage that has either been retro fitted or is free standing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian/Vehicle conflict when photographing the people with the Big Golden Guitar. • No fully accessible toilet amenities. • Does not represent the Region. • Focussed only on country music, i.e. no indigenous or country history of the region. • Council is required to staff both the VIC and Country Music Hall of Fame i.e. operationally inefficient.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The café and food and beverage offering should be aligned to the VIC operating hours. • Potential opportunity to utilise existing council assets and convert these for museum collection storage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of volunteer support base, due to interest and an aging volunteer base. • No investment in technology and exhibition promotion / engagement tools could lead to outdated museums and reduced visitation. • There is real potential of pedestrian vehicle conflict as pedestrian and vehicle access are not segregated. • Further development along the New England Highway further detracts or obscures the location of the VIC. • Limited car parking and reliance on third party owned to provide the majority of the carparking requirement for the VIC. • Loss of the current café operator due to lower patronage • Lack of funds available to refresh or maintain the museum exhibitions resulting in dated exhibitions that do not meet visitor expectations. • Further reduction in funding commitments for operation to the VIC resulting in loss of visitation or reduced operating hours. • Reliance on volunteers for VIC operations diminishes the importance of the visitor economy to the Tamworth LGA area. • Transferred risk and liability associated with utilising a third parties land for car parking. • There is little opportunity to provide signage and wayfinding guidance for carparking, given the proximity of the VIC entry driveway to the New England Highway. • Lost support from contributing Regional Councils.

2.7 Qualitative Assessment / Fitness for Purpose

2.7.1 Current functions / ability to maintain grow operations in alignment with new strategy within the existing fabric.

The current leased facility that houses the VIC, Country Music Wax and National Guitar Museums, photo gallery and café, are partially meeting the current demands of a Visitor Information Centre.

The current VIC provides its base function, visitor information services, however it is dated in its design and layout and does not create an engaging visitor experience. The relevance of the VIC in its current form is likely to diminish over time.

Current bathrooms are not fully accessible and would need to be upgraded, however these works should be completed by the Landlord as they will benefit the landlord. The current bathrooms have a permanent bad odour coming from them that permeates into the café space and is unpleasant.

Current car parking to the facility is inadequate and severely limits its patronage, with an ongoing reliance on ad hoc use of the Longyard Hotel car park.

There is poor vehicle / pedestrian vehicle separation, to the front of the VIC, exacerbated by the shared driveway with the adjacent fast-food outlets.

No compliant accessible access from the rear of the building to the museum facility would need to be addressed long term.

The current synthetic turf treatment to the front arrival area of the building is in reasonable condition, however, there have been ad hoc signage and shelter elements added to this area over time. Aesthetically the presentation of this space requires improvement, as does the presentation and surround to the Golden Guitar. Ramps and partial handrails aged paving would require upgrading to provide a better setting to the Golden Guitar. The current setting and backdrop are dominated by adjoining developments and do not provide an optimal setting that provides context for the photo opportunity for the Golden Guitar.

As the premises are leased it would be unwise for council to invest money to address these issues, particularly given the remaining lease term available.

2.8 Current Annual Costing

2.8.1 Costing

The Quantity Surveyor opinion of probable 2023 cost to maintain the VIC in its current state is approximately \$111K/annum.

Please refer to Appendix A – Northcroft QS Report for a detailed breakdown of costs.

3 Part A2 – Visitor Centre – Augment or Modify the Asset

3.1 Building Modifications – Existing Asset

3.1.1 Interior / Elements contained within the Facility.

As the existing VIC and museums are housed within a leased facility, it is undesirable to invest in significant infrastructure and exhibition upgrades, as any material improvements to the building would be to the benefit of the Landlord and using public funds would be unacceptable to rate payers.

3.1.2 Recommended Amenities

The current bathroom facilities to the VIC, museum and Café require upgrading, as these are dated and there is only an Ambulant toilet provided, no fully accessible toilet is provided within the facility. It is undesirable to provide any major base building (Landlord) upgrades to the existing build infrastructure.

3.2 Quantity Surveyor Costing

3.2.1 Costing

The Quantity Surveyor opinion of probable 2023 cost to upgrade the VIC is approximately \$493K.

The cost for ongoing maintenance post upgrade is approximately \$237K/annum which is calculated based on 2.050% of estimated capital cost of \$9.50M.

Please refer to Appendix A – Northcroft QS Report for a detailed breakdown of costs.

4 Part B1 – Australian Country Music Hall of Fame (ACMHF) – Retain the Asset.

4.1 Existing Asset

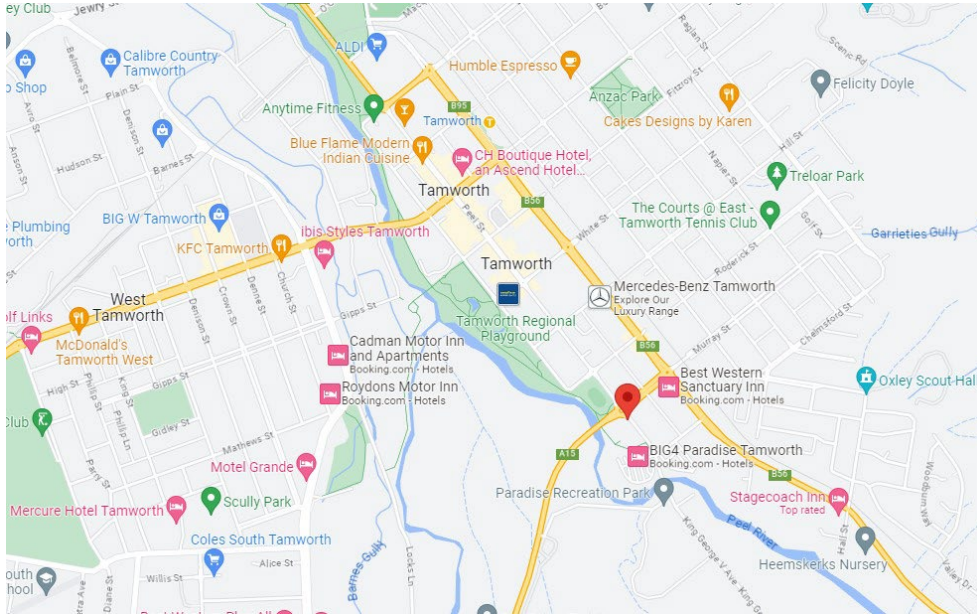


Image: Location Map – Tamworth Country Music Hall of Fame (image Google Maps)

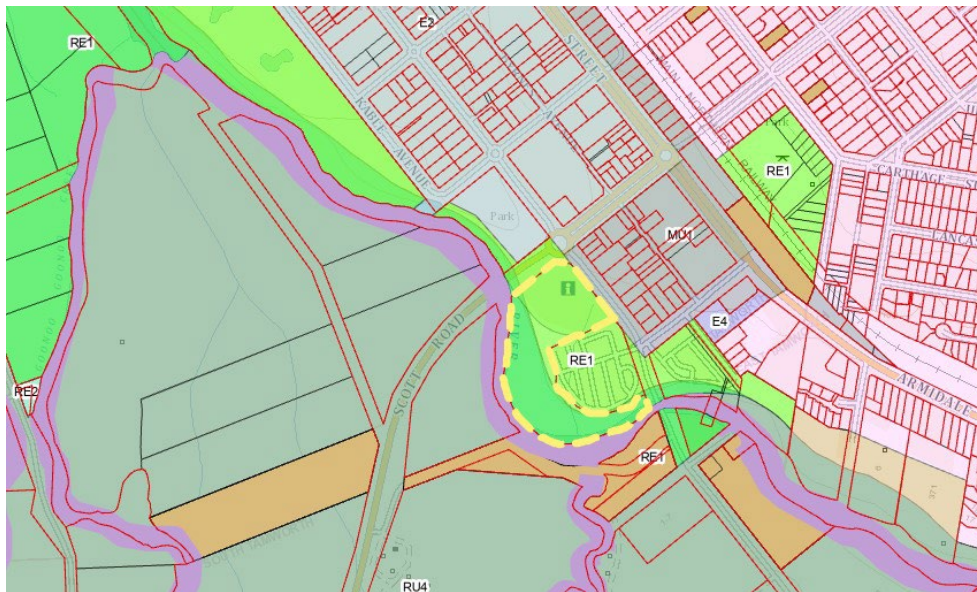


Image: Location Map – Tamworth Country Music Hall of Fame (image Google Maps)



Aerial view: Country Music Hall of Fame (image The Northern Leader)

4.1.1 Description / Ownership / Titling / Zoning

Described as Lot 5/DP1225365

The land that the ACMHF is located on is zoned RE1 – Public Recreation. It shares this location with a Hungry Jacks fast food restaurant and the southern portion of the site is occupied by a Big 4 holiday park.

The Western and Southern portions of the land bordering the Peel River are identified as flood prone lands.

E2 – Commercial Centre – is located to the north and forms part of the Town Centre. To the Northeast of the site the land is classified as MU1 – Mixed Use, primarily comprising of retail developments.

Bounded by the Peel River to the west and south which is classified as RU4 land Primary Production small Lots, these RU4 lotas are identified as bushfire prone lands.

The land and the ACMHF and building are TRC owned.

Hungry Jacks fast food outlet leases the land and the 2 northwestern most group of carparking bays from council. Hungry jacks are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of these facilities.

4.1.2 Location / Proximity to Attractions and Amenities

Location: 561 Peel Street, Tamworth (corner Peel and Murray Streets / New England Highway)

Hours of Operation: 10am – 4pm (Tuesday to Sunday) Closed Mondays and Public Holidays

Access to the site is via Peel Street via a shared driveway with the access to Hungry Jacks fast food outlet.

There are approximately 30 car parking spaces on site, excluding the Hungry Jacks car parking. There is an adjacent council owned carpark that is linked to the driveway of the ACMHF. This provides overflow car parking.

To the South of the site is the Peel River, along the top of the embankment is a shared pedestrian path/cycleway connecting back to the city and along the river. There are no footpaths along the roadside of the ACMHF side of the New England Highway or Peel Street.

To the Northern side of Peel Street there are commercial premises and large shopping centre that includes a Woolworths Supermarket.

To the Western side of the site across the New England Highway, there is an existing velodrome that is soon to be demolished and replaced with a New England University Campus Building.

To the South of the site is a Big 4 Holiday Park, there is direct pedestrian access from Big 4 to the ACMHF site.

4.1.3 Original Building Plans

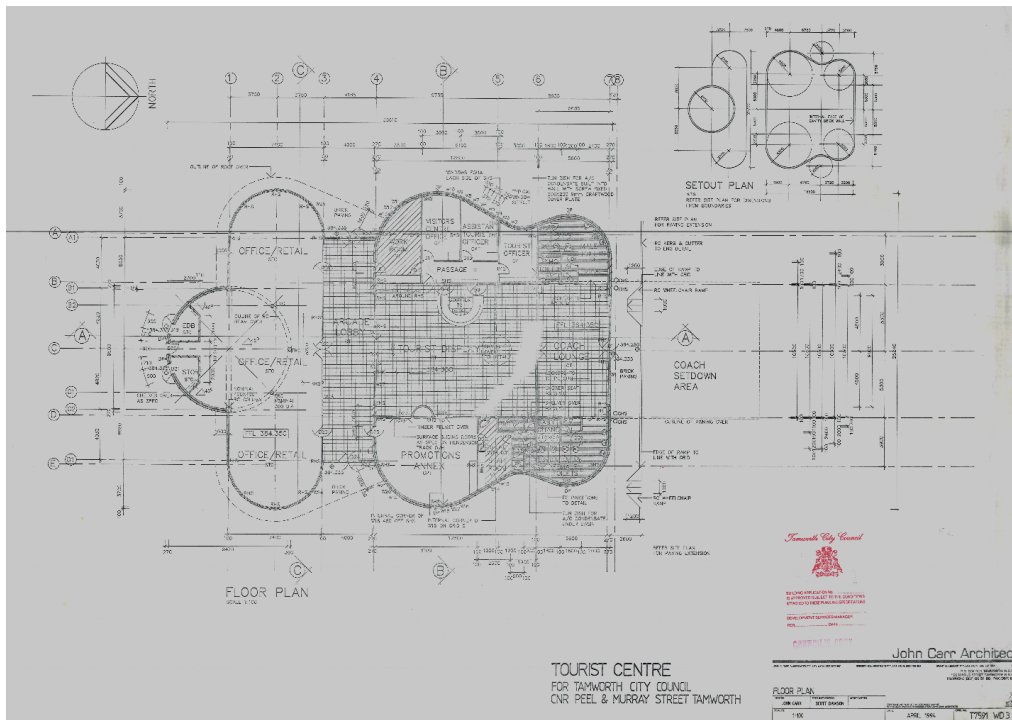


Image: ACNHF Original Floor Plan

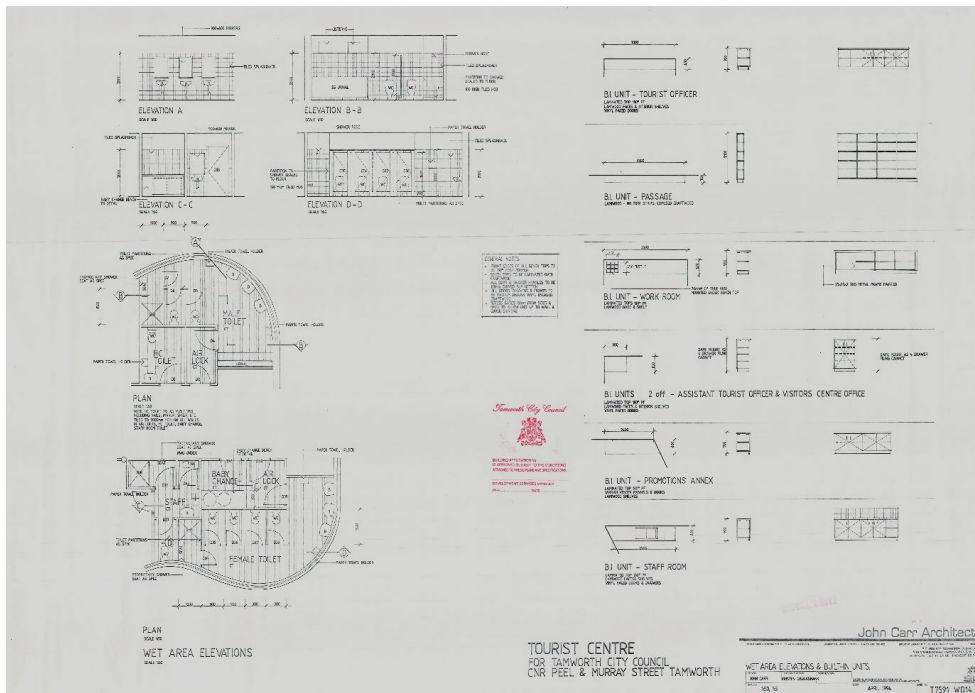


Image: ACMHF – Original bathroom plans and details

4.1.4 Building Fabric

The ACMHF is thematic architecture and has been purposefully designed to resemble a guitar shape. The building originally housed the regional tourism and visitor information centre for Tamworth and operated as a coach station. The building was repurposed in 2016 to house the Australian Country Music Hall of Fame, incorporating the existing Walk a Country Mile exhibition.

The exterior of the building is predominantly constructed from a blond face brick with contrasting redbrick base and parapet.

The parapet hides the tray deck / clip lock style roof and associated associated box gutters. Rainwater heads and exposed external downpipes are constructed from stainless steel.

External window and door joinery to the building is a yellow powder coated aluminium.

Plant rooms located on a turret section of the building, resembling the sound hole of a guitar, and accessible by ladder or plant room accessible from ground level.

At one time there was a central skylight to the building, but has been infilled at some stage, to reduce natural daylight exposure to the museum exhibitions and its form remains evident internally.

A large porte-cochere canopy dominates the front of the building, this resembles the head stock and fret board parts of a guitar, with feature lighting fixed to the end of the structure, representing the tuning pegs.

The cladding to the Porte-cochere is a cellular polycarbonate material heavily tinted but allows light penetration.

The building has both LED up and down lighting and features bespoke standard type lighting around the landscape.

The main driveway and vehicle circulation around the building comprise sections of poured concrete, i.e., the apron to the entry and driveway, while the carparking is a tar spay and chipseal.

Pedestrian circulation around the building consists of small format, coloured concrete pavers, with concrete kerbing separating these areas from vehicles.

Landscape treatment largely compromise of grassed areas with minimal feature planting adjacent to the building.

Signage consists of a large feature sign located near the intersection of Murrey and Peel Streets, which is faded, however advertises the Walk a Country Mile exhibition and a Welcome to Tamworth sign.

4.1.5 Photographs – External Context



Image: ACMHF main entry with driveway and porte-cochere



Image: View East across Murray Street towards the ACMHF with a dominant Hungry Jacks in the foreground



Image: Western elevation of the ACMHF



Image: Southern elevation of the ACMHF showing parking as service / plant room access



Image: ACMHF external paving and lighting detail



Image: ACMHF eastern façade detail with stainless steel downpipe and paving



Image: ACMHF eastern façade disused museum entry and directional signage.

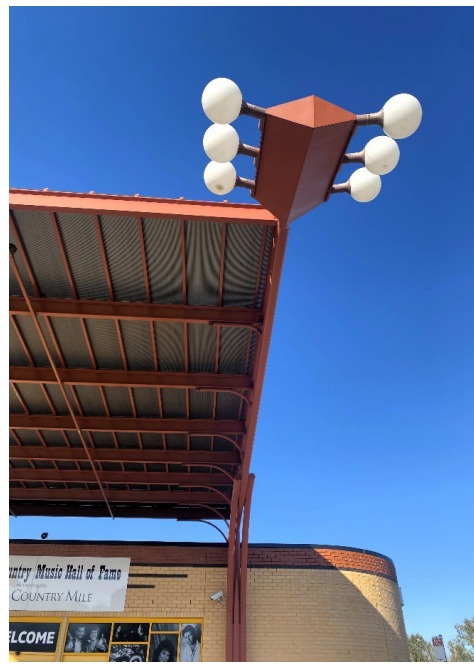


Image: ACMHF view of Porte-cochere and feature lighting



Image: ACMHF stone plinths with country music award winner plaques



Image: ACMHF façade with rainwater tank



Image: Eastern elevation with typical landscape treatment and car park



Image: ACMHF landscape, driveway, and car parking.

4.2 Building Interior / elements contained within the facility.

Generally, the interior of the building has been largely retained in its original state.

There is a decorative polished chrome batted ceiling detail to the entry foyer and main exhibition space, this has been constructed in a wave form. A similar type of ceiling detail exists in the old entry exit foyers to the Walk a Country Mile Exhibition, now used for storage and exhibition space. The office and archive areas to the side areas to the eastern and western sides of the build are a grid and tile ceiling system. It appears that the partition walls are not full height, i.e., there is no separation or compartmentation between the rooms and museum spaces. The Walk a Country Mile Exhibition also has a grid and tile ceiling system that has been painted a dark colour.

The building has a ducted air conditioning system. This system operates 24/7 to maintain optimal environmental conditions for the exhibits. There is a retrofitted Humidity monitoring control system, with various probes for monitoring relative humidity located around the museum space. The system is provided by Euroscan. The system installed is typically utilised for cold store temperature monitoring.

Flooring to the office and Archive areas is generally a carpet tile, while the ACMHF and foyer areas are a glazed floor tile.

Wall cladding to the Walk a Country Mile Exhibition is framed wall with plasterboard cladding, with some walls rendered masonry.

4.2.1 Entry Foyer

The entry foyer contains an information / reception desk where admission fees are paid. There are a limited range of exhibition displays and photographs in this area, that acts as part of the arrival sequence before entering the main museum areas.

The bathroom amenities are accessed from this space.

4.2.2 Main Museum Space

The main museum space comprises a series of static displays either in glass display cases or on display joinery.

Feature spot lighting has recently been upgraded to this space.

The offices, archive and digitising rooms are accessed off this main room.

4.2.3 Walk a Country Mile

The walk a country mile exhibition is a series of linear displays that follow various eras of country music. This section of the building remains largely untouched since its installation in the 1990's. The displays comprise a series of glass fronted wall inset vignettes, wall mounted photographs and memorabilia.

There are several Audio-visual displays with limited seating provided these are push activated by the viewer.

Feature spotlighting has recently been upgraded to this space.

Larger displays of artefacts and memorabilia are also glazed.

4.2.4 Office and Archives

An office space to the eastern side of the building has largely been taken over by artefact / exhibition item storage. The archives are stored on metal shelving, comprising clothing, equipment, and a large record collection. Information is catalogued and accessed via a locked door.

4.2.5 Digitising office and General Storage

The western side of the building house several offices spaces that remain in their original configuration. Originally part of this wall was open and served as a visitor information counter and tours booking area. This has been closed off and is now utilised for storage.

Two of these offices have active workstations and are used for digitising the collection.

One of the spaces adjacent to the digitising room is used as a Conservation room to receive, open, and inspect new donated exhibit pieces for condition, infestation and prepare for digitising and display.

The remaining spaces are utilised to house a range of musical instruments, film and photographic archives and prints and art works in drawers.

4.2.6 Amenities

Male and female toilets are provided either side of the entry foyer. An accessible toilet is provided that is accessed directly from the foyer space behind the main reception counter. Both male and female bathrooms contain a shower cubicle, these are no longer used and were originally installed when the building performed the function of a coach station. The current state of these bathrooms is clean and serviceable; however, their interior and finishes are dated.

4.2.7 Photographs – Internal Context



Image: ACMHF interior with feature ceiling and glass display case

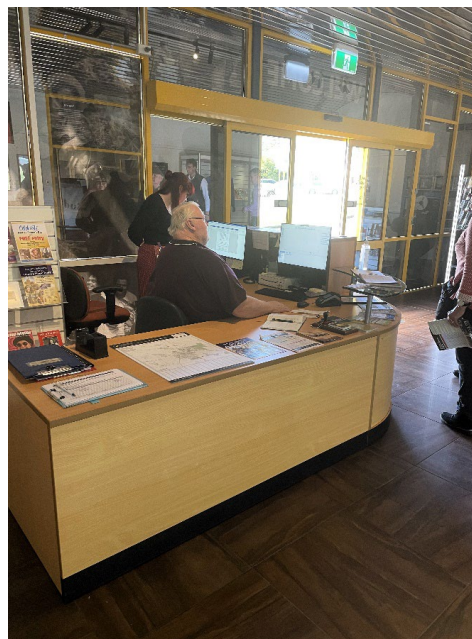


Image: Front Reception desk and view to entry doors



Image: Typical Walk a Country Mile Exhibit



Image: Walk A Country Mile Audio Visual display



Image: ACMHF main exhibition space



Image: CCTV and AV controls, dated technology



Image: Office space converted into conservation collection receiving area



Disused entry hall repurposed into archive / artefact storage



Image: instrument collection and photographic / poster archive storage in repurposed office / disused entry foyer



Image: record and clothing collection housed in a disused office space.



Image: disused entry doors to ACMHF now exhibition space.



Image: feature ceiling to main ACMHF exhibition space with filled in skylight.

4.2.8 Current Operations / Staffing / operational structure (linkage to strategy / council plans etc)

The Australian Country Music Foundation (ACMF) was the founder of the Australian Country Music Hall of Fame in the early 1990's. The ACMF inc. formed to establish a permanent national country music archive and resource centre.

The Australian Country Music Hall of Fame moved to its current location, the guitar shaped building in 2015.

In 2019 the TRC developed a Strategic plan for the Australian Country Music Hall of Fame. This is a partnership between TRC and the Australia Country Music Foundation (ACMF).

In 2020 the ACMF Inc. agreed that the TRC take over the administration of the Australian Country Music Hall of Fame with the existing AMCF Inc. volunteers continuing to provide resourcing for the day to day running of museum.

The ACMF is a not-for-profit association who is responsible for the day to day running of the museum by volunteers.

4.3 Current Operations / Functions / Challenges

4.3.1 Collection Management / Storage

Although it is understood that there are collection management systems and data bases in place, collection management and storage is one of the biggest issues for the ACMHF. Currently disused office spaces hold much of the collection and archives.

These rooms are lockable, however the environmental condition they are held in is just a conditioned space, there is no specific environmental control system.

Due to the shape of the building, the back of house areas is poorly laid out, utilising exiting office spaces, with exhibits and artefacts stacked on top of each other. Other than digital records this makes it difficult to control inventory of the artefacts and exhibits.

There is office furniture excess to requirements within these space and large areas of floor and circulation space that are taken up by artefacts / exhibit elements. These areas are currently unable to be cleaned properly and potentially expose the collection to pest infestation. Generally, there is a lack of space to adequately house the collection.

Secure access to these spaces could be improved by access control systems and processes.

Security surveillance (CCTV) is a traditional record and write over system, i.e., this may not provide adequate coverage of the artefacts.

It is appreciated that the collection has largely been curated by volunteers with some areas of the archive / collection more ordered than others. Other areas require review and better storage organisation with the addition of more racking and shelving.

The current storage areas 'back of house' are at capacity and there is little room for receiving or accepting further artefacts to add to the collection.

4.3.2 Arrival Experience / Presentation

The arrival sequence / experience when entering the museum is poor. The driveway is shared with the Hungry Jacks fast food outlet, the concrete driveway and large portico remain reminiscent of the buildings prior function as a coach stop and visitor information centre.

There is no sense of arrival or welcoming experience provided, most visitors drive to the ACMHF. There are three sets of external doors with no obvious indication which doors are the main entrance to the facility, however, noting that the eastern set of side doors have been used as the main entry previously. The doors under the Porte cochere are currently the main entry doors.

Both sets of doors are covered in graphics, and there is no insight or teaser provided about the experience one is about to have. The main entry doors under the Porte cochere are on the edge of the driveway. The building entry feels like you are entering a repurposed bus terminal.

4.3.3 External spaces

Although there is adequate car parking, the landscape experience, amenity, and aesthetics are poor. Paving has been updated to the exterior of the building over recent times, however there is a lack of vegetation and tree cover provided to the car park. The building feels very much like it remains to be vehicle dominated surrounded by driveways and vehicle parking. The area around the building does not provide a humancentric space with planting, wayfinding and spaces that support the arrival experience, and set the visitor up for success and a memorable experience.

4.3.4 Fire Protection

The current building is fitted with limited thermal and smoke detection systems. The building is also fitted with a range of fire extinguishers. The collection and artefact / archive storage are in an office environment and is not fit for purpose. Although there is 'dry fire' detection equipment installed, these rooms and spaces are not purpose built for the storage of museum artefacts.

There is no fire suppression system installed. The grid and tile ceiling would allow fire to spread to impact these areas or spread from other parts of the building.

The risk of loss part of or the entire collection if there was a fire within the ACNHF would appear quite high, particularly afterhours when the facility isn't occupied.

It is also unknown how the AC system operates in the event of a fire, i.e., does this shut off on a 'fire trip' or is there a risk of the ducting adding to the risk of fire spread.

4.3.5 The Guitar Shaped building

The Guitar shaped building is only recognised when viewed from the air or an aerial photograph. When viewed or experienced from the ground plane there is very little that provides visual cues that this building represents a guitar, other than its curvilinear form.

The curvilinear shape of the building has been partitioned internally into predominantly conventional rooms that adjoin the curved form, except for the Walk a Country Mile Exhibit that partially utilises this form.

The benefit of the guitar shaped building to most visitors is not a key component to the overall visitor experience.

4.4 Building Fabric Assessment

4.4.1 Condition of fabric - Exterior

Generally, the condition of the exterior built fabric is good the façade and window / door joinery appear to be in good condition.

The driveway and car parking surface treatment are in sound condition.

External signage is in a poor condition, either faded or sun damaged with outdated and inaccurate messaging.

External façade flood lighting has been updated with LED lights; however, these have been rehoused in a cage structure that are very utilitarian, unsightly, detracting from overall aesthetics and in pedestrian pathways.

The surrounding landscape treatments, other than paving do little to enhance the experience, with poor quality vegetation and exposed irrigation lines evident through mulched areas.

4.4.2 Condition of the Interior

The interior condition is fair, although dated due to little funding being available for improvements over time.

Generally, wall and floor conditions are good, however floor tiles are dated in their pattern and style. Where carpet tiles exist in public areas, they indicate wear as they do in the back of house office areas.

Ceiling treatments vary. The Walk a Country Mile Exhibition and back of house offices indicate wear and show signs of some minor past water damage in certain locations. The ceiling tiles to the Walk a Country Mile Exhibition have been painted black. These vary in colour and different paint finishes have been applied over the years.

The feature wave form ceiling to the main entry foyer and exhibition space is in good condition, however very distinguishable and distracts the visitor from the exhibition experience. Due to its highly polished finish, it is the first element that you notice when entering the space.

New feature track lighting has been added to the main exhibition space over recent time.

4.4.3 Operator feedback (Asset and Operator)/Visitation

4.4.3.1 Storage

Storage is at capacity and there is no additional space within the facility to store new collection items received, or space to properly organise and store current collections. Storage utilises repurposed office space and there is a need to provide a proper storage environment, with correct environmental controls.

4.4.3.2 Access

Servicing Exhibitions in the Walk a Country Mile exhibition is very difficult as all of these are rear accessed. This requires a staff member enter a crawlspace to access these from the rear. This makes it very difficult to maintain these exhibits and poses a potential WHS hazard to the staff having to access these spaces.

4.4.3.3 Loading

There is no undercover loading, receiving or dispatch area, this means that all artefacts, exhibits need to be moved through front of house public spaces.

4.4.4 Existing Council Budgets / Maintenance / operational budgeted inputs.

TRC maintains a budget for the maintenance of the building and some exhibition elements, particularly for the TRC owned exhibitions like the 'Walk a Country Mile' exhibition.

4.4.5 Visitation

TRC management and staff state that the Country Music Hall of Fame experiences positive feedback. visited from across the region, state, and interstate based on post code collection which have determined geographic spread of visitors.

Broadly, visitation to the Country Music Hall of Fame and Walk a Country Mile exhibit can be categorised as follows:

- d) Average daily attendance 32 PAX / Day over the year 2022/2023
- e) School Holiday / Holiday Periods up to 800 Pax / Day
- f) During the Tamworth Country Music Festival between 700-1000 PAX / Day

4.5 Existing Council Budgets / Maintenance / operational budgeted inputs.

Table 04 Country Music Hall of Fame Budget

Item	Budget
Expenses	
Air Conditioning Maintenance	\$6,478.00
Building Maintenance	\$19,644.00
Cleaning	\$24,336.00
Depreciation	\$11,721.00
Electricity	\$20,300.00
Grounds Maintenance	\$12,924.00
Pest Control	\$1,538.00
Sanitation	\$0
Security	\$9,000.00
Vandalism Repairs	\$500.00
Water Charges	\$1,847.00
Solar Panel Maintenance	\$1,600.00
Total	\$109,888

4.5.1 SWOT Analysis

The table below is a qualitative Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis of the current ACMHF in its current facility in an unaltered state.

Table 05 SWOT Current ACMHF Building.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TRC has owned the Australian Country Music Collections, including the Country Music Hall of Fame, the National Guitar Museum, and the Country Wax Museum collections since 2020, providing it flexibility for exhibition displays. Prominent location on the New England Highway Good pedestrian and cycleway connection along the river front. The exterior fabric of the building is sound and in good condition. Adjacent to the town centre; walking distance to the main parks. Adequate parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current building is a repurposed visitor information centre. The building was not originally designed for museum exhibitions. There remains a reliance on strong volunteer support to operate the museums, while the operations transition to council. There are limited dedicated council management and administrative resources to support the management and future development and promotion of the museum. The current museum is air conditioned, however not a climate-controlled museum environment, risking possible long-term deterioration of artefacts and exhibitions. The arrival experience / sequence to the building is poor and access is shared with a fast-food outlet. Signage and wayfinding to the build are poor, dated, and confusing with the predominance of the Hungry Jacks Signage. Inadequate space, secure environment and adequate fire protection for the artefact and archive storage. The building is at capacity in terms of collection storage The shape of the building makes it difficult to display and or use space efficiently for storage or display. Colocation with Hungry Jacks presents a poor value proposition i.e. kerb appeal. Poor audio experience given its theme. Antiquated video / Theaterette experience.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leveraging a greater visitation during the Tamworth Country Music Festival Leveraging Tamworth's Sister city relationships to facilitate global or on loan touring country music exhibitions (e.g., Nashville) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The museum is reliant on entrance fees to sustain its operations. A decline in visitation would increase the reliance on financial support for operations from the TRC. There is limited revenue or the ability to increase current revenue. There is a risk that lack of future investment in renewing the museum to deliver a more contemporary experience could result in reduced visitation. The current volunteer support base is dwindling which has potential to impact operations in the future. Loss of the entire collection and archive due to antiquated and not purpose-built fire protection or environmental controls. Limitations and relevance of the museums over time as an attraction and revenue stream. Deteriorating collection. Other adjacent Council car park utilised for something different or sold off i.e. loss of car parking.

4.6 Qualitative Assessment / Fitness for Purpose

4.6.1 Current functions / ability to maintain grow operations in alignment with new strategy within the existing fabric.

The current building is Council owned and has housed its 2 Museums for some years. These have been operating within the existing building fabric and current infrastructure, largely unchanged. The long-term viability of the Museum's in this building is not ideal as the building does not contain a proper environmental management control system to ensure the correct conditions for long term preservation and protection of the museum collection.

There is no fire compartmentalisation of the museum exhibits or zones, meaning that a fire event has the potential to cause significant damage to the collection.

The museum archive / exhibit storage area comprises repurposed office areas, although these have fire detection systems installed in them, there is no fire suppression system. The grid and tile ceiling system further add to the risk of fire damaging or destroying the collection and archives.

The Walk a Country Mile exhibition is fixed in its current layout and format and is not possible to upgrade without substantially gutting the exhibition and remodelling it. This exhibition is largely serviced from restricted spaces and are not suitable for adequately servicing the exhibition.

The current collection storage areas within the building are at capacity and their layout and storage facilities are inadequate and inefficient in their current format. Without the ability to increase the collection storage would mean that the collection would need to remain static and not be able to grow. This could lead to the collection diminishing in its relevance overtime.

As the building has been repurposed from a tourism information centre, the original layout of the building was specifically designed to support that function. The actual museum spaces are currently limited to the central spaces within the building and side offices and support areas would require substantial remodelling to improve the museum experience.

The current building and museum layouts are very limited and are not conducive to enabling regular rotation of the collection, refreshes and/or upgrades. This is particularly true to the Walk a Country Mile exhibition, although this is largely a chronology of country music history. The inability to refresh or upgrade this exhibition risks loss of interest and visitor engagement overtime due to the very traditional and static nature of the exhibition.

4.7 Quantity Surveyor Costing

4.7.1 Costing

The Quantity Surveyor opinion of probable 2023 cost for minor remodelling works to the Country Music Hall of Fame and Walk a Country Mile is approximately \$1.398M.

The ongoing cost of maintenance is approximately \$197K/annum which is calculated based on 2.50% of estimated capital cost of \$7.90M.

Please refer to Appendix A – Northcroft QS Report for a detailed breakdown of costs.

5 Part B2 – Australian Country Music Hall of Fame– Augment / Modify the Asset

5.1 Building Modifications

This section of the report addresses potential improvements or modifications to the existing fabric and interior that would allow a greater visitor experience to be created.

5.1.1 Interior / Element contained within the Facility.

The most practical approach to upgrading the exhibitions is to strip out the interior of the building, back to a cold shell and redesign a new museum interior. This would comprise the following:

- a) Create reception / arrival zone within the building entry foyer.
- b) New general lighting and specific feature museum lighting system (track / grid lighting) – Dali controlled / programable.
- c) Exposed Soffit, painted back with truss to allow hanging of objects, theatrical lighting etc.
- d) Ceiling and services exposed / partially exposed painted black, with acoustic treatment.
- e) New floor coverings
- f) Installation a zoned PA soundscape for piped music.
- g) Retiling and refurbishment of the current bathrooms, new tiling, lighting, fixtures and fittings and conversion of the existing showers into cleaners / consumable stores.
- h) New interpretative graphics and signage
- i) Floor boxes for electrical services.
- j) New dry fire detection system throughout the building
- k) New flooring on existing concrete slab.
- l) Allowance for a range of exhibitions fixed and flexible.
- m) Wi-fi to the building.
- n) Small kitchenette (refrigerator, zip mini boil, microwave, cupboards, bench, and sink) / break room for up to 5 staff table and chairs. Lockers
- o) 10 square metre general storage room accessed off the loading dock.
- p) Creating of a loading dock area /and zone internal to the building for receiving, set down and dispatch of approximately 25 square metres.

5.1.2 External spaces

There is a need to significantly upgrade and rework the external spaces and arrival sequence to the building. This needs to create the setting for the experience and provide greater street appeal, indicating to the visitor that this is a must-see attraction.

This would include but not be limited to:

- a) Recommend upgrades to external landscape, with the addition of new native plantings, being water wise / drought tolerant planting. 'Connection to Country' the landscape needs to be easily maintained.
- b) Create shading with canopy trees to the car park areas.
- c) Replace external standard light poles with energy efficient LED lighting.
- d) Replace ground mounted LED lighting set within a protective cage with pole mounted flood light to the building.

- e) Upgrade information signage and wayfinding, including the main entry marker.
- f) Upgrade the entry driveway experience to create a sense of arrival, that is independent to the Hungry Jacks shared entry driveway.
- g) Create a separation from Hungry Jacks; view, landscape.
- h) Provided a shaded canopy / walkway from the car park to the building entry.
- i) Rework the front of the building / entry doors to create a paved landscaped area directly in front of the building, returning this to a pedestrian experience over a car dominated one, through a combination of both hard paved and soft landscape treatments. This will help provide a greater separation or sense of identity from Hungry Jacks.
- j) Add electrical vehicle charging stations to the car park.
- k) Provide greater clarity in vehicle management by reconfiguring the eastern most car park to coaches and caravans.
- l) Relocate and integrate the country music winner monolithic rocks more sensitively into the landscape.

5.1.3 Offsite Archive Facility

An off-site archive / storage facility would need to be constructed or purchased. It would be desirable to own this facility as there will be a requirement to ensure that museum specific environmental control systems are installed within this facility and there is a substantial cost in relocating these archives multiple times. This should be a single-story facility for the ease of management.

Elements should include but not be limited to:

- a) Usable floor area should be 300 square metres to all for the accommodation of the current collection and future collection.
- b) Racking and shelving would need to be provided to the storage space.
- c) A small loading dock with airlock, to enable movement in and out of collection items in weather protected environment.
- d) A small office area 25 square metres with 2 x workstations, small kitchenette included within this space.
- e) Adjacent to the loading dock a separate room approx. 20 square metres to allow for receiving, unpacking and treatment of new items that are being brought into the collection.
- f) A 20 square metre Conservation workshop that is accessed from the loading dock, for restoration, repair, and treatment of any items.

5.1.4 SWOT

The table below is a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis, that deals with remodelling or redevelopment of the current museums in their current facility, this considers the current and future needs of an engaging visitor experience and museum operation.

Table 06 SWOT Augmented or Modified ACMHF building.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The building is council owned, and therefore and additional investment within the building, the benefit remains with council. The existing external fabric of the building are in sound condition and require little maintenance investment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The museum is architecturally themed in the shape of a guitar, making it difficult to integrate any extension or modifications to the external fabric. The internal shape of the building is not conducive to providing an efficient museum layout. Current museum displays are very traditional and two dimensional. Other than engagement with volunteers, there is little interactivity or engaging activities to increase Patron interest or increase dwell time. Despite the external fabric being in good condition, the building remains to be a bespoke building with plantroom and building access locations that may not be conducive to supporting a remodelled internal layout. The footprint of the building does not allow sufficient space to include incorporate a Visitor Experience Centre, and 3 combined museums, storage and archive storage. Cannot include regional or indigenous exhibits, products, art or other opportunities to represent the region and capital of country.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patrons of the fast-food outlet may visit the ACMHF, not being aware of its location. Remodel the interior of the building to allow curation of key experiences within the museum. Remodel the exterior arrival sequence / beautification / landscape treatment to improve the presentation of the offer. Consider the ability to move the archive to an off-site location within a properly climate-controlled building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of the support of volunteers as the operation transitions to council ownership and operation Long term viability of the museum if adequate funding cannot be found to support paid professional staff. Long term viability and relevance of the museum, attractiveness to visit, if funds aren't available to refresh and update the museum displays and stories. Maximum footprint of the building remodelled may still may not provide adequate space for future growth. The VIC and museums can't meet the amenity level, modernisation and/or experiences that benchmarked Regional VIC experiences currently offer. Possible loss of rate payer interest to preserve a revamped display of the same.

5.2 Qualitative Assessment / Fitness for Purpose

5.2.1 Built Environment alignment with new strategy within the existing modified fabric.

To enable alignment with the TRC Visitor Economy Strategy and Tamworth Regional Museums Engagement Strategy. The strip out and redesign of the interior museum spaces to create a bespoke experience is possible. This would vastly improve the visitor experience and enable the museum collection to be displayed in a more contemporary and engaging way. This would allow for a greater level of integration of the two museums.

A strip out and refit of the museums would work best if the archive and collection storage was housed off site. Although this provides a greater floor area and opportunity for improved circulation and museum space, the collection archive to be moved off site requires an additional building to be identified for the management and storage of the archive.

The challenge with this option is that there remains the requirement to house a Visitor Experience Centre and, the Country Music Wax Museum and the National Guitar Museum in another building. This delivers no efficiencies in sharing resources within the one facility, requiring each facility to be separately resourced. This is further impacted if the museum collection and archive are stored in an independent facility off site. There are both the holding costs of this asset and the staff and volunteers that are required to manage it. There is a loss in the efficiency of having the museum archive co-located with the museums, as volunteers can maximise their time by conducting digitising and archiving functions while staffing the museum admissions functions. These functions would need to be independent if the archive is in a separate facility.

Although the interior of the building may be substantially remodelled, the exterior the building, including hardstand areas and Port cochere remain the same. This provides a challenge unless substantially remodelled to deliver and inviting visitor experience. The exterior of the building requires to have a certain kerb appeal for it to be attractive, inviting enough to encourage visitors to enter.

A substantial capital investment would be required to create any noticeable improvement to the overall experience. Despite this the overall experience may be improved as may the conditions that the museum archive is stored in. However, this has potential to increase costs associated with having an additional asset to maintain, in addition to a separate visitor experience centre. This would increase the staff cost base and not deliver operational efficiencies.

