

MARKETING ACTION PLAN

Somerset Regional Council 2023



lingo
PR & DIGITAL

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PURPOSE:

In 2021, Somerset Regional Council engaged SC Lennon & Associates to deliver a five-year Tourism Strategy.

This Tourism Marketing Action Plan aims to build upon that strategy and provide a series of more specific, realistic and actionable tactics that can be delivered to bolster and grow tourism within the region.

In preparing this Action Plan, the following research has been conducted:

- A review of the 2021 – 2025 Somerset Tourism Strategy
- A destination visitation review using geofence data supplied by Localis Research
- One-on-one interviews with key Council staff members
- A two-day famil in region facilitated by Council
- A review of the Arts and Culture Strategic Plans for The Condensery and The Somerset Civic Centre.



The aim of this research was to:

1. Gain valuable visitor insights into the region
2. Identify any barriers and opportunities for growth
3. Benchmark the region against other local government areas in QLD and beyond
4. Define and set more specific goals and outcomes than what was previously set by the Tourism Strategy
5. Provide a series of clear priorities for achieving those goals and outcomes
6. Break down those strategic priorities into a series of actions that can be implemented by Council throughout the 2023 year and beyond.

OBJECTIVES:

The 2021-2025 Somerset Tourism Strategy does not set or define specific objectives for tourism growth in the region.

As part of the Tourism Marketing Action Plan, it is recommended that a series of short term and long-term objectives be established.

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES

- To improve supply in region to be better in line with LGAQ areas of similar size
- To grow the remarketing database year on year by 30%
- To diversify and develop hero experiences in region
- Continue to enhance the profile and destination appeal of the Somerset LGA region

SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES

- To build a destination marketing database
- To establish a marketing campaign planner for 2023
- To implement an events grants system to attract a broader network of events
- To implement PR activity for hero experiences in region
- To identify and apply for funding sources to improve tourism infrastructure in region
- To commence working with Southern Queensland Country Tourism (SQCT) to identify marketing opportunities
- Implement capacity building programs for local operators
- Attract tourism investment and commercial operators to the region
- Attract major events in region
- To provide digital marketing training to Council's core team to improve capacity and reduce the need for outsourcing over time

The following measures should be implemented to monitor and evaluate progress in achieving these goals.

VISITOR DATA
▪ Increase in number of visitor nights year on year
▪ Increase in the volume of supply year on year
▪ Increase in the number of flagship events held in region
MARKETING OUTCOMES
▪ Increase in website traffic to the Experience Somerset website
▪ Increase in the number of contacts on the email marketing database
▪ Increase in number of social followers
▪ Increase in distribution of marketing materials
▪ Increase in ASR value for destination media coverage
▪ Increase in social reach



THE CURRENT SITUATION

As part of this Action Plan, we utilised Localis Technologies to place a geofence around the Somerset Local Government Area. The geofence allowed us to track mobile visitors to the region (i.e. not local residents) for a period of three years.

The geofence provided us with the following findings:

FINDING ONE: LOW SUPPLY

In 2022, the region had a bed capacity of 6,819 beds across 119 properties (listed across Airbnb, Trip Advisor, Booking.com.au).

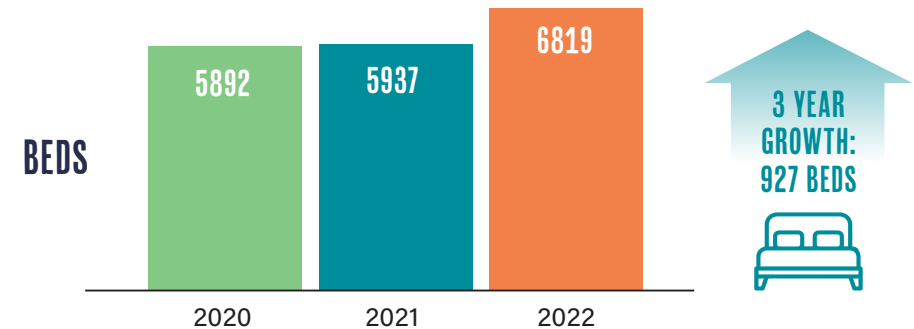
This is very low compared to other Queensland regions tracked within the same timeframe:

Property Breakdown

REGION	CAPACITY	PROPERTIES
Somerset	6,819	119
Southern Downs	19,604	342
Toowoomba	20,421	481
Western Downs	2,660	50
Scenic Rim	20,553	465
Gympie	27,428	504
South Burnett	4,002	91



The below graph shows supply growth over time for Somerset has been slow with the supply pool growing by only 927 beds over three years.



