

Preparation of a Dungog Destination Management Plan

DRT commissioned Jenny Rand and Associates to prepare this plan. This plan provides the framework and direction for tourism development and investment in a locality.

The purpose of the plan and its use is outlined on page 4.

Jenny was already familiar with the region and spent time during 2020 consulting with the main organisations involved with tourism.

DRT is working closely with Dungog Shire Council in the preparation of the plan. Jenny recently presented this draft plan to a meeting of councillors.

It is now in a form which enables a wider review by interested individuals and organisations.

The timetable is:

- 14 December 2020 – distribution to members of DRT and other interested individuals/organisations for review.
- 22 January 2021 – close of review period, collation and consideration of responses.
- 1 February 2021 – review by DRT Board and Jenny Rand & Associates and finalisation of the document.
- 5 February 2021 – forward to Council for final review.
- 1 March 2021 – final approval by DRT Board and distribution

Please review and provide feedback via email or a written statement by 22nd of January. Feedback should be emailed to info@drt.org.au

I am happy to discuss any aspect of the Plan at any time.

Regards

Cameron

AC Archer AM
Chair
Dungog Regional Tourism Inc.
11 December 2020
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Attached to this is either a full copy of the draft plan or a copy of the power point presentation prepared to brief Council on in early December

DUNGOG SHIRE DRAFT DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN



Purpose of the DMP

Sets direction and framework for the development and management of tourism in the Shire for the next 5 years.

Critical in sourcing funding

‘Tourism is everyone’s business’

Written from a Shire perspective – would like to see Council + DRT logos



Goals

The primary goals are to:

- Increase visitor expenditure within the Shire, with resultant economic and social benefits for the Shire community.
- Diversify the Shire's economy and build resilience.
- Improve the viability and sustainability of local businesses.
- Create employment.



Outcomes

- **Deliver on Council's Strategic Objectives - Dungog Shire Community Strategic Plan 2030 and Local Strategic Planning Statement**
- **Growing visitor economy – environmentally, economically and socially sustainable**
- **Increased appeal and competitiveness of Dungog Shire as a destination** – in particular, to build the Shire's attraction and activity base.
- **Higher profile / increased awareness of Dungog Shire** - from both a tourism and economic development perspective.
- **Retention and protection of the lifestyle, heritage, cultural, landscape and environmental assets that underpin tourism.**
- **Increased public and private sector investment in appropriate and sustainable tourism products and facilities.**



Consultation themes



- Importance of tourism to Shire economy.
- Dependence on natural assets + need to manage sustainably.
- Contribution of the MTB / Common + recognition infrastructure + facilities not in place to support
- Strong growth in the cycling, camping, touring caravan and RV and motorcycle (road and off-road) touring + COVID 19 impacts
- Vibrant and growing arts community creating opportunities for place-making, business development and events
- Great venues for events / good track record / accommodation constraints / dependence on volunteers
- Infrastructure, facilities and services need to be improved to accommodate growth in visitation and maximise benefits. / Recognition that Council and the land and water management agencies have limited funds and resources available for tourism infrastructure, facilities and marketing.
- The need for greater communication, cooperation and collaboration between key stakeholders .
- The costs and difficulties of obtaining planning approvals with Council and State Government policies perceived as a barrier to investment.
- Managing irresponsible and anti-social behaviour – roads, State Forests, National Parks

Strengths / Assets to work with

- Proximity to population centres + international / domestic gateways
- National Parks, World Heritage listing, State Forests
- Rivers + Lostock & Chichester Dam
- Dungog Common, Pilchers Reserve
- Mountain biking – emerging as a cycle destination
- Strong arts community / reputation for creative / alternative / lifestyle
- Spectacular camping sites / boutique accommodation – aspirational
- Dungog & villages