The Challenge with this option is that regardless of the amount invested within the museum redesign the building fabric and footprint remain the same.

5.3 Quantity Surveyor – Costing – Strip out / refit

5.3.1 Costing

The Quantity Surveyor opinion of probable 2023 cost to conduct a complete refit of the Country Music Hall of Fame is approximately \$7.6M.

The ongoing cost of maintenance is \$112K/annum The above maintenance cost is calculated based on 2.50% of estimated capital cost of \$11.20M.

Please refer to Appendix A – Northcroft QS Report for a detailed breakdown of costs.

5.4 Building Modifications – Alternative Asset.

5.4.1 Alternative Asset / Repurposed.

The assessment of existing council assets does not form part of the scope of this report, however an option exists for TRC to assess their existing asset base for suitability of council owned assets, to relocate the VIC, Country Music Wax Museum and National Guitar Museum.

The TRC owns many building assets across the city; however, most of these assets are most likely not suitable to be repurposed as a Visitor Experience Centre and amalgamation of museums.

To do this would require an assessment of existing council owned commercial property and other assets to be undertaken to determine their suitability for a new Visitor Experience including integration of the museums.

This process would require a range of criteria to be established to assess the existing asset base, including but not be limited to the following:

- a) Location and proximity to major tourist thoroughfares / travel routes
- b) Availability of adequate free car parking and the ability to accommodate recreational vehicles, vehicles towing caravans and coaches.
- c) Vacant occupancy of the asset
- d) Suitability of the asset in terms of its ability to be repurposed, i.e., no heritage restrictions.
- e) Current access compliance of the facility, works and budget required to make facilities access compliant.
- f) The usable floor area available of the asset and ability to configure this to meet the requirements of a new visitor experience centre brief.
- g) Wet and dry fire system upgrades to comply with Australian Standards.
- h) Heritage restrictions or limitation of the asset.
- i) Base building fabric maintenance and upgrade requirements, current condition
- j) Available tenure for occupation of the visitor experience centre and museums, i.e., these would need to be permanent facilities.
- k) Internal spatial parameters, clear space to accommodate the museum Fit outs.
- l) Costs associated with base building infrastructure upgrades to meet specialist museum HVAC and lighting requirements.
- m) Ability to address internal climate control for the preservation of the museum exhibits.
- n) Storage capacity to accommodate the collection and archives from all museums.

These facilities would also need to be tested against the guiding Principles developed for the new Visitor Experience Centre to ensure their alignment.

Council has an Asset management plan – Tamworth 2017 -2027 asset management strategy. Any strategy to use an existing asset would need to align to the TRC asset management strategy.

5.5 Visitor Experience Centre Key Objectives

The Key objectives for an optimum Visitor Experience Centre are to:

- Provide best practice Visitor experience in the form of service, information, and amenity.
- Provide contemporary accessible amenities, changing places, all gender toilets, accessible toilets.
- Provide a unique agile, multi-use space to accommodate temporary museum/art/photography displays, highlighting the region, music history and cultural history.
- Provide retail space to support visitor services functions and/or museum.
- Provide a food beverage outlet for core operating hours.
- Provide smart technology to provide intelligent spaces that optimise efficiency, comfort, health, and safety, and continuously improves the usability of the centre and museum spaces.
- Provide adequate secure storage for excess exhibit items and/or new museum pieces being delivered for preparation and display.
- Design a functional logistics space for the efficient management of logistics including loading/unloading area, security, and services facilities (waste, cleaning, F&B operations, and maintenance)
- Provide a place for informal education and community gatherings to learn about the history of Tamworth and associated regions.
- Provide office space to administer, maintain, and manage the Visitor Information Centre and museums.
- Provide adequate parking for vehicles and coaches commensurate with projected annual visitation.
- Develop a connection to country and First Nations inclusion
- Include space for live entertainment (indoor or outdoor) covered, including plug and play infrastructure.

6 Attachment A – Northcroft QS Report

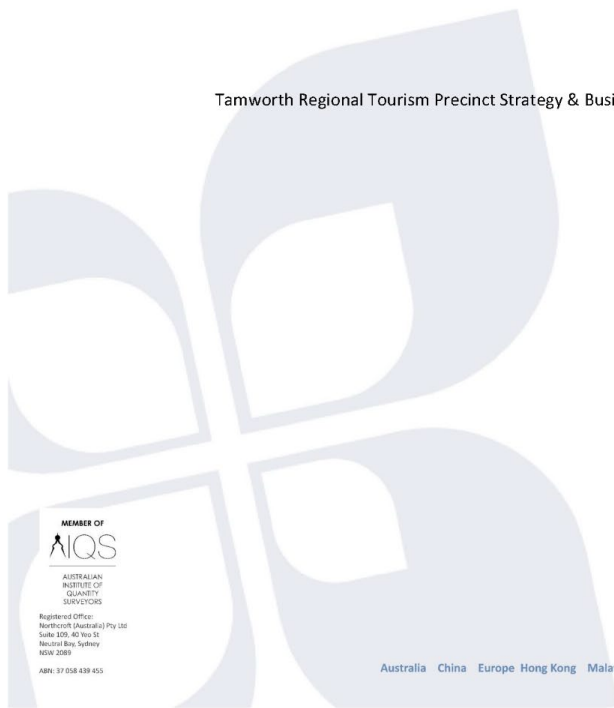


Construction Consultants

HVH Group Pty Ltd

Tamworth Regional Tourism Precinct Strategy & Business Case - Stage 3 Precinct Analysis
Cost Plan Report

17th October 2023



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Stage 3 Precinct Analysis
Cost Plan Report



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Stage 3 Precinct Analysis
Cost Plan Report



1.0 Introduction

This report has been prepared in response to HVH Group's request for the provision of cost estimates of various upgrade works required to existing Council's assets comprising the Australian Country Music Hall of Fame, the National Guitar Museum, the Country Music Wax Museum and Visitor Information Centre.

This costing exercise aims to keep and improve existing assets to make the visitor information centre and attractions more appealing to the visitors.

Should any further information regarding this report be required, please do not hesitate to contact:

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Visitor Centre Precinct_Existing Assets_2023.10.17_Rev.1.docx Page 1

Stage 3 Precinct Analysis
Cost Plan Report



2.0 Tamworth Visitor Information Centre

2.1 Upgrading Works

Tamworth Visitor Information Centre comprises the visitor information centre, the café, the guitar museum, the wax museum and the big guitar monument.

Several shortcomings have been identified that require rectification/upgrade works.

The following table outlines the current forecast costs (GST exclusive) of upgrading works.

No.	Description	Total (\$)
1	ELIMINATE TRIP HAZARD AT SIGNAGE PLINTH	4,000
2	UPGRADE PLINTH/PAVED SURROUNDS OF GOLDEN GUITAR MONUMENT	28,000
3	RE-LINE MARKING FRONT CARPARK	10,000
4	COMPLIANT ACCESSIBLE ACCESS FROM REAR OF BUILDING TO MUSEUM	55,000
5	ROOF LEAK REPAIR	28,000
6	UPGRADE AND REFRESH EXISTING TOILET FACILITIES	128,000
7	ADDITION OF ACCESSIBLE TOILET	95,000
8	PROFESSIONAL/AUTHORITY FEES	63,000
9	CONTINGECY	82,000
TOTAL FORECAST COSTS		493,000

ASSUMPTIONS AND EXCLUSIONS:

1. No major upgrade of underground drains
2. Space available for the addition of an accessible toilet

2.2 Maintenance Cost

The estimated annual maintenance cost of the building will be \$237,000.

The above maintenance cost is calculated based on 2.50% of estimated capital cost of \$9.50M.

Stage 3 Precinct Analysis
Cost Plan Report



3.0 Australian Country Music Hall of Fame

3.1 Minor Remodelling Works

The guitar-shaped building currently houses the Australian Country Music Hall of Fame and Walk a Country Mile exhibition.

Several shortcomings have been identified that require rectification/upgrade works. This option looks at minor remodelling works.

The following table outlines the current forecast costs (GST exclusive) of upgrading works.

No.	Description	Total (\$)
1	AV UPGRADES TO PRESENTATIONS, TECHNICAL AND EQUIPMENT	270,000
2	REPAINTING OF ENTIRE INTERIOR	88,000
3	UPGRADE TO SOUNDSCAPE	135,000
4	UPGRADE TO ENTRY EXPERIENCE EXTERNALLY	432,000
5	NEW EXTERNAL SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING	36,000
6	MINOR LANDSCAPING REPLANTING	98,000
7	PROFESSIONAL/AUTHORITY FEES	106,000
6	CONTINGENCY	233,000
TOTAL FORECAST COSTS		1,398,000

ASSUMPTIONS AND EXCLUSIONS:

1. No major structural works
2. Exclude fire compartmentalisation
3. Exclude environmental management control system
4. Exclude separate building to house excess exhibits
5. Exclude works to Walk a Country Mile exhibition access and service issues

3.2 Maintenance Cost

The estimated annual maintenance cost of the building will be \$197,000.

The above maintenance cost is calculated based on 2.50% of estimated capital cost of \$7.90M.

Stage 3 Precinct Analysis
Cost Plan Report



4.0 Australian Country Music Hall of Fame

4.1 Complete Refit

Due to the poor layout of current space. This option looks at completely gutting out and rebuilding internal fitouts.

The following table outlines the current forecast costs (GST exclusive) of a complete refit.

No.	Description	Total (\$)
1	BUILDERS PRELIMINARIES	825,000
2	DEMOLITION	160,000
3	SUBSTRUCTURE	44,000
4	COLUMNS	17,000
5	STAIRCASE	23,000
6	ROOF	48,000
7	EXTERNAL WALLS/WINDOWS/DOORS	83,000
8	INTERNAL WALLS	234,000
9	INTERNAL SCREENS	93,000
10	INTERNAL DOORS	42,000
11	FINISHES	628,000
12	FITTINGS	841,000
13	SPECIAL	805,000
14	SERVICES	1,285,000
15	EXTERNAL WORKS	566,000
16	PROFESSIONAL/AUTHORITY FEES	640,000
17	CONTINGENCY	1,266,000
	TOTAL FORECAST COSTS	7,600,000

ASSUMPTIONS AND EXCLUSIONS:

1. Relocation of exhibits and archives by others
2. No major structural issues
3. No asbestos/hazardous materials
4. Exclude structural improvements
5. No main services upgrade

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Cost Plan Report



- 6. No staging of works
- 7. Exclude separate building to house excess exhibits

4.2 Maintenance Cost

The estimated annual maintenance cost of the building following the refit will be \$112,000.

The above maintenance cost is calculated based on 1.00% of estimated capital cost of \$11.20M.

Stage 3 Precinct Analysis
Cost Plan Report



5.0 Limitations

The high-level estimates are based on limited information and CURRENT at October 2023.

Allowances for all cost elements are subject to further review should further information become available.

Several assumptions and exclusions have been made in establishing these cost estimates.

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CAPITAL OF COUNTRY TOURISM PRECINCT

Regional Tourism Service Model

January 2024

TRC – Regional Tourism Service Model

Proudly funded by



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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Kamilaroi/Gomeroi peoples of the Kamilaroi Nation, the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which Tamworth region is located. We recognise their continuing and inherent connection to Country and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

This report was prepared by **Destination Marketing Store & P90 Advisory**.



TRC – Regional Tourism Service Model

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TRC – Regional Tourism Service Model

PART A

1. Introduction

The **Capital of Country Tourism Precinct** project is about setting the direction for Tamworth Regional Council (TRC) to guide the development of a new **regional tourism servicing model** that extends across the Tamworth, Gunnedah, Liverpool Plains and Walcha local government areas.

The central piece of this model is the development of a **new purpose-built tourism infrastructure precinct**. Within the new tourism precinct will be a new **Visitor Experience Centre (VEC)**, which will be the location of Tamworth's existing museum collection (integrating the Country Music Hall of Fame, Wax and Guitar Museums), reimagined and augmented with engaging exhibitions and immersive experiences.

The aim is to sustainably grow the region's visitor economy by positioning Tamworth as the *Capital of Country Australia*, leveraging its reputation as the Capital of Country Music and extensive agricultural and equine history, and creating a compelling visitor proposition that drives both longer stays and repeat visitation to the region.

This ambition requires the retention and expansion of existing visitor segments, development of visitor segments, and development of new experiences and services.

The development is also aimed at celebrating the region's significant rural heritage that spreads across the Gunnedah, Walcha and Liverpool Plains Local Government Areas (LGA) and creates the opportunity for a wider visitor dispersal throughout the region.

The Tamworth Regional Tourism Strategy has been developed around eight guiding principles.

1. **Inclusive** of the whole region and all communities.
2. **Informed** - evidence-based.
3. **Showcasing** the destination's existing and emerging **strengths**.
4. **Customer-centric** - putting the visitor first.
5. **Future-focused and sustainable** - understanding a dynamic industry and the importance of protecting the destination's values and attributes.
6. **Collaborative** - across sectors and between industries and stakeholders and with surrounding LGAs.
7. Demonstrate **leadership** through effective implementation, partnerships and communication - including through alignment with NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 & Destination Country and Outback NSW Destination Management Plan (DMP) 2022 – 2030.
8. **Measurable** in terms of both deliverables and outcomes - in line with available resources while identifying opportunities to attract investment.

TRC – Regional Tourism Service Model

This report is a companion document to the Stage 4 – Visitor Experience Centre Fit Out report and the Tourism Precinct Business Case. However, a number of actions identified in this report are designed to enhance and elevate the visitor servicing model for Tamworth and surrounds, regardless of whether TRC is able to attract funding or investment to progress the Tamworth Tourism Precinct initiative.

The prioritised action plan provided at the end of this report identifies those actions that should be implemented to achieve a best practice outcome for visitor servicing for the region.

CURRENT VISITOR SERVICING

As outlined in Stages 1, 2 & 3, the Tamworth VIC comprises of a visitor information centre, the Golden Guitar Café, National Guitar Museum, Country Music Wax Museum, and the Big Golden Guitar located to the front of the facility. Tamworth Regional Council operates the VIC and museums; however, it does not own the visitor information centre building.

The Current Visitor Servicing Team consists of:

- Coordinator, Visitor Economy (Full-time)
- Visitor Economy Development Officer (Full-time) - *currently vacant*
- Visitor Experience Officer (Full-time)
- 2 x Visitor Experience Officers (Part-time, 38 hours per fortnight)
- Trainee – Visitor Experiences (Full-time)

The Tamworth VIC is managed and run by the Visitor Servicing team, and the hours of operation are 9am – 4pm (7 days a week, excluding Good Friday and Christmas Day).

Inadequate financial resourcing is the current barrier to providing professional staffing to support the existing VIC and Museums, with Council remaining reliant on the support of the volunteers for additional support.

There is a pool of 14 volunteers that support the VIC and museums. The current volunteer base largely organises themselves into pairs that like working together, often on selected days. This makes it difficult to coordinate them to work on weekends and can limit the value that the volunteers provide to operations.

Volunteers are also responsible for running all of the Visitor Information Outlets (VIOs).

THE NEW SERVICE AND OPERATING MODEL

The new approach being proposed is based on a **hub and spoke model**, to ensure effective visitor engagement, experiences and dissemination of information and tourism services. This presents the opportunity for the Visitor Experience Centre (VEC) to become a flagship visitor information centre for the wider region.

The hub and spoke model is a distribution network that resembles a bicycle wheel. The 'hub' sits in the centre and serves as a primary point for visitors to converge, while the 'spokes' represent the routes or connections between the central hub and the various secondary destinations. In the context of this project, the VEC serves as the hub for visitor servicing and connects visitors with other key assets across the broader region.

As outlined in the Situation Analysis, the primary goal of visitor servicing should be to adopt a **customer-centric approach**. A common challenge faced by visitor services is to be seen within the local industry as providing equitable promotion of all businesses in the region. However, by adopting a customer-centric approach and implementing strategies that assist in targeting relevant information, remarkable content, or services to the right audience (or target market) through the right channels to reach them, a destination is more likely to lift its economic performance for the benefit of all.

Fundamental to a customer-centric approach is understanding your audience or target market segments and their **customer or visitor journey**. It should involve developing personas that unpack their identity, motivations, interests, pain points or barriers as well as the most effective ways to reach and engage them.

Lastly, best practice visitor servicing is now **omnichannel** and includes effective partnerships with local businesses. This will need to be supported by high-quality online and digital systems to enhance engagement and distribution of information; at all touchpoints along the customer journey – including e-commerce functionality. Efficient and effective omnichannel visitor services are connected and integrated across all channels.

GOVERNANCE

With the implementation of the hub-and-spoke model for the region's visitor servicing, defining the appropriate level of resources, governance and collaboration that will be required for the VEC is key. Engagement with local businesses as partners in the delivery of tourism experiences and the sale of goods and services will also play an important part in the delivery model.

Recommended principles to inform and guide the model:

- Representative of the entire industry and stakeholders involved in the visitor economy.
- Genuine collaboration, communication and trust between Council and the local tourism industry.
- Clear lines of responsibility and accountability linked to milestones and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- Appropriately resourced to achieve a vision of becoming a world-class destination, positioned as the *Capital of Country Australia*.
- Adopt a strategic approach across the functions to guide all activities/ actions, planning, destination marketing and experience development (including events).
- Effective business planning and management, including of commercial revenue streams for resourcing of operations and to contribute to a positive return on investment for TRC.

Importantly, an effective delivery model should be based on:

Overarching vision based on values, destination brand, positioning & competitive advantage: Capital of Country Australia



Appropriate levels or resources, good governance and collaboration

As outlined in the TRC *Visitor Economy Plan 2022 – 2027*, good governance, collaboration and partnerships are critical success factors and are essential to enable a unified and more powerful voice for the destination. An integrated governance model for tourism and events is identified as a high priority to unite functions including marketing, communication, industry engagement and development, visitor servicing, events and destination management and planning.

The Tourism Precinct Visitor Experience Strategy (Stage 4) prepared by HVH, also recognises that the VEC structure will be governed by the Tamworth Regional Council as asset owner and operator. This Strategy clearly identifies key principals for the VEC service model governance as well as several assumptions based on consultations with TRC found on pages 25 & 26 of that report.

Functions within the Governance Model:

It is also important to understand the depth and breadth of the functions that should be considered when deciding on a governance model. The primary functions are outlined in the table below. It is a high-level summary and not intended to represent all roles and responsibilities that should be considered within the governance model.

Visitor servicing is just one of the many functions outlined below. However, more clearly defining all the functions that contribute to a vibrant and sustainable visitor economy provides context for and enables a more-informed approach to determining the most appropriate delivery model. This is essential for three primary reasons, including:

- Providing clarity to staff on the roles required to support a vibrant and sustainable visitor economy and how their specific responsibilities contribute to that outcome.
- Enables more effective communication and builds trust with industry and partners, including demonstrating credibility through a clear understanding of the ‘moving parts’ required to manage and promote a vibrant visitor economy.
- Support and inform decision-making relating to the outsourcing of specific activities or functions.

The table below has been informed by TRC’s *Visitor Economy Plan 2022 – 2027*. Industry and stakeholder engagement as well as events have been specifically identified to recognise the importance of those functions.

DEMAND	ENABLERS	SUPPLY *
<p>Marketing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rolling 3-year Marketing Strategy, underpinned by the brand strategy and destination’s positioning, inclusive of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public relations (PR) ▪ Content & Channel Strategy and distribution • Marketing campaigns and activities <p>Visitor servicing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing omnichannel operations, across online, digital and face-to-face channels • Includes developing & managing commercial revenue streams (eg retail, event ticketing, among many others) • Front-of-house services for Council-owned or managed attractions and facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination or place brand – strategy & positioning • Implementation of TRC’s Visitor Economy Plan (VEP) • Design-thinking to influence visitor-related infrastructure, precincts, open space and the visitor experience • Investment attraction 	<p>Sustainable destination management, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place activation planning and infrastructure to support the visitor economy, including site and precinct development, master planning, management, maintenance, and sustainability • Visitor economy-friendly policy and regulation • Management and maintenance of Council owned and managed attractions, precincts and facilities, from open space to museums, gallery as well as cultural, event and sporting facilities – this includes appropriate management, storage & curation of collections

DEMAND	ENABLERS	SUPPLY *
Industry & stakeholder engagement, including capability development		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local industry – engagement, involvement and ongoing communication Lead engagement with key tourism stakeholders including DNCO, DNSW and TA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Product and experience development Industry capability (workforce development) Facilitate grant applications Fostering collaboration with other sectors and industries, including involvement of the LGA's Business Chambers Fostering collaboration with neighbouring LGAs on the visitor economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community engagement Fostering partnerships across all levels of government, including with DNCO, neighbouring LGAs, NSW NPWS, FCNSW, Dept of Regional NSW etc
Events		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events strategy Delivery (operations) and promotion Includes business events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design-thinking to support event operations and customer experience Consideration of ancillary facilities and services to support events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site and precinct development, management, and maintenance
* Many of these functions reflect core Council responsibilities		

In essence, TRC will need to make a clear decision on the most appropriate governance model moving forward. There are three primary options to consider:

- a) In-house model, whereby Council maintains responsibility for delivery of all functions;
- b) Hybrid model, involving the outsourcing of some functions; or
- c) Outsourced model, noting that several functions identified in the table above relate to core Council responsibilities, such as strategic planning and policy. These functions would be excluded from any outsourced model but need to be considered in the context of ensuring effective communication and coordination between these areas and those functions that are outsourced.

A key challenge to consider is the **influence of an omnichannel approach to visitor services on the day-to-day operations of a major attraction or facility** such as the **Visitor Experience Centre (VEC)**. The integration between place management and a contemporary visitor servicing model cannot be underestimated and should be clearly mapped out as part of determining an appropriate governance model.

The determination of the governance model should consider the capacity and capability of Council to deliver functions required, including but not limited to the **effective operation of the VEC**.

It should also be informed by considering models implemented by other destinations – **please refer to appendix 1 for a summary table of delivery models deployed by other destinations.**

Some examples of successful models include Mudgee Region Tourism, Sapphire Coast Destination Marketing, and Visit Sunshine Coast. They are all quite different and highlight that the model itself will not lead to success. The culture, experience, and expertise of the team employed within the model (internal or external to Council) is critical to delivering sustainable outcomes. It is also important to note that industry buy-in and support takes time to achieve. Demonstrating and sharing successes achieved will contribute to building trust.

The recommendations outlined in this report below address many of the core requirements, roles, and responsibilities to implement an effective visitor servicing model. These should be factored into any assessment of Council's capacity and capability as well as informing the identification of any functions to be either recruited into Council or outsourced to an external provider.

This includes, among many other factors, the flexibility of the workforce to deliver services outside of standard working hours. To be clear, this is not about requiring people to work longer or harder but to ensure that services can be provided in line with industry practice for the visitor economy. For example, to support a more vibrant night-time economy, the Visitor Experience Centre (VEC) could open outside of standard hours to host events and exhibitions, enable bespoke tours (such as behind-the-scenes tours), and support other events and activities through providing hospitality or catering services.

It is essential that any model is **appropriately resourced**. It is entirely unrealistic to assume that an outsourced model (either fully or partially) would not require funding from Council, especially for the establishment and management of services delivered for (on behalf of) Council. The level of funding required will be determined by the functions to be outsourced as well as the capacity and willingness of industry to contribute towards the cost of an outsourced model. Currently, a perceived challenge would be to get industry or local businesses to contribute towards any model proposed by Council. It will require a dedicated effort by Council to genuinely engage and build trust with the industry to achieve that outcome.

If the use of outsourced services was deemed appropriate, it would require:

- Detailed **agreement for the delivery of services**, including identification of key performance indicators as well as a transparent communication process to provide clarity for all parties involved on reporting lines, among many other things.
- Comprehensive **business transition strategy and communication plan**. It will be essential that this considers and respects current employees, partners and stakeholders who may be or are impacted by any proposed change. This should include surrounding LGAs involved in the broader regional tourism delivery model.

A Hybrid Model Approach

It is recommended that TRC consider contracting an external provider, such as a Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO), to deliver the visitor servicing

requirements of Council, specifically to provide management of all visitor-related channels, including face-to-face service within the VEC. This would represent a hybrid model, with Council retaining responsibility for other functions as well as oversight of the DMO contract.

This contract could include industry engagement, with the involvement and collaboration of Council, to strengthen industry relationships and partnerships (including with surrounding LGAs) as well as to encourage enhancement to existing experiences, products and services and investment in new ones. Over time, this would create opportunities for co-op marketing activities involving industry contributions or potentially lead to the introduction of industry membership fees that contribute to the overall resources available for visitor servicing, noting the need for ensuring this is additional to ongoing funding from Council.

Another key function would be to outsource to the DMO the development, curation, and distribution of content to support marketing activities and campaigns.

At the current time, Council should retain functions relating to events as well as the curation and operation of the museum, except for front-of-house responsibilities, including ticket sales and bookings.

If this recommendation was pursued by TRC, it will be critical to ensure collaboration between Council and the DMO is central to the contractual arrangements, especially with regard to creating a seamless partnership between the DMO and Council's communication, tourism, economic development, and events teams (among others).

Resourcing:

Over time, there is potential to introduce membership fees as well as attracting funds from industry partners, members or sponsors for specific purposes, such as co-opt marketing campaigns or to support events. This is essential to building a more sustainable resource base, which is required to achieve the ambition and goals of TRC for the region's visitor economy.

Primary considerations:

- It is recommended that a **staged approach** to implementing membership fees is established and communicated **prior to launch** of the new structure – this is critical to ensure industry understand that while in the initial phase(s) TRC will provide the resources, it aims to transition to a shared model.
- **Revenue generation** should also be prioritised through e-commerce and online booking systems, among other opportunities (to be considered as part of developing the business plan).
- Development of a **business plan** should be prioritised. It will demonstrate transparency to industry while also highlighting the goals and resourcing needs, gaps and opportunities. Further, it is likely to be a requirement of Council ahead of any potential restructure of these functions and would assist transparent communication of the key steps and stages involved in the transition to the new model. At this time, it will be important to clearly articulate the benefits and challenges of the proposed model compared with other options considered.

Recommendation

It is recommended that TRC undertake a comprehensive review process to determine the most appropriate governance model for the delivery of visitor services, including but not limited to the management of the VEC, which considers the delivery of services in the broader context of TRC's ambition and objectives to support and enable a vibrant and sustainable visitor economy.

VISITOR EXPERIENCES

With a purpose built VEC comes the opportunity to develop exceptional visitor experiences that entice people to visit, and that also help shape the design of the physical VEC space.

The 'Stage 4 – Visitor Experience Centre Fit Out' delivered by HVH Group, clearly articulates a design brief that takes into consideration how the VEC intends to be used. The key functional relationships and adjacencies diagram illustrates conceptual relationships between the spaces and the integration with the greater visitor precinct. This is to ensure that the Capital of Country positioning can be reinforced through the design of the facility and to create transformative and immersive experiences.

Several signature experiences have been identified by TRC as part of the concept planning for the VEC. As the VEC is developed, new transformative and immersive experiences can be created. The initial signature experiences include (but are not limited to):

- **Experience One: Aboriginal Knowledge Sharing**

Join one of our experienced Aboriginal knowledge holders as they welcome you to Country on the Kamilaroi/ Gomeroi lands. Experience bi-lingual storytelling and hear first-hand about their connection to Country. Understand the early history between Aboriginal singer-song writers and Tamworth, before finishing the session by exploring the Country's flora in the Bush Tucker Garden.

- **Experience Two: Guided Tour of Exhibitions**

Take a guided tour of the Tamworth VEC by one of our knowledgeable staff or volunteers. The interactive tour includes individual stories regarding the singer-song writers that paved the way for the Country Music Industry in Australia. Immerse your senses with tales of the prestigious Golden Guitar Awards, surrounded by Tamworth's nationally significant country music collection.

- **Experience Three: Family Experience**

Take your family on a hands-on tour of the best of Capital of Country. Start with a walk-through of the museum's exhibition and our nationally significant collection, before indulging in some family fun with our more participatory exhibits, costumes and musical instruments. Finish the experience by getting up close to one of the Country Music Legends, as you take a "selfie" with our look-a-like star wax figurines.

- **Experience Four: School Groups/Kid's Trail**

Our Kid's Trail is specifically designed for children and school groups. Begin your adventure with a guided tour designed for this target audience including the key museum objects of our nationally significant collection that link back to the current curriculum. Further your student's knowledge with our touch trolley of 'All Things Country'. Incorporating replicas of important museum objects, stage props, instrument and costumes, students will gain 'hands-on' experience as they learn individualised histories and stories of Tamworth's Country Music Legends and Stars.

Finally, finish the experience at the 'Hands of Fame', where students can get up close to the Country Music Stars as they place their own hands in the 'Hands of Fame' impressions.

Outreach Experiences

- **Experience Five: Museum in a Box**

A one-stop shop for all ages to learn about 'All Things Country'. Incorporating replicas of important museum objects, instruments and costumes, 'Museum in a Box' allows the Museum to come to you. Able to be taken to schools, workshops and events, or as a brief introduction to the VEC, 'Museum in a Box' allows for both an informative and 'hands-on' experience for all ages. Learn the histories and stories of Tamworth's Country Music Legends and Stars, as you handle replicas of their instruments, objects and costumes, and gain an in-depth, personalised understanding of who made the 'Capital of Country' what it is today.

- **Experience Six: Behind the Scenes Guided Tour of the Collection Store**

Your chance to go behind-the-scenes of Tamworth's museums. Take a guided tour of Tamworth's offsite Museum Collection Store with one of our knowledgeable staff or volunteers, as you get an exclusive look at what makes Tamworth the 'Capital of Country'. Experience an in-depth look at Tamworth's nationally significant collection and how it is cared for, for future generations. The guided tour includes individualised stories regarding the singer-song writers that paved the way for the Country Music Industry in Australia, as you see hidden gems that hold enormous significance for the Legends and Stars of Australian Country Music.

- **Experience Seven: Guided Tour of AELEC**

The Australian Equine and Livestock Events Centre (AELEC) is a state-of-the-art facility located in the major regional hub of Tamworth. The biggest of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere, it hosts more than 50 events each year, including agility dogs, dressage, show jumping, motorcycle rallies and rodeos. The AELEC attracts about 7000 competitors, 9000 horses and 16000 head of cattle each year, and is a major regional hub of agricultural activity. A must-see for agricultural visitors to the region, don't miss your chance to go behind the scenes and experience how the AELEC runs and operates. Follow our experienced staff through the multi-level complex, as you hear stories and histories of local legends and events.

Functions and Events

- **Experience Eight: Functions and Events**

Host your next event at the VEC. It can be hired for private or corporate functions. Use the outdoor amphitheatre or flexible indoor event spaces to invite guests to mingle with canapes and drinks, as they indulge in the best of the 'Country Capital'. Listen to one of our talented local Country musicians, whilst your guests get up close to Tamworth's Country Music Stars as they place their hands in the 'Hands of Fame' impressions and take in the atmosphere surrounding the iconic Golden Guitar.

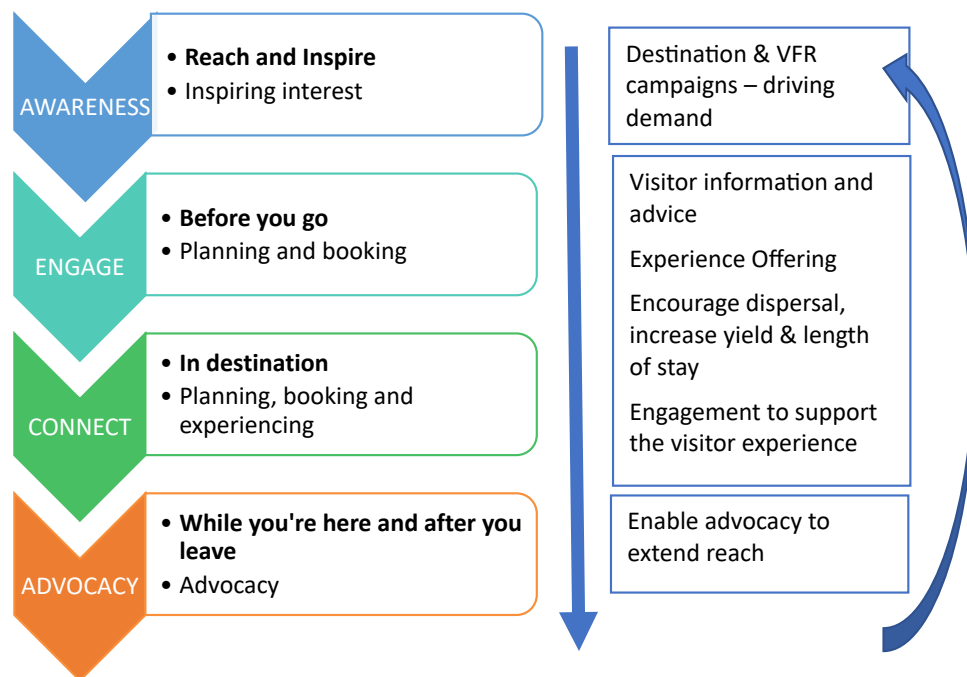
2. Recommendations – Applying Best Practice Principals to Tamworth Regional Tourism Services

The recommendations have been structured to correlate with the various stages within the customer journey as the visitor services required at each stage will vary, either in the nature of the content or in the channel through which it is delivered.

They outline the rationale as well as the services to be offered and options or stages of implementation that would assist in enabling a practical solution for Tamworth and the surrounding regions.

It will be critical to reinforce the relationship between the visitor's mindset, content, products or experiences, channels and output required, including format for production of collateral or other elements, across all customer touch points to deliver a world-class visitor service.

Customer journey and visitor servicing





RECOMMENDATION 1: Develop a world-class place brand

As outlined in the VEP, the number one foundation project is to “Develop and activate a world-class place brand for Tamworth region, which is informed by credible visitor research and sentiment analysis and adopts the positioning of Capital of Country Australia.”

A new place brand will be a key communications asset for TRC and will enable the design of all creative elements and collateral (online and traditional). It is fundamentally important that the place brand be developed first to guide the creative execution and positioning of Capital of Country Australia.

ACTIONS

1. Develop a place brand strategy, destination positioning, identity and associated creative as a high priority.



RECOMMENDATION 2: Raise awareness of and drive visitor demand for Tamworth, Gunnedah, Liverpool Plains and Walcha local government areas.

Marketing a destination and providing high-quality visitor information and services are ‘two sides of the same coin.’ The secret is knowing when and what information to deliver to a potential visitor at each stage in the customer journey. In the awareness phase, there are two key campaigns that will build awareness and drive demand:

- Developing and implementing a **destination campaign** that helps to win hearts and minds; and
- Engage local residents and businesses to encourage them to **invite their friends and family to visit** the region while also involving them as the ambassadors of the destination (**VFR campaign** and building civic pride).

The number one key to success, whether it is marketing or providing visitor information is to ensure that the information is provided in the right way at the right time. Secondly, and equally important to success is the creation of *Remarkable Content and Stories*.

The beauty of linking the two campaigns is that the content created for each campaign can be shared across both. The content created for and by the locals will appeal to the target market of the destination campaign. Why? Because it taps into the motivations and expectations of potential visitors in today’s world, including finding out more about the places and experiences that locals love to visit, see and do. It provides an opportunity for them to learn more about a destination and its culture, connecting them to the place in a more meaningful way.

It is essential that prior to these actions being implemented, that TRC undertake a comprehensive process to develop a place brand that clearly articulates the destination positioning and creative identity.

ACTIONS

1. Develop and implement a **destination campaign to promote Tamworth and the surrounding regions** to raise awareness and drive conversion specifically outside of the peak travel periods. Importantly, a high-quality destination campaign will connect its target markets to the products and experiences with which they resonate through remarkable content and accessible information. The destination campaign should be designed to deliver the right information (from inspiration through to practical information) at the right time in their dream, plan, book, go cycle. This should integrate with the destination's approach to visitor servicing.
2. Implement a **local community campaign for the VFR market** to encourage and motivate local residents to:
 - a. Find out more about their own region and inspire them to explore it – in essence, *'discover your own backyard'*
 - b. Build their knowledge of the region so they can share it with visitors, especially their friends and family, with pride
 - c. Invite their friends and relatives to visit the region
 - d. Encourage the locals to create and share their own content, for example, short videos and images of their favourite places or things to do
3. Develop a **content strategy and create content** to be utilised by both campaigns. Content that is engaging, authentic and relevant to the target market segment will be what drives success. This includes in-destination visitor servicing, whether that is through local businesses sharing the content on their social media channels, local PR or collateral such as postcards, itineraries or local trails, maps or local stories etc.

AWARENESS

ENGAGE & CONNECT

ADVOCACY

RECOMMENDATION 3: Review and confirm the key directions, functions and operations of the VEC

As outlined in the Situation Analysis and detailed in the Stage 4 report, there is the need to shift away from transactional experiences and create immersive, inspirational and transformative experiences for visitors.

The VEC should not have a traditional visitor reception counter and should be designed to act more like a concept store, whereby staff roam and move freely about the space assisting visitors as required.

Other primary elements to be considered when designing the VEC should address 'people, place and product', for example:

- 'Reimagining' the VEC to create ways to inspire more people to walk through to door. This is about re-thinking the experience, the services and the retail offering to appeal to a more substantial proportion of people visiting your region as well as being the go-to place for locals. It includes integrating signature 'Capital of Country' visitor experiences and also investigating the role of technology within the VIC, such as Augmented Reality (AR) or Virtual

Reality (VR) along with contemporary collateral and outstanding and memorable retail experiences and products.

- People still play a very important role in visitor servicing, whether that is through a omnichannel contact centre or face-to-face within the VEC. However, the value is in the interaction between the visitor and the local who share genuine and authentic insights and help to shape the most memorable of experiences. This also extends to the way in which those within the VEC interact with the community and local businesses who deliver the services or products and underpin the culture of the destination.
- Branded content and design elements (from place-making to space-making) that reinforce the values and essence of your destination and bring it to life in a tangible way. Ask yourself: is this a library, council office or a showcase for what the region has to offer?
- Identify opportunities to improve the visitor experience through providing information at a variety of visitor touch points with and within your destination. Whether that is in accommodation, cafes, clubs, retail stores, newsagents, art galleries, real-estate agencies etc.
- Involvement and collaboration with local businesses and organisations, from retail outlets to the owners of short-stay accommodation who see the benefit to their business of providing visitor information to their customers.
- What are the opportunities for providing information in towns and villages across the region that do not have a purpose-built VEC? And importantly, how best is this achieved?

Finally, providing good quality information that is easy to access and helps visitors to be inspired and make informed decision about their experience choices will always be central to the purpose of a VEC. However, the opportunity for Tamworth Regional Council is not just to 'jazz up' the traditional VIC model using technology such as an AR or VR or selling local product (although technology will help). It is about shaking up the entire VEC experience and the space itself by making it the place-to-meet, a place to relax and plan out the day's activities and a showcase for the Tamworth, Gunnedah, Liverpool Plains and Walcha local government areas.

In an always-on world, the role of technology and digital channels is greater than ever, especially when coupled with the simple fact that 92% of people are influenced by recommendations from family and friends than any other form of marketing.

In essence, the model is about transitioning from a focus on the bricks-and-mortar VEC to focus on visitor touch points.