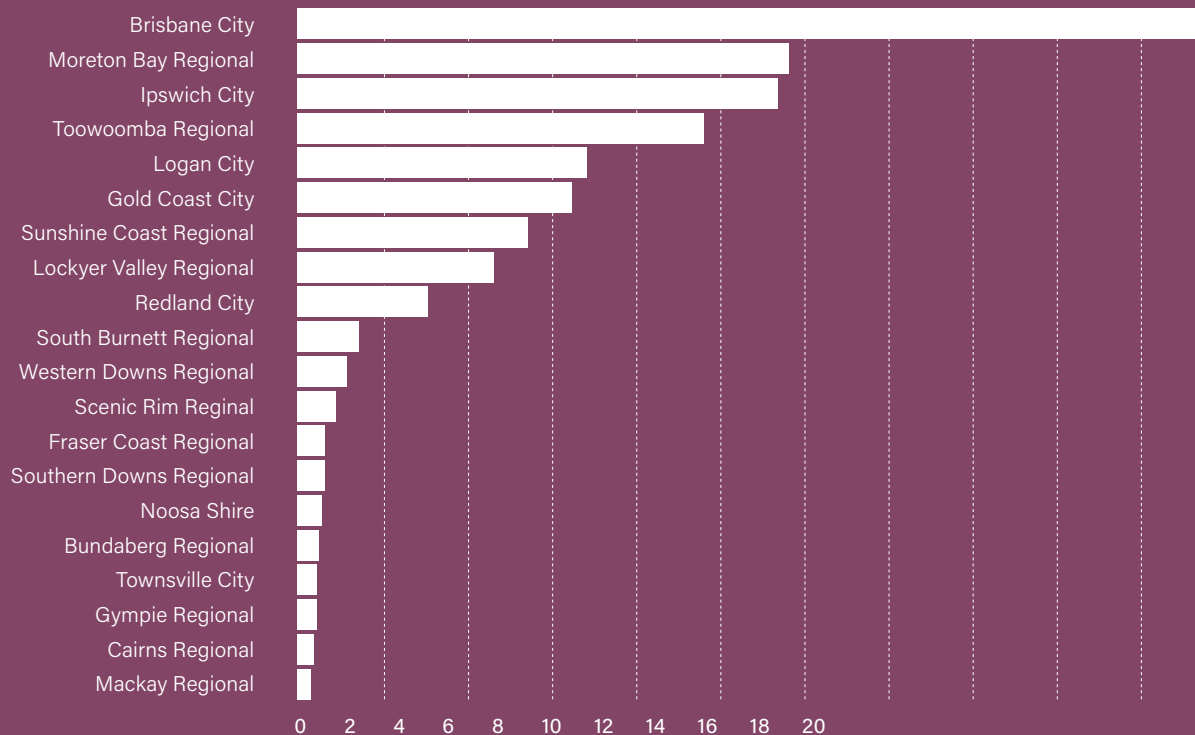
Key takeaways from this:

1. Supply limitations mean that marketing should be limited to:
 - Brisbane short drive market
 - Owners of self-contained accommodation (i.e. caravanners and campers)
2. Greater investment in the development of accommodation infrastructure is required.

FINDING TWO: TOP VISITING LGAS

Brisbane, Moreton Bay, Ipswich, Toowoomba and Gold Coast were the top visiting LGAS to the region.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA



PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL VISITATION

Key takeaways from this:

1. This reiterates the region's appeal as a "short-stay" escape
2. It also demonstrates that there is capacity to market to the short drive regions of Ipswich, Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba and Gold Coast.
3. With supply limited, this also reiterates the region's capacity to drive tourism through short drive day visitation and touring.