Challenges / Issues

- Limited funds & resources / dependence on volunteers
- Population growth – pressure on the area
- Gloucester – recognised gateway
- Increasing competition from surrounding LGAs
- Limited attraction base
- Attractions not achieving full potential
- Accommodation capacity constraints
- Aging infrastructure – toilets, picnic facilities, VIC
- Not leveraging emerging markets
- Low yield visitors
- Improving safety for residents and visitors
- Disjointed marketing and promotion

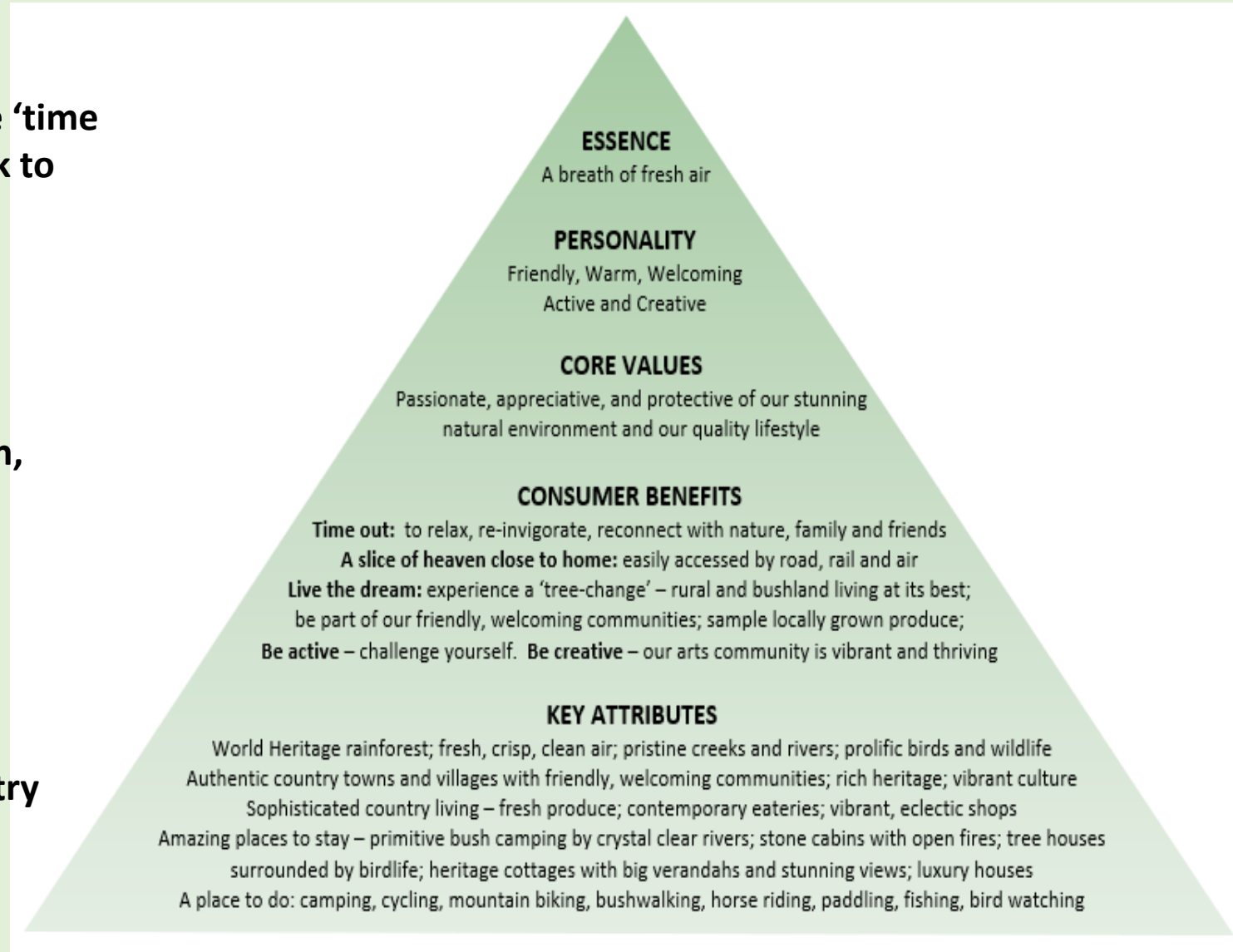


Positioning

The Shire's offers visitors the opportunity to take 'time out' - to escape, relax and reconnect - to get back to basics, in a spectacular setting.