ACTIONS

1. Review and confirm the key directions for the VEC and visitor servicing network, specifically considering the areas outlined in the table below (although not intended as an exhaustive list)

FOCUS	Primary considerations (specifically identified for the Tamworth region)
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate in-destination specialists who have an understanding of the region, the areas that make it up and the experience offer that resonates with primary market segments – this will assist in ‘directing traffic’ with regard to connecting visitors or potential visitors with the right information and services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider how the ‘virtual network’ can support the sharing of functions and expertise across various physical locations within the region – this should involve all members of the network, from volunteers to staff and businesses with whom TRC collaborates ○ <i>Remember:</i> People is not just about the TRC team – it’s also about the businesses and people who TRC can involve or collaborate with to deliver visitor services ○ Consider the opportunities for involving locals as either <i>In-Destination Experts</i> or <i>Destination Storytellers</i> (refer to Recommendation 9 for details) • Develop a level of service framework that links the values of TRC to the expected behaviours of staff (beyond simply through their position descriptions) – this should guide the capability/professional development program for staff • Build a program (with flexibility) that takes the service ‘to the streets’ or the bush, events or markets. Leverage mobile visitor services to build a program that considers seasonality, peaks and troughs and special events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Before venturing out into the great outdoors, ensure the design of the VEC supports venturing out from behind the desk – this will enable greater interaction and engagement between the team and visitors • Map staffing roles, functions and inter-relationships across core areas, from industry relationships through to experience development, promotions and visitor engagement – this should guide delivery of the work program, matched to key responsibilities and timeframes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This should consider the need for fulfilment of e-commerce functions (including inventory management) where e-commerce functionality is introduced to the TRC visitor servicing model
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate the appropriate visitor servicing model to each location. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The VEC – this is the flagship hub and will be the showcase of TRC and an experience hub. It needs to live and breathe the destination brand as well as its specific location and experience offer. More than a stop to go to the toilet or grab a brochure, the flagship hub should offer a shared space to meet, to unwind and be inspired to explore further or engage in a fascinating yarn as told by a ‘Destination Storyteller’ ○ The VICs in Gunnedah, Liverpool Plains and Walcha – these VICs will still serve an important role in being an accredited VIC in the surrounding LGA’s. They will be operated respectfully by

FOCUS	Primary considerations (specifically identified for the Tamworth region)
	<p>the individual LGA's, however should work collaboratively in servicing the region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community-operated VIOs – these will be smaller centres, which help drive consistency in the way in which the brand is expressed while creating opportunities for visitors to access practical information and engage meaningfully with a local ○ Mobile VEC – this is about taking the information to the visitors. However, it doesn't have to look and feel like a traditional VIC on wheels. It should adopt the same approach to the VEC, which is to infuse the sense of place and brand into the delivery of the service and the design of the space. Consider opportunities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Utilising Council-owned assets such as cars or vans to activate the information-to-the-streets model (see People above) ▪ Food trucks to coffee carts – consider how Council permits for these operators can be tailored to include a visitor servicing option (potentially with a fee offset) ○ Not required – to be delivered through alternative mechanisms such as in-collaboration with local businesses or through online/digital channels ○ Designate the VEC as the hub for an omnichannel contact centre for the management of visitor servicing across voice, email, online and digital channels ○ Business-operated VIC services – this is about involving businesses or other organisations, such as clubs, in the delivery of visitor information to the visitor touch points within the destination. This is a way to extend the reach of the VEC through the network of businesses and organisations across the region while also making them active participants in the visitor economy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Undertake visitor mapping of the wider precinct as well as the use of the visitor interface with and within the VEC – this is critical to inform place and space-making ● Ensure the destination brand strategy influences the way in which each VEC, VIC or VIO within the network is executed, from the design (look and feel) and layout of the centre through to the way in which it presents collateral and its retail strategy ● Consider the role of technology to enhance design, interpretation as well as the visitor experience and delivery of core functions to support the omnichannel contact centre or the mobile VEC model
Experience & Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify and strengthen the experience offer of TRC, including through collaboration with industry and inspiring further innovation in product and experience development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop and promote bundled and/or packaged experiences. These should reflect the themes and precincts identified within TRC's Visitor Economy Plan (VEP). The packages can also be developed based on popular requests from the visitors, to enable

FOCUS	Primary considerations (specifically identified for the Tamworth region)
	<p>delivery of events or to respond to perceived barriers or challenges to visiting the region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enhance and develop new experiences that offer personalisation, guided experiences and behind the scene tours – such as the ones identified in the ‘visitor experiences’ section in this document above. ● Create remarkable content, including for the delivery of practical information. A great example is creating themed itineraries or trails, such as VEC staff favourites (In-Destination Specialists/Experts Choice) or those of other <i>In-destination Experts</i> or <i>Destination Storytellers</i>, like Rachel’s Arts Trail, Donna’s Foodie Trail or Kerry’s Health & Well-being Trail. The itineraries and trails can range from a couple of hours, a day or a multi-day itinerary. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A key consideration is that video is an increasingly important format for driving interest and conversion into bookings. ● Consider the role of technology to support promotion and access to visitor information at various stages along the visitor journey or further strengthen the reach of visitor servicing within and beyond TRC as well as enhancing the visitor experience. And don’t forget, simple things like free WiFi always add value ● Consider e-commerce functionality, including for the booking of packages or retail offerings ● Prepare a retail strategy, which has two levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Destination-wide - true region and destination-branded products ○ VEC-specific - true local or highly-relevant to the location – from hiking boots to locally inspired lifestyle products ○ Available for sale in-store or online



RECOMMENDATION 4: A centralised omnichannel contact centre

Efficient and effective omnichannel contact centres rely on several factors, including but not limited to:

- Consistency in messaging and communication, including in the tone of voice and manner that underpin the destination’s brand (or place brand with clear destination positioning)
- Integration of channel management (if possible, aim for a cost-effective omnichannel strategy¹) across voice, email and digital/online channels and

¹ **Omnichannel strategy definition:** Omnichannel is a cross-channel content strategy that organisations use to improve their user experience and drive better relationships with their audience across points of contact.

with capacity for an effective interface with face-to-face information servicing and retail sales – this includes the ability to triage and re-direct queries to those with specialist or more detailed knowledge of a specific topic or area within the broader region. It should also consider opportunities for LiveChat or use of interactive video platforms for enriching visitor services (one-on-one to small group sessions)

- Access to and capacity for distribution of remarkable and relevant content, which leverages local information and is up-to-date and responsive to current circumstances, from weather to road closures or serious incidents such as wildfires or floods (localised or more wide-spread impacts)
- Well-managed procurement and fulfilment processes associated with retail strategies or other commercial services offered through the region's visitor servicing function, including for the local community
- Ongoing knowledge and customer data management
- Consistency of experience across all touchpoints

A destination-wide omnichannel contact centre should also consider the following with regard to the way information and services are positioned and delivered:

- Provide high-quality customer service across all channels, which will enhance the visitor experience, appeal of the destination and word of mouth worthiness because the recipient has received timely, relevant and expert advice regardless of the channel
- Create an opportunity to 'upsell' the destination by offering up experiences and reasons (eg products) for a visitor to consider extending their length of stay as well as an opportunity to increase their spend within the region
- Provide a service to personalise the information and the experiences. This could be through developing itineraries, packages and bundling experiences to meet the needs of the individual visitor. This specialised service will assist showcase the diversity of the region, encourage regional dispersal and increase length of stay. Video conferencing platforms offer a significant opportunity to share destination insights and engage with potential visitors to develop more bespoke itineraries etc.
- Consolidate the region under its destination brand
- An integrated ticketing and booking system that can be accessed and utilised by staff in multiple locations and outposts around the region

As highlighted in the table attached to Recommendation 3, creating an omnichannel contact centre based on all these factors or guiding principles is recommended as part of the reimagined future of visitor servicing for TRC.

ACTIONS

1. Consolidate and centralise the contact centre, taking into consideration:

Rather than working in parallel, communication channels and their supporting resources are designed and orchestrated to cooperate.

- a. It should be developed from a customer-centric perspective
 - b. Ensure that it has the appropriate systems to support its functions and enable reporting and evaluation of the level and quality of service
 - c. Where feasible or possible, leverage other systems or resources of TRC to reduce costs and create efficiencies
 - i. This includes integrating and optimising your own channels – online, digital and EDMs
 - d. Integrated ticketing and booking system(s) that can be accessed and utilised by staff in multiple locations and outposts
2. Develop systems to acquire and manage customer data. Awareness and acquisition of customer data is essential in understanding your customers' needs and communicating with them in a way that resonates with them.



RECOMMENDATION 5: Review and consolidation of TRC websites

Stakeholder consultations revealed that there are several different websites owned by TRC and that the different units or teams are quite fractured or disjointed, often working with separate budgets, operating systems and priorities. It was also discussed that the current websites are hard to navigate and don't connect seamlessly with one another.

There is an opportunity to consolidate several of the TRC websites into a singular website that is more user-friendly, optimised and that integrates with other key themes such as work, study, invest and sustainability. A great example of a destination website that has done this well is www.myhelsinki.fi/.

As outlined in recommendation 1, before a new wireframe or the application of any creative can be done, the place brand needs to be developed and implemented. User journey mapping and the user experience also need to be addressed prior to developing a new website. This should consider key functionality requirements, including e-commerce and itinerary development.

ACTIONS

1. Conduct an audit of all current TRC websites and explore ways to seamlessly integrate the destination website with other key economic development areas such as work, study, invest and sustainability.
2. Undertake user journey mapping and detailed, best-practice user experience prior to and to inform the development of an appropriate wireframe for the website.

AWARENESS

ENGAGE & CONNECT

ADVOCACY

RECOMMENDATION 6: Improved collaboration across the visitor servicing, marketing and events teams at TRC, as well as with Gunnedah, Liverpool Plains and Walcha local government areas.

Stakeholders raised a range of collaboration opportunities, both within TRC and between neighbouring LGAs. There is a desire from visitor servicing staff in across the region to be well connected and to learn from one another to be able to promote each other's regions.

This collaboration, cooperation and coordination could range from something as simple as streamlining the region's events calendar, through to participating in cooperative marketing opportunities. It could also involve collaborating with industry to create road trip itineraries or more accessible and richer touring experiences for visitors.

There is also the opportunity for the Visitor Servicing team to support the Events and Marketing teams at TRC to enable a more holistic and coordinated approach to visitor servicing.

ACTION

1. Conduct cross-regional famils and staff exchanges with the VIC staff from Gunnedah, Liverpool Plains and Walcha LGA's to enable a deeper understanding of the operations and experiences had at each of the VIC's
2. Build cross-regional experience itineraries such as road trips between the LGA's to promote visitor dispersal.
3. Have regular or monthly meetings that bring together the Visitor Servicing, Events and Marketing teams within TRC to knowledge share and collaborate on the visitor experience offering.
 - a. Visitor Servicing staff should have input and be across what is going to be posted by the Marketing team across TRC's channels
 - b. The Events team should be able to share upcoming events and information with the Visitor Servicing and Marketing Teams to ensure appropriate promotion, as well as explore opportunities to host events at the new VEC (including night time activations).

AWARENESS

ENGAGE & CONNECT

ADVOCACY

RECOMMENDATION 7: Technology, travel and visitor servicing

Technology such as Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), Apps, push notification or QR codes will have ongoing impact on visitor servicing. The questions are: what is the value in investing into such technology? Do you have the budget to make it happen?

As identified in the Situation Analysis, artificial intelligence (AI), including generative AI (GenAI), are also equipping the industry to reimagine what it means to plan, book, and experience travel.

In the first instance, it is critical to understand the purpose of the technology and the benefits it delivers to the visitor. For example, developing an app that can be downloaded to support wayfinding and interpretation of sites and places throughout the region would encourage visitor dispersal and add to the overall visitor experience. However, this would only be valuable if access to the website with the same information is not available because of lack of connectivity throughout the region.

Basic technology required for visitor servicing in today's world includes:

- Free Wi-Fi access at all VICs and other public places (where feasible or possible), including offering this as part of the mobile information service.
- Mobile-optimised website (rarely not included within the costing for the delivery of new websites)

Augmented Reality and QR codes are also gaining significant traction, especially as a result of COVID-19. They are cost effective technologies. For example, AR can be used for interpretation and sharing stories while both AR and QR codes can provide an instant short-cut to the most relevant information on the destination's website or other sources.

Finally, there is also an opportunity to investigate the opportunity to use increasingly-popular Virtual Reality (VR) technology within the VEC to showcase the experience offering such as being on stage with a country music star or the thrill of riding a horse through the countryside.

Using the Helsinki example again, this is a great example of a destination that has used VR technology to create a digital twin of the city and a tour that provides people with the opportunity to experience Helsinki without the dependence of travel. See example [here](#).

ACTION

1. Review the opportunities to integrate technology, including AI, GenAI, AR, VR and QR codes into all aspects of visitor servicing, including collateral
2. Ensure that basic technology requirements are in place across the VIC and VIO network within Tamworth, Gunnedah, Liverpool Plains and Walcha local government areas



RECOMMENDATION 8: Visitor information and content

Content should never be created for content's sake. Its primary purpose is to provide useful, relevant information to visitors or those planning a trip to your destination. Given that we all consume information through different channels, another essential consideration is ensuring that content can be leveraged across our various distribution channels, whether that be in printed form, on a mobile optimised website or app or via a social media platform.

There is also the opportunity to collaborate and work with industry to support promotional activity and content sharing. Developing, creating and publishing content aimed at the secondary experiences of the destination, including itinerary building,

and the inclusion of relevant businesses to the Destination Tamworth website with links (backlinks helping business SEO) will foster industry support. Other ways to encourage industry to share content include:

- Putting business/partner features in EDM newsletters
- Featuring content from businesses across social channels
- Developing a partnership program (see Recommendation 5 below)
- Doing a product/destination campaign
- Offering product development opportunities

If the above actions are taken, industry are more likely to engage with your content, sign up to your newsletters, create useful User Generated Content of local experiences and support your promotional activities of visitor information.

ACTIONS

1. Develop an omnichannel content strategy, which includes clear direction on which channels are to be used for content distribution. This will need to consider the audience and purpose of the content, involving psychographics and mindset through to more general-information collateral, which is useful for a broader audience.



RECOMMENDATION 9: Building Business Partnership and Information Programs

Fish where the fish are! There is an amazing opportunity to develop a program to encourage local businesses across Tamworth, Gunnedah, Liverpool Plains and Walcha local government areas to be a part of delivering visitor services and information to their clients, guest and visitors. The level of information and time spent engaging with a visitor to provide information will vary from business to business. The visitor servicing partnership program could be offered as a tiered program, based on the amount of time and level of involvement a business is prepared to provide. For example:

- Tier One - provides more detailed information and the staff within that business would also have more in-depth knowledge about the region. This tier could also include a training or regional familiarisation program.
- Tier Two - would display and provide a minimal amount of information. This could be in the form of a simple brochure rack with a selection of themed itineraries or postcards and an ever-handy map.

The program would be made available to the tourism and hospitality sector as well as other business, such as real estate agencies, retail shops, clubs, galleries, museums or recreation centres.

This model can be achieved very cost-effectively and significantly extend the reach of visitor information and services across the region. At its heart, this is about connecting to visitors where they choose to go.

ACTIONS

1. Develop a visitor servicing partnership program, including among other things:
 - a. An introductory package and agreement to maintain service level standards
 - b. Develop an induction program for Tier One that involves a choice of either 'self-guided' (undertaken by the business in line with the framework provided by TRC) or participate in a facilitated program delivered by TRC
 - c. Create a system whereby participating partners are provided with regular updates that ensure the information they provide is up to date and relevant
 - d. A distribution strategy for printed information to be supplied to participating partners

AWARENESS

ENGAGE & CONNECT

ADVOCACY

RECOMMENDATION 10: Using third party channels and experience platforms to promote tourism products and services

Being mobile optimised and providing e-commerce functionality is no longer a value add. It's an essential. Essential because it addresses the **expectations** of today's travel markets.

As mentioned in recommendation 6, artificial intelligence (AI), including generative AI (GenAI) and other technologies, are equipping the industry to reimagine what it means to plan, book, and experience travel. These new AI tools are having a big impact on the tourism industry and can search third party channels and experience platforms to curate travel itineraries and make recommendations for people wanting to visit your destination.

Ensuring your tourism providers and experience operators are listed on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) is a minimum requirement. Listing experiences on relevant experience platforms is also more important now than ever, with data showing huge increases in bookings through experience platforms such as Red Balloon, Adrenaline or Experience Oz.

ACTIONS

1. Create an industry development program that supports experience operators and tourism providers to create ATDW listings and maintain them. Encourage specific providers to list their products and services on third party experience platforms such as Red Balloon, Adrenaline or Experience Oz.

AWARENESS

ENGAGE & CONNECT

ADVOCACY

RECOMMENDATION 11: Review and refine printed collateral

Even though the world has turned towards digital, there is still a time and a place for printed information. To decide what information is printed should be based on the following two insights:

1. Where is the information going to be distributed? For example, in-destination distribution through the partnership program and the VIC network vs out of region distribution
2. What action is it you want the visitor to take once the information is in their hand. That is, the call to action such as inspiring them to find out more via the Destination Tamworth website, make a booking, download the app (if one exists), etc.

The keys to success are ensuring that all collateral, either printed or digital/online is integrated and meets the expectations of contemporary markets. This is best achieved through developing an omnichannel content strategy.

Based on the insights from the research, it is recommended the following printed collateral be developed:

- A good quality printed map of the entire region with key sites
- A set of simple, themed brochures of local trails or itineraries. Each brochure could include a QR code to take the reader directly to the Destination Tamworth website for more detailed information
- Postcards to showcase the region and signature activities. Each postcard would have a QR Code located on the back to access the relevant information on the Destination Tamworth website. The postcards can also be distributed outside the region to raise the profile and awareness of the destination and its experience offering

In today's always-on world and attention economy, highly detailed brochures that try to include everything within the destination are most likely to be ignored. Our advice is to ensure printed collateral is suited for and tailored to the needs and expectations of contemporary markets.

ACTIONS

1. Review and refine the amount of printed collateral being produced and ensure they are meeting the needs of consumer markets.



RECOMMENDATION 12: Mobile or pop-up visitor information

There is an opportunity to set up a program to deliver a pop-up information services that can be utilised around the region, as and when required and to accommodate peaks or major events, among other things. A factor that contributes to the success of this activity is the ability of perceived locals (rather than officers behind a desk) to interact with visitors while sharing genuine local knowledge, sometimes as simple as where to get the best coffee in town.

Destination Barrington Coast is a good example of how mobile visitor servicing has been effective. Doing pop ups on Fridays at popular rest stop areas means they are able to engage with their ideal visitors who would usually just be passing through the region. They have experienced high levels of engagement and encouraged people to explore their region.

There is also the opportunity to provide visitor servicing at Tamworth Regional Airport, both in person and through screens throughout the terminal. This was identified as an ideal opportunity to engage with visitors to the region during the stakeholder consultations and an opportunity that should be explored further, particularly during busy periods.

Importantly, a mobile VEC doesn't have to look and feel like a traditional VIC on wheels. It should aim to infuse the sense of place and brand into the delivery of the service and the design of the space, the vehicle or even the 'uniform' or 'dress policy.'

ACTIONS

1. Create a program or schedule of pop-up services, which addresses key periods in the calendar (seasonality, major events such as TCMF, other events such as markets or sporting events) and specific locations (such as Tamworth Regional Airport). Importantly, while the program provides structure it is also important to enable flexibility so that the mobile VEC can respond to specific situations such as weather events.
2. Review the model for delivery of mobile visitor services, including funding for example through a combination of sponsorship, a partner program or government grants to value add to Council resources. This should consider, among other options:
 - a. Utilising Council-owned assets such as cars or vans and TRC staff
 - b. Food trucks to coffee carts – consider how Council permits for these operators can be tailored to include a visitor servicing option (potentially with a fee offset)
 - c. Involving in-destination specialists or Storytellers (see People within the table as part of Recommendation 2 above)



RECOMMENDATION 13: Reimagine community-operated Visitor Information Outlets (VIOs)

Develop a three-year review process to evaluate the value of ongoing funding of the three community-operated VIOs in Nundle, Manilla and Barraba (including the potential of the VIO in Moonbi). The review process is not about shutting down visitor servicing in these locations. Rather, it is to reimagine how visitor servicing can best be delivered by the volunteers and businesses to extend reach and create opportunities for visitors to access practical information and engage meaningfully with a local. It should acknowledge that while the VIOs currently provide a base for these services, it may not be the only way to deliver them into the future.

A great part of the services provided at these VIOs is that they are run by volunteers. Volunteers, who are passionate and knowledgeable about their area, are a great way to connect visitors to the region and its experience offer. Involving volunteers in programs that strengthen their understanding of best practice in visitor servicing is

critical for two reasons: ensuring that the volunteers feel valued and involved; and for the delivery of high-quality and relevant visitor services.

Initiatives such as implementing a simple and robust annual business planning process for all community-based VIOs as well as implementing an induction, reward and recognition program for volunteers should be a requirement of ongoing funding by TRC, coupled with a transparent review process based on a set of key performance indicators.

ACTIONS

1. Develop a review process to be conducted over three years, commencing at the start of 2024, to assess the gaps, challenges and opportunities for the community-operated VIOs into the future. This should include consideration of:
 - a. Pilot projects that encourage the volunteers to step out of the VIO, including through a pop-up or mobile VEC program, including in collaboration with TRC staff
 - b. Volunteer engagement programs and the implementation of new systems and processes that enable the effective and efficient exchange of information across the TRC visitor servicing network
 - c. Contribution and value-add of each VIO to TRC, including through effective industry and business engagement to support visitor servicing across the destination, year round
 - d. A simple and robust annual business planning process, which is supported by a standard template provided to each VIO by TRC's Tourism Team (with support from TRC's Finance Team as required). Conduct an annual review of key performance indicators established at the outset (although KPIs may need to be refined as required)
 - e. Reward and recognition program for volunteers that starts with a welcoming induction or orientation to Tamworth and underpins the delivery of high-quality visitor services



RECOMMENDATION 14: People still play a very important role in visitor servicing

The **power of interpersonal connection** cannot be underestimated. As stated in recommendation 3, people still play a very important role in visitor servicing, whether that is through an omnichannel contact centre or face-to-face within the VEC.

A. Reposition the Visitor Economy Team and Visitor Experience Centre staff as the *In-Destination Specialists*

At present, the TRC Visitor Economy Team explicitly delivers visitor information and provides services to enhance the visitor's experience. The positions within the team have been performing a relatively traditional role in how they deliver information. The opportunity is to evolve these roles to better meet the needs or expectations of the market.

Creating *In-Destination Specialists* is about acknowledging that staff are experts who can do more than handout information or just share their knowledge of the region. Frontline staff could be the region's 'in-house' expert either of an experience theme or a specific location within the region (or both). They also become a key resource for industry engagement and experience development.

Utilising the themes identified in TRC's Visitor Economy Plan as a guide will assist in identifying potential packages and itineraries that they can develop in partnership with local tourism operators and businesses. Maintaining a good knowledge of the broader region will continue to be required to ensure they can respond to all enquiries.

These roles are based on the concept of the local Travel Advisor. Travel Advisors are the evolution of a travel consultant, who is generally geographically based in the source market. They also differ from a travel consultant because they possess in-depth knowledge of the region as well as having strong personal relationships with local tourism operators and hospitality providers. The repositioning of these roles would create the 'concierge' desk for the Tamworth region.

B. In-destination Experts and Destination Storytellers

Involving locals as either *In-destination Experts* or *Destination Storytellers* will strengthen the perception of Tamworth, assist in connecting visitors with locals in authentic and truly meaningful ways and provide great content to increase advocacy for Tamworth and the surrounding regions.

In-destination Experts: These are the locals who can work with TRC's In-destination Specialists to create bespoke itineraries or trails through to providing practical information on what to pack for a multi-day hike or a mountain biking adventure.

Destination Storytellers: These are the locals who could share their experience or stories of the region in an informal and engaging way. For example, it could involve an Elder of the local Aboriginal community, who shares insights into their Connection to Country or a local artist, farmer or outdoor recreation expert. These experiences can be shared over tea, under the stars or while watching a sunset. This approach is likely to appeal to small groups, especially women travellers, special interest enthusiasts as well as inter-generational groups.

ACTIONS

1. Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of *In-Destination Specialists* (TRC roles), noting that they will continue to provide general visitor information
2. Undertake an in-house familiarisation or training program for existing staff and based on this, develop an induction or orientation package for new staff
3. Identify and recruit potential *In-Destination Experts* and *Destination Storytellers* – create an information package for inducting them, including a simple agreement that sets out expectations and responsibilities of both parties to ensure the reputation of TRC
4. Create a framework for In-Destination Specialists, In-Destination Experts and Destination Storytellers to guide the collection and curation of content, stories and for experience development, including of local trails and itineraries

3. Prioritised Action Plan

The following table summarises and prioritises all the actions from this Strategy. Please note that some actions will require resources outside the scope of the Tamworth Tourism Precinct Business Case (TTPBC). Likewise, some actions should be undertaken to inform the development of the VEC.

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY & FINANCIAL YEAR (FY)	NOTES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OR ACTIVATION
1. Develop a world-class place brand		
1.1 Develop a place brand strategy, destination positioning, identity and associated creative	High – FY2024	Foundation project with Tamworth Visitor Economy Plan (VEP). Critical project to guide marketing and visitor services. Not funded within the TTPBC.
2. Raise awareness of and drive visitor demand for Tamworth, Gunnedah, Liverpool Plains and Walcha local government areas		
2.1 Develop and implement a destination campaign to promote Tamworth and the surrounding regions	Medium – subject to finalising the Place Brand – FY2025	Priority project with Tamworth Visitor Economy Plan (VEP). Not funded within the TTPBC.
2.2 Implement a local community campaign for the VFR market	Medium – FY2025	Priority project with Tamworth Visitor Economy Plan (VEP). Not funded within the TTPBC. Would contribute to enhancing civic pride. Consider funding with community engagement programming.
2.3 Develop a content strategy and create content for the campaigns (1.1 and 1.2)	Medium – FY2025	Not funded within the TTPBC.
3. Review and confirm the key directions, functions, and operations of the VEC		
3.1 Review and confirm the key directions for the VEC and visitor servicing network (refer to table on pages 17-19)	High – FY2024	To be completed to enable implementation of the VEC, subject to attracting funding or investment from the TTPBC.
4. A centralised omni-channel contact centre		
4.1 Consolidate and centralise the contact centre	Medium – FY2025	Subject to the outcome of the TTPBC.
4.2 Develop systems to acquire and manage customer data.	Medium – FY2025	Subject to the outcome of the TTPBC.
5. Review and consolidation of TRC websites		
5.1 Conduct an audit of all current TRC websites and consolidate	High – FY2024	Will inform the development of the VEC as well as future visitor servicing activities. To be funded from within TRC existing budget.
5.2 Undertake user journey mapping to inform the development of an appropriate wireframe for the website	High – FY2024	Will inform the development of the VEC as well as future visitor servicing activities. To be funded from within TRC existing budget.

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY & FINANCIAL YEAR (FY)	NOTES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OR ACTIVATION
6. Improved collaboration across the visitor servicing, marketing and events teams at TRC, as well as with Gunnedah, Liverpool Plains and Walcha local government areas.		
6.1 Conduct cross-regional famils and staff exchanges	High – FY2024	Will inform the development of the VEC as well as future visitor servicing activities. To be funded from within TRC existing budget.
6.2 Build cross-regional experience itineraries	High – FY2024	Will inform the development of the VEC as well as future visitor servicing activities. To be funded from within TRC existing budget.
6.3 Conduct regular or monthly meetings that bring together the Visitor Servicing, Events and Marketing teams within TRC	High – FY2024	Will inform the development of the VEC as well as future visitor servicing activities. To be funded from within TRC existing budget.
7. Technology, travel and visitor servicing		
7.1 Review the opportunities to integrate technology, including AI, GenAI, AR, VR and QR codes	Medium – FY2025	Will inform the development of the VEC as well as future visitor servicing activities. Subject to the outcome of the TTPBC.
7.2 Ensure that basic technology requirements are in place across the VIC and VIO network	High – FY2024	Will inform the development of the VEC as well as future visitor servicing activities. To be funded from within TRC existing budget.
8. Visitor information and content		
8.1 Develop an omnichannel content strategy	High-medium – early FY2025	Will inform the development of the VEC as well as future visitor servicing activities. To be funded from within TRC existing budget.
9. Building Business Partnership and Information Programs		
9.1 Develop a visitor servicing partnership program	High-medium – early FY2025	Will inform the development of the VEC as well as future visitor servicing activities. To be funded from within TRC existing budget.
10. Using third party channels and experience platforms to promote tourism products and services		
10.1 Create an industry development program	Ongoing	Priority project with Tamworth Visitor Economy Plan (VEP). To be funded from within TRC existing budget.
11. Review and refine printed collateral		
11.1 Review and refine the amount of printed collateral being produced and ensure they are meeting the needs of consumer markets.	High – FY2024	Priority project with Tamworth Visitor Economy Plan (VEP). To be funded from within TRC existing budget.
12. Mobile or pop-up visitor information		
12.1 Create a program of pop-up services, which addresses key periods in the calendar	High-medium – early FY2025	Priority project with Tamworth Visitor Economy Plan (VEP). To be funded from within TRC existing budget.

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY & FINANCIAL YEAR (FY)	NOTES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OR ACTIVATION
12.2 Review the model for delivery of mobile visitor services	High-medium – early FY2025	Priority project with Tamworth Visitor Economy Plan (VEP). To be funded from within TRC existing budget.
13. Reimagine community-operated VIOs		
13.1 Develop a review process to be conducted over three years	Low – FY2026	Priority project with Tamworth Visitor Economy Plan (VEP). To be funded from within TRC existing budget.
14. People still play a very important role in visitor servicing		
14.1 Define the roles and responsibilities of <i>In-Destination Specialists</i> (TRC roles)	Medium – FY2025	Will be informed by the delivery model of the VEC as well as future visitor servicing activities. To be funded from within TRC existing budget.
14.2 Deliver an in-house familiarisation or training program for existing staff and develop an induction or orientation package for new staff	Medium – FY2025	Will be informed by the delivery model of the VEC as well as future visitor servicing activities. To be funded from within TRC existing budget.
14.3 Identify and recruit potential <i>In-Destination Experts</i> and <i>Destination Storytellers</i> – create an information package for inducting them, including a simple agreement	Low – FY2025 to FY2026	Subject to the outcome of the TTPBC.
14.4 Create a framework for In-Destination Specialists, In-Destination Experts and Destination Storytellers to guide the collection and curation of content, stories and for experience development	Low – FY2025 to FY2026	Subject to the outcome of the TTPBC.

4. Appendix 1 – Delivery models deployed by other destinations (CONFIDENTIAL)

Below is a summary of delivery models deployed by other destinations:

DESTINATION	DESCRIPTION	COMMENTS
<p>Sapphire Coast Destination Marketing</p> <p>LGA: Bega Valley Shire Council</p>	<p>Bega Valley Shire Council (BVSC) contracts Sapphire Coast Destination Marketing (SCDM) to provide a range of tourism marketing services on its behalf. SCDM is a for-profit corporation.</p> <p>The tourism services contract ensures delivery of tourism destination marketing, experience development and regional leadership activities to contribute to the growth of the local visitor economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding of SCDM is primarily derived from its contract with BVSC and grants funding (eg NSW & Commonwealth Governments). The grants have been a critical funding source for SCDM over recent financial years. Core responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Destination marketing and brand Delivery of visitor services and Industry engagement, development, and resources, including experience development A four-year contract (2018 – 2022) was awarded to SCDM for \$327,800 pa fixed-price contract The BVSC's budget for tourism marketing services is solely funded by business ratepayers through a special rate variation Council maintains responsibility for destination management and planning responsibilities. SCDM industry resources and engagement provides a strong foundation for the local tourism and events industry
<p>Mudgee Region Tourism</p> <p>LGA: Mid-Western Regional Council</p>	<p>Mudgee Region Tourism (MRT) is an independent incorporated body funded by the Mid-Western Regional Council (MWRC) and by its members and sponsors (collectively known as 'partners').</p> <p>MRT is responsible for the promotion of tourism assets across the local government area.</p> <p>MRT was established in 2001, is governed by a constitution and operates in accordance with the Association Incorporations Act</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding of MRT is primarily derived from its contract with MWRC and industry membership/ partnership fees. Grant funding (eg NSW & Commonwealth Governments) has also been a significant income source over recent years. Core responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Destination marketing and brand Delivery of visitor services and operation of VICs Industry engagement and development A four-year contract (1/7/2022 – 30/6/2026) was awarded to MRT by

DESTINATION	DESCRIPTION	COMMENTS
	<p>2009. It has an industry board with MWRC representation.</p> <p>MRT offers partnerships to a range of sectors of the business community and during the 2021–22 financial year supported 353 partners.</p> <p>In addition to partnership income and the MWRC contract, the organisation raises revenue through other streams such as Federal and State Government funding grants, retail sales and merchandise, and ticket/ accommodation online sales or at the Mudgee Visitor Information Centre.</p>	<p>MWRC for \$760,000 annually (base lump sum, paid monthly and indexed to CPI annually) from 1 July 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership revenue in 2021/2022 was \$543,047 (an increase of 21.5% on FY2021) In 2021/2022, retail trading contributed around \$51,000 in gross profit (before expenses), equivalent to 3% of all income sources – the cost of the VIC is highly subsidised by the contract with MWRC Destination marketing campaigns (including PR) have been funded through recent grant funding programs from the NSW and/or Commonwealth Governments
<p>Visit Sunshine Coast</p> <p>LGAs: Sunshine Coast Council, Noosa Council and Gympie Regional Council</p>	<p>The principal activity of Visit Sunshine Coast (VSC) is the promotion and development of tourism within the Sunshine Coast region, which encompasses the combined local government areas of the Sunshine Coast Council, Noosa Council and Gympie Regional Council.</p> <p>VSC is a company limited by guarantee, with a membership base and governed by a Board with Council representation. The Board must have a majority of 'skills-based' directors. The Board directors are paid.</p> <p>VSC's objective is to grow the contribution of tourism to the Sunshine Coast economy by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting the region and building destination awareness within Australian and international markets to drive demand and grow visitor nights and yield. Expanding digital presence through innovative online and social media strategies. Being the sought-after partner of key tourism industry stakeholders. Building an engaged and active membership base. Strengthening existing and developing new strategic partnerships to grow funding and resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding of VSC is primarily derived from Sunshine Coast Council – in FY 2022 it amounted to almost \$4.5M or 70% of total revenue Revenue from other government sources (eg Queensland Government and other two LGAs), including grant funding is also a significant income source. In FY 2022 it was almost \$1.7M or 26% of total revenue Industry membership fees are a relatively small component of total revenue. In FY 2022, it contributed \$128,562 or 2% of total revenue Recent changes in Queensland Government's funding model relating to Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) means that all future grant funding will be moved to a partially competitive model, with RTOs competing for funds against each other within areas of focus specified by Tourism & Events Queensland (TEQ) as relevant to their region/LGA.

DESTINATION	DESCRIPTION	COMMENTS
	6. Assisting industry to improve service quality and supply, develop new product offerings and refurbish existing products. 7. Lobbying and influencing relevant parties to develop improved visitor access to the region.	
<p>Destination Barrington Coast</p> <p>LGA: Mid-Coast Council</p>	<p>Destination Barrington Coast (DBC) is the destination name and brand of Mid-Coast Council (MCC).</p> <p>It operates wholly as a part of Council. The current delivery model integrates all core functions, including destination management and planning, destination marketing and brand, and delivery of visitor services, including the operation of VICs.</p> <p>There is strong engagement and communication with industry although there isn't a permanent industry body or committee formally established.</p> <p>Council's corporate communication is separately managed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cost to MCC is difficult to determine based on the structure of MCC's financial statements. However, the total budget for Destination Barrington Coast for FY 2022 was around \$1.5M, including marketing, visitor services and destination management. It doesn't include events, which are managed separately. • All communications relating to tourism, events and the visitor economy are segmented under DBC. An example of the success of this model is DBC's recent destination marketing campaign. DBC successfully raised over \$60,000 from industry to contribute towards the co-opt marketing campaign, which was achieved through creating a tiered partnership program. Local businesses and operators could select from a range of price points to buy into the campaign from \$500 to \$10,000. DBC contributed over \$220,000 towards the campaign in addition to industry • DBC has won numerous awards in tourism, reflecting the high quality of marketing and visitor services currently delivered by the in-house team, supported by external expertise/agencies • A holistic approach from demand to supply has strengthened destination management and planning outcomes while contributing to high levels of industry engagement

PART B

TRC – Regional Tourism Service Model

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Version: 1, Version Date: 30/05/2024

5. Cost-Benefit Analysis

Tamworth Tourism Value Overview

Tourism is a key industry and a major contributor to Tamworth’s economy. In 2021/22, the total tourism sales in Tamworth Regional Council were \$296.9m, the total value added was \$145.8 million.

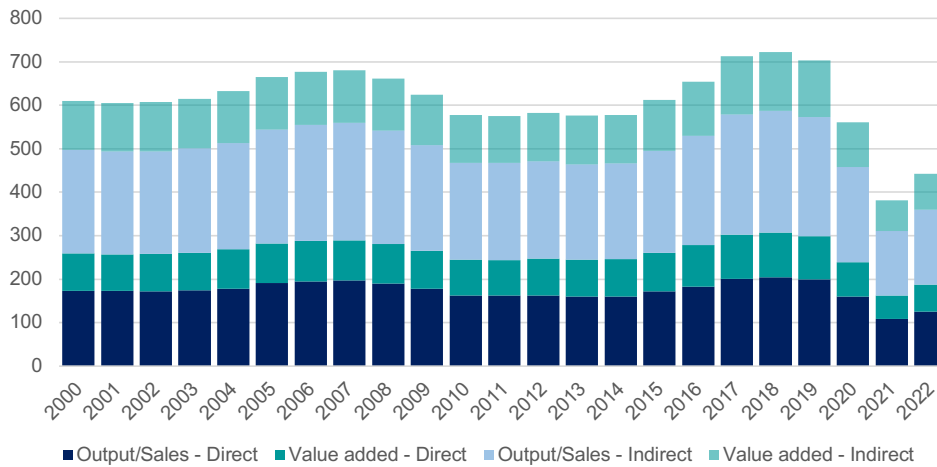
Key economic indicators of the value of Tourism and contribution to the economy are provided below:

Figure 1: Tamworth Tourism Value 2021/22



Over the last 20-years, Tamworth tourism value has remained relatively stagnate. Since 2016/17, there has been a \$91 million decline in the value added from Tourism, primarily due to Covid-19 and changing in visitor preferences.

Figure 2: Value of Tamworth Regional Tourism (\$ millions)



Tamworth receives over 1.1 million visitors every year from a variety of events and festivals and is heavily reliant on the annual Country Music Festival, Tamworth’s globally recognised Festival receives 50,000 visitors per annum, generating over \$127 million in economic benefits.

The Country Music Festival accounts for almost half of the total Tamworth tourism sales. The opportunity for Tamworth is to grow its existing Tourism industry and associated businesses, attract new ones, and foster an effective Tourism service model that collaborates and partners with industry. It already has a diverse economy that offers a considerable range of opportunities for innovation and growth.

The future revival and prosperity of the Tourism sector will depend on Tamworth’s ability to effectively execute two key strategies:

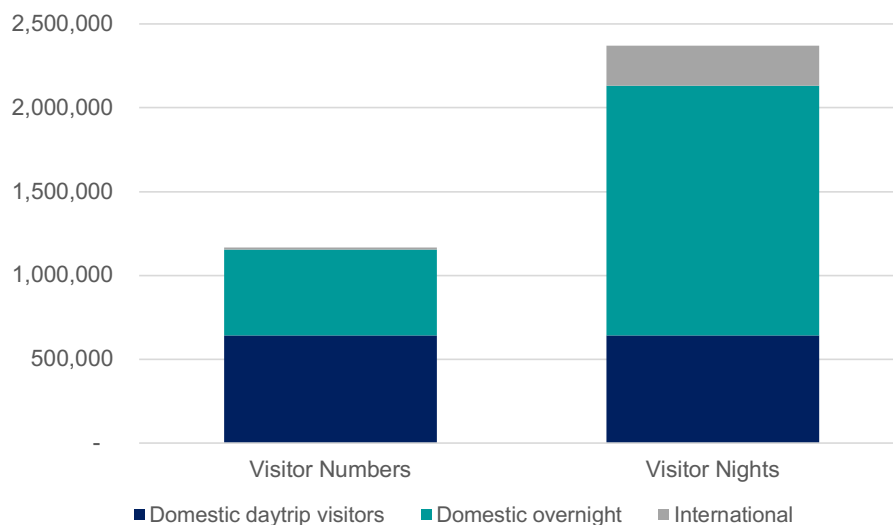


Tamworth Tourism Visitation Insights

Tamworth visitation is comprised of domestic day trip visitors, domestic overnight visitors and international visitation. In 2020/21, Tamworth had total visitors of 1.1 million spending approximately 2.4 million visitation nights in the region.

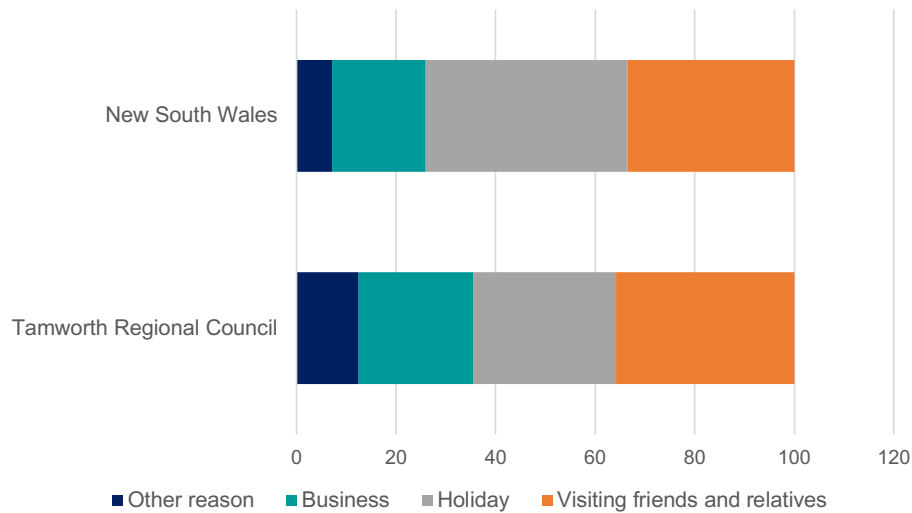
- Domestic daytrip visitors – 641k visitors
- Domestic overnight visitors – 1,489k visitors
- International visitors – 12k visitors

Figure 3: 2020/21 Tamworth Regional Visitation and Visitor Nights



In the 5 years up to 2021/22, Domestic overnight visitors to Tamworth Regional Council were more likely to be visiting friends and relatives, accounting for 35.8% of all visitors.

Figure 4: 2020/21 Visitors by Reason, Tamworth vs New South Wales



The results from the survey highlight visitors that travel to Tamworth for “Holiday” purposes is a lower proportion than visitors that travel to New South Wales. Holiday visitors are likely to induce significantly more direct Tourism benefits than other visitors, representing a significant visitor cohort for Tamworth to develop targeted strategies over the medium to long-term.

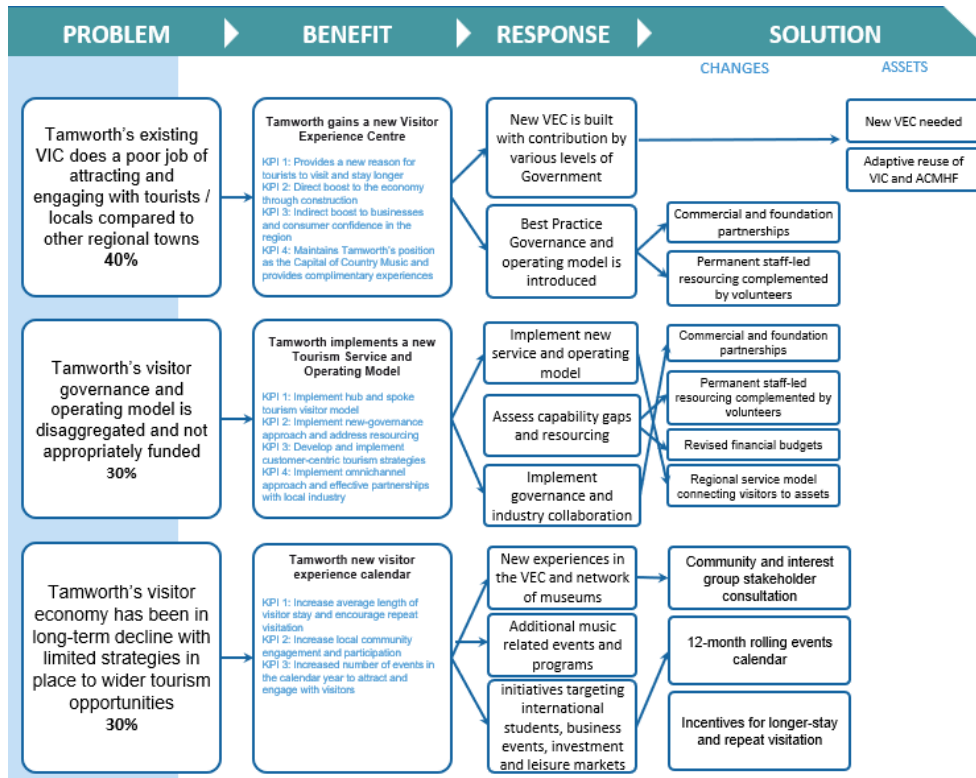
Regional Tourism Service Model: Investment Logic Map

The investment logic map summarises the service need, targeted benefits and strategic responses. It also identifies the changes required to address the service need while achieving the benefits. The Regional Tourism Service model encapsulates three key priorities across assets, service and operating model and new experiences.