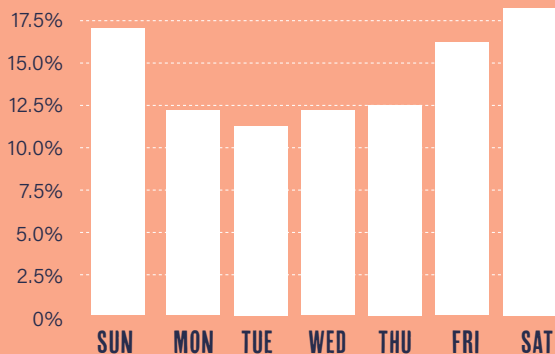
FINDING THREE: ACCOMMODATION PEAKS AND TROUGHS

In 2022 Accommodation peaks were January, April, September and December (all school holiday peak periods).

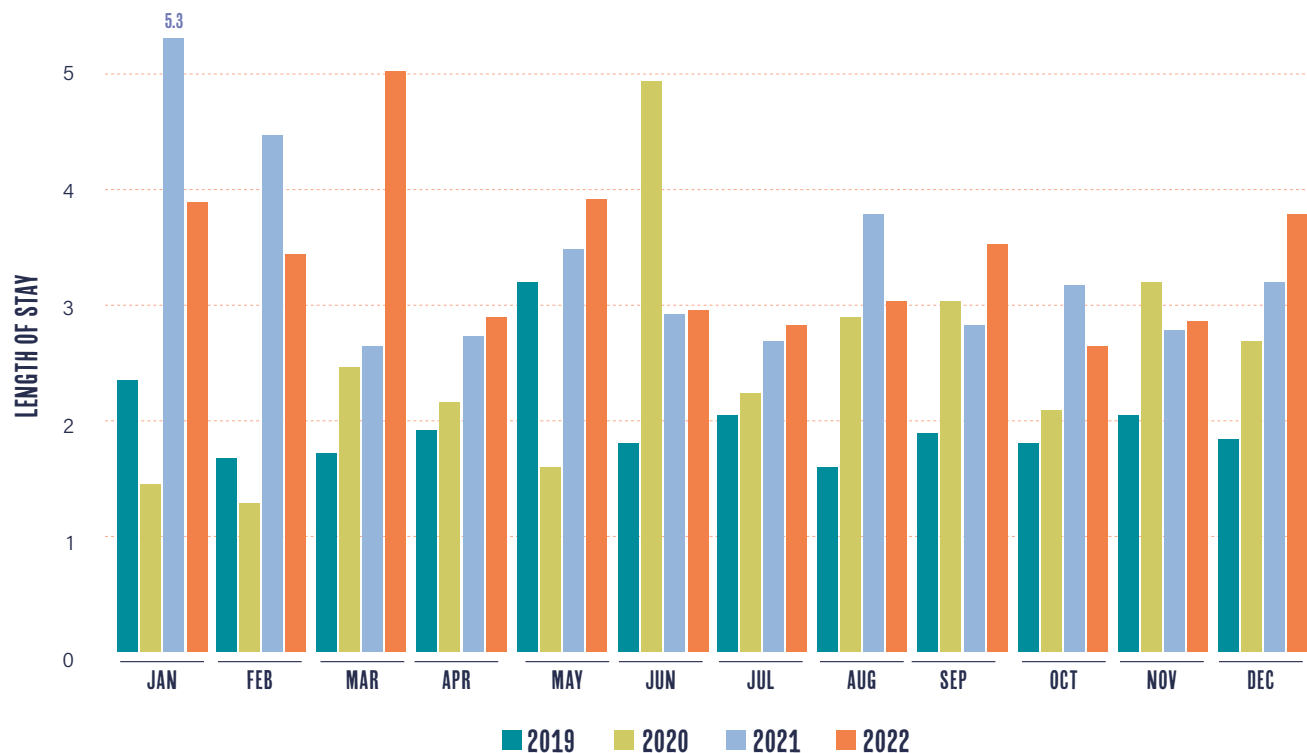
In 2021, the peaks were June, July, September and December.