Visitors are invited to:

- Experience the Shire's World Heritage listed rainforest, pristine creeks and rivers, and fresh, crisp, clean air.
- Stay in amazing places.
- Be active; be creative; challenge themselves.
- Experience a tree-change: sophisticated country living at its best.



Strategic Priorities

Ensure that the framework and resources needed to coordinate and drive growth in the visitor economy are in place

Strengthen Dungog and the villages as both visitor destinations and service centres

Consolidate Dungog Shire as a destination for outdoor, adventure and nature-based activities

Foster arts and cultural tourism

Grow the events sector

Leverage emerging markets – Caravans & RVS, touring motorcycles, agri tourism, accessible tourism

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

Continue to build industry capacity

Market growth and development supported by effective marketing and promotion



Placemaking: Dungog

- Dungog – vibrant, historic country town, creative, gateway, MTB / cycle hub
- Infrastructure – creatively themed
- Cycleway / shared pathway linkages



Placemaking: Clarence Town

- River town and anchor attraction for paddling & fishing / Williams River Canoe Trail
- Leverage National Parks & State Forests – MTB, horses, 4WD
- Williams River holiday park – iconic camping experience



Placemaking: Gresford

- Destination for the touring caravan and RV markets
- Family friendly destination
- Promote showground as a venue
- Improve river access points



Placemaking: Paterson

- Day trip destination for regional residents – in conjunction with Morpeth, Tocal, Hinton
- Leverage rail access to encourage regional residents and walking groups
- Leverage Maitland CC DMP initiatives – paddling hub at Morpeth, RV / caravans, agri-tourism
- Williams River canoe trail – Paterson to Clarence Town



Cycle Tourism

- MTB Park
- Network of local day rides
- Rail access / air access / proximity to population centres
- Pedalfest
- World heritage brand



NEXT STEPS

- On-going development at the Common
- Common linked to the town centre
- Supporting infrastructure
- Product development



Cycle Tourism – Product development

Additional flow tracks at the Common
Down hill experiences
Clarence Town as a focal point
Skills / Technical Park
EPIC (wilderness trail)



What makes an EPIC, epic?

The EPICS designation is designed to recognize the most adventurous and special of rides.

Criteria

- Demanding, mostly singletrack trail experience in a natural setting
- Denotes a true backcountry riding experience in remote settings
- One that is technically and physically challenging
- More than 80 percent singletrack
- At least 20 miles in length
- EPICS route is mapped on mtbproject.com or other online source



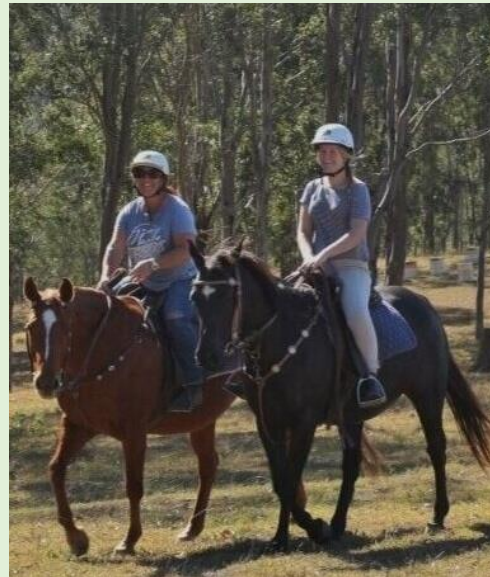


Gravel grinding



Equine Tourism

- **Places to ride:** Columbey NP, Wallaroo NP, Dungog Common, State Forests, private property
- **Places to stay:** Dungog + Gresford Showgrounds, Lostock Scout Camp potentially private property.
- **Horse events:** Clarence Town, Dungog, Gresford, Paterson, Lostock
- **Growing horse ownership:** Hunter region
- **Active Clubs in the Region**