Note that an iconic VEC building is only one element of an integrated solution that begins with changes to governance, particular target markets with engaging experiences and a service delivery model that flawlessly executes the visitor strategy.

The integrated Regional Tourism Service model is investment logic map is highlighted below:

Figure 5: Tamworth Regional Tourism Service Model: Investment Logic Map



Regional Tourism Service Model: Cost-Benefit Analysis

Costs

Tamworth Regional Tourism Services Model cost base consists of a network of museums, supported by the Visitor Information Centre and Visitor servicing team.

TRC manages ten collections across several locations, with each museum model slightly different with different legal and organisational structures. The scope of the VEC is to consolidate Visitor Information and Tourism Centre, Country Music Hall of Fame, Wax Museum, Guitar Museum Guitar Photo Gallery, Regional and Cultural hub.

Table 1: Tamworth Museums and Legal Ownership

List of Museums	Legal Ownership
Tamworth PowerStation Museum	TRC-Owned
Australian Country Music Collections	TRC-Owned

List of Museums	Legal Ownership
Nandewar Heritage Museum	Incorporated Body
Manilla Heritage Museum	Incorporated body, co-located with a VIO
Rocks, Gems, Minerals and Fossil Collections	TRC-Owned, co-located with a VIO
Moonbi Museum	TRC-Owned
Australian Country Music Hall of Fame	TRC-Owned
The Country Music Wax Museum	TRC-Owned
National Guitar Museum and Gallery	TRC-Owned
Tamworth Regional Film and Sound Archive	TRC-Owned
Tamworth Historical Society	Incorporated body
Tamworth Regional Astronomy Club	Incorporated body
Tamworth and District Family History Group	Incorporated body

The Current Visitor Servicing Team consists of:

- Coordinator, Visitor Economy (Full-time)
- Visitor Economy Development Officer (Full-time) - currently vacant
- Visitor Experience Officer (Full-time)
- 2 x Visitor Experience Officers (Part-time, 38 hours per fortnight)
- Trainee – Visitor Experiences (Full-time)

Other costs identified as being included as part of the Tourism Service model cost base:

- Marketing expenses – Estimated at \$40,000 per annum for the Tamworth Region
- Indirect support expenses - Estimated at \$1,500,000 million per annum, including legal, IT support, Country Music Festival related costs and management time

A total of \$2.5m per annum is the estimated current operating expenditure on Tourism-related services. A breakdown has been provided below; further work is required to develop a detailed cost-base.

The total operating costs as a percentage of 1.7% of the direct value contributed by Tourism to the local Tamworth economy. This is relatively low considering the direct and indirect value Tourism generates for the region.

Table 2: Tamworth Visitor Servicing Cost Estimate, per annum

#	Cost item	Estimate \$
1	VIC and ACMHF Operating Deficit	\$800,000
2	Visitor Servicing Team	\$200,000
3	Marketing Expenses	\$40,000
4	Indirect Team Support	\$1,500,000
	Total Expenditure	\$2,540,000
	Expenditure as a % of direct value added	~1.7%

Benefits

Tourism and associated services are typically considered public service that caters to the community for recreation, wellness and learning. Given the public good nature of these services, market prices do not exist and other methods need be used to quantify the value.

There are many economic, social and environmental benefits associated with the Tamworth Regional Tourism Service Model.

Table 3: Range of Benefits attributable to Regional Tourism Service Model

ECONOMIC	SOCIAL/CULTURAL	ENVIRONMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-local expenditure (tourism visitation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User / Community benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased open space and tree canopy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue created through commercial partnerships, room hire – contributing to operating expenses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social inclusion, interaction and isolation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase residual land value
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic multipliers from new expenditure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher rates of participation in local community activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in co2 emissions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional employment from new expenditure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to attract a variety of events and support development of local sports and culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved water, waste and utility efficiencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoided health costs from social isolation 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased productivity and reduced absenteeism 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial savings through service delivery efficiencies 		

Cost-Benefit Analysis Results

Based on observable increases of other Region's Visitor increases because of delivering a new Tourism Service Model, including a new Visitor Information Centre (refer to the Shepparton and Goulburn Valley case Study in Stage 6), the Regional Tourism Service model is expected to increase visitation from non-local visitors by 40,000, representing a 3.6% total increase in Tamworth Regional visitation

Primary quantifiable benefits associated with the Regional Tourism Service Model include:

- Visitation Direct Benefits
- Construction Direct Benefits
- Commercial Revenues to support operating expenses
- Sales or lease proceeds from surplus sites

Primary quantifiable costs associated with Regional Tourism Service Model include:

- VEC Capital Costs - \$31 million over 2-years
- Regional Tourism Service Model - \$1 million per annum

Table 4: Rapid Cost-Benefit Analysis: Tamworth Regional Tourism Service Model

Category	Regional Tourism Service Model
Benefits	
Visitation Direct Benefits	\$42,406
Construction Direct Benefits	\$9,994
Commercial Revenues	\$4,972
Land Use Benefits	\$1,036
Residual Asset Value	\$11,322
Costs	
Capital Costs	\$30,010
Operational Costs	\$19,885
Visitor Service Delivery Model Costs	\$13,281
Benefits (real, discounted)	\$69,371
Costs (real, discounted)	\$63,176
NPV (5% discount rate)	\$6,194
BCR (5% discount rate)	1.1

The net present value of the Regional Tourism Service Model is estimated to be around \$6 million, with a benefit cost ratio of 1.10. This means that the proposed Regional Tourism Service Model benefits outweigh the costs.

Cost-Benefit Analysis Limitations

The above cost-benefit analysis has several limitations including:

- Cost-Benefit Analysis represented is for the total Regional Tourism Service Model (Stage 6 Business case represents the cost-benefit analysis for the new VEC only)
- Operating costs are based on estimates and management representations and may not be complete
- Visitor Service Delivery Model costs are an estimate only and is based on ensuring the cost-benefits analysis of the Regional Tourism Service Model maintains a BCR greater than 1.0
- Visitor Service Delivery Model costs requires further due diligence and development

Cost-Benefit Analysis Recommendations

Tourism is a key industry and vital to the long-term prosperity of the Tamworth region. Cost-benefit analysis has identified several recommendations for adoption, including:

- Develop a detailed Tourism Services cost model across Tamworth and associated regions
- Develop long-term services funding model, recognising economic flows from Tourism activities will not necessarily flow back through to TRC
- Develop detailed business case for service model, including people, process, systems, technology and marketing to support a new hub and spoke model
- Explore partnership and sponsorship opportunities from Government, philanthropic groups and industry associations, similar to other jurisdictions

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TRC – Regional Tourism Service Model

Document Set ID: 2186509
Version: 1, Version Date: 30/05/2024



TAMWORTH REGIONAL COUNCIL

Capital of Country: Visitor Experience Centre

Final Business Case



Document Set ID: 2186514
Version: 1, Version Date: 30/05/2024



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Tamworth Regional Council: Capital of Country: Visitor Experience Centre

Endorsement by:

This is the Final Business Case of **Tamworth Visitor Experience Centre**. The business case is certified to have been developed in accordance with the NSW Treasury Guidelines Business Cases (TPG22-04).

Signed

Name

[Role], [Division], Tamworth Regional Council

The **Tamworth Visitor Experience Centre** has followed the governance and approval process set out in the Final Business Case:

Signed

Name

Title, Division, Tamworth Regional Council

Project Team

Project Director



Program Lead



Infrastructure Advisor



Cost Manager



Business Case and Cost-Benefit Analysis



Abbreviations and acronyms

Acronym	Details
AELEC	Australian Equine and Livestock Events Centre
AMP	Asset Management Plan
BC	Business Case
BCR	Benefit Cost Ratio
BRM	Benefits Realisation Management
CBA	Cost Benefit Analysis
CWG	Communications Working Group
DPE	Department of Planning and Environment
ESC	Executive Steering Committee
ETC	Estimated Total Capital cost
FDB	Functional Design Brief
FFE	Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment
FIS	Financial Impact Statement
GRP	Gross Regional Product
ICT	Information Communication & Technology
IRSD	Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage
LEP	Local Environmental Plan
LGA	Local Government Area
LTO	Local Tourism Organisation
NPV	Net Present Value
RTO	Regional Tourism Organisation
RV	Recreational Vehicle
SAMP	Strategic Asset Management Plan
SEIFA	Social & economic index for areas
SEPP	State Environmental Planning Policy
SoA	Schedule of Accommodation
STO	State Tourism Organisation
TRC	Tamworth Regional Council
TRECC	Tamworth Regional Events and Conference Centre
VEC	Visitor Experience Centre
VEP	TRC Visitor Economy Plan 2022-2027
VIC	Visitor Information Centre
VIO	Visitor Information Outlets
VM	Value Management





Revision Table

Revision	Date	Author	Approval	Description
0.01	5 th January	P90 Advisory		Final Draft

0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tamworth Visitor Experience Centre				
Service Need	<p>Tamworth is a dynamic and diverse regional community. Tamworth has a current population of 65,000, with aspirations to grow the population to 100,000 by 2041. Tamworth's Gross Regional Product (GSP) in 2021 was \$3.26 billion, underpinned by a strong Tourism and Hospitality services sector, contributing \$299 million to the local economy.</p> <p>The Tamworth region offers a wide range of arts and cultural attractions, supported by Visitor Information Centre (VIC) and a network of museums that showcase the region's rich history in country music, art and cultures. The VIC, located at 2 Ringers Rd, Hillvue, as well as the Australian Country Music Festival Hall of Fame (ACMHF), located at 561 Peel Street, Tamworth, attract over 120,000 visitors per annum. These cultural assets are instrumental in shaping the visitor experience across the Tamworth region. Research undertaken for the 'A National Perspective on Visitor Information Servicing' highlights that often a VIC visit results in additional spending ranging from \$59 (NSW) to \$151 (VIC) per adult.</p> <p>Both the VIC and ACMHF have significant infrastructure and service challenges in meeting current and future visitor expectations over the medium-term. An opportunity exists to create a state-of-the-art Visitor Experience Centre (VEC). The VEC will underpin Tamworth's visitor tourism strategy and will create a dynamic, flexible and interactive visitor experience that showcases Tamworth's regional endowments.</p>			
	<p>Design and construction of a new 2,500 sqm Tamworth VEC, integrating the consolidation and renewal of 4-visitor assets, including the current VIC, ACMHF, Country Music Wax and National Guitar Museums. The new VEC will be vital for TRC to strengthen and diversify the visitor experience over the long-term.</p> <p>The state-of-the-art VEC will be situated on the former athletics track and fields on Greg Normal Drive, Hillvue, owned by TRC, the VEC will be an important pillar to a vibrant new Visitor Entertainment Precinct, surrounded by a new Hotel, retail, restaurants and open space, well-positioned and in close proximity to other pivotal entertainment assets, including the Tamworth Sporting Complex and Equine centres.</p>			
Project Type	Major Capital Works	Capital Total Cost \$	\$31.89m (nominal)	
State Electorate	LGA	Tamworth		
	State Electorate	Tamworth		
	Federal Electorate	New England		
Project Phase	Project Phase	Gate 2 – Final Business Case		
	INSW Risk Tier	Tier 3		
Service Region	Population (2021)	64,522		
	Population Projection Growth (2041)	14%		
	Existing Dwellings (2021)	23,617		
	Implied Dwelling Demand (2041)	33,607		
Visitation Stats	Visitors per annum	2018	2022	CAGR %
	Tamworth	1,290,000	1,111,000	(3.5%)
	VIC	108,000	111,000	0.0%

Tamworth Visitor Experience Centre				
(Tamworth, VIC and ACMHF per annum)	ACMHF	7,651	11,692	11%
Drivers of the Service Need (the case for Investment to consolidate the VIC and ACMHF into a new VEC)	Challenge / Issue		Impact on Service Need	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ageing, inflexible visitor assets impacting modern visitor services and delivery. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not fit-for-purpose asset functionality limiting display and visitor experience. Limitations include lack of flexible display space, inadequate storage space, outdated visitor experiences Lack of compliance with building code standards, including inadequate air climate control, fire control systems and accessibility Remediation costs to address identified shortcomings of existing facilities, with remediation capital estimates ranging from \$1.8 million to address critical issues to \$7.6 million complete a total refurbishment 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tamworth region visitor experience and length of stay below NSW Regional average. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low visitation of the VIC and ACMHF as a proportion of annual visitors, with less than 10% of total Tamworth Regional visitors visiting the VIC and ACMHF Threats to Tamworth's (and NSW's) leading reputation as the County Music Capital, with significant investments in Country Music events in Queensland and other regional towns Lack of space to showcase Tamworth as the 'Capital of Country'. Tamworth is significantly reliant on Country Music Industry, with over 30% of visitation to the VIC and ACMHF occurring in the month of January. There is a need to build on Country Music visitation and develop diversified, complimentary visitor experiences Changing visitor markets and visitor expectations, with the increased adoption and integration of digital technologies, as well as increase expectations of immersive and interactive visitor experiences, currently not possible with the VIC and ACMHF 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic opportunity to exit leased facilities and enter into a purpose-built precinct. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of a quality "Welcome to Tamworth" Visitor Experience, with the current VIC location, including the location of the Golden Guitar, consumed by surrounding commercial developments Inefficient use of land and resources (location and 	

Tamworth Visitor Experience Centre		
		dispersion of assets). Opportunity to consolidate and reduce rental, operations and maintenance expenditure
Project Vision	Integrating the Visitor Information Centre, Australian Country Music Hall of Fame, National Guitar and Country Music Wax Museums, creating a new vibrant, flexible and interactive Visitor Experience Centre that showcases the Tamworth region's heritage and endowments	
Project Objectives and Benefits	 <p>1. Provide a best-practice visitor experience in the form of service, information and amenity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase Visitor Information Centre visitation and experience scores • Create a regional hub, facilitating a hub-and-spoke tourism visitor information delivery model • Improved visitor interactions, information sharing and journey planning • Showcase regional products, produce and attractions to highlight the region's identity as the 'Capital of Country'
	 <p>2. Enhanced visitor museum experiences by providing flexible, interactive and digital experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased museum visitation and experience scores • Increased visitation and diversification across the calendar year • Greater capacity and flexibility of spaces for seasonal experiences and exhibitions • Increased digital and immersive experiences • Improved curation, management and storage of artefacts • Unify four existing museums into a single comprehensive and integrated experience
	 <p>3. Improve asset, financial and service performance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid capital remediation costs of existing VIC and ACMHF • Avoid operational maintenance costs of existing, aged VIC and ACMHF • Reduce duplication associated with asset management activities, including security, storage and other shared services • Financial savings exiting unfavourable lease terms • Increased admission and merchandise revenues • Increased ancillary revenue streams, including function and event space hire, catering and sponsorship • Divestment or lease proceeds as a result of exiting the ACMHF site
	 <p>4. Create a vibrant entertainment and "Welcome to Tamworth" precinct</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase prominence of the Golden Guitar • Accommodate live entertainment, with state-of-the-art infrastructure supporting both outdoor amphitheatre and indoor spaces. • Offer contemporary public amenities accessible to all. • Facilitate and attract private investment into the Visitor Experience Precinct

Tamworth Visitor Experience Centre					
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved open space and local community use 	
Project Options	Base Case			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain current VIC and ACMHF locations Minimum intervention, including minor capital works to remediate critical issues, increased maintenance expenditure based on QS assessment 	
	Option 1			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and construct new VEC incorporating VIC and ACMHF Full scope build, replacing existing facilities, catering for growth Additional exhibition space to enable flexible and seasonal exhibitions Additional outdoor garden and amphitheatre to cater for events, live music and educational programs 	
	Option 2			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and construct new VEC incorporating VIC and ACMHF Minimum, rebuild existing facilities as per current scale and functionality Additional exhibition space and outdoor areas not included 	
Multi-Criteria Assessment of Options (BCR, Capital, MCA) \$millions	Options		BCR	Capital	MCA
	Base Case		1.09	\$1.89	0.9
	Option 1		1.40	\$31.89	2.0
	Option 2		1.19	\$23.16	1.7
Option Evaluation (preferred option)	<p>Option 1 – Build a new VEC full scoped option is the preferred option</p> <p>The net present value of the scenario is estimated to be around \$19.48 million, with a benefit cost ratio of 1.40. This means that the proposed VEC development benefits outweigh the costs. Option 1 best maximises and meets the strategic objectives of the project, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves and diversifies visitor experience Creates flexible and adaptable spaces Increases VEC prominence in Tamworth strategic centre Maximises value for money Minimises operational impacts and disruptions 				
Project Milestones	Milestone/s	Milestone Date			
	Funding Deed – Binding agreements with various parties	March 2024			
	Site investigations – Environmental studies	June 2024			
	Detailed Design	August 2024			
	Issue Tender Documents – D&C	September 2024			
	Tender Assessment - Appoint Developer	October 2024			

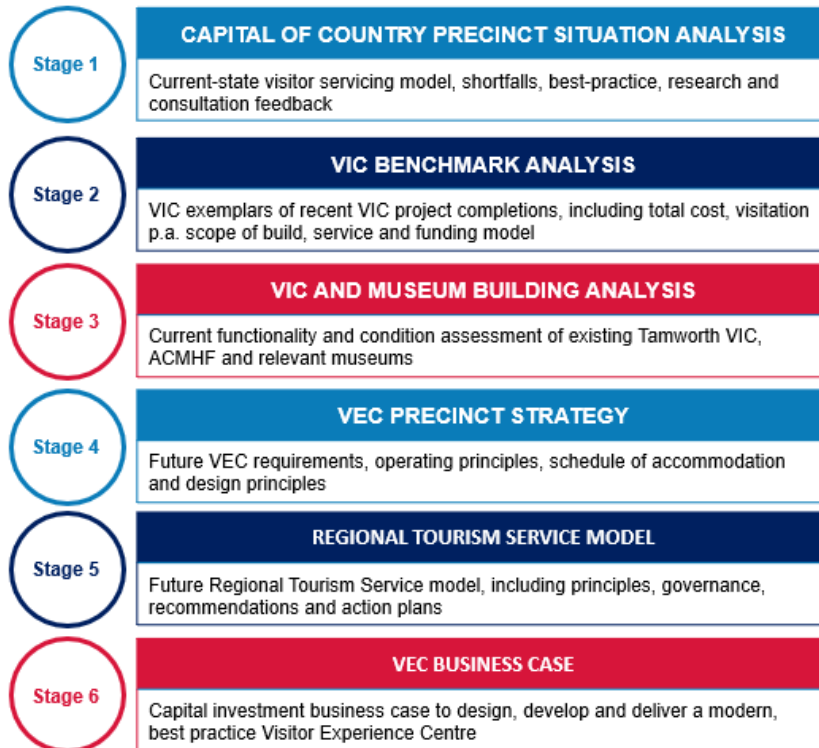
Tamworth Visitor Experience Centre		
Recommendations	Planning Approval	December 2024
	Relocation – VIC and ACMHF	October 2026
	Construction – VEC Project	November 2026
	Commissioning Complete and Handover (Final Stage of Refurbishment)	December 2026
	<p>It is recommended that TRC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse Option 1 is the preferred option noting that the full-scoped VEC within the Visitor Experience Precinct maximises value for money and meets the project objectives • Endorse the Option 1 scope and reference accommodation requirements noting this has been approved by the project team • Endorse that \$31.89million of capital funds is required to deliver the projects, expected to be funded from the following sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TRC - \$5.2m, capital contribution from the proceeds of sale from the ACMHF site and Visitor Entertainment Precinct land sale to the preferred developer ○ Federal or NSW Government - \$26.7m, required capital contribution, to be applied via a number of current grant opportunities ○ TRC - \$8.0 million operating deficit funding over the first 10-years of the new VEC's operations (noting this is less than the forecasted operating deficit under the base case scenario) 	

1 SERVICE NEED

1.1 Project Background

The Capital of Country Visitor Experience Centre program has been developed sequentially over six stages. Stages 1 through to 5 established the current state of the visitor service model and existing buildings, developing the future VEC building requirements and tourism model. This business case represents stage 6 of the program and reflects the capital investment required to deliver a modern Visitor Experience Centre, consolidating the existing Visitor Information Centre and Australian Country Music Hall of Fame.

Figure 1: Capital of Country Visitor Experience Centre Program



Stage 1 to 5 deliverables have been provided as attachments to the business case.

1.2 Project Summary

Nestled in the heart of New South Wales, Tamworth stands as a thriving regional city, blending a rich tapestry of cultural heritage, artistic expression, and natural beauty. As the administrative and economic centre of the Tamworth Regional Council, this dynamic city has become a hub for innovation and community spirit. Boasting a population of over 60,000 residents, Tamworth serves as a bustling nexus where urban amenities harmonise with the serene landscapes that surround it.

Situated approximately 400 kilometres north of Sydney and just over 500 kilometres south of Brisbane, Tamworth offers a refreshing escape from the metropolitan hustle, inviting both locals and visitors to immerse themselves in its unique charm. Renowned as the "Country Music Capital of Australia," Tamworth hosts the iconic Tamworth Country Music Festival annually, drawing music enthusiasts from far and wide. Beyond its musical acclaim, Tamworth is deeply rooted in equestrian culture, and its breathtaking landscapes further contribute to the city's allure.

With an annual influx of over 1.1 million visitors, Tamworth has become an iconic destination for those seeking an authentic Australian experience. In the midst of this vibrant setting, the Tamworth Regional Council envisions a transformative project – the creation of a state-of-the-art Visitor Experience Centre (VEC). By amalgamating existing cultural institutions, including the National Guitar Museum, Country Music Festival Hall of Fame, Country Music Wax Museum, and the Visitor Information Centre, the VEC seeks to enhance the visitor experience and provide a comprehensive showcase of Tamworth's multifaceted identity. This visionary project not only celebrates Tamworth's cultural richness but also positions the city as a premier destination for those seeking an immersive exploration of Australia's artistic, historical, and natural heritage.

The state-of-the-art VEC will be situated on the former athletics track and fields on Greg Normal Drive, Hillvue, owned by TRC, the VEC will be an important pillar to a vibrant new Visitor Entertainment Precinct, surrounded by a new Hotel, retail, restaurants and open space, well-positioned and in close proximity to other pivotal entertainment assets, including the Tamworth Sporting Complex and Equine centres.

PROJECT TERMINOLOGY:

Tamworth Regional Council (TRC): This is the name given by to the area mass of 9,653 square kilometres for the areas within or associated with TRC, including Tamworth, Kootingal, Nundle, Manilla, Barraba, Moonbi, Oxley Vale and West Tamworth.

Tamworth Information Centre (TIC): Tamworth Information Centre serves as the gateway to the vibrant city, offering a wealth of resources to both locals and visitors. Located in the heart of Tamworth, this centre is a bustling hub of information, providing details on local attractions, events, accommodations, and more. It acts as the first point of contact for those eager to explore the diverse wonders of the region, making it an essential stop for anyone seeking to make the most of their Tamworth experience.

National Guitar Museum (NGM): The National Guitar Museum is a haven for enthusiasts and connoisseurs of this iconic instrument. Showcasing an impressive collection of guitars from various eras, genres, and artists, the museum takes visitors on a captivating journey through the evolution of the guitar and its profound impact on the world of music. Beyond its extensive exhibits, the National Guitar Museum serves as an educational hub, providing insights into the craftsmanship, innovations, and the unique stories behind some of the most iconic guitars in history.

Tamworth Country Music Hall of Fame (TCHoF): The Tamworth Country Music Hall of Fame is a captivating homage to the rich heritage and enduring influence of country music in Australia. This dynamic institution not only honours the legends and trailblazers who have shaped the country music genre but also seamlessly integrates with the Wax Museum, creating a unique and immersive experience.

Tamworth Visitor Experience Centre (VEC): This is the official name of the project. More broadly, it refers to a new, purpose-built facility that combines the existing VIC, NGM and TCHoF. The VEC will be situated in a new precinct development, the Visitor Experience Precinct, on the former athletics track and fields located on Greg Noman Drive, Hillvue. The VEC will be strategically collocated with other visitor amenities such as a hotel, restaurant and commercial mixed-use precinct.

1.3 Tamworth Regional Overview

The Tamworth Regional Local Government Area (LGA) is located midway between Sydney and Brisbane and is a Regional City within the New England North West Region. It is adjacent to the Great Dividing Range and is part of the North West Slopes and Plains in northern NSW. Tamworth is renowned as the 'Country Music Capital of Australia' and boasts a rich heritage in this musical genre. With an expansive land area covering approximately 485.5 square kilometres, Tamworth offers a diverse landscape that includes rural areas, suburban neighbourhoods, and natural beauty.

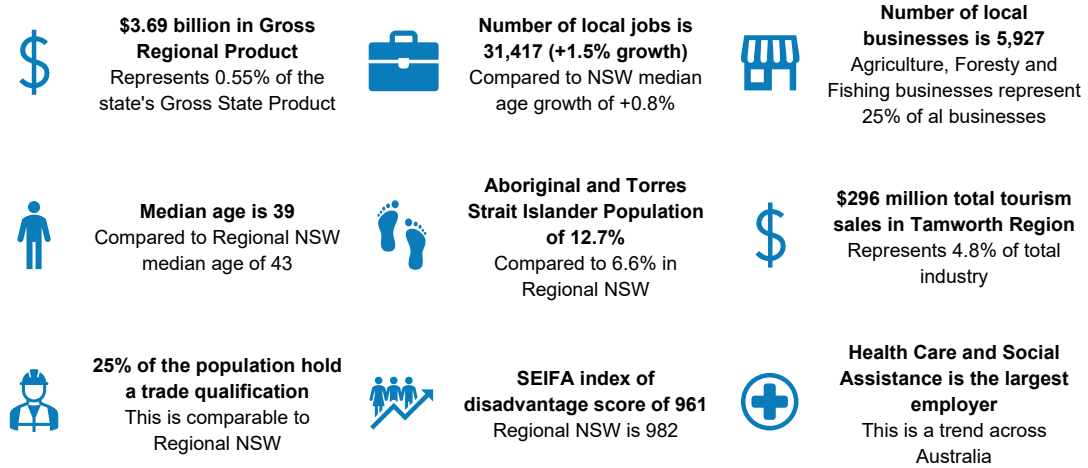
Demographically, Tamworth is a dynamic community, with an estimated current population of 65,000¹. The Department of Planning Industry and Environment have forecasted the population for the Tamworth Region to grow to 74,600 by 2036², a 28.1% overall increase, or 1% annual growth. The city's population spans various age groups,

¹ ABS Estimated Resident Population 2022

² NSW and Local Government Area Population Projections

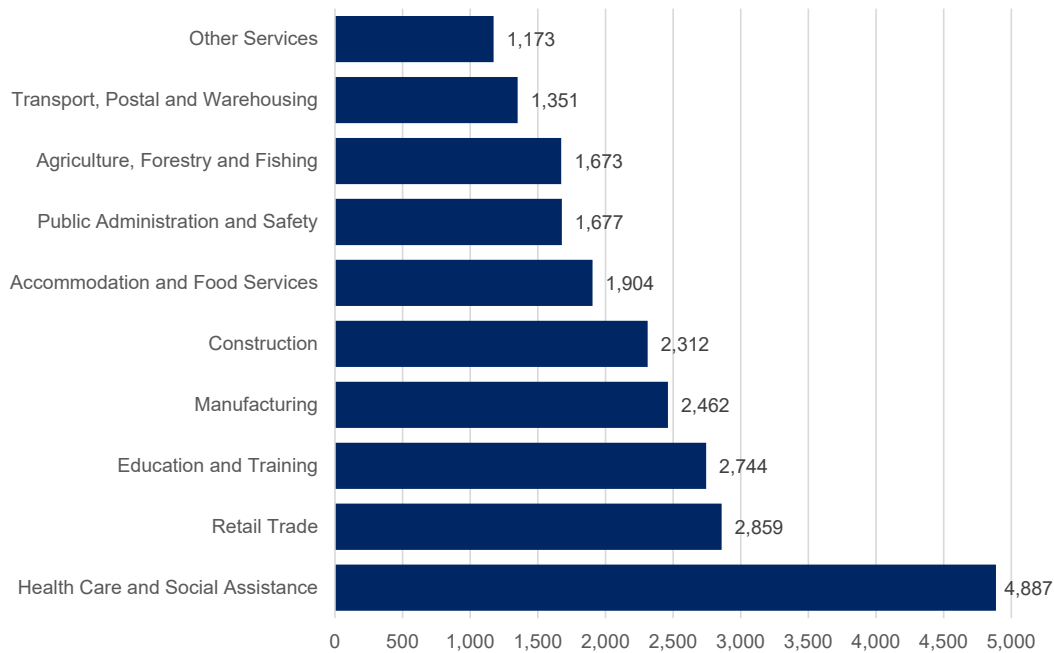
creating a harmonious blend of residents. This diversity extends to ethnicity, with Indigenous Australians and people from diverse European and Asian backgrounds contributing to the city's cultural richness. Tamworth's educational institutions, including primary and secondary schools, a TAFE campus and a university campus, ensure that the local community has access to quality education. A regional snapshot is below.

Figure 2: Tamworth Region Demographic Snapshot (ABS 2021)



Tamworth's economy is marked by its versatility, with key sectors driving growth and prosperity. Robust healthcare services, including hospitals and medical centres, cater to the well-being of its residents. The city also nurtures a growing education sector. Further, agriculture is a prominent industry, with a strong focus on beef and sheep farming, as well as grain production, making it an agricultural hub of the region.

Figure 3: Top 10 Industry Sector by Employment (# of jobs, 2021 ABS)



However, one of the standout pillars of Tamworth’s economy and cultural identity is tourism. The city’s status as the ‘Country Music Capital of Australia’ draws visitors globally, particularly during the annual Tamworth Country Music Festival, an internationally renowned event that showcases the city’s musical talent. Beyond the music scene, tourists are captivated by Tamworth’s natural beauty, outdoor activities, and cultural attractions, including art galleries and museums. With over 400,000 visitor nights per annum, the total tourism sales in the Tamworth Regional Council were \$296.9 million, adding \$145.8 million to the economy³.

1.4 Tamworth’s Visitor Economy

The Tamworth region is an attractive tourist destination as it is known for its laid-back lifestyle, incredible landscapes, and generous hospitality. Rich heritage meets outdoor adventure, arts, music and fun. With Tamworth’s natural beauty, strong track-record of delivering successful events, such as the Tamworth Country Music Festival, and rich history, it is a logical step to establish itself as the ‘Capital of Country NSW’ and be a must-see destination.

TRC draws visitors domestically and globally. Each year, an average of nearly 13,000 international visitors stay nearly 330,000 nights. The average length of stay for these international visitors is 25 days which is nearly double the number of days that international visitors stay in NSW (nearly 17 days). Domestically, on average just over 460,000 visitors stay over 1.2 million nights in TRC each year. Over a third of domestic overnight visitors travelled to visit friends and family. While domestic daytrips accounted for nearly 644,000 visits per year. Nearly half of the domestic daytrip visitors travelled for holidays, while approximately 16% visited friends or family and 15% visited for business. The graph below shows the breakdown of domestic overnight visitors main reason for visiting TRC⁴.

Table 1: Why Domestic Travellers Visit Tamworth? (2021)

Reason for Visit	Domestic Overnight Visitors	Domestic Daytrip Visitors
Visiting Friends and Relatives	35.8%	16.1%

³ Economy ID – Tourism and Hospitality

⁴ Tourism Research Australian – Survey data, 2021

Tamworth Regional Council: Capital of Country: Visitor Experience Centre

Reason for Visit	Domestic Overnight Visitors	Domestic Daytrip Visitors
Holiday	28.7%	44.1%
Business	23%	15.1%
Other Reason	12.5%	24.7%

Tourism is a key industry; however, it is not well represented in economic profiles because it includes parts of many different traditional industries (i.e. hospitality and retail). In 2020/21, the total tourism sales in TRC was \$296.6 million, while the total value added was \$145.8 million⁵. Tourism sales support a robust workforce of just over 2,100 people⁶. Kitchenhand was the largest tourism and hospitality occupation, making up 17.2% of the total tourism workforce in TRC. The top 10 tourism occupations in TRC is provided in the table below.

Table 2: Top 10 tourism occupations in TRC in 2016⁷

Occupation	Number of People Employed	% of Tourism Workforce in TRC
Kitchenhand	286	17.18%
Waiter	175	10.51%
Bar Attendant	130	7.81%
Chef	125	7.51%
Cook	123	7.39%
Cafe or Restaurant Manager	120	7.21%
Commercial Housekeeper	94	5.64%
Barista	91	5.46%
Aeroplane Pilot	85	5.1%
Hotel or Motel Manager	84	5.04%

In the 19-years prior to Covid-19, the total value of tourism (both direct and indirect contribution) has steadily grown by 2.4% per annum. The total value of tourism across the Tamworth Regional Council was \$442 million in 2022, well short of the \$703million⁸ generated in 2019.

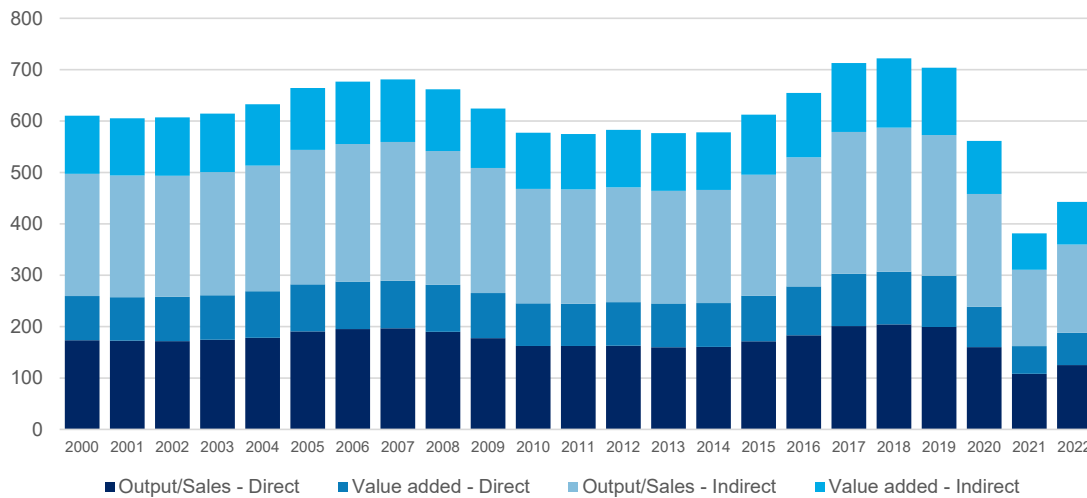
⁵ National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR)

⁶ In 2021/22, there were 2,189 people who made up the workforce, with 1,277 direct and 913 indirect.

⁷ ABS census 2016 – by place of work

⁸ Economy ID

Figure 4: Value of Tourism, TRC, 2000 to 2022 (\$ millions)



1.5 Tamworth’s Visitor Assets

The Tamworth region offers a wide range of arts and cultural attractions, including multiple museums that showcase the regions rich history in equine, agriculture, and country music. The museums are run by both paid staff and by volunteers and tell the stories of people, places and events that have been instrumental in shaping the region.

The Tamworth Regional Museums Engagement strategy 2019 – 2024 outlines a framework for the support of ten public museums and social history collections located in TRC. Across the ten collections, each museum model is slightly different, with different organisational structures ranging from Section 355 Committees through to independent incorporated bodies:

1. Tamworth Powerstation Museum (TRC owned)
2. Australian Country Music Collections (TRC owned)
3. Nandewar Heritage Museum (Incorporated body)
4. Manilla Heritage Museum (incorporated body, co-located with a VIO)
5. Rocks, Gems, Minerals and Fossil Collections (TRC owned, co-located with a VIO)
6. Moonbi Museum (TRC owned)
7. Australian Country Music Hall of Fame
8. The Country Music Wax Museum
9. National Guitar Museum and Gallery
10. Tamworth Regional Film and Sound Archive (TRC owned)
11. Tamworth Historical Society (Incorporated body)
12. Tamworth Regional Astronomy Club (Incorporated body)
13. Tamworth and District Family History Group (Incorporated body)

The quality of the visitor experience and interpretation of these museums varies significantly. Strategic asset management of the Region’s Museum offering is required to create an overarching narrative that links the existing museums to create a compelling story of Tamworth’s history and heritage.

The assets identified as priorities to be revitalised and proposed to be brought into the new VEC include:

1. Visitor Information Centre
2. Australian Country Music Hall of Fame
2. The Country Music Wax Museum
3. National Guitar Museum and Gallery

1.5.1 Tamworth Visitor Information Centre

Tamworth VIC consists of a visitor centre, the Golden Guitar Café, the National Guitar Museum, Country Music Wax Museum, and the Big Golden Guitar. The facility is situated at the corner of The Ringers Road and the New England Highway, which is the main inland road connecting Sydney with Brisbane. The VIC is located approximately 1km to the Tamworth Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre (TRECC), the Tamworth Sports Dome and Athletic Centre, and the Australian Equine and Livestock Events Centre (AELEC). While the VIC and museums are operated by TRC, the building is owned by a third party.

Figure 5: Tamworth VIC Entry



In addition to the VIC, TRC also has several Visitor Information Outlets (VIO):

- Nundle has a VIO that will be moving location in the next 12 months (2024) to Nundle Library.
- Manilla has a VIO, but there have been discussions to move it to the TRC customer service building.
- Barraba used to have a VIO, but it is now closed and operating from the TRC customer service area.
- There have also been discussions to create another VIO in Moonbi at the Museum.

1.5.2 The Country Music Wax Museum

The Wax Museum is collocated with the Tamworth VIC. Established in 1983, the museum moved to its current location in 1988 and was opened by Slim Dusty. It features the likenesses of some of Australia's best recognised and most influential country music personalities in costume.

The Country Music Wax Museum collection is historically significant because it contains objects and outfits from key events and personalities in Australian country music. It is one of the few wax museums in Australia and it is the only wax museum dedicated to Australian country music. The majority of the museum's collection has not been updated since its opening at its current location in 1988.

The interior of the wax museum has been created by a series of corridors that fold back on themselves with dividing plasterboard walls creating a linear experience where the visitor follows a path viewing dioramas with country wax museum figures creating a localised contextual setting. Two-dimensional information signage is provided outlining the history and information about the respective country artists.

Figure 6: Country Wax Museum Exhibition



1.5.3 Australian Country Music Hall of Fame

The Australian Country Music Foundation (ACMF) founded the Australian Country Music Hall of Fame in the early 1990s to establish a permanent national country music archive and resource centre. The Hall of Fame moved to its current location, which is shaped like a guitar, in 2015.

In 2019, the Tamworth Regional Council (TRC) developed a strategic plan for the Australian Country Music Hall of Fame, which is now a partnership between TRC and the ACMF. In 2020, the ACMF Inc. agreed that the TRC would take over the administration of the Hall of Fame, while the existing ACMF Inc. volunteers would continue to provide resources for its day-to-day running.

The Australian Country Music Hall of Fame, including Walk a Country Mile, features an unmatched collection of memorabilia from Australian country music artists and depicts Tamworth's musical history. The museum's displays focus on the performers and their unique stories, including many stage outfits, musical instruments such as a Glockenspiel, handmade leather and bush works from Gordon Parsons, and Rodney Walker's one-man band festival ensemble.

The museum's displays include:

- Walk a Country Mile, a permanent and interactive installation that begins with the music brought to Australia through colonization from 1788 and leads visitors through a retelling of the story of Australian country music.
- Australian Country Music Foundation Exhibitions, which highlight the foundation's extensive collection and bring to life the personalities and stories of Australian country music for visitors of all ages.

The Hall of Fame shares its location with a Hungry Jacks fast food restaurant, and the southern portion of the site is occupied by a Big 4 holiday park. The land and the ACMHF building are owned by TRC. The Hungry Jacks fast food outlet leases the land and the two northwestern-most groups of carparking bays from the council and is responsible for their maintenance and upkeep.

Access to the site is via Peel Street, through a shared driveway with the Hungry Jacks fast food outlet. There are approximately 30 car parking spaces on site, excluding the Hungry Jacks car parking. An adjacent council-owned carpark linked to the driveway of the ACMHF provides overflow car parking.

To the south of the site is the Peel River, along the top of the embankment is a shared pedestrian path/cycleway connecting back to the city and along the river. There are no footpaths along the roadside of the ACMHF side of the New England Highway or Peel Street.

To the northern side of Peel Street, there are commercial premises and a large shopping centre that includes a Woolworths Supermarket. To the western side of the site, across the New England Highway, there is an existing velodrome that will soon be demolished and replaced with a New England University Campus Building.

To the south of the site is a Big 4 Holiday Park, and there is direct pedestrian access from the park to the ACMHF site.

Figure 7: Country Music Hall of Fame



1.5.4 National Guitar Museum and Gallery

In 2020, the National Guitar Museum was established and is currently located in Tamworth's VIC. It features more than 45 guitars, including the likes of Smoky Dawson, QUEEN's Brian May, Tommy Emmanuel, KISS's Paul Stanley, Keith Urban, Dolly Parton, Brooks and Dun, Kenny Rogers, the Eagles, etc. With a special focus on rock and country, the collection is made up of famous guitars, replicas of famous guitars, signed guitars and profiles on the Australian and international stars who played them all.




The collection of guitars is complimented by a photographic exhibition by Chuck Bradley. The exhibition, titled 'Instrumental' is an illuminating picture collection of guitars and other instruments from country and rock icons such as Midnight Oil, INXS, Guns 'n' Roses, Troy Cassar-Daley, Archie Roach and more. This collection is continuously growing as Bradley is still photographing.



1.5.5 Tamworth Sports and Recreation Assets

Tamworth boasts a rich history of sporting and recreational assets that contribute to the vibrant and active lifestyle of its residents and visitors. The city's key sporting and recreation assets create a dynamic environment for sports enthusiasts and leisure seekers alike, contributing to a strong visitor experience for the TRC.