The times of lowest visitation for the region are March, October and November.

Day Of Week Visitation



YOY Occupancy by Month



Key takeaways from this:

1. Events that fall in low visitation months should be fostered and developed
2. Campaign schedules should focus on building visitation in the below months:
 - Summer – February
 - Autumn – March
 - Winter – late May and June
 - Spring – October and November
3. Weekend Escapes are prominent with visitation peaking on Friday, Saturday and Sundays.

FINDING FOUR: VISITOR PROFILE

By tracking all visitors to region in 2022, a visitor profile can be determined.

The average family income, rental and mortgage data has been determined by matching the mobile user with their location, apps and ABS traits.

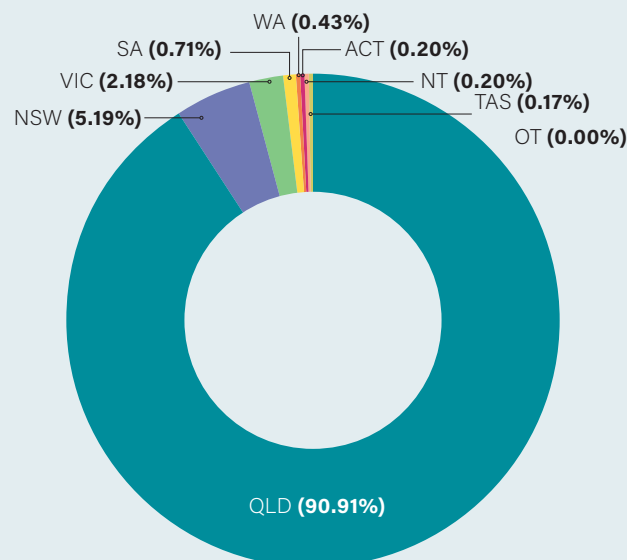


THE AVERAGE VISITOR TO SOMERSET IS AGED AN AVERAGE OF 38 YEARS WITH A PARTNER AND AT LEAST ONE CHILD.

Average Visitor Profile

WEEKLY FAMILY INCOME	\$1,992.86
WEEKLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME	\$1,741.57
WEEKLY PERSONAL INCOME	\$788.83
WEEKLY RENT	\$364.65
MONTHLY MORTGAGE REPAYMENT	\$1,705.18
HOUSEHOLD SIZE (PERSONS)	2.7
AGE (YEARS)	38.9

State Visitation



Modest Means Audience



Tend to be high internet users with children ranging in age from 0 – 14 years



Represent "middle Australia" with values centred around personal and family lives



Families on average wages



Reliable, value for money products and services are sought



Seek greater financial security and improved living standards

Key takeaways from this:

1. The average visitor to Somerset falls in the "Modest Means" CAMEO Australia Category which means there is an opportunity to attract higher yield visitors to region
2. With high quality accommodation in limited supply, however, Council will need to look at attracting high yield visitors through day touring and bespoke experiences (such as The Linville Hotel and hand selected "best of" B&B experiences).
3. Value for money events and experiences will appeal to the current audience (think country music festivals, holidays, events etc).