Opportunities

- Identify and promote horse-riding facilities and trails within Dungog Shire, similar in concept to the Local Rides (cycling routes) promoted by Ride Dungog. As part of this:
 - Lostock Dam area.
 - Direct market to horse riding clubs and associations and post information on relevant horse-riding websites.
- Holiday with your horse: Dungog Showground, Lostock Scout Camp – potential for rural properties
- Camping area for people with horses at Clarence Town
- Build the horse events market
- Provide additional facilities – eg: a covered arena, cross country course to support and stimulate growth in equine events.
- Develop a multi-day trail riding event, similar in concept to the Weddin Mountains Muster.

INVESTIGATE

- Showground - Common link – safe trail
- Separating horses & mountain bikes – horse entry / float parking near the saleyards



Paddle Tourism

White water – upper reaches – water levels

Navigable water – downstream of Paterson, Clarence Town

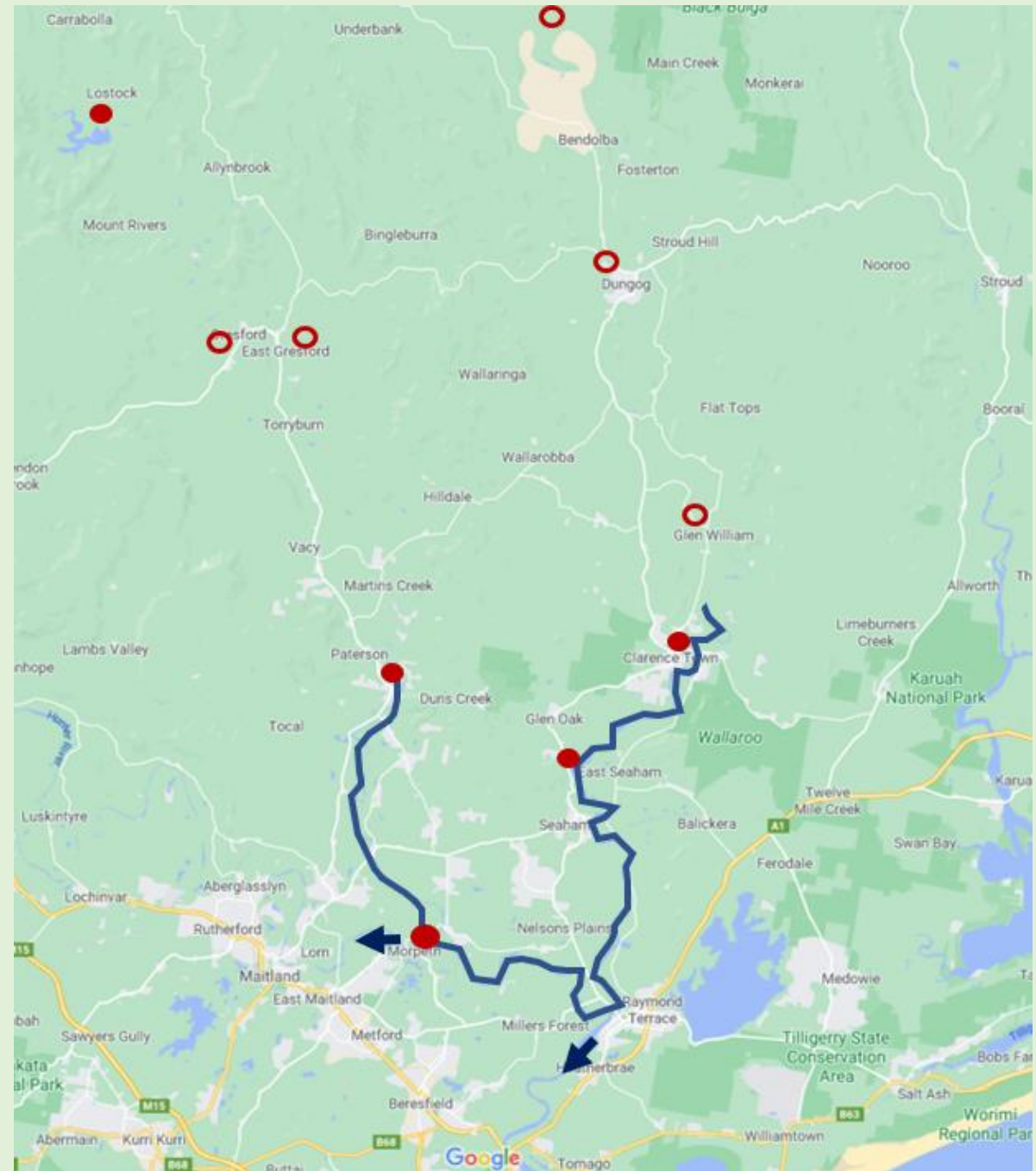
Lostock Dam

Waterholes throughout the Shire – recreation

Seaham – canoe facilities

Morpeth – proposed paddling hub

Potential for canoe trails



Arts & cultural tourism

- Growing reputation + assets to work with
- Groundswell of initiatives + energy
- Creative industry - driver of tree change
- Incorporate into place making
- Local and regional arts trails
- Arts / Creative activities and events
- Re-build the film events and activities
- Boutique live music scene
- Artist in residence

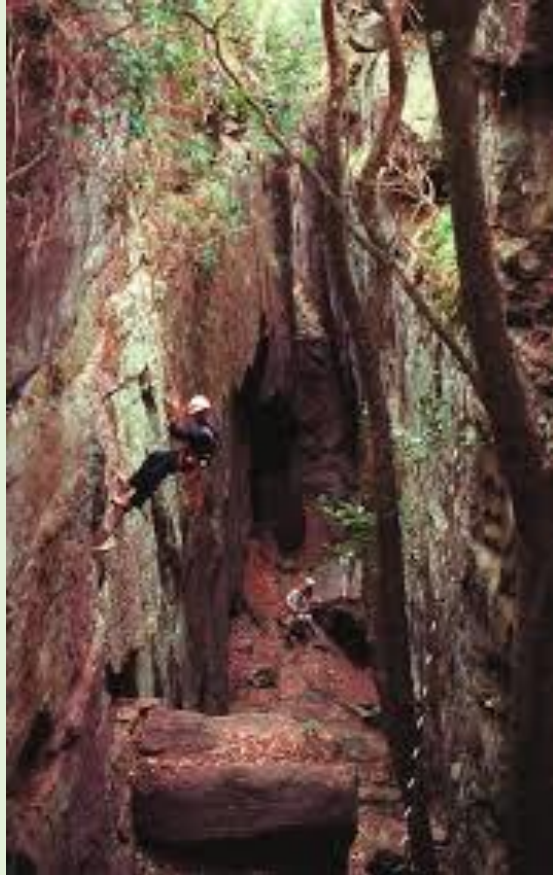


DUNGOG BY DESIGN



Pilchers Reserve

- Unique – strong point of difference
- Council controlled
- Close to Dungog – access by rail
- Make it exclusive – opportunity for a guided tour business



Caravans & RVS

Growth market – domestic and international (longer term)

Travels outside of peak

Time to explore / willing to spend

Propensity to stay in small towns & villages

Travelling with bikes, canoes, pets

Opportunities:

- Towns as hubs for exploring – Gresford base for Allyn & Paterson River valleys, Dungog for Upper Williams
- Paterson meeting the need in Maitland
- Licensed clubs / pubs providing sites as 'ancillary' uses; Overnight areas for self contained rigs
- Overflow / temporary sites in peak times and for events
- Caravan and RV rallies
- Accreditation RV Friendly Localities and RV Friendly Destinations

DUNGOG NEEDS TO BE CARAVAN FRIENDLY



Caravans & RVS

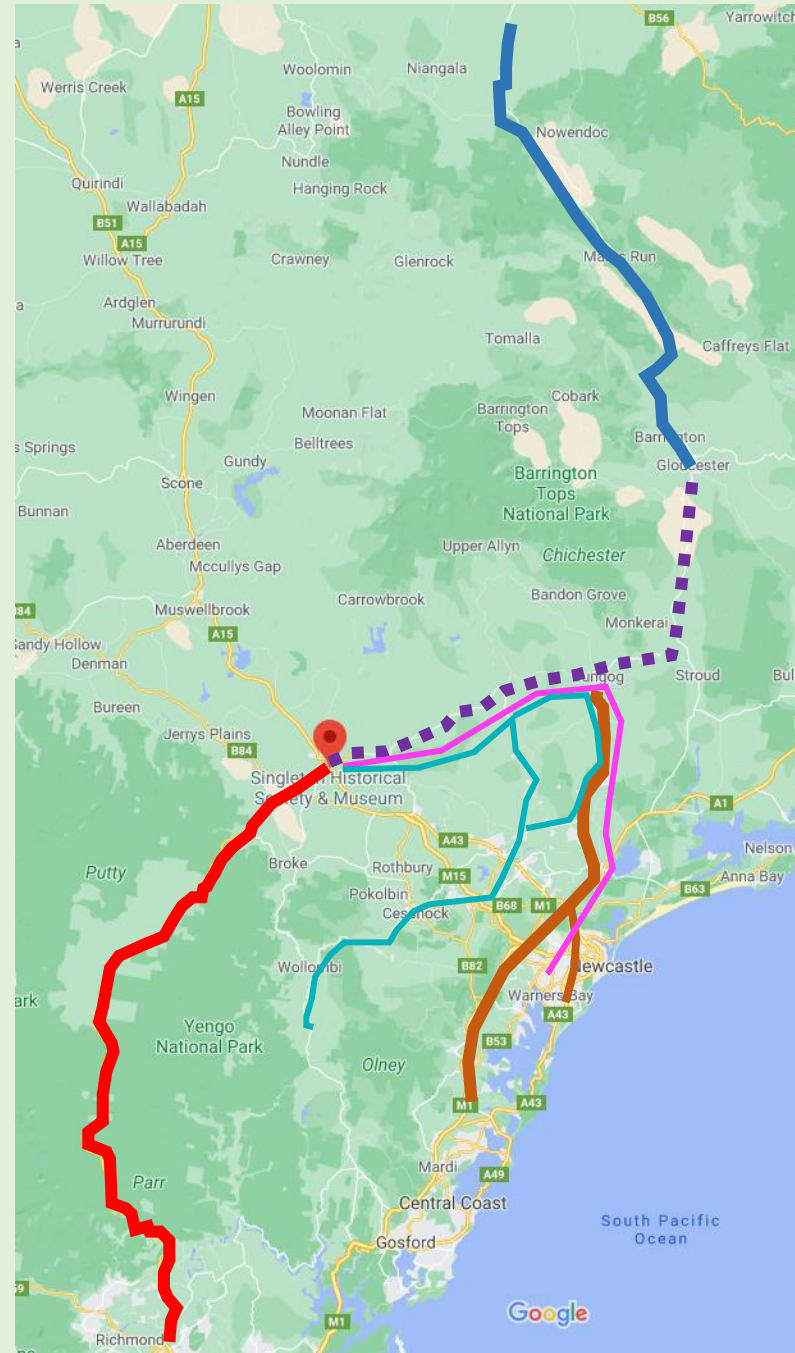


Motorcycle Touring

High yield market

Leverage the heavy lifting already done by neighbours

Trail bikes – greater propensity to stay in the Shire



Accessible tourism

High yield, high growth market