Table 3: Tamworth recreation and sporting assets

Tamworth Assets		
Australia Equine and Livestock Events Centre (AELEC)	Tamworth Regional Sporting Complex and Sporting Facilities	Tamworth Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre (TRECC)
		
A state-of-the-art facility that hosts more than 50 events each year, including the Tamworth Agricultural	Tamworth's sporting facilities include an international level athletics track and field facility, a seven court indoor	TRECC seats up to 4,800 in full Concert Mode, 3,300 in Lyric Mode and 1,800 in Intimate Mode. There are

Show, Cattle events, Motorcycle Rallies, Rodeos and Corporate Events.

sporting venue, and premier turf fields and pitches. The sporting venues attract thousands of visitors to the region annually for events and competitions.

separate break-out rooms and meeting areas off the main auditorium. It boasts of superior audio and visual technology, catering and bar areas, green rooms and flexible stage configurations.

1.6 The Case for Change

A new VEC, incorporating the consolidation and renewal of 4 visitor assets, including the current Visitor Information Centre, Australian Country Music Hall of Fame, Country Music Wax and National Guitar Museums, is vital for TRC to strengthen and diversify the visitor experience over the long-term.

There are three key drivers of the case for change supporting the need for investment in a modern, revitalised VEC.

- Ageing, inflexible visitor assets impacting modern visitor services and delivery.
- Tamworth region visitor experience and length of stay below NSW Regional average.
- Strategic opportunity to exit leased facilities and enter into a purpose-built precinct.

1.6.1 Ageing, inflexible visitor assets impacting modern visitor services

TRC operates the visitor services across two primary locations which have significant limitations for modern visitor services. The primary source of these issues is rooted in the fact that the two buildings have been adapted and retrofitted for their current roles as a VIC and museums respectively. Notably, they were not originally constructed with the explicit purpose of serving as a VIC and museums.

Table 4: Summary of Existing Visitor Assets

Particulars	Visitor Information Centre	Australian Country Music Hall of Fame
Sites		
Location	2 The Ringers Road, South Tamworth NSW 2340	561 Peel Street, Tamworth
Hours of Operation	9am – 4pm (7 days a week excluding Good Friday and Christmas Day)	10am – 4pm (Tuesday to Sunday) Closed Mondays
Asset Ownership	Leased facility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7-year lease over the premises expiring May 2026 	Owned facility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lot 5/DP1225365
Offering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor Information Centre • National Guitar Museum • Country Music Wax Museum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Country Music Hall of Fame



1.6.1.1 Not Fit-for-purpose asset functionality limiting display and visitor experience

The ACMHF building, initially designed as a coach station and Visitor Information Centre, underwent changes when the ACMHF relocated to the site in 2015. Its distinctive guitar-shaped architecture presented inherent challenges when retrofitted. Internally, the building's curvilinear design led to partitioning into predominantly conventional rooms that adjoin the curved form. The exception to this layout is the 'Walk a Country Mile' exhibit, which partially utilises the building's unique form. It's worth noting that the guitar-shaped nature of the building is only readily apparent from an aerial view or in arial photographs. From the ground, there are limited visual cues that would signify its guitar-like design, nor does it add to the visitor experience.

The VIC building, which TRC currently leases, was previously used as a retail space, including as an ice-creamery. While it offers a clear and open entry point for the VIC, it does not effectively convey to visitors that the Wax Museum and National Guitar Museum are situated within the VIC premises. This lack of clarity in spatial organisation can impact the visitor experience and hinder their ability to access and appreciate these additional attractions.

The table below highlights the key condition and functionality issues across the two sites. A detailed functionality assessment of the sites is attached (**Attachment 3**)

Table 5: Functionality Assessment: ACMHF and VIC Key Issues

Issue	Site
 <p>What? <i>The arrival sequence and experience when entering both facilities is poor</i></p> <p>Impact? <i>Negative first impressions, wasted time, reduced spending, damages destination image and deferred future visits</i></p>	<p><u>Visitor Information Centre Site</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is little curtilage or decompression space for relaxation prior to entering the VIC and museums. • There is minimal shade or weather protection for visitors arriving at the VIC. <p><u>Australian Country Music Hall of Fame Site</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The benefit of the guitar shaped building to most visitors is not a key component to the overall visitor experience. • The concrete driveway and large portico remain reminiscent of the buildings prior function as a coach stop and visitor information centre. • There are three sets of external doors with no obvious indication which doors are the main entrance to the facility. • There is a lack of vegetation and tree cover provided to the car park. • The building feels vehicle dominated surrounded by driveways and vehicle parking.
 <p>What? <i>Lack of visitor safety features, including no fully accessible toilets</i></p> <p>Impact? <i>Visitor deferral, damaged destination image, slips, trips, falls, or pedestrian and vehicle incidents</i></p>	<p><u>Visitor Information Centre Site</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plinth and paved surrounds of the Golden Guitar are in poor condition, with uneven paving in several location. • Inappropriate barriers to protect wheelchair access. • There are no tactile indicators to stairs or ramps and ramp entry is via synthetic turf, not paved surface. • Long vehicles are physically not able to access the limited car parking available at the VIC, nor can they pass through the fast-food outlet drive through in a forward direction requiring them to reverse out of the driveway and back onto The Ringers Road. • There is no segregation of pedestrians from vehicles other than a pedestrian crossing over the shared entry driveway. • No fully accessible toilet facilities are provided. <p><u>Australian Country Music Hall of Fame Site</u></p>

Issue	Site
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- There is no fire suppression system installed. The grid and tile ceiling would allow fire to spread to spread to other sections of the building.



What?

Displays and lighting do not effectively showcase exhibits

Impact?

Reduced engagement, diminished educational value, decreased visitor satisfaction

Visitor Information Centre Site

- The guitars are generally displayed behind an acrylic / Plexi glass screen, however, the fluorescent batten style lighting causes reflection and obscures the view of the object.
- Lighting to the Wax Museum is via a dated track spotlight system.
- VR and technology are outdated.

Australian Country Music Hall of Fame Site

- VR and technology are outdated (refer to image below).



What?

The facilities and supporting infrastructure are not fit-for-purpose and in poor condition

Impact?

Visitor dissatisfaction, damaged destination image, impaired learning, and engagement

Visitor Information Centre Site

- The ducted air conditioning throughout the building is not a purpose designed climate control system suitable for museum or gallery spaces.
- There is no separate staff break room associated this the office.
- The current electrical demand for the facility is at capacity limiting any further opportunity for expansion or upgrade to exhibition areas without substantial electrical infrastructure upgrades.
- The building has PV system, however there is no battery storage provided within this system.
- There are currently no electrical vehicle charging station provided on site.

Australian Country Music Hall of Fame Site

- Due to the shape of the building, the back of house areas is poorly laid out, utilising existing office spaces, with exhibits and artefacts stacked on top of each other. Other than digital records this makes it difficult to control inventory of the artefacts and exhibits.
- External signage is in a poor condition with outdated and inaccurate messaging.
- The current state of these bathrooms is clean and serviceable; however, their interior and finishes are dated.



What?

No appropriate RV and caravan parking at the VIC

Impact?

Visitor Information Centre Site

- Limited car parking is available in front of the VIC, with longer vehicles and caravans able to park in a carpark located behind the Longyard Hotel.
- Limited carparking availability due local resident popularity of the café offering within the VIC and surrounding food venues.

Issue	Site
-------	------

Reduced visitor numbers, economic impacts



What?

Collection management and storage has been identified as the most critical issue for the ACMHF

Impact?

Artefact damage, legal and ethical concerns

Australian Country Music Hall of Fame Site

- The collection and artefact / archive storage are in an office environment and is not fit for purpose.
- Currently disused office spaces hold much of the collection and archives. There is no specific environmental control system.
- Due to excess furniture, these areas are currently unable to be cleaned properly and potentially expose the collection to pest infestation (refer to image below).
- The current storage areas 'back of house' are at capacity and there is little room for receiving or accepting further artefacts to add to the collection.

Figure 8: Current state images and shortfalls



ACMHF main exhibition space



Inadequate arrival sequence and experience of the Country Music Wax Museum



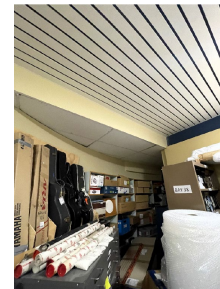
Inadequate storage to the rear of the photographic gallery



Walk a Country Mile Audio Visual Display



Office space converted into conservation collection receiving area



Disused entry hall repurposed into archive / artefact storage

1.6.1.2 Lack of compliance with building code standards

Several functional deficiencies have been identified during recent audits of both the VIC and ACMHF locations, increasing the risk of damage to artefacts, as well as Work Health and Safety (WHS) risks to staff and visitors. Several areas requiring rectification include fire protection systems, thermal control systems, accessibility and storage:

- **Fire protection systems:** The current ACMHF building is fitted with limited thermal and smoke detection systems. The building is also fitted with a range of fire extinguishers. The collection and artefact archive storage are in an office environment and is not fit for purpose. Although there is 'dry fire' detection equipment installed, these rooms and spaces are not purpose built for the storage of museum artefacts. Without installed fire suppression systems, the grid and tile ceiling would allow fire to spread to impact these areas or spread from other parts of the building. The risk of loss part of or the entire collection if there was a fire within the ACMHF would appear quite high, particularly afterhours when the facility isn't occupied
- **Thermal Control Systems:** There is ducted air conditioning throughout both buildings that is delivered to the various spaces via ceiling swirls and diffusers. However, this system is not a purposed designed climate control system suitable for museum or gallery spaces. The photographic gallery section of the building is serviced by split cycle wall mounted air conditioning units; a ducted system is not included in this area. Humidity and environmental control are monitored manually via wall mounted sensors; however, these are independent to the HVAC system. The risk of loss part of or the entire collection, particularly the wax collection, which is highly susceptible to damage due to changes in temperature, is significant if the systems are not appropriately upgraded
- **Accessibility:** Servicing various exhibitions, including the Walk a Country Mile exhibition is very difficult as all of these are rear accessed. This requires a staff member enter a crawlspace to access these from the rear. This makes it very difficult to maintain these exhibits and poses a potential WHS hazard to the staff having to access these spaces. Vehicular accessibility to the VIC is shared with adjoining fast-food outlets and is entered directly off The Ringers Road. Long vehicles, i.e., a vehicle towing a caravan are physically not able to access the limited car parking available at the VIC, nor can they pass through the fast-food outlet drive through in a forward direction requiring them to reverse out of the driveway and back onto The Ringers Road. This poses a safety risk given the proximity of the driveway entrance to The Ringers Road and New England Highway. There is no segregation of pedestrians from vehicles other than a pedestrian crossing over the shared entry driveway. This poses a possible safety hazard between vehicles and pedestrians as visitors are often distracted while taking photographs of the Golden Guitar. The carparking directly to the front of the VIC has no wheel stop or kerb to prevent vehicle pedestrian conflict between the carparking and the synthetic turf area to the front of the VIC.

1.6.1.3 Remediation costs to address identified shortcomings of existing facilities

The functionality, age and condition of the VIC and AMCHF buildings, as well as safety and accessibility issues mean that TRC needs to invest capital to remediate both buildings over the medium to long-term. Capital investment is required to address critical functionality and asset compliance issues.

This may place pressure on TRC's financial sustainability and divert funds away from critical services. A Quantity Surveyor has provided an opinion on the probable cost⁹ to upgrade and yearly ongoing maintenance:

- The **VIC building** will cost approximately \$493,000 to upgrade, with ongoing maintenance post upgrade of approximately \$237,000 per year¹⁰. The scope of the capital works is to address critical shortcomings, including repairing of roof leaks, compliant accessible access from the rear building to Museum, re-line markings of carparks and other safety and condition-based works.
- The **AMCHF building** will cost approximately \$1,398,000 to upgrade, with ongoing maintenance post upgrade of approximately \$197,000 per year¹¹. The scope of the capital works is to address critical shortcomings, including upgrade of technology and AV equipment, improved entry experience, external signage and wayfinding and other safety and condition-based works

⁹ 2023-year costs.

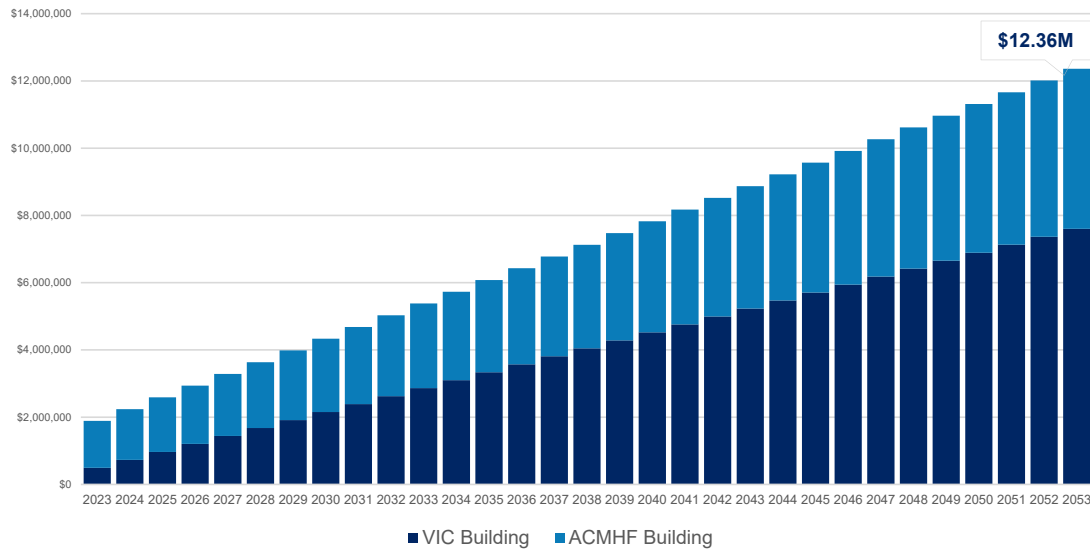
¹⁰ Calculated based on 2.50% of estimated capital cost of \$9.50M.

¹¹ Calculated based on 2.50% of estimated capital cost of \$7.90M.

From 2022/23 to 2052/53, TRC requires \$12.36 million¹² to initially upgrade and then maintain the assets. This capital requirement does not include any major upgrades to bring the asset condition up to standards expected by the community, staff, and visitors.

The graph below illustrates the rising financial requirements for the site. This expenditure will form part of the base case and is quantified as a cost saving when compared incrementally in the Value for Money and Affordability Assessment chapter.

Figure 9: VIC and ACMHF Asset Replacement and Maintenance Cumulative Expenditure (\$ nominal)



Current maintenance expenditure on both the Tamworth VIC and ACMHF is well below expected expenditure levels. There is a \$338,000 per annum shortfall between the actual and expected maintenance expenditure. Over time, the current expenditure levels will be insufficient to meet condition-based maintenance requirements, resulting in a substantial deterioration in both the quality and performance of the VIC and ACMHF.

Table 6: VIC and ACMHF: Estimated¹³ Maintenance vs Actual Maintenance Expenditure per annum

Buildings	~ Capital Cost	~ Maintenance p.a.	Actual Maintenance p.a.
VIC	\$9,500,000	\$237,000	\$27,789
ACMHF	\$7,900,000	\$197,000	\$68,367

¹² Real-terms, 2023-year costs.

¹³ Stage 3 Precinct Analysis: Cost Plan Report: Northcroft Quantity Surveyors

1.6.2 Tamworth’s Region Visitor Experience and Length of Stay are below NSW Regional Average

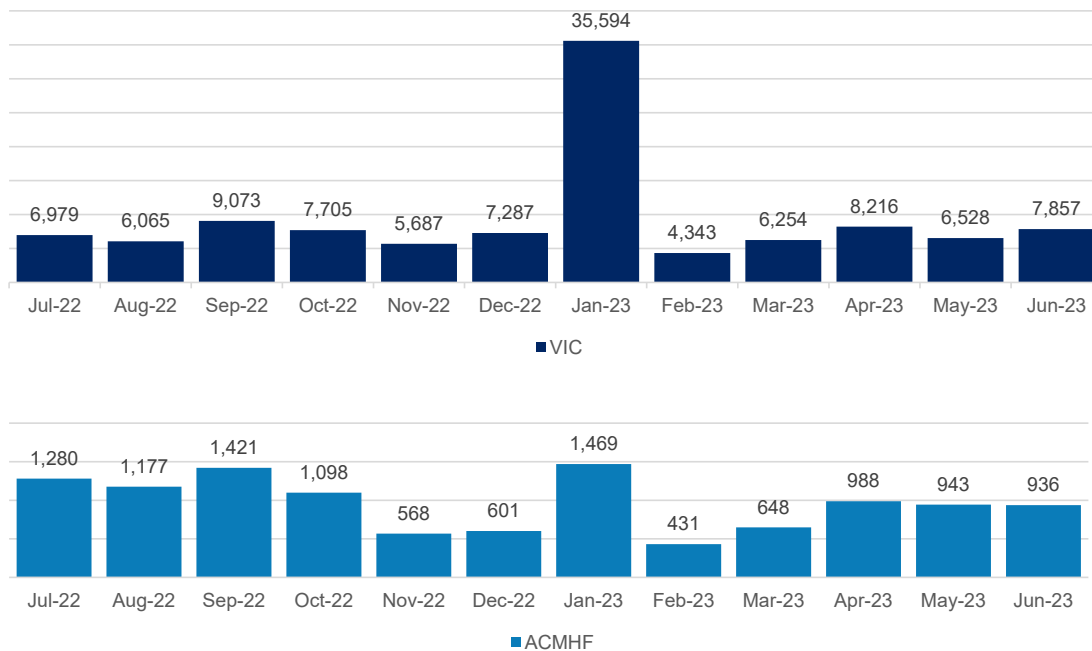
Tamworth’s traditional VIC service model is facing challenges in meeting the evolving preferences of the visitor market. It is required to modernise to support TRC’s vision to extend the duration of visitor stays (from 2.6 nights to the regional NSW average of 2.7 nights¹⁴) and grow annual visitation to TRC to over 1.6 million (resulting in an additional \$116 million to the region’s economy)¹⁵.

1.6.2.1 Low visitation of the VIC and ACMHF as a proportion of annual visitors

VICs play a critical role in realising the economic contributions of the visitor economy. Through the information shared and the skilful sales and advice provided in person and online, VICs can have a positive impact on the overall visitor experience and unlock visitor spending, facilitating a flow on effect through increased visitor expenditure and stay duration. Research undertaken for the ‘A National Perspective on Visitor Information Servicing’ highlights that often a VIC visit results in additional spending ranging from \$59 (NSW) to \$151 (VIC) per adult.

TRC’s VIC receives an annual visitation of just over 111,000, with the ACMHF receiving over 11,000 visitors annually. January, due to the Country Music Festival, attracts nearly 4 times as many visitors to the VIC than any other month, with September the next highest month in a given year. Excluding the January peak, there are on average 6,900 visitors to the VIC every month. The ACMHF highest month is also January, although the peak in visitation is only 1.4 times the average monthly visitation.

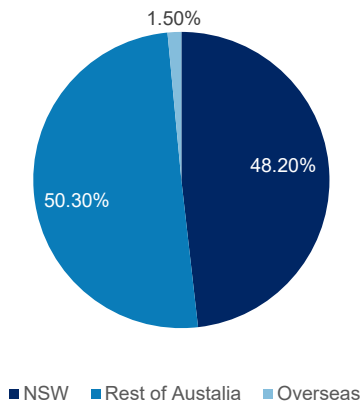
Figure 10: VIC and ACMHF Visitors per month (July 2022 to June 2023)



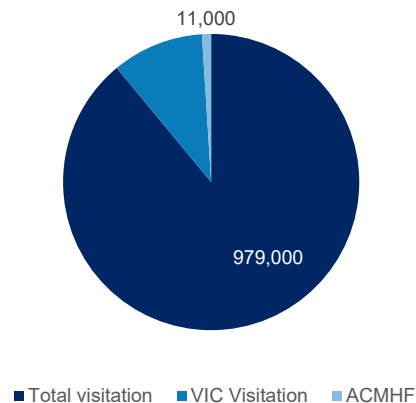
¹⁴ Economy ID, 2017/18 to 2021/22

¹⁵ TRC Visitor Economy Plan 2022-2027.

VIC annual visitation by origin
 (July 2022 to June 2023)



VIC and ACMHF visitation as a proportion of total visitation
 (July 2022 to June 2023)



NSW residents comprise of 50% of the total annual visitation to the VIC, with the remaining visitors from other Australian States/territories and overseas. This underscores the importance of the visitor economy to not only TRC but NSW, with a significant proportion of visitors outside of the State.

With over 1.1million annual visitors to the Region, the amount of visitors to the VIC and ACMHF locations is approximately 10% of total visitors. Given the economic benefits of visitation to Regional VIC's and the relatively low proportion of VIC and ACMHF visitors, this represents a significant opportunity cost for TRC and the broader visitor economy.

1.6.2.2 Threats to Tamworth’s leading reputation as the County Music Capital

Tamworth, recognised as the 'Country Music Capital of Australia,' has a storied history deeply rooted in its unwavering dedication to country music. This lively regional city has left an indelible mark on Australian music history by being the proud host of the legendary Tamworth Country Music Festival. Far more than just an entertainment extravaganza, this festival has evolved since its establishment in 1973 into one of Australia's premier country music events, attracting fans, artists, and industry experts alike. Tamworth's dedication to nurturing country music talent, fostering creativity, and providing a platform for the genre to flourish underscores Tamworth's enduring significance in shaping the country music landscape and cultivating an enduring musical legacy.

Tamworth's annual Country Music Festival stands as a testament to the nation's profound connection with country music. Remarkably, Australia is the world's third-largest market for country music, standing alongside the genre's strongholds in the United States and Canada. In the first half of 2023, Australians demonstrated their fervour by streaming the top 500 songs in the country genre 1.1 billion times¹⁶.

The ten-day event contributes approximately \$60 million, or 20% of the total tourism sales. This means that for ten days a year the visitor economy is generating around \$6 million per day, while the remaining 355 days only generates just over \$0.5 million per day¹⁷.

The esteemed country music reputation of TRC faces a substantial challenge due to the ambitious endeavors of the Queensland Government, aiming to establish Queensland as the new epicenter of country music in Australia. Notably, visitors from Queensland constitute the largest segment of TRC's visitors from outside New South Wales, comprising approximately 28% of the total annual visitation, with a significant figure of 280,000 visitors. The Queensland Government's substantial investments in the Broadbeach Country Music Festival (Groundwater) and CMC Rocks Queensland introduce formidable competition from these events within Queensland itself.

Figure 11: Tamworth Country Music Visitor Attractions



Broadbeach Country Music Festival: Queensland

Groundwater Country Music Festival is an annual event that takes place in Broadbeach, Gold Coast, Australia. The festival is known for bringing together high-calibre international and Australian artists to Broadbeach for three days and nights of free entertainment. The festival features over 1300 songs, 135 live shows, and close to 60 homegrown and international artists across 15 stages. The festival is scheduled to take place from 18th to 20th October 2024. The festival has a reputation for being one of the best country music festivals in Australia and is a must-visit for country music fans.

¹⁶ The music network.

¹⁷ TRC Visitor Economy Plan 2022 - 2027

This heightened competition poses a tangible threat to Tamworth's longstanding status as the unequivocal Country Music Capital. The risk is not merely confined to the potential diversion of visitors but also extends to the associated revenue streams traditionally associated with Tamworth's dominance in the country music genre. The Queensland initiatives, backed by considerable investments, have the potential to lure both enthusiasts and industry professionals away from Tamworth, altering the established dynamics of the country music landscape.

Tamworth's response to this challenge must involve strategic measures to reinforce its position as the unrivaled hub of country music. This includes enhancing the allure of the Tamworth Country Music Festival, introducing a new VEC that cultivates an interactive, dynamic experience showcasing Tamworth's cultural legacy in country music.

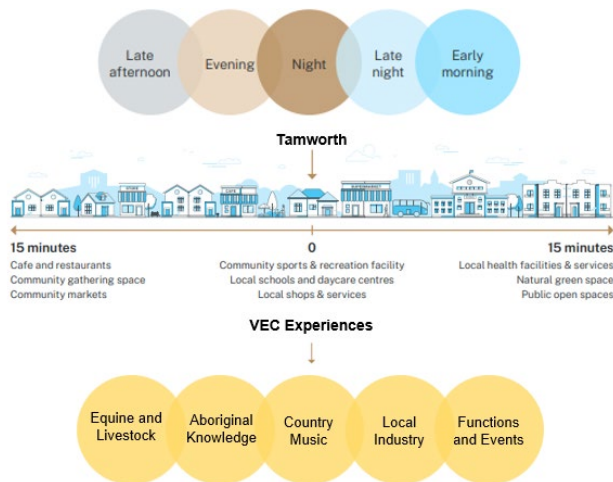
1.6.2.3 Lack of space to showcase Tamworth as the 'Capital of Country'

Whilst Tamworth is proud of its country music history, consultation conducted across Tamworth in August and September 2023 highlights the importance of building a more resilient and sustainable visitor economy. Participants emphasised the challenges of managing an unbalanced tourism industry, which included seasonality and regional dispersal.

TRC lacks available, modern, flexible space to develop exceptional visitor experiences that entice people to visit and re-visit, including tourists and residents. The current VIC and ACMHF are not flexible to enable seasonal exhibitions or experiences, limiting the facilities to showcasing fixed country music experiences only. As a result, the current facilities operate predominantly within weekdays and business trading hours. Visitation peaks are limited to key country music events and there is no capacity for flexible, seasonal experiences.

TRC would benefit from a new VEC that provides flexible experiences that contribute to the economy 7-days a week, morning, afternoon and night. By providing a range of visitor experiences, the VEC will attract a broad range of visitors, including locals and school students, improving the overall amenity of the local community.

Figure 12: VEC Precinct proposed operations and experiences



Several signature experiences have been identified by TRC as part of the concept planning for the VEC. As the VEC is developed, new transformative and immersive experiences can be created to showcase a broad range of Tamworth's endowments including (but not limited to):

- **Country Music:** Immersive, 'hands-on' experience as visitors learn individualised histories and stories of Tamworth's Country Music Legends and Stars, as you handle replicas of their instruments, objects and costumes, and gain an in-depth, personalised understanding of who made the 'Capital of Country' what it is today.
- **Aboriginal Knowledge:** Experienced Aboriginal knowledge holders as they welcome you to Country on the Kamilaroi/ Gomeroi lands. Experience bi-lingual storytelling and hear first-hand about their connection to Country. Understand the early history between Aboriginal singer-song writers and Tamworth, before finishing the session by exploring the Country's flora in the Bush Tucker Garden.

- **Equine and Livestock:** The Australian Equine and Livestock Events Centre (AELEC) is a state-of-the-art facility located in the major regional hub of Tamworth. The biggest of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere, it hosts more than 50 events each year, including agility dogs, dressage, show jumping, motorcycle rallies and rodeos. The AELEC attracts about 7,000 competitors, 9,000 horses and 16,000 head of cattle each year, and is a major regional hub of agricultural activity.
- **Functions and Events:** Host your next event at the VEC. It can be hired for private or corporate functions. Use the outdoor amphitheatre or flexible indoor event spaces to invite guests to mingle with canapes and drinks, as they indulge in the best of the 'Country Capital'. Listen to one of our talented local Country musicians, whilst your guests get up close to Tamworth's Country Music Stars as they place their hands in the 'Hands of Fame' impressions and take in the atmosphere surrounding the iconic Golden Guitar.

1.6.2.4 Changing visitor markets and visitor expectations

In the dynamic landscape of visitor experiences, two pivotal forces – digital disruption and evolving visitor demographics – have emerged as primary influencers, shaping the trajectory of the tourism industry. Technology has ushered in a digital era, disrupting traditional paradigms, and redefining how visitors engage with destinations. Simultaneously, changing demographics, marked by different preferences and expectations, underscore the need for the tourism sector to adapt and innovate. This confluence of digital transformation and shifting visitor demographics compels destinations to navigate a landscape where seamless integration of technology and nuanced understanding of diverse visitor profiles are essential for crafting compelling and inclusive experiences.

With the growing number of information touch points for travellers, the role of VICs in visitor information servicing must continue to evolve and adapt. VICs now need to be far more than a 'bricks and mortar' information service housed in a central location. Staff and volunteers need to be delivering visitor information services in additional ways to meet the changing needs of visitors. The contemporary visitor servicing model includes pop-ups, mobile vehicles, touchscreens, roving ambassadors and online to extend the reach of bricks and mortar VICs. The visitor economy recognises that VICs do not play the only role in attracting and informing visitors. The various stakeholders and their roles in growing the visitor economy are outlined in the following figure. Enhanced collaboration and concerted efforts among stakeholders will amplify the economic impact of the visitor economy.



Technology is not making VICs redundant as was predicted by some. Rather, technology is providing VICs opportunities for new information channels, dynamic ways of interacting with visitor markets and reasons to attract visitors into centres. VICs now need engagement solutions that are more inclusive of digital technology and online platforms to ensure they provide information visitors want and in the way they want it.

Alberta Tourism shared the views of a Futurist Panel on technology's impact on visitor services in five to ten years.

" VICs will become highly interactive, digital centres where trip profiles and requirements can be curated and updated. There will be a move toward satellite visitor services, primarily mobile kiosks. Virtual reality technology will provide visitors with sensory experiences about attractions and activities in the region.

Interactive and intuitive mobile kiosk screen displays, offering apps for download and online concierge advice, will be located in high visitor traffic areas (e.g., rest areas, historic sites and museums, retail centres, convention centres, etc.).

The digital revolution has brought an expectation of personalised service, tailored to individual needs. The graphic below illustrates the visitor journey and the various touchpoints throughout their journey.

Figure 13: Visitor journey, including touch points



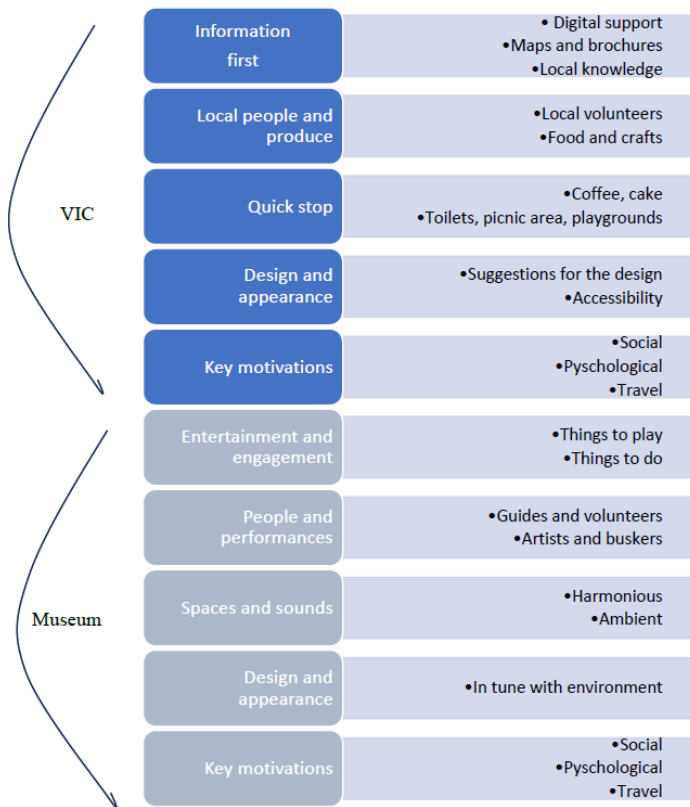
As the population ages, the travel segments are changing. Currently domestic visitors to VICs are typically Baby Boomers (aged 50 years+), followed by Generation X's, (aged 30-49 years). Boomers prefer human interaction over digital media, although they are growing users of digital technology. Millennials (currently aged 22-37 years) are a new generation of travellers that will soon replace Baby Boomers to become the largest travel market segment as their incomes and financial standing grow. The Baby Boomers will continue to travel and bring with them a new travel segment – inter or multi-generational travellers.

Millennial travellers have distinct approaches to travel, largely because they want to control their experiences. They are hyper-connected and digitally driven and very interested in travel as their incomes grow. They take on the planning themselves and often seek out low-cost flights and peer-to-peer accommodation sharing options. With their preference for personal experiences and local connections, they are the generation that fuelled the rise of the sharing economy such as Uber and Airbnb. By taking a budgeted approach to their travel and accommodations, they typically free up dollars that they can use on indulgences including personalised, authentic experiences that give them a deep connection and inspiration.

Thematic analysis was undertaken by during stage 1 (**Attachment 1**) to further understand the experiences of visitors. The results of both forums were coded and compared to identify the differences and similarities between participants. Analysis of the forum conversations led to the emergence of key themes in each forum which set the framework for further analysis and exploration.

The results for both forums have been grouped into the following results areas, discussed further in under each section for the Museum and VIC. The key result areas represent the main themes that have emerged from the study as well as other important considerations from the perspective of the traveller.

Figure 14: VIC and Museum Qualitative Research Result Areas



Both the Tamworth VIC service model and Country Music Museum experiences have predominately remained unchanged over the last 20-years. Development of a new VEC in the context of a visitor centric service model, incorporating visitor preferences, is required to develop a seamless visitor journey experience, integrating digital and physical infrastructure.

1.6.3 Strategic Opportunity to exit leased facility and consolidate as an anchor attraction within a new entertainment Precinct

The current locations of the VIC and the ACMHF are dispersed and not strategically positioned to leverage existing events, venues, and local and visitor traffic. Further, the locations and duplication of services are also impacting the visitor experience and asset and financial performance.

The VIC has largely become engulfed by surrounding development. The building is setback from adjacent developments and is not immediately obvious when approached by vehicle along the New England Highway. The Golden Guitar is the obvious wayfinding landmark that drivers look for; however, this is largely lost in a forest of signage from adjoining fast-food outlets, service stations and retail premises.

Figure 15: VIC and Golden Guitar Current Location



To address this, the former athletics track and fields on Greg Norman Drive, Hillvue, has been identified as a strategic location to purpose-built VEC within a designated entertainment Precinct (**Tamworth Entertainment Precinct**). The Precinct, owned by TRC, presents an opportunity to create a highly visible “Welcome to Tamworth” precinct, create a high-quality visitor entertainment precinct and consolidate the VIC and ACMHF assets.

1.6.3.1 Lack of a quality “Welcome to Tamworth” Visitor Experience

The Tamworth Entertainment Precinct is a 14-hectare greenfield site and is a strategic opportunity for TRC to create a vibrant entertainment precinct and gateway for Tamworth. Consultation of developing the site with private developers is currently in the planning stage. The Tamworth Visitor Experience Precinct is a mixed-use precinct integrating a new VEC with quality short-stay accommodation, retail and restaurants.

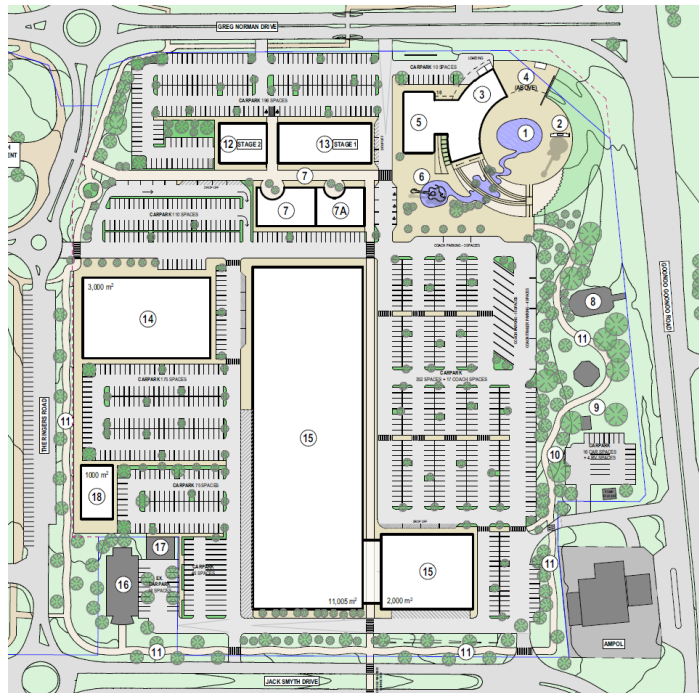
Figure 16: Proposed Site: Tamworth Entertainment Precinct



A concept design has been developed to fully harness the potential of this site, specifically designed to accommodate the new purpose-built VEC. The proposed site is a mixed-use precinct, introducing a diverse array of potential amenities, including:

- An “Eat Street” with food and beverage facilities, alfresco dining, a family-friendly pub, and brewery (site key 7 and 7A)
- A Picnic area with BBQs (site key 9)
- A Tamworth sporting ‘walk of fame’ boulevard (site key 11)
- Hotel and conference centre (site key 12 and 13)
- Wellness Centre (site key 14)
- Large Format Retail (site key 15)
- An Equine Precinct (site key 16, 17 and 18)
- Substantial capacity of 997 car spaces and 21 designated coach, trailer, and RV spaces

Figure 17: Proposed Precinct Concept Design



The site location will critically drive the success of the project; while at first glance, the two sites are approximately 1km apart, the economic, social, and place-making outcomes derived by each site is crucially different. The proposed site offers the following benefits over the existing location:

- **Strategic location:** Positioned between key precincts, being bookended by AELEC and TRECC, enhancing its strategic significance.
- **Availability:** The site is currently available, presenting a timely opportunity for development.
- **Prominent thoroughfare:** Situated on the main thoroughfare, the proposed site capitalises on its high visibility and prominence along this critical route.
- **Alignment with key attractions:** Recognising that the primary draws for visitors are sports and horses, the proposed site aligns seamlessly with these key attractions.
- **Capacity:** The proposed site has capacity to accommodate the consolidated Visitor Information Centre, museums, and car parking.

The ‘A National Perspective on Visitor Information Servicing’ echoes that the location of a bricks and mortar VIC is fundamental to the visitor economy’s success. It highlights that VICs need to be prominent and accessible to their target visitors regardless of the level or size of the centre. Further, VICs should be positioned as the gateway for towns like Tamworth that are reliant on highway traffic stopping.

1.6.3.2 Inefficient Use of Land and Resources (Location and Dispersion of Assets)

Currently, the VIC and ACMHF occupy two separate sites, presenting challenges related to service and infrastructure management, which results in increasing costs and places pressure on the financial sustainability of the two facilities over the medium to long-term.

Table 7: Financial Performance: ACMHF and VIC

Profit and Loss	ACMHF	VIC	Total
Revenue – Admission and Merchandise	\$90,000	\$95,000	\$185,000
Operational Expenditure – Total	\$109,888	\$448,000	\$558,000
Net Profit/(Loss) After Tax	(\$20,000)	(\$353,000)	(\$373,000)

Annually, the two facilities generate \$373,000 in operating losses for TRC annually, largely attributable to the lease terms of the VIC. TRC has a 7-year lease over VIC premises with the option to renew for another 7-year term. The annual lease fee is \$198,000 per annum and is significantly above current market rates. The lease represents more than half of the total losses across the two facilities. TRC is responsible for the building outgoings, rates, and charges, including maintenance and any building upgrades. This means that any improvements are paid for from public funds and ultimately benefit the landlord. It noted that there is a risk that the current owner of the property could sell the building, requiring TRC to vacate the premises at a relatively short notice. Given the lease is expected to expire in May 2026, there is a unique opportunity for TRC to relocate to a new facility within the current lease period.

Traditionally, the VIC and ACMHF in the Tamworth region have largely been operated and or resourced by passionate groups of volunteers that have taken it upon themselves to establish these museum collections. A number of these museums and organisations have been managed through the establishment of independent incorporated bodies and Section 355 committees under the *Local Government Act*. The council has taken a leading role in transitioning these operations from a largely volunteer managed museum to a council owned and managed collection, still drawing upon the support and resources of the volunteers.

Council has approximately 1.5 FTE staff to manage these museums and remains reliant on the support of the volunteers for the museums and the VIC. Inadequate financial resourcing is the current barrier to providing professional staffing to support the existing VIC and Museums.

The VIC has 2 paid FTE staff and 2 part time staff on the roster. There is a pool of 14 volunteers that support the VIC and museums. However, the current volunteer base largely organises themselves into pairs that like working together; these are often on select days and is generally difficult to get them to work on weekends. This can limit the value that the volunteers provide to operations. Consolidation of these two facilities will improve the TRC’s capacity to resource appropriately.

Additionally, duplication of services and infrastructure costs are also currently incurred including:

- Operational and maintenance costs due to a larger footprint and duplication of services
- Staff and volunteers
- Car parking
- Back of house functions, including kitchen, toilets, staff accommodation and loading docks

Amalgamating the VIC and museums will address the above challenges and enhance the overall visitor experience.

Benefits of this include:

- Increase patronage, patronage dwell times, admission and merchandise revenue
- Reduce staff, operational and maintenance costs
- Enable VIC to be a destination in its own right

2 POLICY AND STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

TRC's Visitor Experience Centre is a strategic initiative that supports critical Federal, State and Local Government priorities. This includes growing NSW's visitor economy which is the lifeblood of many regional communities contributing \$7 billion annually to NSW Gross Regional Product (GRP). Further, as a major export, the visitor economy annually injects \$38 billion into the Gross State Product, supporting nearly 300,000 jobs and enhancing both the prosperity and liveability of NSW.

This project acknowledges Tamworth's pivotal role in supporting industries such as hospitality and retail and strategically positioning itself as the catalyst for diversifying the local tourism sector. By promoting year-round tourism and reducing dependence on the Tamworth Country Music Festival, the VEC demonstrates TRC's commitment to economic sustainability and resilience. Leveraging place-based planning principles and encouraging industry and community engagement, the project seeks to increase visitation to TRC, emphasising repeat visitation, increased visitor spending and an extended average length of stay.

Furthermore, TRC's VEC introduces a transformative hub-and-spoke Visitor Information Centre model, designed to disperse visitors more effectively. Its strategic co-location within the Tourism Precinct, adjacent to industry, retail, and key event venues such as AELEC and TRECC, enhances regional vibrancy and liveability. By supporting a thriving hospitality sector, retail outlets, transport services and sporting facilities, the VEC becomes an integral contributor to the region's economic and cultural landscape.

This section outlines the Project's alignment with Federal, State, and local strategic context.

2.1 Contribution to Government's Priorities

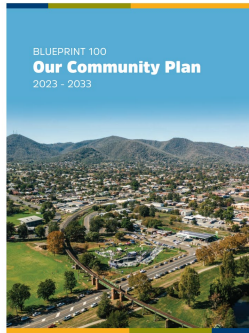
This project is aligned with the strategic directions of the Australian Federal Government, NSW Government and Tamworth Regional Council.

Table 8: Project Contribution to Relevant Strategies

Strategies	Project contribution to relevant strategies
<p>Media Release Creative Communities: putting culture at the heart of NSW</p> <p><small>Media release available here Tuesday, 12 December 2023</small></p> <p><small>The NSW Government has today unveiled details of Creative Communities, the new arts, culture and creative industries policy.</small></p> <p><small>Creative Communities is a 10-year vision, the state's first creative industries policy, supporting the traditional arts sector and cultural institutions, but encompassing industries defined by the state's unique and diverse cultural strengths, including:</small></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations cultures • Galleries, libraries, archives and museums • Performing arts including theatre, dance, circus, comedy, cabaret • Music including classical and contemporary composition, performance, and recording • Screen and digital games • Visual arts and crafts • Literature, writing and publishing • Branding and digital media • Design, architecture and fashion • Book and print publishing • Creative and arts education • Creativity in the food and beverage sector • Creative innovation in the technology sector <p><small>Creative Communities has the goal of sustainably growing the depth and breadth of creative industries throughout NSW, and over the next decade enabling creative individuals, organisations and communities throughout the state to reach their potential.</small></p> <p><small>The NSW Government endorses, and through Creative Communities will focus on implementing, the National Cultural Policy, by supporting the NSW cultural ecosystem.</small></p> <p><small>The NSW Government also supports the long-term goal of exporting more Australian stories to the world. Australia has one of the largest creative trade deficits per capita in the world. The creative goods sector and soft local stories have the most power on the planet. The NSW Government will research and develop plans to increase the nation's creative exports.</small></p>	<p>Creative Communities: Putting Culture at the heart of NSW</p> <p>Creative Communities is a 10-year vision, the state's first creative industries policy, supporting the traditional arts sector and cultural institutions, but encompassing industries informed by the state's unique and diverse cultural strengths,</p> <p>The new arts, culture and creative industries policy has the goal of sustainably growing the breadth and depth of creative industries throughout NSW, including First Nations Cultures, Galleries libraries and museums, performing arts museums</p> <p>VEC Project Response</p> <p>The VEC Project will position Tamworth as the 'Capital of Country' through a renewed and strengthen visitor experience, modernising the museum experience incorporating Tamworth's rich country music, agriculture, and indigenous history.</p> <p>The VEC will be collocated with industry and retail to create a vibrant atmosphere not only for visitors but also for the local community.</p>

Strategies

Project contribution to relevant strategies



TRC Blueprint 100 Our Community Plan 2023-2033

TRC's Community Plan is a plan designed by its community. It describes what the community wants its future to look like, and how they are going to get there. Our Community Plan is based on partnerships between individuals, council, state and federal governments, businesses, and community groups.

It will be critical to strategically invest in infrastructure and precincts that deliver shared benefits to the local community and visitors to the region.

Tamworth's ambition is to be country Australia's leading and most vibrant destination with a sustainable and dynamic visitor economy.

VEC Project Response

The VEC Project will position Tamworth as the Capital of Country through a renewed and strengthen visitor experience and modernised museum incorporating Tamworth's rich country music, agriculture, and indigenous history.

The VEC will be collocated with industry and retail to create a vibrant atmosphere not only for visitors but also for the local community.



TRC Visitor Economy Plan 2022-2027

The VEP has been developed simultaneously with Council's new Economic Development and Investment Strategy, Tamworth Tomorrow. It also aligns directly with Councils Blueprint 100 and the Community Strategic Plan (CSP), Our Community Plan 2023 - 2033.

A critical success factor will be to increase resources to strengthen the development and promotion of a sustainable visitor economy. This is coupled with an integrated governance model within Council that unites marketing and high-quality visitor services with destination planning and management as well as industry engagement and development.

VEC Project Response

The VEC provides a hub and spoke Visitor Information Centre operating modelling which will generate greater dispersal of visitors. Further, it will be co-located in the Tourism Precinct, close to industry, retail and the AELEC and TRECC. It will contribute to the vibrancy and livability of the region, supporting a more viable hospitality sector, retail, transport services and sporting facilities.

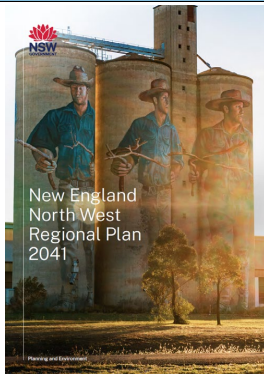
New England North West Regional Plan 2041

The New England North West Regional Plan 2041 sets a 20-year strategic land use planning framework for the region, aiming to protect and enhance the region's assets and plan for a sustainable future.

In the coming 20 years, population growth in the region is expected to be concentrated in Moree and the regional cities of Tamworth and Armidale. With an ageing population, changes in technology and new job opportunities, this Regional Plan sets out the requirements for clear and coordinated planning across all levels of government and within the community.

Strategies

Project contribution to relevant strategies



VEC Project Response

This Project strengthens the Region's visitor economy and facilities increased economic activity by providing a modern and revitalized VEC. The VEC will be a part of Tamworth's Tourism Precinct, closely located to the AELEC and TRECC.



NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030

The NSW Government's Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 provides a roadmap to support all industries involved in the visitor economy to recover from the impact of drought, bushfires, and COVID-19 and to grow in the future.

The strategy sets a bold vision for NSW to be the premier visitor economy of the Asia-Pacific by 2030.

VEC Project Response

The VEC Project will position Tamworth as the Capital of Country by leveraging its regional strengths, including country music, equine, agriculture, and indigenous history. It will amalgamate and reimagine the Visitor Information Centre, National Guitar Museum, Australian Country Music Hall of Fame and Country Wax Museum. It will utilize innovative technologies for exhibits leading to immersive experience and increased visitor engagement.

A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW



The 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW is the NSW Government's plan to drive sustainable, long-term economic growth in regional NSW. It is the roadmap to unlock significant economic potential in regional NSW.

It guides transformative, once-in-a-generation investment in our regions through the \$4.2 billion Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund, to create jobs now and into the future.

This vision is about going above and beyond 'business as usual' – the NSW Government's objective is to leave a legacy for regional NSW. It sets out a long-term plan and a framework for how the NSW Government will provide the foundations for businesses to invest in our regions with confidence.

VEC Project Response

The Project will display Tamworth and its surrounding regions endowments, including country music, equine, agriculture, and landscape. Further, it will encourage increased visitation, including repeat visitation and increasing the average length of stay. It will diversify the region's tourism by making Tamworth a year-round destination.

Strategies **Project contribution to relevant strategies**



Regional NSW Investment Attraction Strategy 2022-2027

The strategy establishes the key vision, objectives, and priorities to bring \$1 billion in private sector investment and 15,000 high-value jobs into regional NSW over the next five years.

Implementation of the Strategy will play an important role in realising the NSW Government's 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW

VEC Project Response

The VEC Project will encourage industry partnerships through its built form, programs, and Foundation. The VEC will provide multi-purpose space to showcase the region's industries and develop a Precinct Charter which will guide collaboration and industry and community engagement.

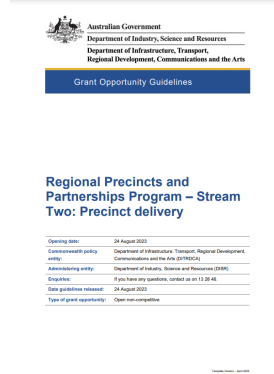


State Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2042

The 2022 State Infrastructure Strategy (SIS) identifies infrastructure needs and strategic priorities for the State over the next 20 years. The Strategy builds on the extensive program of infrastructure investment delivered over the past decade and seeks to leverage the ambitious pipeline of investments already committed by the NSW Government.

VEC Project Response

This Project will contribute and enhance the Region's visitor economy ensuring regional economic sustainability. This will support a thriving regional NSW.



Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program (rPPP)

The rPPP seeks to support transformative investment in regional, rural and remote Australia based on the principles of unifying regional places, growing economies and serving communities. Unlike traditional grant programs, the rPPP will focus on a partnership approach, bringing together governments and communities to deliver regional precincts that are tailored to local needs and have a shared vision for how that precinct connects to the region.

The Australian Government is providing \$400 million over 3 years for the program.

- \$100 million will be available for 2023-24
- \$150 million will be available for both 2024-25 and 2025-26

VEC Project Response

The VEC Project will be embedded in a Tourism Precinct and provide a place-based approach to planning, design, and delivery. It will contribute to the economic prosperity of the community by enhancing the visitor economy and encouraging industry and government partnerships.

2.2 Tamworth Region Strategy

TRC has an ambitious growth vision. To grow economic output, increase the region's prosperity and attract both private and public investment, TRC is creating favourable conditions to increase the population target growth rate from 1% to 2.5%. This accelerated growth rate will result in a population of 100,000 in 2041. This population goal has several advantages. It is seen as the critical tipping point for generating more jobs, securing funding for key 'liveability' improvements, diversifying housing options and gaining increased recognition from State and Federal Governments for infrastructure projects.



Tamworth's regional strategy, guided by the Strategies and Plans in the figure above, encompasses a vision for a thriving and resilient region. TRC's Blueprint 100 outlines eight priority themes with the visitor economy playing a crucial role in supporting and enabling the four priority themes below.

Table 9: TRC Blueprint 100: Priority Themes and the VECs Contribution

Priority Theme	VEC Contribution
<p>Priority Theme 3: Create a prosperous region</p> <p><i>Recognises that economic growth is vital for the community's well-being</i></p>	<p>The visitor economy, specifically the VEC, contributes significantly to this goal by attracting and servicing visitors, creating jobs, and stimulating local businesses. Action 3.10, aimed at strengthening Tamworth's wider tourism opportunities, aligns well with this priority, fostering economic prosperity by capitalising on the region's unique attractions.</p>
<p>Priority Theme 4: Build resilient communities</p> <p><i>Acknowledges the importance of community resilience</i></p>	<p>Tourism plays a key role in building resilience by diversifying the local economy and providing additional and alternative sources of income. Promoting tourism related to heritage and natural assets, such as vintage machinery, Mt. Borah, and Warrahabh National Park, as outlined on the actions, ensures that the community can adapt and thrive in changing circumstances.</p>
<p>Priority Theme 7: Celebrate our culture and heritage</p> <p><i>Emphasise the significance of preserving and showcasing the region's cultural identity</i></p>	<p>Tourism contributes by sharing the rich cultural heritage of Tamworth with visitors, preserving traditions, and supporting local cultural events and initiatives.</p>
<p>Priority Theme 8: Strengthen our proud identity</p> <p><i>Fosters a sense of pride and belonging among residents</i></p>	<p>Tourism reinforces this identity by highlighting what makes Tamworth unique and celebrating its distinctive character.</p>

The VEC is pivotal in advancing these priority themes, driving economic growth, fostering resilience, celebrating culture and heritage, and strengthening the region's proud identity. Future prosperity and the success of the VEC will also depend on the support of sufficient zoned land, centres, precincts and neighbourhoods adjacent to the facility that support a high quality of life. The interconnections between employment uses, the city and the region will need to be understood, developed and leveraged.

2.3 TRC's Visitor Economy Plan 2022-2027

In January 2023, TRC unveiled its Visitor Economy Plan 2022-2027 (VEP) which was developed concurrently with Tamworth Tomorrow - the new Economic Development and Investment Strategy. The VEP aligns with TRC's Blueprint 100, and the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) titled Our Community Plan 2023-2033.

The situation analysis revealed the potential to attract high-yielding markets and promote greater dispersal across the region. The first step towards achieving this is to create a world-class place brand that consolidates Tamworth region's identity, narrative, and position as the Capital of Country Australia, which will establish a strong foundation for a sustainable and resilient visitor economy.

The VEP aims to achieve the following goals:

1. Sustainably grow visitation to Tamworth region year-round
2. Increase yield and the contribution of the visitor economy to the region's economy
3. Encourage greater regional dispersal.

Assets and precincts play a critical role in the growth of the visitor economy while continuing to deliver important community outcomes. This project is flagged in several priority actions in the VEP, including:

Table 10: TRC's VEP Priority Actions

Pillar	Component	Priority Action	Primary Task Summary
Supply	Activating our assets and precincts	1. Prioritise investment and funding of Tier 1 precinct, based on the likelihood of achieving a positive review on investment faster	<p>iii. Country Music and Tourist Precinct.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Profile the region as country Australia's most vibrant destination. The integration of a new, high-quality (and easily accessible) visitor centre and hub for the home of Country Music Enable public-private partnerships and/or commercial offsets
Supply	Enriching the experience	5. Revitalise the Tamworth museums and interpretation	<p>i. Create an overarching narrative that links the individual museums to bring a more compelling story of Tamworth's history and heritage to life.</p> <p>ii. Both the Tamworth Regional Gallery and the Golden Guitar Museum provide a high-quality visitor experience</p> <p>iii. Proactively strengthen opportunities for best practice interactive and immersive interpretation of the region's museums and heritage sites</p> <p>iv. Identify new experiences such as 'behind-the-scenes' tours, workshops or master classes</p>

2.4 VEC Project Objectives

TRC is dedicated to creating an outstanding visitor experience by establishing the Visitor Experience Centre (VEC) to firmly establish Tamworth as the 'Capital of Country' and a key gateway to the New England Region of NSW.



The primary objectives of the VEC Project are to:



1. Provide a best-practice visitor experience in the form of service, information, and amenity.
2. Enhanced visitor museum experiences by providing flexible, interactive and digital experiences.
3. Improve asset, financial and service performance.
4. Create a vibrant entertainment and "Welcome to Tamworth" precinct

2.4.1 VEC Project Benefits and Measures

Development of a VEC will provide a single facility that provides an unparalleled, integrated and museum experience, aiming to firmly establish Tamworth as the 'Capital of Country' and positioning it as an indispensable destination, serving as the gateway to the New England Region of NSW.

The VEC will integrate essential components such as a Visitor Information and Tourism Centre, Country Music Hall of Fame, Wax Museum, Guitar Museum Guitar Photo Gallery, Regional and Cultural hub. This precinct will serve as a warm and engaging welcome, information hub, and entertainment venue for both visitors and residents of the region. The primary benefits of the VEC are described in the table below.

Project Outcomes	Benefits
 <p>1. Provide a best-practice visitor experience in the form of service, information, and amenity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase Visitor Information Centre visitation and experience scores • Create a regional hub, facilitating a hub-and-spoke tourism visitor information delivery model • Improved visitor interactions, information sharing and journey planning • Showcase regional products and produce to highlight the region's identity as the 'Capital of Country'
 <p>2. Enhanced visitor museum experiences by providing flexible, interactive and digital experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased museum visitation and experience scores • Increased visitation and diversification across the calendar year • Greater capacity and flexibility of spaces for seasonal experiences and exhibitions • Increased digital and immersive experiences • Improved curation, management and storage of artefacts • Unify four existing museums into a single comprehensive and integrated experience

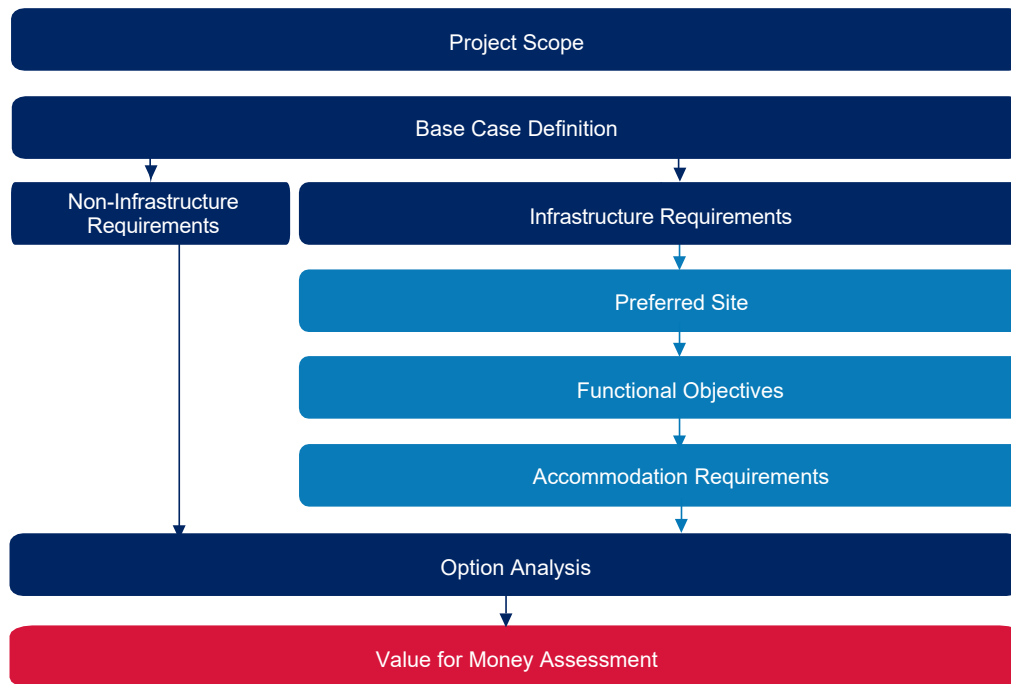
Project Outcomes	Benefits
 3. Improve asset, financial and service performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid capital remediation costs of existing VIC and ACMHF• Avoid operational maintenance costs of existing, aged VIC and ACMHF• Reduce duplication associated with asset management activities, including security, storage and other shared services• Financial savings exiting unfavourable lease terms• Increased admission and merchandise revenues• Increased ancillary revenue streams, including function and event space hire, catering and sponsorship• Divestment or lease proceeds as a result of exiting the ACMHF site
 4. Create a vibrant entertainment and “Welcome to Tamworth” precinct	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase prominence of the Golden Guitar• Accommodate live entertainment, with state-of-the-art infrastructure supporting both outdoor amphitheatre and indoor spaces.• Offer contemporary public amenities accessible to all.• Facilitate and attract private investment into the Visitor Experience Precinct• Improved open space and local community use

3 PROJECT OPTIONS

3.1 Options Development Process

Detailed information on the option development process and scope of the short-listed options are included within the following sections. A summary of the process undertaken to develop the project options, scope and requirements is summarised below.

Figure 18: VEC Option Development Process Overview



The shortlisted options are then assessed in the value for money and affordability section (section 6).

3.1.1 Project Scope

TRC manages ten collections across several locations, with each museum model slightly different with different legal and organisational structures. The scope of the VEC is to consolidate Visitor Information and Tourism Centre, Country Music Hall of Fame, Wax Museum, Guitar Museum Guitar Photo Gallery, Regional and Cultural hub.

Several other museums were considered to be integrated within the VEC. The project team prioritised the essential components of the museum portfolio TRC-owned, not fit for purpose and requiring capital investment over the medium to long-term.

Table 11: TRC Museums in scope for consolidation into the VEC

List of Museums	Legal Ownership	Including in Scope	Excluded
Tamworth PowerStation Museum	TRC-Owned		●
Australian Country Music Collections	TRC-Owned	●	
Nandewar Heritage Museum	Incorporated Body		●
Manilla Heritage Museum	incorporated body, co-located with a VIO		●
Rocks, Gems, Minerals and Fossil Collections	TRC-Owned, co-located with a VIO		●
Moonbi Museum	TRC-Owned		●
Australian Country Music Hall of Fame	TRC-Owned	●	
The Country Music Wax Museum	TRC-Owned	●	
National Guitar Museum and Gallery	TRC-Owned	●	
Tamworth Regional Film and Sound Archive	TRC-Owned		●
Tamworth Historical Society	Incorporated body		●
Tamworth Regional Astronomy Club	Incorporated body		●
Tamworth and District Family History Group	Incorporated body		●

3.1.2 Base Case

The base case scenario is used as a reference scenario to evaluate the incremental benefits and costs of the proposed options. The VEC project has adopted a “do minimum” scenario for evaluation, which includes minor upgrades to the existing buildings for safety or compliance, ongoing maintenance, and no changes to exhibits. The minor upgrades have been costed by a quantity surveyor during ‘Stage 3 – Precinct Analysis’. For both facilities, it is assumed that there is no change to the service model, governance and operating model.

3.1.2.1 Visitor Information Centre

As the existing VIC and museums are housed within a leased facility, it is undesirable to invest in significant infrastructure and exhibition upgrades, as any material improvements to the building would be to the benefit of the landlord and using public funds would be unacceptable to rate payers.

It is recommended that current bathroom facilities to the VIC, museum and Café are upgraded, as these are dated and there is only one ambulant toilet provided with no fully accessible toilet is provided within the facility¹⁸.

¹⁸ Based on Stage 3 – Precinct Analysis Part 2A – Visitor Centre – Augment or Modify the Asset.

3.1.2.2 Australian Country Music Hall of Fame

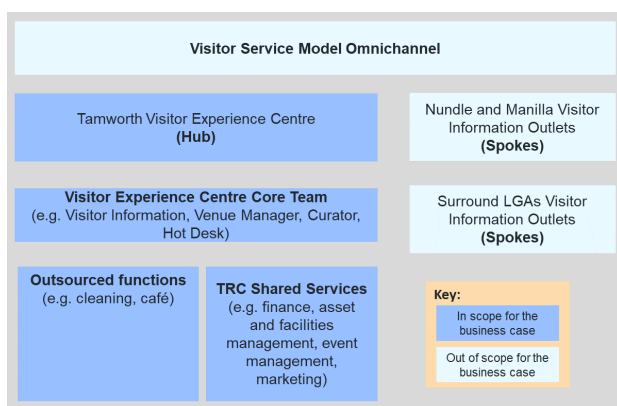
The current building is Council owned and has housed its two museums for some years. These have been operating within the existing build fabric and current infrastructure, largely unchanged.

It is recommended that the base case includes minor remodelling works to the Country Music Hall of Fame and Walk a Country Mile spaces¹⁹.

3.1.3 VEC non-infrastructure requirements

The new approach being proposed is based on a hub and spoke model, to ensure effective visitor engagement, experiences and dissemination of information and tourism services. This presents the opportunity for the Visitor Experience Centre (VEC) to become a flagship visitor information centre for the wider region. The following assumptions are based on the Stage 4 Report prepared by HVH Group and inform the Value for Money and Affordability Assessment. The below figure illustrates the visitor service and operating model.

Figure 19: TRC Visitor Service and Operating Model



3.1.3.1 Operational Requirements

The Primary functions of the Visitor Experience Centre will be managed by TRC’s visitor Information team for this business as usual (BAU) operations and include:

- Visitor, and regional tourist information services
- Museum exhibitions
- Variable exhibitions/displays
- Café dining
- Retail sales.

In line with the design aspirations and to ensure the design is fit for purpose, additional TRC management will support the VEC to curate and manage exhibit collections and exhibits, coordinate and sell a potential range of activations and activities.

3.1.3.2 Service Model Governance

The VEC Structure will be governed by TRC as asset owner and operator. VEC Service Model Governance key principles are:

- **Ownership and Responsibility:** TRC will maintain ultimate responsibility as the owner and operator of the VEC precinct.

¹⁹ Based on Stage 3 – Precinct Analysis 4.6.1 Current Functions / Ability to Maintain Grow Operations in Alignment with New Strategic Within the Existing Fabric.

- **Division Management:** The VEC will be managed under the TRC's Growth and Prosperity Division.
- **Professional and Volunteer Staff:** Professional council staff will manage the VEC, supported by trained and qualified volunteer staff.
- **Visitor Services:** VEC staff will handle tasks such as museum and exhibition entry fee collection, queue management, and conducting tours.
- **Curatorial Expertise:** Dedicated TRC museum curatorial staff will oversee the curation and production of exhibitions within the VEC.
- **First Nations Representation:** The VEC Curatorial department will include representation from First Nations advisors who will provide guidance on exhibitions, indigenous tours, public art, and regional Aboriginal history.
- **Outsourced Food and Beverage:** Food and beverage operations will be outsourced to a professional catering business with expertise in the industry.
- **In-House Catering:** Functions within the VEC will be serviced by an in-house caterer.
- **Event Booking Services:** Event booking and management for the VEC precinct will be provided by online event booking software which is located at the VEC.
- **Maintenance and Management:** Planned preventative and reactive maintenance, asset management, and capital improvements for the VEC will be overseen by the TRC Regional Services Division.
- **External Expertise:** The VEC will have the flexibility to draw upon external stakeholders and advisors as needed to enhance its operations and offerings.
- **Sponsorship/Philanthropic Funding:** Capital and operational contributions will be sought from private sponsorship and/or philanthropic giving. These entities may have a role in organisational governance of the VEC.

The following as the service model governance assumptions:

- The VEC will operate as its own cost centre.
- Recurrent operating budget: resources, planned preventative and reactive maintenance, asset management and lifecycle management plans will be established.
- The VEC will be actively staffed by paid Council professionally trained staff members and supported by trained volunteers. and supported by a venue manager, curator, and Council facilities (Asset) management for maintenance.
- VEC Staff will be responsible for the controlled access to the museums, ensuring a smooth and secure experience for visitors.
- Council will provide maintenance staff responsible for both planned preventative maintenance and prompt response to reactive maintenance needs, ensuring the facility remains in optimal condition.
- For special events, Council will provide additional maintenance services staff at established rates to accommodate event-specific requirements.
- Cleaning services will be entrusted to a reputable third-party contractor, maintaining the highest standards of cleanliness throughout the VEC.
- The provision of food and beverage services, encompassing the Café and functions, will be outsourced to a third-party contractor, with a focus on showcasing regional produce.
- Event management will be facilitated by Council, ensuring seamless execution of events at the VEC.

The following table captures the TRC VEC resource requirements:

Table 12: VEC Resource Requirements

Position	Days	Hours
Visitor Information Staff #1	Monday - Sunday	9:00am – 4:00pm
Visitor Information Staff #2	Monday - Sunday	9:00am – 4:00pm

Tamworth Regional Council: Capital of Country: Visitor Experience Centre

Position	Days	Hours
Visitor Information Staff #3	Monday – Friday	9:00am – 4:00pm
Visitor Information Roving #1	Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays	9:00am – 5:00pm
Management		
Venue Manager #1	Monday - Friday	
Curator #1	Monday - Friday	
Event Manager #1	Tuesday - Sunday	
Contractor Hot Desk #1 (F&B)	Monday - Sunday	
Contractor Hot Desk #2	Monday - Sunday	
Volunteer Hot Desk #1	Monday - Sunday	

3.2 VEC Infrastructure Requirements

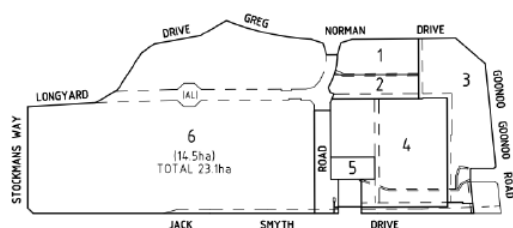
3.2.1 Preferred Site

The TRC proposed location of the VEC precinct is located adjacent to the Australian Equine and Livestock Event Centre (AELEC), and Tamworth Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre (TRECC) and is proposed to be located on the site of the grass running track currently identified as part of the Tamworth Regional Sporting Complex, fronting the New England Highway (Goonoo Goonoo Road). The site identified as #3 in Figure below of the precinct lot subdivision and is the proposed location of the VEC Precinct, located at the corner of Greg Norman Drive and Goonoo Goonoo Road.

A private Ampol roadhouse petrol station is adjacent to the site in the southeastern corner of the precinct, and the Tamworth Truckers Memorial is located north of the Ampol roadhouse adjacent to Goonoo Goonoo Rd. The western edge of the precinct identified as Lots 1, 2, 4 and 5 are the proposed subdivisions which are earmarked for two accommodation hotels (lots 1 and 2), large format retail (lot 4) with open plan car parking located between Lots 3 and 4. This site is located 6.4km south of Tamworth City Centre and 1.1km south of the current location of the Visitor Information Centre, Guitar and Wax museums and Guitar Photo Gallery.

This is the preferred site for the VEC as it is TRC-owned, geographic proximity to Tamworth entertainment assets, visibility and prominence, capacity and potential to develop a purpose-built, visitor precinct.

Figure 20: VEC Precinct Proposed subdivision (concept stage)



3.2.2 VEC Functional Requirements

VEC functional requirements have been developed by documenting current infrastructure requirements of both the VIC and ACMHF, assessment of gaps of each facility and the development of an integrated functional requirements. The VEC functional requirements have been developed to ensure the VIC and museums are seamlessly integrated, maximising shared spaces and amenities.

Primary VEC Functional requirements are detailed in 'Stage 4 – Visitor Experience Centre Fit-Out' and are summarised below:

- Central atrium space:** Light and airy arrival space that welcomes visitors to the building, all other functions are connected to this space. This space can be opened to the outside in warmer weather and closed off at other times. This connects from the car park or and is the main entry to the building. This is a flexible space that can be used for temporary regional exhibitions, showcasing ARLEC and TRECC and other attractions in addition to being able to house events or small gallery exhibitions.
- Retail space:** Located within the central atrium space, this activates the atrium and is optimally positioned to capture visitors existing from the museum experience. Its central / open location also draws visitors into the space. There are direct connections to Back of House storage areas to support retail.
- Amenities:** Located near the entry doors, as these are often one of the first things that a traveller looks for when entering a facility like this. Bathrooms are inclusive with provision of an accessible toilet.
- Visitor information zone:** This does not consist of a formal counter arrangement but creates an area off the central atrium where visitors can engage professional visitor services staff, volunteers, digital information, traditional tourism collateral and book regional attractions. This area seamlessly connects to the atrium allowing visitor information staff to actively engage with visitors in the atrium area.

- e) **Staff amenities:** Including kitchenette, staff lockers and dining space, bathrooms, with connection from visitor information and a connection to the staff meeting room / green room.
- f) **Staff meeting room:** Suitable for up to 12 people, AV technology enabled. This room is required movable furniture as it will be utilised as a green room when music events are held in the amphitheatre. This meeting room is to have a direct connection the central atrium space to enable the green room function to operate independently from the visitor services and administration.
- g) **Storage space:** For collateral or equipment associated with ticketing and visitor information / services. This is to be connected to the loading dock via a back of house corridor.
- h) **Main country music exhibition space:** This is to be a dark room to enable theming, specialist lighting and soundscape associated with the re imagined country music museums. There is to be a transitional space between the central atrium and museum exhibition space to enable the exhibition to be showcased and provide help set the scene for the museum experience that someone is about to experience. This also helps activate the central atrium. This allows access control of this space for separate ticketing if required. The exhibition space is to be acoustically isolated from the main atrium and adjoining exhibition space. The main exhibition space is to be able to be operated and ticketed independently to the flexible exhibition space, in addition to being able to be combined with the flexible exhibition space to be operated or ticketed as a single exhibition space, if required.
- i) **Climate controlled storage space:** Direct connection to the main exhibition space and the adjacent loading dock. This allows for secure and conditioned space control and movement of artefacts in and out of the museum. This space is to include a small conservation area for the preservation and management of artefacts, this space is to be independently accessed from the loading dock, however connected to the storage area.
- j) **Loading dock:** Suitable for a medium rigid vehicle i.e., furniture removal vehicle. The loading is to have secure covered access with a dock leveller that allows ease of loading and unloading. Access is to be provided direct from the dock to the museum holding storage / holding rooms (K and I). Corridor access is to be provided to storage area (M) for food and beverage and waste removal from the food and beverage offering. The loading dock is to house the small workshop that services the two exhibition spaces (L & H) in addition to a waste holding room for the facility. Waste and food and beverage operations are to be segregated from access to the exhibition holding rooms. There is also direct access to be provided to the central atrium area to facilitate bump in and out of equipment / sculpture / art / commercial displays etc.
- k) **Flexible exhibition space:** this is smaller, however identical in its technical requirements to the main exhibitions space. This space is also accessed from the main atrium space and able to be ticketed separately. This space is approximately one third of the main country music exhibition space and can be used for showcasing the region, hosting temporary country music exhibitions, indigenous culture, regional industry, or housing a temporary art exhibition. This space can be interconnected with the main exhibition space if required.
- l) **Climate controlled storage space:** Direct connection to the flexible exhibition space and the adjacent loading dock. This allows for secure and conditioned space control and movement of artefacts in and out of the museum.
- m) **Food and beverage offering / café / restaurant:** This includes a small commercial kitchen that can cater for retail food and beverage requirements in addition to supporting functions and events in the amphitheatre and main atrium. The food and beverage offering are located strategically away from the entry to draw visitors into the Atrium, it plays a key function in activating the central atrium space and provides a seamless linkage between the interior and exterior allowing dining to flow uninterrupted between the interior and exterior landscaped terrace space.
- n) **Food and beverage storage space:** This houses dry goods, cool room etc for food and beverage. There is a direct connection to the loading dock and to the exterior landscaped terrace area to enable equipment / mobile bar etc to be moved when a music event is being hosted in the amphitheatre.
- o) **Outdoor landscaped terrace:** This space integrates seamlessly with the café and main atrium to maximise visitor flow and connection with the outdoors. Permanent shade structures or awnings provide weather protection outside the café and atrium area. This space is a combination of soft landscaped area, featuring indigenous species that are representative of the region, in addition to providing a connection with the region's agriculture. This area has shade trees and plantings that frame distant views, screen undesirable views, and help intuitive wayfinding to the golden guitar sculpture and the amphitheatre.
- p) **Golden Guitar sculpture:** Relocated to the new VEC and purposefully set into its landscape surrounds, to maximise the photographic opportunity, while being a recognisable landmark from the road. The base of the

Golden Guitar is to be accessible to provide equity in access to its base and included feature uplighting at night.

- q) **200-300 seat outdoor theatre:** Includes a stage area to enable performances to be held regularly. Shading is provided through a combination of natural vegetations and shade structures. Wheelchair accessible seating is to be provided. The amphitheatre will have vehicle access from the main carpark to facilitate the bump in and out of performance equipment. Although its proximity to the main atrium and food and beverage offering are important, the amphitheatre is to be created to reflect a bush setting.
- r) **Landscaped arrival sequence:** that sets the scene for the overall visitor experience. This starts with a decompression area, where the visitor has made their way from the carpark and is a transitional landscape space where visitor meet and make decisions, this provides access to the remainder of the visitor precedent, retail, hotels and eat street and more importantly is the commencement of the visitor experience. The visitor proceeds towards the Visitor Experience Centre and Museums. The landscape treatments, including ephemeral water course, representing the water sensitive environment, elements of sculpture, soundscape, sensory landscape planting, and materiality embody a deep connection with country, signifying that this is the beginning of their 'Capital of Country' experience.

3.2.3 VEC Accommodation Schedule

Based on the VEC functional requirements set out in 3.2.2 (documented in detail in Stage 4), the VEC is expected to encompass approximately 2,500 m² of internal Gross Floor Area (GFA) and 3,000 m² of external area. The below outlines the schedules of accommodation.

Table 13: VEC Accommodation Schedule

Area	Room / Space	Area (sqm)
External Areas	Car Park entry(s)	
	Car Park (parking for cars, recreational vehicles, coaches, accessibility and electric vehicle charging)	As per council requirements / considering existing TRECC parking
	Amphitheatre + Stage (Seating capacity 200-300 pax)	350-500m2
	Golden Guitar	50
	Landscape / Parkland Public Domain	3,000
Visitor Experience Centre Entry		
Public Indoor Areas	Main Entry / Atrium	250
	Visitor Information	100
	Amenities – Public (includes separate changing places and accessible toilet)	65
	Retail	35-55
	Café (servery and seating)	150
Back of House Areas		
	Loading Dock	80
	Conservation Room	25
	Digital Record	4
	Exhibition Storage	30 – 60
	Visitor Collateral Storage	5
	Retail Storage	6

Area	Room / Space	Area (sqm)
	Commercial Kitchen (Regeneration Kitchen)	40
	Food and Beverage Cold Storage	6
	Food and Beverage Dry Storage	10
	Cleaners Room	15
	Audio Visual Control Room	12
	Waste Room	20
	Workshop	15
Exhibition Areas		
	Museum, Regional, First Nations, other split 2/3 fixed exhibitions and 1/3 rotating / flexible	1,500 ²⁰
Management Office		
	VEC Office	80
	Amenities - Staff	40
	Staff Breakroom	20
	Utility Room	4
	Meeting Room	20
	Communications / Data / Security	6
	Storage	5
Total Internal Space²¹		2,543 – 2,593
Total External Space²²		3,050

3.3 VEC Option Analysis

A long list of options, including both non-infrastructure and infrastructure options, was developed based on the following activities with TRC representatives:

- Options workshops on 10 October 2023
- ILM workshop outputs on 25 October 2023
- Individual stakeholder consultations held between October to November 2023

The long list options were reviewed against TRC's objectives and progressed if the option would serve the visitor economy, provide a modern, sustainable, and customer-focused offering, address the existing ageing assets, and increase visitation. The table below lists the non-infrastructure and infrastructure long list options, the initial assessment undertaken, and the recommendation to progress or not to the further assessment.

²⁰ This is an optimal figure and could be reduced to a minimum viable product size of between 800-1000sqm, split 1/3 flexible space and 2/3 fixed exhibitions. This needs to be tested by the design consultant team when curatorial storylines are defined along with a program of possible temporary / travelling exhibitions.

²¹ Excludes circulation.

²² Includes car parking.

Table 14: Long List Assessment

Options	Option	High-level summary of options	Preliminary assessment
Non-Infrastructure	Move VIC / ACMHF completely online	Only a virtual / online presence for the VIC and museums	Does not align to Tamworth's Strategic objectives and minimum requirements
	Digital platform / integration	Enhance online presence and digital platforms to provide a seamless and comprehensive visitor experience, including virtual tours and interactive content	Does not align to Tamworth's Strategic objectives and minimum requirements
Infrastructure	Refurbish the existing buildings	Keep the two sites and do not integrate the VIC and museums	Does not align to Tamworth's Strategic objectives and minimum requirements
		Refurbish the existing buildings, including adapting floor plan	
	Accommodate ACMHF in VIC building	No upgrades or refurbishments	Insufficient accommodation space
		Accommodate ACMHF in existing footprint and fit out	
	Accommodate VIC in ACMHF building	No upgrades or refurbishments	Insufficient accommodation space
		Accommodate VIC in existing footprint and fit out	
Fully scoped VEC within VEC Precinct	Relocate to the VEC Precinct (lot 3)	Meets project objectives	
	Integrate the VIC and museums		Alignment to Tamworth's strategic objectives
	Fully scoped, purpose-built facility designed to include redundancy		
Minimum viable VEC within VEC Precinct	Relocate to the VEC Precinct (lot 3)	Meets the mandatory requirements	
	Integrate the VIC and museums		Alignment to Tamworth's strategic objectives
	Purpose-built facility to accommodate current capacity		
Redevelop ACMHF site	Relocate the VIC, including the Country Wax Museum and National Guitar Museum to the ACMHF site.	Significant disruption with closure of ACMHF for several years	
	Construct a purpose-built VEC on the AMCHF site	Challenges to relocate wax artefacts temporarily Not shortlisted due to change complexity, capacity, lack of flexibility and shortfalls with existing site	

3.3.1 Multi-criteria Analysis

The VEC option selection evaluation criteria and respective weightings, scoring was developed from the ILM and validated in a workshop on 10 October 2023.

Table 15: Option Evaluation Overall Results

Option	Weighting	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
		Fully scoped VEC within Tourism Precinct	Minimum viable VEC within Tourism Precinct	Redevelop ACMFH site
Criteria 1 Improves and diversifies visitor experience	20%	2	2	1
Criteria 2 Creates flexible and adaptable spaces	30%	2	1	1
Criteria 3 Increases VEC prominence in Tamworth strategic centre	20%	2	2	1
Criteria 4 Value for money	20%	2	2	0
Criteria 5 Operational impacts	10%	2	2	0
Total Weighted Score		2.0	1.7	0.9
Ranking		1	2	3

Table 16: Scoring Methodology for the Qualitative Option Evaluation

Score	Description
0	Does not meet any aspects of the criteria
1	Meets some aspects of the criteria
2	Meets all aspects of criteria

Based on the assessment, options 1 and 2 scored the highest due to:

- Site is strategically positioned and will be integrated with the AELEC and TRECC
- New purpose-built facility
- Operationally efficient and sustainable
- Allows for true and unabated VIC and museum integration
- Provides redundancy for future growth through sufficiently sized site and flexible and adaptable spaces
- Allows for strong brand identity

These options were progressed to a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) and financial appraisal (FA), for ease of reporting, relabelled according to the table below.

3.3.2 Options Scope

The two options progressed to the short list stage are relatively similar in concept and design however the scale of each option differs. Option 1 caters to future growth and enhanced adaptability, while Option 2 captures essential space types and current capacity. The table below outlines the scope of the options, noting the difference in scale.

Table 17: Options Scope

Dimension	Factors	High-level summary of assessment
1 – The “What” – Service: scope, scale, and location	Scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option 1: Fully Scope VEC – 2,500 m2 internal GFA; 3,000 m2 external area Option 2: Minimum Viable VEC in Tourism Precinct - 2,000 m2 internal GFA; 1,000 m2 external area
	Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lot 3, locate at the corner of Greg Normal Drive and Goonoo Goonoo Road
	Infrastructure scope:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New-Build Decant and make-good VIC building Decant ACMHF building Car parking
2 – The “How” - Service Solution	VIC and museums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor information space Exhibitions space, including fixed and temporary Outdoor public amenity
	Support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food / beverage and retail
	Service Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hub and spoke model TRC owned and operated Stand-alone profit centre with full-time staff and TRC staff supporting curating and entertainment requirements
3 – The “When” – Timeframe and Staging	Timeline and Staging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2024 Q2 – Approve FBC 2025 Q2 – Finalise design 2027 Q2 – Finalise delivery
4 – Funding	Potential funding options	Capital Funding Source <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Sector TRC – proceeds from disposal of land and capital fund NSW Government Federal Government
		Operating Funding Source <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TRC – revenue and general operating fund

4 PROJECT DESIGN

This section is based on the 'Stage 4 – Visitor Experience Centre Fit Out' Report prepared by HVH Group in November 2023. This section provides a summary of key information that is relevant to the design and costs for the purposes of the business case. It is important to note that there is no correlation between the concept designed prepared by a potential developer (illustrated in the Service Need) and the operational and functional performance brief included in HVH Group's report. The HVH Group operational and functional performance brief should serve as the principal guide for shaping the design and functional specifications for the development of a new VEC and museum experience.