Opportunity – accessible adventure / outdoor tourism destination

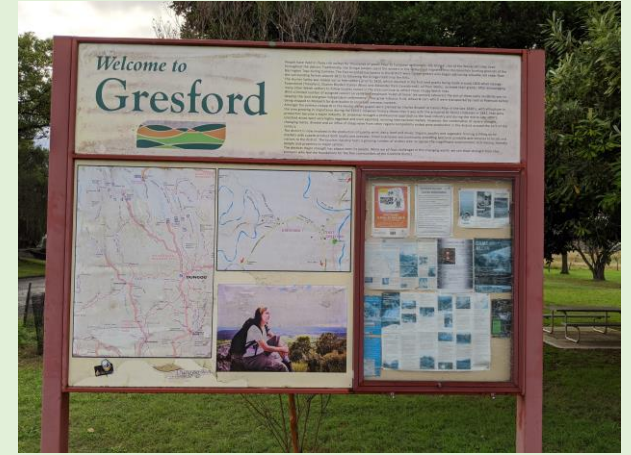


Information Services / VIC

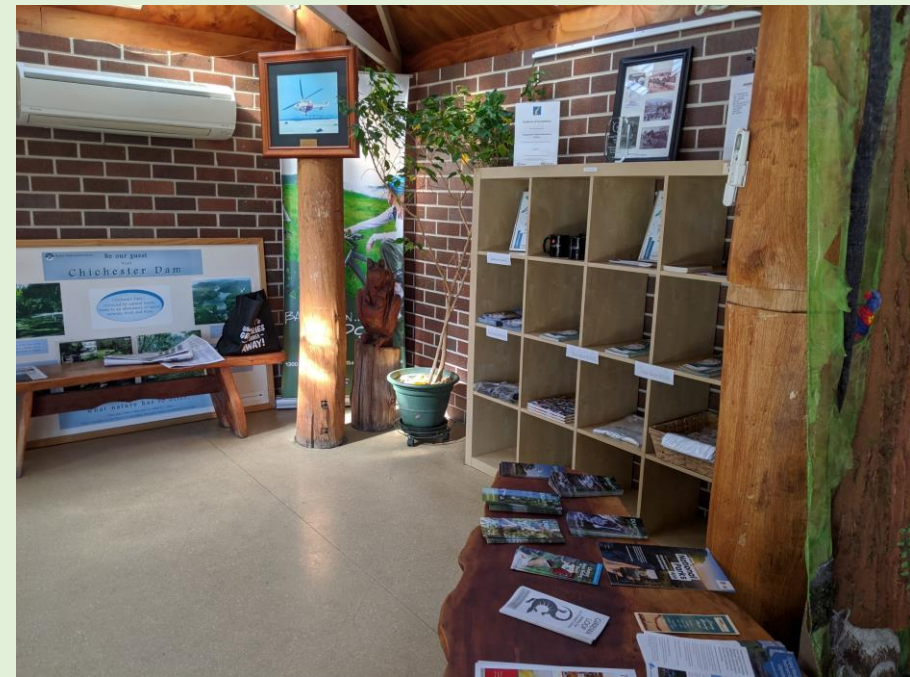
VIC needs to be re-vamped

New information directories

Additional information & promotional material



Information Services / VIC



Other

Road priorities

River access

Signage

Telecommunications

Visitor + resident safety

EV charging stations

Marketing and promotion

Industry development



Next Steps

DRT + Council feedback

Finalise draft + add images

Circulation to other stakeholders

Review feedback

Finalise document

DRT adopted

Council adopted

Other organisations?

Joint logos



Questions / Discussion