4.1 Design Parameters

The VEC precinct aims to be Tamworth's primary visitor hub, nationally recognised as Australia's Country Music Capital. It will appeal to the local community and draw national and international visitors, emphasising its country music affiliation and annual festival.

To maximise the building's lifespan, flexibility and adaptability in design, specifications, and sizing is crucial. This ensures the building can effectively respond to changing operational needs and align with TRC's requirements. Flexibility in museum and exhibition spaces will be achieved through design elements such as column-free spaces, separation, temporary walls, and adaptable lighting systems. The visitor information space will be complemented by museums, auxiliary spaces for exhibitions, community engagement, front-of-house functions, café, retail, and back-of-house facilities.

The building infrastructure must be designed for upgradability over time to meet changing user expectations and operational needs. Considerations for plant rooms, services risers, conduits, and loadings should allow for potential upgrades to accommodate environmental, operational, and technological advancements in the future.

The following are project's design parameters:

- **Site Location:** Decision on the optimum location (lot 3) to achieve the visitor economy expectations as well as accessibility, visibility, and proximity to the Tamworth Town Centre, key attractions and/or points of interest.
- **Architectural Aesthetics:** Agree the desired architectural style and aesthetics that align with the region's character and cultural identity as well as designing an iconic and recognisable building. Incorporate finishes, materials and fittings that are appropriate for a high-profile public building with a 50-year minimum design life.
- **Space:** Calculating and designing to the optimum spaces and functions, including exhibition areas, visitor information reception and display, management offices, amenities, storerooms, food and beverage and efficient back of house logistics areas to achieve Council's vision and objectives whilst meeting budget/funding constraints.
- **Single Story Facility:** for efficiency and cost the VEC and museums will be delivered in a single storey building.
- **Sustainability:** Setting sustainability goals and design parameters related to energy efficiency, water conservation, materials selection, and green building certification. Additionally, materials, furniture, fixtures, and equipment must be reasonably accessible i.e., must not be sourced from manufacturers/suppliers requiring long term delivery. Access/procurement of replacement materials must be easily and quickly replaced to ensure continuity of service and safety.
- **Visitor Experience:** Define the desired visitor experience, including key themes and storylines, interactive exhibits, accessibility features, and opportunities for community engagement.
- **Cultural and Historical Integration:** Incorporation of design elements that reflect the cultural and historical significance of the region, such as heritage preservation, and indigenous perspectives.
- **Accessibility:** Ensure that the facility is fully accessible to individuals of all abilities, adhering to accessibility standards and guidelines.
- **Exhibit Design:** Specifying requirements for exhibit design, interactive displays, audio-vision elements, and storytelling that are balanced and provide an engaging visitor experience.

- **Budget and Funding:** Establishing a project budget based on obtaining funding and successful grant applications as well as defining on-going recurrent operating budgets that will preserve the building and operational outcomes.
- **Regional Inclusion:** Incorporating elements that reflect cultural, regional councils and historical significance of the region, not just Tamworth.
- **Infrastructure:** Ensuring services calculations can be provided to the site to achieve optimal operational functionality.
- **Museum Standards:** The design, collection, quality, and functionality of the facility operation of the museum's exhibits, storage, conservation, collection, climate control and displays must comply with the National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries; second edition 2023 and align with international performance space, museum, and gallery standards.
- **Safety in Design:** Proposed design solutions must be considerate of reasonably foreseeable hazards that may occur as the structure is built, commissioned, used, maintained, repaired, refurbished, modified, or decommissioned.
- **Building Code Compliance:** The VEC will need to achieve compliance with all relevant planning and building approvals and codes including:
 - The National Construction Code and Australian Standards
 - Requirements for Places of Public Entertainment
 - National and International Museum and Gallery performance codes
 - National Standards for Disability Services

4.2 Sustainability Design Objectives

The VEC building and fit out works are to achieve sustainable and best practice design solutions. As such, the project is to strive to achieve the following:

- Natural ventilation in front of house areas and wherever possible and achieve low energy use in its ongoing operation.
- Designed consistent with Climate Positive Principles:
 - To be Carbon neutral.
 - To be Water positive.
 - To achieve Waste Minimisation in construction and operation; and
 - To provide Community Wellbeing
- Include infrastructure such as:
 - Water and recycling
- Car parks, walkways, and paved areas will be designed in line with minimising urban heat island effect.
- Connect to a rainwater reuse system.
- All WCs and the like to connect to the water reuse system.
- Achieve low-energy use for ongoing operations.
- Eliminate the use of gas or fossil fuels from the site/design.

4.3 Design Constraints

Navigating the intricate design constraints is pivotal to shaping the visionary VEC project. The following have been identified as design constraints:

- **Zoning and Sub-division:** Complying with local zoning regulations and working with the precinct developer to ensure the sub-division does not hinder the desired architectural and operational objectives of the VEC.

- **Site Conditions:** Addressing site-specific conditions including archaeological history as well as site contamination from possible historic waste disposal, environmental sensitivities, and drainage.
- **Funding Limits:** Achieving grant funding and adherence to budget constraints and cost limitations throughout the design and delivery phases.
- **Program:** Meeting timelines and project deadline constraints, considering construction schedules and milestones.
- **Space Limitations:** Working within the site and site configuration to achieve design and functional outcomes and objectives of the VEC.
- **Sustainable Design:** Complying with environmental regulations and best practice sustainability standards, such as Green Star certification.
- **Accessibility:** Ensure compliance with and exceeding National Australian Standards for Disability Services.
- **Stakeholder Input:** Accepting and addressing feedback and concerns from industry consultation, community, and regulatory authorities throughout the design process.
- **Safety and Security:** Implementing adequate security measures and safety standards to protect visitors, staff, and the exhibition collection.

4.4 Integration with the Greater Visitor Precinct

An indicative concept has been prepared for the wider visitor precinct by a third-party prospective developer. This concept masterplan outlines the various components of the wider visitor precinct, including retail, a hotel, food and beverage precinct and car parking.

The proposed strategic location of the VEC and new museums within the larger visitor precinct needs to maximise its benefits and connectivity with not only the larger precinct but with the existing council facilities namely the TRECC and AELEC.

4.5 Benchmark Analysis: Visitor Information Centres

In October 2023, a benchmarking exercise was conducted across five visitor information centres with the aim of understanding what makes a good VEC. The exercise evaluated best practices in design, materials, content, amenities, services, and operations. The resulting insights and learnings have brought to light the deficiencies of TRC's VIC and museums.

The five visitor information centres involved in the exercise were the Orange Visitor Information Centre, Mudgee Visitor Centre, Mossman Gorge Visitor Centre, Shepperton and Goulburn Valley Visitor Centre, and Penguin Parade Visitor Centre. The VIC offers various functions and services such as retail, cafe, museum, gallery, amphitheatre, and coach parking. Some of the VICs are situated near galleries, libraries, and precincts. Interviews were conducted with Local Government Areas to assess learnings of recently completed projects. Key learning summarised below:

- Inadequate vehicle and coach parking is a barrier to visitation.
- Clarity and ease of wayfinding and the arrival sequence is critically important in setting up the visitor for a positive and engaging experience.
- Outdoor amenities are important, picnic areas, BBQ's, and flexible outdoor performance spaces / amphitheatre areas.
- Opportunities exist to embed education and flexible learning spaces within these facilities.
- Incorporation of sustainability initiatives into the building fabric or the inclusion of photovoltaic cells, create a more efficient building and can reduce running costs.
- Any food and beverage offering needs to be substantial to attract or retain visitors, therefore a commercial kitchen is essential to facilitate this.
- Signature building design needs to account for exhibition and usable wall space.
- Clustering functions or interrelated facilities is beneficial in providing a critical mass of activity, integration into broader precincts is beneficial to visitation.





- Adequate covered loading dock and storage facilities are important building functional components.

4.5.1 Benchmark Analysis Results

Visitor Information Centres design and construction is based on the unique needs of the local community, annual visitation and ancillary collocated services and experiences, such as museums. The benchmarking exercise has identified several key insights and learnings that can be applied to the Tamworth Visitor Experience Centre, including providing a sense check of the size and scale of the facility.

The Tamworth VEC is proposed to be approximately 2,500 m2 of internal GFA, with approximately 120,000 visitors per annum. The proposed VEC attracts more visitors than the Shepparton and Goulburn Valley Visitor Centre whilst expected to be half the size.

Table 18: Visitor Information Centre: Benchmark Analysis

Benchmark	Built (Year)	Visitors / Population	Est. Cost 2023 (\$M)	GFA	Funding
Orange Visitor Information Centre 	2016	39,000 p.a. / 42,000	\$13.6M	1,300 m2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Government - \$4m • NSW Government - \$1m • Local Council – \$3.2m
Mudgee Visitor Information Centre 	2021	33,000 p.a. / 12,559	\$10.4M	1,244 m2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSW Government - \$2.3m • Mid-Western Regional Council - \$3m • Federal Government – \$1.5m
Shepparton and Goulburn Valley Visitor Centre 	2020	33,000 p.a. / 67,000	\$56.3M	5,300 m2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Shepparton City Council - \$15.35m • State Government - \$10m • Federal Government – \$15m • SAM Foundation - \$7m
Mossman Gorge Visitor Centre (Queensland) 	2011	300,000 p.a. / 1,937	\$35.1M	2,252 m2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous land and sea corporation • Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia

²³ Not all funding sources accounted for, funding sources listed based on publicly available information only.

The benchmarking exercise has identified several key insights and learnings that have been applied to the Tamworth VEC functional design requirements, including:

- Multiple funding sources should be investigated, Local, State and Federal Governments Community fundraising and the establishment of a Foundation could be a valuable way of raising initial funds and then providing long term operation support for a community asset.
- Clustering functions or interrelated facilities is beneficial in providing a critical mass of activity, integration into broader precincts is beneficial to visitation.
- Facilities are resourced with paid professional visitor experience staff, colocation of visitor information and a gallery, museum or retail maximises staffing efficiencies.
- Retail should showcase regional products and there is scope to increase this opportunity.
- Signature building design needs to account for exhibition and usable wall space.
- Adequate covered loading dock and storage facilities are important building functional components.
- Incorporation of sustainability initiatives into the building fabric or the inclusion of photovoltaic cells, create a more efficient building and can reduce running costs.
- Any food and beverage offering needs to be substantial to attract or retain visitors, therefore a commercial kitchen is essential to facilitate this.
- Traditional visitor information counters are undesirable, space should be provided for visitors and visitor experience staff to engage.
- Regular changeout of exhibitions or displays drives visitation and encourages repeat visitation.
- Outdoor amenities are important, picnic areas, BBQ's, and flexible outdoor performance spaces / amphitheatre areas.
- Opportunities exist to embed education and flexible learning spaces within these facilities.
- Clarity and ease of wayfinding and the arrival sequence is critically important in setting up the visitor for a positive and engaging experience.

4.6 Schedule of Accommodation

Based on the VEC functional requirements set out in 3.2.2 (documented in detail in Stage 4), the VEC is expected to encompass approximately 2,500 m2 of internal Gross Floor Area (GFA) and 3,000 m2 of external area. Two options have been shortlisted to proceed to the value for money and affordability stage:

- Option 1 – Fully scoped VEC, design and construction of the facility to fully meet functional requirements
- Option 2 – Minimum viable VEC to meet existing functional requirements and partially meet future requirements

The below outlines a comparison of the accommodation schedules for Option 1 and 2.

Table 19: Shortlisted Options: Schedule of Accommodation

Area	Room / Space	Area (sqm) Functional Requirements	Option 1 Fully scoped VEC within Tourism Precinct	Option 2 Minimum viable VEC within Tourism Precinct
External Areas	Car Park entry(s)			
	Car Park (parking for cars, recreational vehicles, coaches, accessibility and electric vehicle charging)	As per council requirements / considering existing TRECC parking	As per council requirements / considering existing TRECC parking	As per council requirements / considering existing TRECC parking
	Amphitheatre + Stage (Seating capacity 200-300 pax)	350-500m2	350-500m2	Delayed

Tamworth Regional Council: Capital of Country: Visitor Experience Centre

Area	Room / Space	Area (sqm) Functional Requirements	Option 1 Fully scoped VEC within Tourism Precinct	Option 2 Minimum viable VEC within Tourism Precinct
	Golden Guitar	50	50	50
	Landscape / Parkland Public Domain	3,000	3,000	1,000
Visitor Experience Centre				
Public Indoor Areas	Main Entry / Atrium	250	250	250
	Visitor Information	100	100	100
	Amenities – Public (includes separate changing places and accessible toilet)	65	65	65
	Retail	35-55	35-55	35-55
	Café (servery and seating)	150	150	150
Back of House Areas				
	Loading Dock	80	80	80
	Conservation Room	25	25	25
	Digital Record	4	4	4
	Exhibition Storage	30 – 60	30 – 60	30 – 60
	Visitor Collateral Storage	5	5	5
	Retail Storage	6	6	6
	Commercial Kitchen (Regeneration Kitchen)	40	40	40
	Food and Beverage Cold Storage	6	6	6
	Food and Beverage Dry Storage	10	10	10
	Cleaners Room	15	15	15
	Audio Visual Control Room	12	12	12
	Waste Room	20	20	20
	Workshop	15	15	15
Exhibition Areas				
	Museum, Regional, First Nations, other split 2/3 fixed exhibitions and 1/3 rotating / flexible	1,500 ²⁴	1,500	1,000
Management Office				
	VEC Office	80	80	80

²⁴ This is an optimal figure and could be reduced to a minimum viable product size of between 800-1000sqm, split 1/3 flexible space and 2/3 fixed exhibitions. This needs to be tested by the design consultant team when curatorial storylines are defined along with a program of possible temporary / travelling exhibitions.

Area	Room / Space	Area (sqm) Functional Requirements	Option 1 Fully scoped VEC within Tourism Precinct	Option 2 Minimum viable VEC within Tourism Precinct
	Amenities - Staff	40	40	40
	Staff Breakroom	20	20	20
	Utility Room	4	4	4
	Meeting Room	20	20	20
	Communications / Data / Security	6	6	6
	Storage	5	5	5
Total Internal Space²⁵		2,543 – 2,593	2,543 – 2,593	2,503 – 2,493
Total External Space²⁶		3,050	3,050	1,050

The primary differences in the schedule of accommodation between Option 2 and Option 1 include:

- **Amphitheatre and Stage:** Not essential to meeting core requirements of the VEC although limits VEC event activation, interactive experiences and function space hire. Project assumes that this could be developed over a future stage
- **Landscaping and Public Domain:** Not essential to meeting core requirements of the VEC although reduces amenity, open and shared space. Project assumes that this could be developed over a future stage
- **Museum Exhibition Space:** Project reduces exhibition space to the minimum amount of space to showcase existing museum artefacts with very limited flexible space (approximately 200 m².)

²⁵ Excludes circulation.

²⁶ Includes car parking.

5 VALUE FOR MONEY AND AFFORDABILITY ASSESSMENT

5.1 Approach

The cost benefit analysis (CBA) has been prepared in accordance with NSW Government's Guide to Cost-Benefit Analysis (TPG23-08).

CBA is an assessment technique that estimates the economic, social, and environmental costs and benefits of a project in monetary terms. Within a business case there are two separate but interrelated analyses, the CBA, and the financial appraisal. The CBA analyses real resource flows reflecting the opportunity cost of resources in the economy with the aim of estimating the (net) impact to social welfare. As a result, economic appraisal must include non-monetary costs and benefits²⁷, while the financial appraisal does not.

By contrast, the financial appraisal is specified in nominal terms and analyses only cash flows with the aim of understanding financial impacts. In some cases, the economic appraisal might justify proceeding with a proposal based on a net change in social welfare, but the financial appraisal might show a net cost to the budget.

A CBA compares the state of the world with the proposed project, program, or policy against the state of the world without the proposal. The benefits and costs of all other options are calculated relative to the Base Case (i.e. the incremental change). The CBA should also focus on those costs and benefits that are directly attributable to the project.

5.1.1 Specific Visitor Considerations

Generally, visitors allocate a fixed budget for leisure and tourism activities. This means that spending on tourist attractions is often a replacement for other recreational expenditures by visitors (such as sightseeing, dining at local restaurants, gaming or attending other events). Consequently, it can be challenging for tourism initiatives to genuinely stimulate new spending within the region, and including such benefits may result in some form of double counting.

The principal economic benefits of Visitor Information Centres and Museums are derived from their use. While there might be potential non-use benefits associated with a tourism project, they are likely to be speculative. The inclusion of these types of benefits poses a risk of double counting.

Incremental revenue from NSW visitors is expected to be displaced from a variety of alternative entertainment and leisure activities and additional expenditure from these visitors is not new injected expenditure because it is merely displaced from one area to another within NSW. This business case reflects the incremental costs and benefits over and above the Base Case scenario, expected to be derived from new internal and interstate visitors earned by TRC (as VEC owner) can be included as an economic benefit.

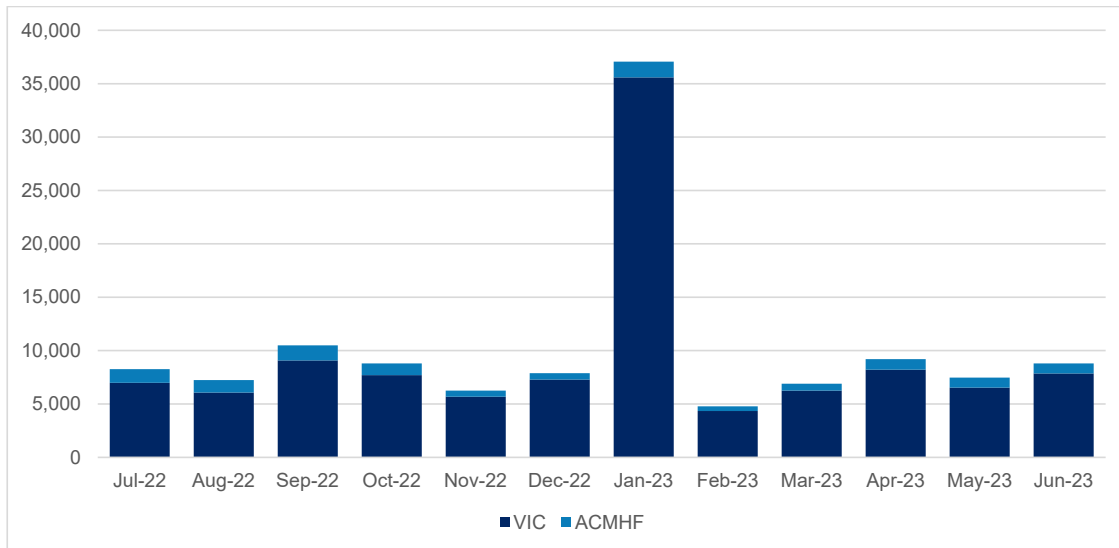
5.2 Demand Analysis

5.2.1 Baseline Visitation

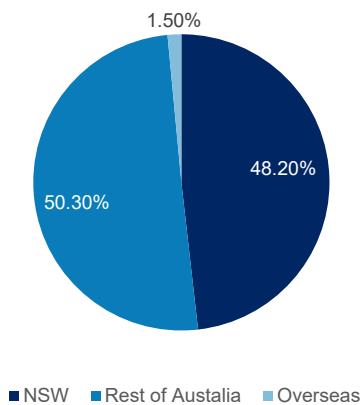
TRC's VIC receives an annual visitation of just over 111,000, with the ACMHF receiving over 11,000 visitors annually. January, due to the Country Music Festival, attracts nearly 4 times as many visitors to the VIC than any other month, with September the next highest month in a given year. Excluding the January peak, there are on average 6,900 visitors to the VIC every month. The ACMHF highest month is also January, although the peak in visitation is only 1.4 times the average monthly visitation.

²⁷ This distinction is often critical in social infrastructure business cases. Many of the benefits of a social infrastructure project can go uncounted because they are often difficult to monetise into a financial transaction and therefore underestimate the true value of the project.

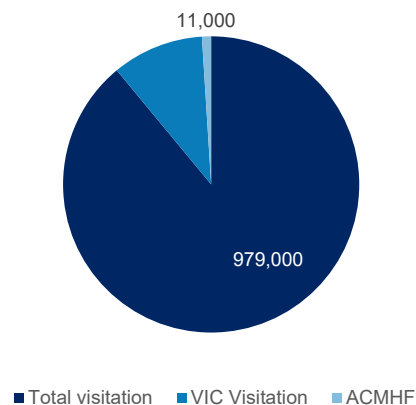
Figure 21: VIC and ACMHF Baseline Visitors per month (July 2022 to June 2023)



VIC annual visitation by origin (July 2022 to June 2023)



VIC and ACMHF visitation as a proportion of total visitation (July 2022 to June 2023)



NSW residents comprise of 50% of the total annual visitation to the VIC, with the remaining visitors from other Australian States/territories and overseas. This underscores the importance of the visitor economy to not only TRC but NSW, with a significant proportion of visitors outside of the State.

With over 1.1million annual visitors to the TRC, the amount of visitors to the VIC and ACMHF locations is approximately 10% of total visitors. Given the economic benefits of visitation to Regional VIC's and the relatively low proportion of VIC and ACMHF visitors, a new VEC has a significant opportunity to increase the number of visitation.

5.2.2 Baseline Visitation Dwell Time

Based on interviews with local staffs and volunteers, the time spent at both the VIC, VIC Museums (National Guitar and Australian Country Music Wax Museums) ACMHF is indicated below.

Table 20: VIC and ACMHF Baseline Visitation

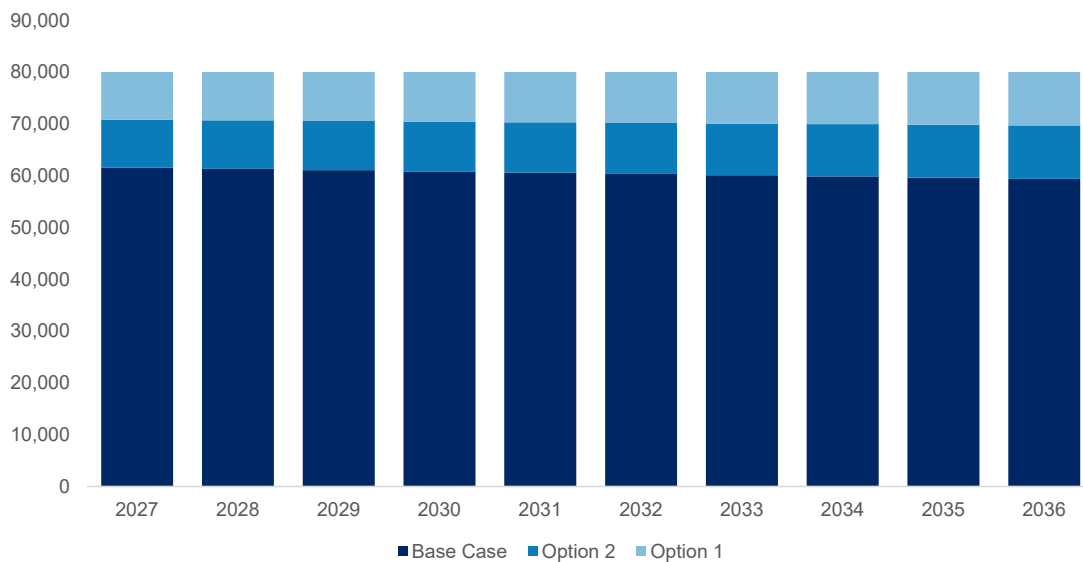
#	Facility	Estimated Dwell Time (Minutes)
1	VIC Only	20 minutes
2	VIC + Museums	40 minutes
3	ACMHF	40 minutes
4	VIC and ACMHF (1+2+3)	70 minutes

The time spent at the VIC is estimated at 20 minutes per visitor. This increases to 40 minutes when visitors enter the Australian Country Music Wax and National Guitar Museums. The time spent at the AMCHF is also estimated at 40 minutes per visitor. For the purposes of measuring the baseline visitation hours against a colocated VEC, the total hours per visit of the current VIC and ACMHF is estimated at 70 minutes.

5.2.3 Forecast Visitation and Visitation Dwell Time

The visitation and dwell time assumptions included in the model have been sourced from TRC interviews and under economy.id. This information has been used to estimate indicative visitor forecasts for both the base and options. It is noted that a number of assumptions were made to estimate visitor numbers due to the limited information available. More detailed modelling is required to confirm the appropriateness of the assumptions uses, and as such, caution is required when interpreting the results. Sensitivity testing is provided in this chapter given these data limitations. The forecasted visitation for the base case and options is provided below.

Table 21: Forecasted VIC and ACMHF Visitation p.a. (non-NSW residents)



A number of general assumptions have been applied to the visitation forecast including:

- 2022 visitation is used as the baseline for 2027, the year the new VEC is expected to be completed and operational
- NSW visitation is excluded as this is assumed to be a redistribution of state expenditure, and not an 'impact'. Currently around 50% of visits are non-local. This baseline visitation is applied to both Option 1 and option 2

Specific scenario assumptions that have been applied to the visitation forecast include:

- Base Case: Baseline visitation demand is expected to decline at a steady rate of 0.3%. This rate of decline is consistent with recent Tamworth visitation trends. Between 2018 and 2022, total Tamworth visitation declined at a 3.5% annual rate
- Option 1: "Fully-Scoped VEC": Forecasted visitation is expected to increase by 30% and 50% of the 2027 base case demand for the VIC and ACMHF. No annual growth has been forecasted. The expected increase is based on observations of other cultural institutions uplifts (refer to the Shepperton Case study in the next section).
- Option 2: "Minimum Viable VEC". Forecasted visitation is 15% and 25% of the 2027 base case demand for the VIC and ACMHF. No annual growth has been forecasted. The expected increase is half that of Option 1, due to the reduction in exhibition space and outdoor amphitheatre (no capacity for seasonal exhibitions)

Forecasts for average dwell time per visitor is provided below:

Table 22: Forecasted VEC Dwell Time (non-NSW residents)

#	Facility	Base Case	Option 1 Fully scoped VEC	Option 2 Minimum viable VEC
1	VIC Only	20 minutes	40 minutes	30 minutes
2	Museums	40 minutes	60 minutes	50 minutes
4	VIC and Museums (VEC)	70 minutes	90 minutes	80 minutes

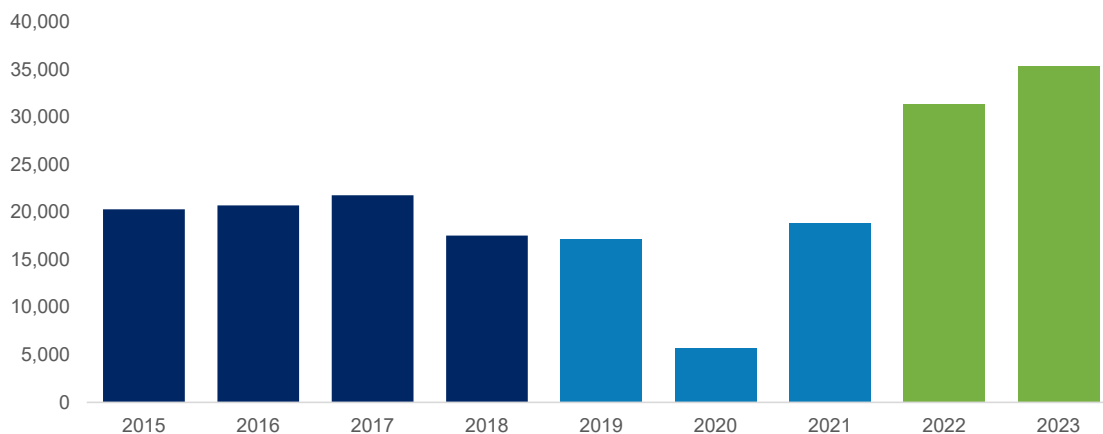
Specific scenario assumptions that have been applied to the visitation forecast include:

- Base Case: Based on interviews with staff and volunteers (refer to 5.2.2 for further information)
- Option 1: "Fully-Scoped VEC": Forecasted dwell time expected to increase by 20 incremental minutes, based on 150% increase in exhibition space above the current base case, as well as the outdoor amphitheatre and gardens
- Option 2: "Minimum Viable VEC". Forecasted dwell time expected to increase by 10 incremental minutes, half of Option 1

5.2.3.1 Case Study: Shepparton and Goulburn Valley Visitor Centre

The Shepparton & Goulburn Valley Visitor Centre shares a purpose-built facility that accommodates the Visitor Centre, The Shepparton Art Museum Gallery, the Kaiela Art Gallery, a Children's area, gallery as well as café and retail for each area. The Visitor Centre is the only accredited VIC providing visitor information and services for the Shepparton & Goulburn Valley region including Mooroopna, Tatura, Murchison, Dookie and Merrigum area.

Table 23: Shepparton and Goulburn Valley: Pre and post-development visitation by year



The purpose-built facility was established in 2020 and has seen strong growth in visitor numbers post-completion. Average annual visitation pre-Covid impacted years was approximately 20,800 (2015 to 2017). Over the last two years, average visitation was approximately 33,000 per annum, representing a 60% increase.

5.3 Costs

Tamworth VEC primary cost components include capital / relocation costs, recurrent costs and land acquisition/proceed of sale.

5.3.1 Capital Costs

Tamworth VEC Cost estimates associated with the base case and options were estimated by an independent quantity surveyor, Northcroft, and were based on the Stage 3 and Stage 4 Reports prepared by HVH Group. A summary of the cost plans for the base case and two options are presented in the below table and the detailed cost plans within the respective stages.

Table 24: VEC Cost plan summary (nominal \$'000)

Item #	Item Description	Base Case	Option 1 Fully scoped VEC	Option 2 Minimum viable VEC
1	External Areas	\$663	\$3,039	\$1,000
2	Internal Areas	\$744	\$23,371	\$17,480
3	External Services	\$0	\$420	\$420
4	Professional / Authority Fees	\$169	\$2,160	\$2,160
5	Contingency	\$315	\$2,900	\$2,106
Total project costs		\$1,891	\$31,890	\$23,166

The scope of the capital works and underlying assumptions for each scenario are detailed in the following sections.

5.3.1.1 Base Case

5.3.1.1.1 Tamworth Visitor Information Centre

Several shortcomings have been identified that require rectification or capital replacement works. The following outlines the inclusions in the upgrading works:

- Trip hazard at signage plinth
- Upgrade plinth / saved surrounds of Golden Guitar monument
- Reline marking front car park
- Compliant access from rear of building to museum
- Roof leak repair
- Upgrade and refresh existing toilet facilities (no major upgrades of underground drains)
- Addition of accessible toilet (quantity surveyor assumed space was available for an accessible toilet)

5.3.1.1.2 Australian Country Music Hall of Fame

Several shortcomings have been identified that require rectification or capital replacement works. The following outlines the inclusions for the minor remodelling works:

- AV upgrades to presentations, technical and equipment
- Repainting of entire interior
- Upgrade to soundscape

- Upgrade to entry experience externally
- New external signage and wayfinding
- Minor landscape replanting

Assumptions and exclusions made by the Quantity Surveyor (Northcroft) include:

- No major structural works
- Exclude fire compartmentalisation, which would remain as a significant risk to the museum collection and TRC
- Exclude environment management control system
- Exclude separate building to house excess exhibits
- Exclude works to Walk a Country Mile exhibition access and service issues.

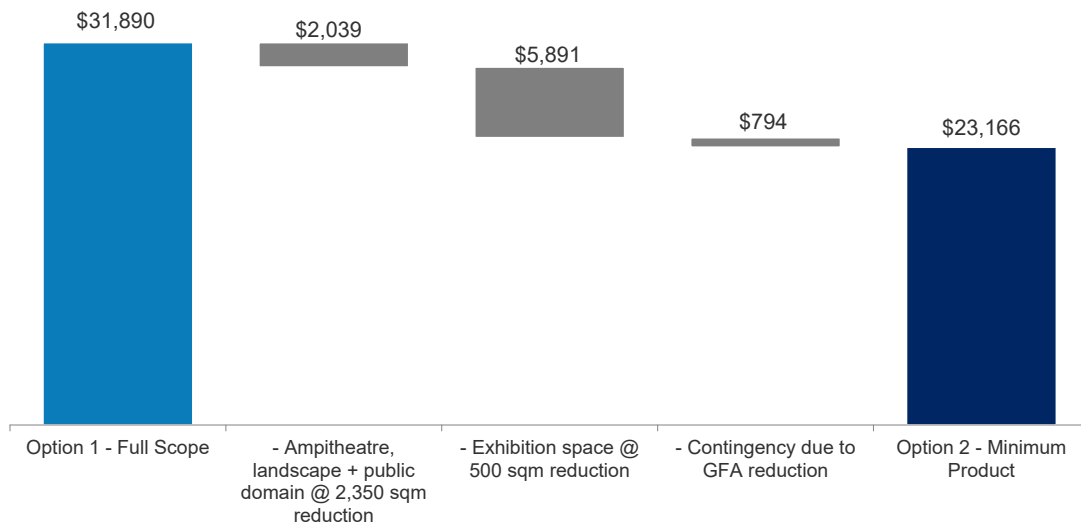
5.3.2 Option 1 and 2

The Tamworth VEC capital cost plan for Option 1 and 2 is based on the Schedule of Accommodation GFA in section 4.6 and incorporates the following scope inclusions:

- Site formation works
- Excavation and substructure
- Superstructure
- General finishes, windows, doors and all architectural works
- Sanitary fittings and fixtures
- Hydraulic Installation including plumbing and drainage
- Electrical installation including power, light, data, AV, soundscape, security and telephone
- Light fittings
- Fire services
- Fixed and loose furniture, exhibition displays and showcases
- Relocation of exhibits and artefacts
- Equipment including electrical appliances, shop fittings
- External works including stormwater drainage, external services, paving and landscaping
- Professional / authority service fees
- Project contingency

Difference between Option 1 and 2 schedule accommodation area reflects a reduction on GFA for internal exhibition space and the external amphitheatre and open space. The difference is approximately 2,800 m² in total area, or \$8.7m in capital expenditure.

Figure 22: VEC Cost plan summary bridge (nominal \$'000)



5.3.3 Recurrent Costs

Recurrent costs relate to the ongoing cost of operating and maintaining the upgraded VIC and ACMHF under the Case. These costs included under the project options are calculated incrementally to the base case. Incremental costs identified for including include:

- Leasehold expenses
- Building Maintenance
- Staffing

The incremental recurrent costs for the options across the 30-year appraisal period are presented in the table below. The table shows that Option 1 and Option 2 generate incur less recurrent costs over the Base Case scenario.

Table 25: Incremental Recurrent Costs (30-years)

Recurrent Expenditure	\$000, Nominal
Base Case	\$39,748
Option 1, Incremental recurrent costs	(\$1,782)
Option 2, incremental recurrent costs	(\$6,121)

The following section provides a breakdown of the key components

5.3.3.1 Leasehold expenses

The current VIC is under a 7-year building lease which is expected to expire in 2026. Under the Base Case, the lease terms are assumed to continue over the financial appraisal period, with both Option 1 and Option 2 exiting this lease upon completion of the new VEC. This results in a \$8.6 million (nominal) reduction in recurrent costs over the financial appraisal period and represents a significant financial benefit and funding source for TRC.

5.3.3.2 Building maintenance

Estimated annual maintenance costs for the existing VIC and ACMHF, as well as the new VEC were completed by a Quantity Surveyor (refer to Stage 3 and Stage 4 cost plans). Annual maintenance was estimated as a range between

1.0% and 2.5% of capital cost based on the Quantity Surveyor's assessment of the building fabric, function and condition.

Under the Base Case, it was identified that there was a \$337,000 annual shortfall in actual maintenance versus the estimated annual maintenance costs for the VIC and ACMH. This unfunded maintenance has been incorporated into the Base Case, as it is expected that over the next 30-years, TRC will need to fund the assessed condition-based maintenance to maintain operations and performance of both facilities.

Option 1 and 2 both represent a reduction in maintenance expenditure over the financial appraisal period, as investment in capital reduces the long-term maintenance requirements and liabilities. Further maintenance savings are achieved through consolidation of back-office and building service functions.

Table 26: Incremental Building Maintenance Recurrent Costs (30-years)

Building Maintenance Expenditure	\$0000, Nominal
Base Case	\$14,810
Option 1, Incremental recurrent costs	(\$1,947)
Option 2, incremental recurrent costs	(\$4,091)

5.3.3.3 Staffing

Traditionally the VIC and museums in the Tamworth region have largely been operated and or resourced by passionate groups of volunteers that have taken it upon themselves to establish these museum collections. A number of these museums and organisations have been managed through the establishment of independent incorporated bodies and Section 355 committees under the *Local Government Act*. The council has taken a leading role in transitioning these operations from a largely volunteer managed museum to a council owned and managed collection, still drawing upon the support and resources of the volunteers. Council only has approximately 1.5 FTE staff to manage these museums and remains reliant on the support of the volunteers for the museums and the VIC.

Lack of permanent staffing and the reliance on volunteers has been identified as a significant barrier to delivering exceptional visitor experiences. Under the Base Case, current expenditure levels on staffing and reliance on volunteers is assumed over the financial appraisal period. Under Option 1 and 2, incremental recurrent costs have been included to provide the requisite uplift needed to support a new VEC. Option 1 assumes an additional \$200,000 per annum, whilst Option 2 assumes \$150,000 per annum, with the full incremental recurrent expenditure represented in the below table.

Table 27: Incremental Staffing Recurrent Costs (30-years)

Staffing Expenditure	\$000, Nominal
Base Case	\$2,590
Option 1, Incremental recurrent costs	+\$8,780
Option 2, incremental recurrent costs	+\$6,585

5.3.4 Land Acquisition / Opportunity Cost

The proposed site for the VEC is former athletics track, Lot 3, located at the corner of Greg Normal Drive and Goonoo Goonoo Road. The site is TRC-owned hence no financial funds are required to acquire the site. For the purposes of the cost-benefit analysis, the cost of the site needs to be reflected as an economic (opportunity) cost of the VEC. As such, the business case assumes the new VEC will require 5,000 m² of land at \$140 per/sqm (\$560,000 total).

5.4 Benefits

Community and cultural facilities, such as VICs and museums, are typically considered public goods that cater to the community for recreation, wellness and learning. Given the public good nature of these facilities, market prices do not readily exist, and other methods need be used to quantify the value.

The project is expected to deliver a range of benefits to visitors, staff, and the community such as delivering modern infrastructure to enable greater financial sustainability for TRC, improved amenity for visitors and staff and enhanced visitor experience.

VEC benefits have been identified and considered and are articulated in the CBA and outlined in the below table. Quantifiable benefits methodology, assumptions and evidence is outlined in the below sections.

Table 28: Summary of quantitative Benefits Under Assessed Options

Benefits	Base Case	Option 1 Fully scoped VEC	Option 2 Minimum viable VEC
Quantitative Benefits			
Increase visitation and dwell times	×	✓	Partial
Direct impacts construction	×	✓	✓
Increased commercial revenues	×	✓	✓
Land use benefits	✓	✓	✓
Residual asset value	×	✓	✓
Qualitative Benefits			
Staff productivity	×	✓	✓
Reduced artefacts damage risk	×	✓	✓
Aboriginal culture protection	×	✓	✓
Improved facility amenity	×	✓	✓
Improved green and open space amenity	×	✓	✓

5.4.1 Increased Visitation and Dwell Times

Development of a Tamworth purpose-built VEC is expected to increase both visitation per annum and the amount of time visitors spend in the facility (dwell time). The visitor economy recognises that the benefits of visitor activity reach beyond industries that directly service visitors such as attractions, accommodation, tour companies and transport providers to retail, food production and service providers and other industries involved indirectly.

2022 visitation is used as the baseline for 2027, the year the new VEC is expected to be completed and operational. NSW visitation is excluded as this is assumed to be a redistribution of state expenditure, and not an 'impact'. Currently around 50% of visits are non-local (outside of NSW or international). This baseline visitation is applied to both Option 1 and Option 2.

The report 'A National Perspective on Visitor Information Servicing' highlights that the total additional money spent in the region as a result of a VIC visit ranges between \$59 (NSW) and \$104 (WA), up to \$124 per adult (SA) and \$151 (VIC).

Other reports, such as standard cost benefit analysis guidelines published in 'Principles and Guidelines for Economic Appraisal of Transport Investment and Initiatives', estimated the value at \$16/hr as per 2016/17, or approximately \$20/hr as of 2022/23.

Based on this, the total value of direct user benefit is conservatively estimated at \$23 per visit under the base case and comparative Options. This value is applied to the forecast of non-local visitation (section 5.2.3) under both scenarios (to estimate the incremental benefit of the Project. Local visitation is excluded due to potential double counting).

Table 29: Incremental Visitation and Dwell Time Benefits

Non-local visitation benefits	\$0000, Nominal
Base Case	\$19,981

Option 1, Fully Scoped VEC	+\$22,065
Option 2, Minimum Viable Product	+\$8,114

5.4.2 Direct Construction Benefits

Using the NIEIR Impact Assessment Module to assess an economic impact gives an idea of the likely flow-on effects. Construction in the Tamworth LGA is an important industry, worth \$744m local sales, or 15% of the local economy in 2021/22. Construction tends to fluctuate significantly with the commencement or completion of new projects.

The investment of \$30 million (Option 1) of construction activity into the LGA would add \$10.8 million in direct impact in value added and 64 jobs associated directly with the construction (~64 per year over the 2-year construction period). Given the size of this project, this is likely to have a regional impact as not all these jobs will be performed by local residents.

Table 30: VEC Construction Phase Economic Assessment: Base Case and Options

Construction phase (2-year period)				
Base Case - Modelling the impact of adding \$1.8m in Construction				
Economic measure	Output (\$m)	Value-added (\$m)	Local Jobs (annual)	Residents jobs (annual)
Impacts on Tamworth Regional Council economy	--	--	--	--
Direct impact on selected sector(s)	\$1.8	\$0.64	4	--
Industrial impact	\$1.64	\$0.55	3	--
Consumption impact	\$0.55	\$0.28	2	--
Total impact on Tamworth Regional Council economy	\$3.99	\$1.47	9	8
Option 1 - Modelling the impact of adding \$30m in Construction				
Direct impact on selected sector(s)	\$30	\$10.75	64	--
Industrial impact	\$27.3	\$9.12	55	--
Consumption impact	\$9.23	\$4.63	28	--
Total impact on Tamworth Regional Council economy	\$66.53	\$24.5	147	141
Option 2 - Modelling the impact of adding \$23m in Construction				
Direct impact on selected sector(s)	\$23	\$8.24	49	--
Industrial impact	\$20.93	\$6.99	42	--
Consumption impact	\$7.08	\$3.55	21	--
Total impact on Tamworth Regional Council economy	\$51.01	\$18.78	113	108

In addition, another 55 jobs (\$9.1 million in value-added) would come from associated industries (suppliers and users), with approximately 28 jobs in consumption impact (more money flowing through the economy from increased spending by additionally employed workers).

The total impact on the local economy would be 141 jobs and \$24.5 million in value-add from the construction phase of the project. The impact model also includes assumptions around input-output relationships between regions and therefore there are additional impacts to the broader Australian economy as a result of supply chain relationships.

5.4.3 Increased Commercial Revenue

A new VEC has the potential to generate additional admission, merchandise, sponsorship and event-hire revenues. The 2022/23 admission and merchandise revenues for both the VIC and the ACMHF totalled \$180,000. Admission fees are currently \$20 per person and is assumed to remain constant for the new VEC. Primary sources of revenues for the new VEC include:

- Admission and merchandise revenues, which are forecasted to grow in line with increased visitation
- Commercial tenancies, include a food and beverage retail offering, assumed at \$33,000 per annum
- Event space hire and catering, including the new outdoor area amphitheatre. Currently no incremental revenues are assumed in the options with further work required to develop forecasts and delivery model

Table 31: Increase Commercial Revenue Results

Increased Commercial Revenues	\$000, Nominal
Base Case	\$3,638
Option 1, Fully Scoped VEC	+\$606
Option 2, Minimum Viable Product	+\$606

5.4.4 Land use benefits

Establishment of a new VEC, consolidating both the existing VIC and ACMHF, will enable TRC council to exit the lease at VIC and make available the ACMHF site available for alternative use.

Table 32: 561 Peel Street, Tamworth



Located at 561 Peel Street Tamworth, the land that the ACMHF is located on is zoned "RE1 – Public Recreation". It shares this location with a Hungry Jacks fast food restaurant and the southern portion of the site is occupied by a Big 4 holiday park. The Western and Southern portions of the land bordering the Peel River are identified as flood prone lands. Northeast of the site the land is classified as MU1 – Mixed Use, primarily comprising of retail developments. Bounded by the Peel River to the west and south which is classified as RU4 land Primary Production small Lots, these RU4 lots are identified as bushfire prone lands. The land and the ACMHF and building are TRC owned. Hungry Jacks fast food outlet leases the land and the 2 northwestern most group of carparking bays from council. Hungry Jacks are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of these facilities.

The site is near the Tamworth town centre and can be adaptively reused for a number of commercial, residential and recreational purposes. Upon completion of the VEC, the potential ACMHF site surplus to TRC's requirements is approximately 7,100 m² with the land recently valued at \$1,230,000 as of 1 July 2022.

5.4.5 Residual asset value

The VEC has assumed to have an asset life of 50-years, subject to routine maintenance requirements being fulfilled. As such for Options 1 and 2, a residual land value has been calculated using a Depreciated Optimised Replacement Cost (DORC) methodology. For the base case, no residual asset value has been assumed, given the current age and condition of the assets.

5.4.6 Avoided Capital Costs

Avoided capital costs refer to the savings realised by steering clear of or mitigating potential capital expenditures that would otherwise be incurred in the absence of a particular project or initiative. These costs typically encompass investments in physical assets, infrastructure, or major capital projects. For the purposes of this project, the avoided capital costs are the minor remodelling workings and upgrades for the VIC and ACMHF under the Base Case.

5.4.7 Avoided Operational Costs

Avoided operational costs pertain to the savings resulting from the prevention or reduction of ongoing operational expenditures that would otherwise be incurred within a specific project or initiative. This category of costs encompasses a range of day-to-day expenses associated with the regular functioning of the Visitor Information Centres and Museums. For instance, within the context of the VIC, avoided operational costs will include savings from exiting the lease at 2 The Ringers Road, Hillvue.

5.4.8 Non-Quantifiable Benefits

There are of course several aspects of the VEC project that cannot be readily valued due to limited information and insufficient research, including.

- Improved Green and Open Space
- Volunteering
- Improved facility amenity
- Co-locational benefits
- Reduced social isolation
- Environmental benefits from reduced travel
- Benefits to specific user groups (e.g. youth, indigenous people and seniors)

5.4.8.1 Improved Facility Amenity

New and refurbished spaces will provide significantly improved amenity to the users of those spaces. This reflects the quality, look and feel of a space, as well as other services made available (e.g. parking, foyer seatings, etc). It is enjoyed by anyone that visits or used the VEC and is not necessarily tied to how the space is used. It reflects general improvement to the overall aesthetic and quality of a property.

To estimate this benefit, we have assumed a base case rate of \$113 per sqm. This reflects the lower commercial space in the Tamworth region as a proxy for the current VIC and museum buildings given its current condition. The Project cases are assumed to have amenity value of \$342 per sqm which is consistent with prime grade office space in the Tamworth region.

5.4.8.2 Improved Green and Open Space

The Project options will also aim to enhance green spaces and public amenity as a means of fostering the creation of active public spaces.

A study from the UK found that the average annual WTP for enhanced public green space and amenity including shared spaces, full pedestrianisation, limited vehicle access, improvements to high-quality construction materials, and high space activation (i.e. where complementary uses on street) equated to £56.09²⁸, or \$103.60 AUD³⁰.

Similarly, a study in China examined the enhancement of public street scapes by increasing the observable quality of public green space and amenity elements from 'low' to 'high'³¹. The study estimated that collectively the WTP for enhancement of pedestrian widths, green space, and street furniture was ¥836.03 per year or \$174.90³².

5.4.8.3 Fit for Purpose Space

Older buildings can have numerous negative impacts on their users. Poor lighting, poor air circulation, temperature control, old non-ergonomic workspaces, mould, and dust (e.g., ducting, carpeting, etc.) all can impact on productivity, whether that be working or learning.

Research into the literature of modern commercial buildings demonstrates a clear link between the fit out of a space and workplace productivity. Well-designed buildings can improve wellbeing and productivity through:

- Improved air quality and temperature control
- Improved lighting (both building and natural light)
- Reduced absenteeism
- Reduced noise levels
- More efficient use of space
- Avoided health and safety incidents
- Rectification of any building faults that may cause discomfort or risk, such as mould, exposed wiring etc³³.

Table 33: Literature Sources for Productivity Improvements

Source	New building on workplace productivity	Improvement in productivity
BPIE, 2018	Improved air quality	0.8% increase per 1 litre per second per person airflow increase
BPIE, 2018	Improved temperature control	3.6% increase per 1-degree Celsius temperature reduction when overheating
BPIE, 2018	Improved lighting	0.80% increase per 100 lux increase in light level
BPIE, 2018	Better daylight	10% increase due to better daylight exposure in office
Pilcher et. al., 2002 ³⁴	Thermal comfort	14.88% decrease in performance – temperature above 32.22 degrees C

²⁸ UK Department for Transport, *Valuation of Townscapes and Pedestrianisation: Final Report*, prepared by Atkins Consulting and the University of Leeds, 26 January 2011.

²⁹ Bank of England, *Inflation Calculator*, <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>.

³⁰ Reserve Bank of Australia, *Exchange Rates*, <https://www.rba.gov.au/statistics/frequency/exchange-rates.html>.

³¹ Shao Y, Xu X, Jiang L, Crastes dit Sourd R., *Economic Valuation of the Renewal of Urban Streets: A Choice Experiment*, Sustainability 2020, 12, 4808.

³² Reserve Bank of Australia, *Exchange Rates*, <https://www.rba.gov.au/statistics/frequency/exchange-rates.html>.

³³ SGS Economics and Planning, *Courts Infrastructure Program: Definition and Quantification of Common Economic Parameters*, November 2021, Page 55.

³⁴ Pilcher et.al, 2002 - Effects of hot and cold temperature exposure on performance: A meta-analytic review

Source	New building on workplace productivity	Improvement in productivity
Pilcher et. al., 2002	Thermal comfort	13.91% decrease in performance – temperatures under 10 degrees C
Lan et. al., 2011 ³⁵	Thermal comfort (warmer temperatures)	Evidence of performance decline when temperatures increased to 30 degrees C from 22 degrees C
World Green Building Council, 2014 ³⁶	Indoor air quality	8%-10% increase in performance with improved air quality
World Green Building Council, 2014	Thermal comfort – cooler temperatures	4% performance increase, comparing 23 degrees to 15 degrees
World Green Building Council, 2014	Thermal comfort – warmer temperatures	6% performance increase comparing 21 degrees to 30 degrees
Seppanen, Fisk, & Faulkner, 2004 ³⁷	Improved temperature control	2% decrease in performance per degrees C on temperatures above 25 degrees C
SGS economic and planning ³⁸	Improved workspace quality and fit out	Assumed standard economic parameter of improved productivity range of between 2% and 3.86%

5.5 Cost Benefit Analysis

This section presents the economic assessment supporting this FBC outlining the expected outcomes of a capital investment in the Project.

The key steps of a CBA model include:

- Identifying the quantifiable benefits that can be monetised.
- Calculating the value (in monetary terms) of the quantified incremental benefits and capital costs in net present value (NPV) terms using the discount rates.
- Calculating the benefit-cost ratio (BCR). This includes the total present value of all net benefits compared to the present value of costs to determine the ratio to which incremental net benefits exceed (or undershoot) incremental costs related to the proposal.

5.5.1 General Assumptions

The table below provides a summary of the assumptions used in the value for money assessment.

³⁵ Lan et.al, 2011 - Effects of thermal discomfort in an office on perceived air quality, SBS symptoms, physiological responses, and human performance

³⁶ World Green Building Council, 2014 - Health, Wellbeing and Productivity in Offices

³⁷ Seppanen, Fisk, & Faulkner, 2004 - Control of Temperature for Health and Productivity in Offices

³⁸ SGS Economics and Planning, "Courts Infrastructure Program – Definition and Quantification of Common Economic Parameters", Prepared for Department of Courts and Justice, November 2011.

Table 34: Value for Money Parameters and Assumptions

Description	Assumption	Source
General		
Social discount rate	5%	NSW Government guidelines Standard sensitivity tests at 3% and 7%
Financial appraisal discount rate		
Appraisal Period	30 years	NSW Government guidelines
Base Date for NPV	30 June 2024	
Design Phase	1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025	
Delivery Phase	1 July 2025 – 30 June 2027	
Operating Phase	1 July 2027 – 30 June 2057	
Revenues / Costs		
Revenues cashflows	2.5%	
Capital cost escalation rate	2.5%	
Operating cost escalation rate	2.5%	

5.5.2 CBA Results

The economic appraisal results for the project options based on the above analysis are presented in the table below.

Table 35: CBA result summary (30-year appraisal period, discounted at 5%) ('\$000)

Category	Base Case Minimum Intervention	Option 1 Fully scoped VEC	Option 2 Minimum viable VEC
Benefits (real, undiscounted)			
Admission Revenues	\$3,638	\$4,366	\$4,002
Visitation Direct Benefits	\$19,981	\$42,046	\$28,095
Construction Direct Benefits	\$625	\$9,994	\$7,661
Commercial Revenues	\$-	\$606	\$606
Land Use Benefits	\$484	\$1,036	\$1,036
Residual Asset Value	\$-	\$11,322	\$8,138
Costs (real, undiscounted)			
Capital Costs	\$1,868	\$30,010	\$21,800
Operational Costs	\$20,829	\$19,885	\$19,885
Results Summary			
Benefits (real, discounted)	\$24,728	\$69,371	\$49,538
Costs (real, discounted)	\$22,697	\$49,895	\$41,685
NPV (5% discount rate)	\$2,030	\$19,476	\$7,852
BCR (5% discount rate)	1.09	1.40	1.19

- Base Case: The net present value of the scenario is estimated to be around \$2.03 million, with a benefit cost ratio of 1.09. This means that the benefits outweigh the minimum capital costs. It is important to note the risks with the base case including:
 - Long-term decline in visitation due to lack of capital renewal investment. Current visitation is forecasted to decline by 0.3% per annum although this would most likely be significantly worse
 - Risks of inadequate storage, climate control and fire protection systems, resulting in damage to artefacts or harm to staff or the community
- Option 1: The net present value of the scenario is estimated to be around \$19.48 million, with a benefit cost ratio of 1.40. This means that the proposed VEC development benefits outweigh the costs. This option produces the best benefits cost ratio and was assessed as the preferred option under the multi-criteria assessment analysis (section 3.3.1)
- Option 2: The net present value of the scenario is estimated to be around \$7.85 million, with a benefit cost ratio of 1.19. This means that the proposed VEC development benefits outweigh the costs.

The cost benefit analysis has determined that Option 1 is the preferred option for the VEC, delivering greater visitation benefits than Option 2.

5.6 Preferred Option

Following the MCA, a review of the BCRs and financial NPVs was undertaken to compare the key value for money outcomes across each of the project options.

The table below provides a summary of the value for money assessment outcomes. The analysis has been undertaken for the core results only (i.e. excluding tests completed as part of the sensitivity analysis). The detailed analysis is in the value for money section above.

Table 36: Value for Money Assessment Summary

	Option 1 Fully scoped VEC within Tourism Precinct	Option 2 Minimum viable VEC within Tourism Precinct
NPV	\$19,476	\$7,853
BCR	1.40	1.19
MCA	2.0	1.7

5.7 Financial Appraisal

This section presents the financial appraisal for the project options. The financial analysis includes analysis for an average year, an assessment of cash flows over the life of the Project, and a sensitivity analysis to determine the effect of changes in key assumptions to the financial outcomes.

The financial appraisal will draw on many of the same inputs and assumptions as the CBA, with some notable differences.

5.7.1 Financial Forecast

Detailed financial analysis of the current VIC and ACMHF was undertaken, along with an assessment of indirect support provided by Council. Council currently underwrites direct operating costs by approximately \$0.4 million per annum in cash, and a further \$200,000 – 250,000 per annum in indirect support of the operation.

The table below provides a 10-year forecast for a new VEC. Detailed assumptions can be found in section 5.3.3. Additionally, the forecast was built on the assumptions that:

- Direct expenses would increase by 2.5% per annum
- Direct revenue would increase by 2.5% per annum
- Indirect expenses would continue to be funded by TRC

To deliver the project, the total funding required is \$8.0 million from FY27 through to FY36; this includes funding to cover operating cost shortfalls of approximately \$0.8 million annually.

The following table sets out the total funding required in nominal numbers until FY57.

Table 37: Total Operational Funding Requirement, excludes one-offs

Category	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32	FY33	FY34	FY35	FY36	10-yrs
Option 1											
Direct Revenues	\$249	\$255	\$262	\$269	\$276	\$283	\$290	\$297	\$305	\$313	
Direct Costs	\$944	\$972	\$1,002	\$1,032	\$1,063	\$1,094	\$1,127	\$1,161	\$1,196	\$1,232	
Profit / (Loss)	(\$695)	(\$717)	(\$740)	(\$763)	(\$787)	(\$812)	(\$837)	(\$864)	(\$891)	(\$919)	(8,025)
Base Case											
Direct Revenues	\$180	\$185	\$189	\$194	\$199	\$204	\$209	\$214	\$219	\$225	
Direct Costs	\$989	\$1,019	\$1,049	\$1,081	\$1,113	\$1,146	\$1,181	\$1,216	\$1,253	\$1,290	
Profit / (Loss)	(\$809)	(\$834)	(\$860)	(\$887)	(\$914)	(\$943)	(\$972)	(\$1,002)	(\$1,033)	(\$1,066)	(9,320)
Incremental Profit / (Loss)	\$114	\$117	\$120	\$124	\$127	\$131	\$135	\$138	\$142	\$147	\$1,295

A new VEC in Tamworth would require TRC to product additional income or operating contributions of approximately \$800,000 per annum. Forecasted operational business revenue cannot achieve this, and grants, sponsorships and donations should be used as value adding rather than gap filling.

Secure approaches to break even are:

- Increasing the Council contribution – By combining a financial argument that indirect support is no longer required, that there is an upside of commercial use of the former building, and that a new VEC is needed to be built (though Council will continue to be responsible for its operating costs)
- Sponsorships, donations and grant funding - Establishes an investment account of approximately \$8.0 million that can yield a minimum return of 5% per annum, which is drawn down to fund the deficit

The business case currently assumed the Council contribution as the funding source for operating losses. Further work, stakeholder engagement and consultation are required for validation.

5.7.2 Funding Sources

Ultimately, the financial feasibility of a new art museum for Shepparton rests with a partnership between Council, Government and partnerships. The VEC requires the following funding commitments:

- Council being prepared to fund the \$8.0 million operating deficit over the next 10-years;
 - Capital contribution by TRC including:
 - Proceeds of sale ACMHF - \$1.2 million sale of the ACMHF, site located at 561 Peel Street Tamworth
 - Proceeds of sale VEP - \$4.0 million sale of the Regional Sporting Field to the successful developer. Sale includes all lands of the precinct except for Lot 3, designated for the VEC
- Federal or State Government being prepared to fund the \$26.7 million capital to build the VEC;
- TRC capital contribution of \$5.2 including:
 - Proceeds of sale ACMHF - \$1.2 million sale of the ACMHF, site located at 561 Peel Street Tamworth
 - Proceeds of sale VEP - \$4.0 million sale of the Regional Sporting Field to the successful developer. Sale includes all lands of the precinct except for Lot 3, designated for the VEC

TRC are planning to apply for Stream Two: Precinct Delivery of the "Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program". Under this stream, grants of between \$5 and \$50 million are available to help deliver one or more elements of a precinct. TRC are intending to apply for the VEC design and delivery, including enabling infrastructure, shell and fit out. The anticipated capital funding that TRC will request is \$27.7, which is the balance of capital funding required.

It is expected that approval and announcement of successful applicants will be between May – June 2024. If successful, the project completion date will need to be no later than 31 March 2026.

6 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Overview

This section provides an overview of the Project's implementation, including development process, governance, key milestones, change and risk management, benefits realisation, stakeholder engagement and proposed next steps for delivery.

6.2 Package of Works

In developing a strategic approach to procurement, TRC aims to effectively package and procure the diverse components of the VEC Project, ensuring the optimal allocation of resources and expertise across multiple facets, from the construction and fit-out of the VEC to the relocation of existing facilities and iconic structures.

The following packages have been identified:

Table 38: VEC Project Packages

Package	Description
VEC Shell and Fit Out <i>Primary Package</i>	The success of the new VEC and museums is reliant on creating a seamless visitor experience and journey, from the arrival to the site, transitioning through the landscape and entering the building to the VEC and museums. An integrated fit out as part of the base building would maximise the opportunity to get this right, an independent fit out to the base building often leads to coordination issues for services, potential reworking of spaces and services that would add cost to the project. An integrated development puts the onus on the contractor to coordinate works and has the potential to enable an expedited delivery of the project.
Relocation and Curation of Museums	This package involved the relocation of the existing VIC and museums to their new precinct. Additionally, it includes the curation of museum exhibits to enhance the overall visitor experience. It is noted that these suppliers should be consulted during the shell construction and fit out stage.
Golden Guitar Relocation	This package focuses on the relocation of the iconic Golden Guitar to its designated areas within the new precinct, ensuring its prominent and visually appealing placement. A targeted procurement process should be initiated, specifically identifying contractors experienced in handling delicate and iconic structure. The emphasis would be on preserving the integrity of the Golden Guitar during the relocation.

6.3 Delivery Model

There are several delivery methodologies for the planning, development, and construction of the new VEC and Museums. These are explored below for the primary package with a qualitative assessment to determine the most appropriate approach that will deliver upon TRC's expectations.

6.3.1 Works-in-Kind

The delivery of the VEC within the broader Tourism Precinct could be facilitated through the developer's contribution as 'works in kind', as permitted by the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. Under this legislation, local councils possess the authority to mandate development contributions to offset the expenses associated with providing necessary services and facilities to accommodate demand generated by the development.

In this specific context of the VEC, this might entail the developer of the wider Tourism Precinct taking on the responsibility of constructing the VEC itself, serving as an alternative to a monetary contribution. Alternatively, the

arrangement could involve the developer providing essential trunk infrastructure or enabling works, with the remaining aspects of the VEC's delivery overseen on the Council.

Such an approach holds the potential to streamline the delivery of the VEC and museums, leveraging the expertise of the contractor already engaged in executing the broader Tourism Precinct. However, it is crucial to note that, as of the writing of the business case, no formal development agreement, including considerations for land, has been established. This lack of development agreement poses a risk to the successful realisation of this Project.

6.3.2 Construct Only

This would involve the Council managing the design and documentation of the VEC and museums against an agreed brief and scope of work. TRC would need to procure a multidisciplinary design team to design and document the project, arrange for independent costing for the design.

Then TRC would be required to procure the services of a Building Contractor with the appropriate experience to deliver the Base building VEC and museums with an integrated fit out. This approach would ensure that Council has full control over it required scope of works and costs. It is important to acknowledge however, that TRC has not previously embarked on a project of this nature. As a result, this delivery model introduces potential risks to TRC, given the absence of prior experience in a comparable undertaking.

6.3.3 Design and Construct

A detail brief would be prepared that encompasses TRC's requirements for the VEC and museums, this would be developed with TRC's procured consultant team to a particular point, then TRC could approach market for a suitable Design and Construct (D&C) Contractor to finalise the design and construct the project.

This has the advantage of the construction contractor being able to use their trade partner expertise in finalising the design and meeting TRC's requirements, potentially expediting the delivery of the facility, however, would require considerable resources from TRC to input into the design and ensure that their contracted requirements are delivered to expectation.

6.3.4 Preferred Delivery Approach

The preferred approach for the delivery model is a Design and Construct for the primary package as it provides:

- The right level of experience and capability
- Certainty with the delivery timeframe
- Risk mitigation for TRC (i.e. transfer risk allocation to the D&C contractor)
- Early collaboration between designers and builders

A detailed functional brief, schematic design and site-specific due diligence (e.g. environmental reports, engineering, services, etc) are important enablers to progress delivery and ensure adequate contracting to a suitable builder.

6.4 Master Program

The Master Program outlines the key milestone and activities for the delivery of the Project. The program reflects the scope of the preferred option and has informed the Delivery and Procurement Strategy. The program includes several concurrent activities that are being undertaken in conjunction with this Business Case development.

6.4.1 Key Milestones

Key Program milestones have been identified to facilitate successful completion of the VEC Project within time and budget constraints, as outlined in the table below. Key dependencies for project commissioning by December 2026 include security of Grant funds, planning approvals and completion of detailed design. TRC will need to consider timing of the new VEC, ideally to be open for 2027 Country Music Festival event.

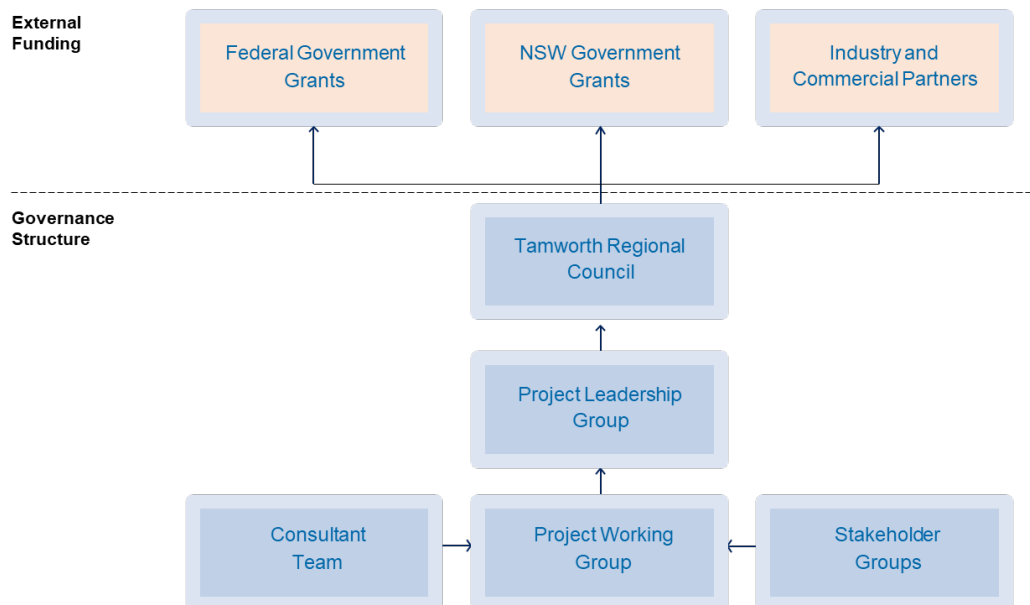
Table 39: TRC VEC Timeline

Milestone/s	Milestone Date
Funding Deed – Binding agreements with various parties	March 2024
Site investigations – Environmental studies	June 2024
Detailed Design	August 2024
Issue Tender Documents – D&C	September 2024
Tender Assessment - Appoint Developer	October 2024
Planning Approval	December 2024
Relocation – VIC and ACMHF	October 2026
Construction – VEC Project	November 2026
Commissioning Complete and Handover (Final Stage of Refurbishment)	December 2026

6.5 Project Governance

TRC is responsible for the delivery of this Project. An overview of the VEC Governance arrangements for the Project during the various 6-stages (inclusive of this Business Case) has been provided below. The governance structure will continue to be adjusted to reflect the requirements of the delivery plan to ensure the relevant knowledge and skillset is involved in reach level of governance for successful project completion.

Table 40: TRC VEC Project Governance Structure



6.5.1 Project Working Group

TRC have formed a Project Team to deliver the VEC Project. This team has been working collaboratively for the planning and design phases. The team included representatives from the VIC, ACMHF and was led by the TRC Growth and Prosperity Team. The purpose of the Project Team is to bring together a cohesive stakeholder group working together to develop a comprehensive VEC scope and operating model that maximises the VEC stated project objectives (refer to section 2.4.1). The Project Working Group was supported by a specialist consultant team.

6.5.2 Project Leadership Group

A Project Leadership Group has been formed to oversee the Stage 1 -5 VEC Project Deliverables. The Leadership Group will endorse the scope, recommendations and directions. The Leadership Group membership reflects the TRC leadership group.

6.5.3 Tamworth Regional Council

Based on the financial investment requirement, Tamworth Regional Council is accountable for the final approval of the final business case and associated stage recommendations. The endorsement of Council will enable the Project team to liaise with external stakeholders and potential partners, including the Federal Government, NSW Government and other potential investment parties.

6.6 Stakeholder Engagement

6.6.1 Stakeholder Management

To provide confidence that any impacts and interests of the Project have been identified and will be effectively managed, a Stakeholder Register and Interest has been created. This document will be updated periodically throughout the Project's lifecycle:

A Communications Engagement Strategy (CES) will be developed and implemented post business case approval, and will include:

- An outline of the communication approach and key stakeholders involved with the Project.
- Identified stakeholder groups comprising of individuals and organisations that could be impacted by or have an interest in the Project.
- A high-level stakeholder consultation plan to engage stakeholders; and
- Identifies risks associated with involving (or not involving) stakeholders in the development through to the implementation of the Project.

6.6.2 Stakeholder Identification & Analysis

TRC recognises that well-planned and strategic stakeholder management will be a key success factor for the planning, design, development, handover, and operation of the Project.

Table 41: TRC VEC Stakeholder Register

Stakeholder	Interest in project
Local members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting the economic, social, and environmental objectives of state and federal governments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State – Member for Tamworth, The Hon. Kevin John Anderson • Federal - Member for New England, Hon. Barnaby Joyce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering increased visitor services capacity. • Delivering infrastructure which meets expectations. • Local planning compliance. • Staging schedule for construction and opening of the VEC. • Schedule for construction. • Impacts on the local community including noise, congestion, and traffic. • Providing tourism infrastructure to meet current and projected visitor needs. • Shared use of community spaces

Stakeholder	Interest in project
<p><u>Tamworth Regional Council</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor -Russell Webb General Manager – Paul Bennett Councillors Council staff including planners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local planning compliance. Staging schedule for construction and opening of the VEC. Schedule for construction. Impacts on the local community including noise, congestion, and traffic. Providing tourism infrastructure to meet current and projected visitor needs. Shared use of community spaces. Future use of the ACMHF building. VEC integration within the Tourism Precinct, AELEC and TRECC. Industry engagement and participation. Budget implication, including potential third-party funding sources and infrastructure planning and maintenance.
<p><u>NSW Government agencies and peak bodies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Tourism Industry Council Destination NSW NSW Department of Planning and Environment Department of Regional NSW Aboriginal Affairs NSW Local Government NSW NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alignment of project with relevant government priorities, projections, strategies, and plans. Compliance with standards, policy, and regulatory requirements, including planning requirements. Providing tourism infrastructure to meet current and projected visitor needs. Impact to visitor economy, including diversification and sustainability. Available funding sources. Integration with planned public infrastructure projects. Impacts on existing public infrastructure including roads and transport and any heritage items. Ensuring new infrastructure meets standard requirements for safety and fire evacuation. Environmental, sustainability and potential contamination issues during design, construction, and operation. Adequate public transport options and access (including sustainable transport options i.e., riding and walking) Ensuring new infrastructure meets standard requirements to ensure the safety in design and sensitive to local concerns.
<p><u>Special Interest Groups</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Country Music Foundation National Guitar Museum Foundation Manilla Place Management Nundle Place Management AELEC TRECC Tamworth Sporting Complex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project proposals, designs, and implementation timing. Impacts of the project on the surrounding community prior, during and after construction. Altered road network and impacts on traffic, access, public transport, and parking. Pedestrian safety. Re-location of the Golden Guitar, VIC and ACMHF. Shared use of community spaces VEC artefacts curation experiences VEC service model
<p><u>Local Community Groups</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbouring residents Community associations Volunteer organisations and advocacy groups Environmental groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared and open space VEC final design VEC service model Sustainability practices
<p><u>Service providers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electricity Gas Water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of utilities into design and connection during construction. Compliance with any approval processes.

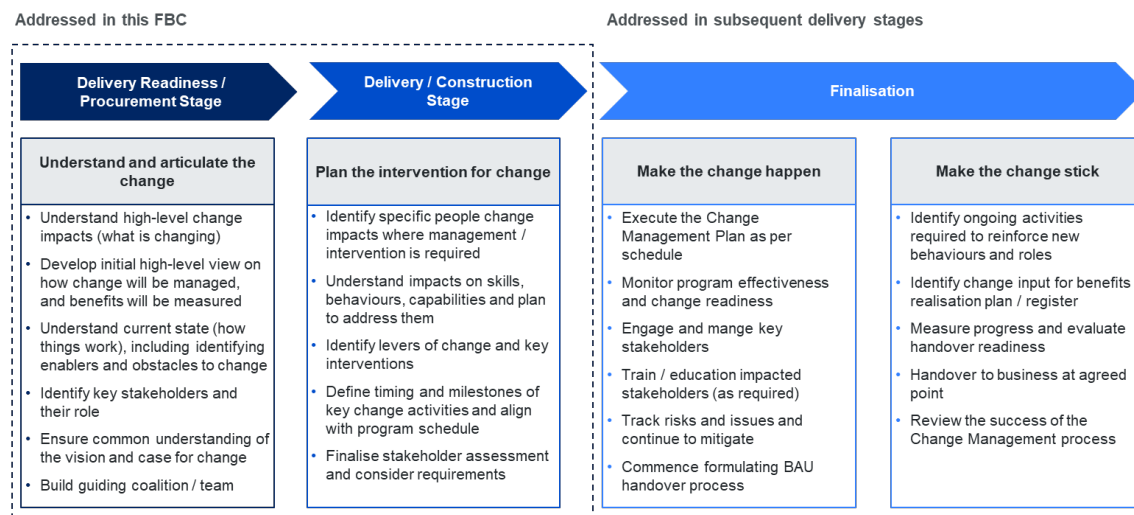
Stakeholder	Interest in project
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telecommunications
<p>Local Media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metro print, tv and radio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location of the new VEC. Issues in the public interest. Controversial or contested issues. Benefits for the local community and audiences.
<p>Local Aboriginal Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSW State Aboriginal Land Council Local Aboriginal Land Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considering support needs and improving outcomes for Aboriginal families. Potential for impact on cultural heritage or significant sites. Potential input into design elements and considerations.

6.7 Change Management

Change management is the process whereby people are prepared and supported to understand, accept, and adopt change. An effective change management program is critical to minimising the risk and disruption associated with change and to help realise its benefits. A high-level Change Management Framework, shown in the figure below, has been developed in accordance with the best-practice change processes.

It outlines the key types of change that will occur because of the VEC implementation of the preferred option and sets out proposed key actions to manage these changes.

Figure 23: Change Management Framework



While a Change Management Plan is being prepared by TRC, a high-level desktop assessment of the level of change, types of changes and who will be impacted are considered below.

The level of change for the VEC Project is relatively low versus developing the existing sites over the long-term. Change management will predominately focus on staff and artefact relocations between the existing sites and new site. The change for staff will require communication throughout the process to ensure they are aware of, and support, the initiative.

A summary of identified key changes, including an overview of the potential change management approach is in the table below.

Table 42: Key changes, including change management approach

Key Change	Overview of Change Management Approach
<p>Execution of the Master Development Agreement and relevant lot subdivision</p> <p>Lot subdivision approval and execution is required to enable VEC project development. TRC is currently negotiating and finalising the subdivision with a Precinct developer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Precinct Master Plan final design Precinct services plan for the Precinct, including integration of core functions such as traffic management, car parking, pedestrian and road networks
<p>Adoption of VR/AR technology</p> <p>The VEC will leverage new technologies such as Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) to create immersive visitor experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide training programs for staff and volunteers to familiarise them with VR/AR technology. Establish technology support to address any challenges during the adoption phase. Develop user-friendly interfaces to enhance visitor interaction with VR/AR elements.
<p>Hub and Spoke Service Model</p> <p>The project introduces a hub and spoke service model, changing the way services are delivered and dispersed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop training programs to familiarise staff and volunteers with the new service model. Recruitment and training of permanent staff Resource model strategy integrating permanent staff and volunteers Communicate the benefits of the hub and spoke model, including increased visitor dispersal and improved efficiency. Monitor and assess the model's effectiveness, adjusting as needed based on feedback and performance metrics.
<p>Cross-functional Workforce</p> <p>Staff and volunteers will work across the VIC and museums, fostering a collaborative and cross-functional approach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement cross-training programs to enhance the skill sets of staff and volunteers. Establish collaborative work culture through team building activities. Address any resistance to change through open communication and recognition of contributions.
<p>Seasonal Exhibition Space</p> <p>The project includes the introduction of seasonal exhibition space, requiring the curation of temporary exhibits, a new practice for TRC.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and train staff or hire professionals with expertise in curating temporary exhibits. Implement a content management system to streamline the curation process. Establish guidelines for selecting and rotating temporary exhibits.
<p>Financial Sustainability</p> <p>The VEC will establish its own profit and loss structure, moving away from general fundings for the VIC and museums.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct financial capability training for relevant staff to manage the profit and loss structure effectively. Develop transparent financial reporting mechanisms for stakeholders (i.e. separate profit centre codes). Communicate the financial sustainability benefits of the new structure to gain support.
<p>Relocation to a new site</p> <p>The VEC will relocate to a new site, necessitating adjustments in operations and logistics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a detailed relocation plan outlining timelines, logistics and potential challenges. Communicate the reasons for relocation and the benefits to staff, volunteers, and the community. Implement a change support team to address concerns and facilitate a smooth transition.

6.8 Risk Management Plan

The Risk Management Plan (RMP) for the Project in accordance with TRC’s processes for the identification, mitigation, and management of risk.

The RMP is a ‘live’ document, regularly reviewed, updated, and reported by the Project Team and PCG meetings throughout the final business case period. A consultative process will continue to be adopted to identify, analyse, and manage project risks. This approach is based on a continuous and proactive approach to risk management and includes:

- Discussions on risk at monthly PDC meetings
- Discussions on risks with the nominated
- Risk Owners Discussions on risk at Design Team meetings
- Risk Matrix prepared utilising information from the above
- Risk Review Workshops to be held at key milestones throughout the life of the Project.

The Project Manager coordinates, manages, and updates the Risk Management Plan to reflect mitigation actions implemented and any new risks or mitigation actions identified. All project risks will be grouped under one of the following categories:

- Service Delivery
- Design/ Scope
- Change, Communications and Stakeholders
- Construction/ Commissioning
- Programme
- Procurement
- Financial (Capital/ Recurrent)

6.8.1 Risk Assessment Criteria

The VEC Project risks are individually identified – assessing both the likelihood (probability of the event occurring) and the consequences (cost or impact of the event). Mitigation strategies are subsequently developed to mitigate or reduce the project risk exposure. Ongoing review, monitoring and updating will occur throughout the planning, design and delivery stages and is the responsibility of the Project Director.

Table 43: Risk Rating Assessment Methodology

Likelihood	Consequence				
	Insignificant (1)	Minor (2)	Moderate (3)	Major (4)	Critical (5)
Almost Certain (5)	Low (2)	Medium (3)	High (4)	Extreme (5)	Extreme (5)
Likely (4)	Very Low (1)	Low (2)	Medium (3)	High (4)	Extreme (5)
Possible (3)	Very Low (1)	Low (2)	Medium (3)	High (4)	High (4)
Unlikely (2)	Very Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (2)	Medium (3)	High (4)
Not possible (1)	Very Low (1)	Very Low (1)	Low (2)	Medium (3)	Medium (3)

6.8.2 Risk Register

A preliminary identification and analysis of key project risks, measures to mitigate their impacts and status of implementation of mitigation strategies has been undertaken by the Project Team. These risks have been reviewed by the Project Working Group and mitigation strategies are also reviewed and updated bi-monthly to proactively monitor the risks and the Project's response to monitoring them. The risk register is presented below.

Table 44: VEC Project Risk Register

Category	Risk Description	Consequence Rating	Likelihood	Inherent Risk Rating	Summary of Mitigation Strategies	Mitigated Risk Rating
Financial / Recurrent	Over all scenarios, including the base case, there is a funding operating deficit, without any determined funding strategy	C5	C5	Extreme	- Development of a detailed funding and commercial strategy	Extreme
Design/ Scope	VEC Precinct subdivision has not been completed by TRC	C4	L3	High	- Complete negotiations with developer - Complete subdivision and land transaction with developer	Medium
Service Delivery	VEC is not adequately integrated into the Tourism Precinct, AELEC and TRECC	C4	L3	High	- Develop a Precinct masterplan and strategy - Develop a Precinct charter and establish Precinct governance	Medium
Design/ Scope	Project scope not adequately captured nor budgeted	C5	L3	High	- Clearly define scope - Regular scope reviews and formalised change control processes to assess and approve scope changes - Develop a community consultation plan	Medium
Change, Communications and Stakeholders	Community opposition to relocation of the VIC, museums, or Golden Guitar	C3	L3	Medium	- Engage the community early - Develop a community consultation plan	Low
	Staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders may resist or struggle with the introduction of new systems or processes	C4	C4	High	- Implement a Change Management Plan, including stakeholder engagement, communication, and training programs	Medium

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Category	Risk Description	Consequence Rating	Likelihood	Inherent Risk Rating	Summary of Mitigation Strategies	Mitigated Risk Rating
	Current VIC and ACMFH staff and volunteers resist working across functions	C4	C3	High	- Implement a Change Management Plan, including stakeholder engagement, communication, and training programs	Medium
Construction/ Commissioning	Latent site conditions during construction leading to program delays or budget impacts				- Undertake site assessments in planning and design stage - Ensure appropriate level of contingency	
Programme	Delay in tender and contract award impacting operational commencement	C3	L4	Medium	- Regular updates of the project schedule - Weekly tracking of progress and immediate action on delayed activities with escalation to the ESC for action as required	Low
	Project program exceeds the planned delivery date leading to cost impacts	C3	L4	Medium	- Project Manager to manage project impacts by working closely with the suppliers and the Project Director to find efficiencies in approvals and delivery - Coordination through the Enterprise Project Management Office to ensure business readiness state for implementation is achieved	Low
	Project program delays exceed VIC lease end date	C4	C3	High	- Regular updates of the project schedule - Weekly tracking of progress and immediate action on delayed activities with escalation to the ESC for action as required	Medium
Procurement	Tender responses exceed approved budget	C4	C3	High	- Development of a comprehensive project budget - All internal TRC resources cost such as project management, change management and ICT, finance support has been provided by the relevant SMEs	Medium
	Contractor availability in remote locations, tender may not be competitive, higher budget, or not contractor available	C4	L2	Medium	- Undertake an EOI / market engagement process	Low

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Category	Risk Description	Consequence Rating	Likelihood	Inherent Risk Rating	Summary of Mitigation Strategies	Mitigated Risk Rating
Financial (Capital/ Recurrent)	Capital funding required not obtained	C5	L3	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enter into Development Agreement for the Tourism Precinct - Allocate available funds within the TRC general capital budget - Develop a Partnership Foundation and actively engage with industry - Explore Federal and State Government funding opportunities 	Medium

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1.1 VEC Project Recommendations

A post-implementation plan (PIP) will be developed to guide the review of the project once the project is complete and operational, against agreed objectives and outcomes identified in the business case and planning process. The review will consider costs and benefits, timing and delivery, effectiveness of the design, and whether the facility meets the identified stakeholder requirements.

The PIP will be linked to the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and the consultation should recommence approximately 12 months after operational commissioning to ensure the learnings from the implementation are documented and carried forward for future projects.

It is recommended that TRC:

- Endorse Option 1 is the preferred option noting that the full-scoped VEC within the Visitor Experience Precinct maximises value for money and meets the project objectives
- Endorse the Option 1 scope and reference accommodation requirements noting this has been approved by the project team
- Endorse that \$31.89million of capital funds is required to deliver the projects, expected to be funded from the following sources:
 - TRC - \$5.2m, capital contribution from the proceeds of sale from the ACMHF site and Visitor Entertainment Precinct land sale to the preferred developer
 - Federal or NSW Government - \$27.7m, required capital contribution, to be applied via a number of current grant opportunities
 - TRC - \$8.0 million operating deficit funding over the first 10-years of the new VEC's operations (noting this is less than the forecasted operating deficit under the base case scenario)

8 APPENDICIES

Appendix 1 – Stage 1 “Capital of Country Tourism Precinct Situation Analysis”

Appendix 2 – Stage 2 “VIC Benchmark Analysis”

Appendix 3 – Stage 3 “Capital of Country Building Situation Analysis”

Appendix 4 – Stage 4 “VEC Precinct Strategy”

Appendix 5 - Stage 5 “Regional Tourism Service Model”