CURRENT TOURISM PRODUCT

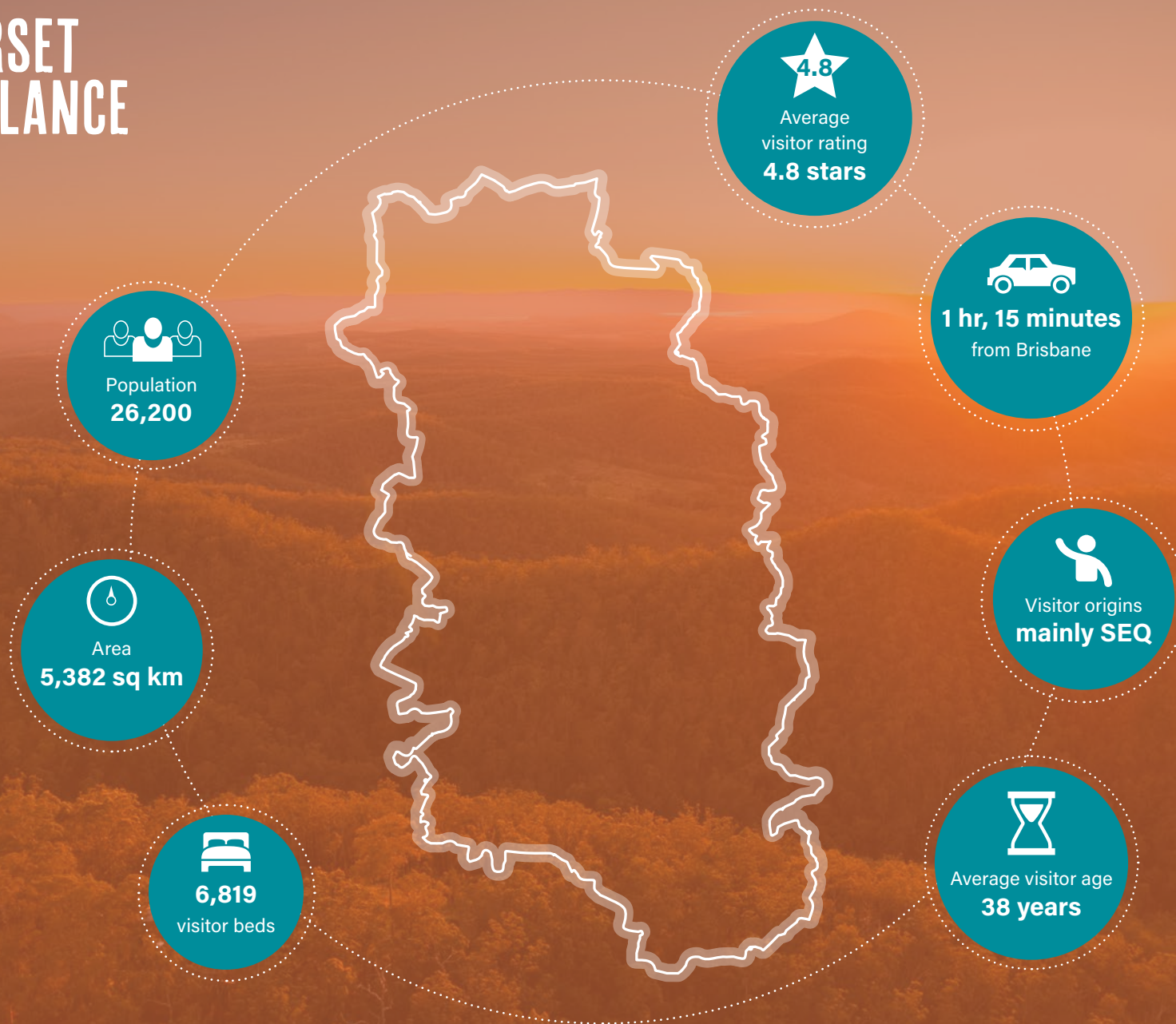
For a small LGA, Somerset has a number of attractive tourism products and experiences. The majority of these, however, are in the “developing” stage meaning that the product or experience is still being refined and will require further development and/or marketing assistance.

We have identified the following tourism products in region:

- **BRISBANE VALLEY RAIL TRAIL**
- **SKYDIVE RAMBLERS**
- **WATTS BRIDGE**
- **CYCLING**
- **WATER SPORTS – SKIING, FISHING, CANOEING**
- **HORSE-RIDING**
- **WALKS AND NATURE TRAILS**
- **COUNTRY DRIVES AND TOURS**
- **THE CONDENSERY**
- **REGIONAL ART GALLERIES**



SOMERSET AT A GLANCE



SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Significant infrastructure already in place (Brisbane Valley Rail Trail (BVRT), The Condensery, Somerset Civic Centre)
- Highly skilled and passionate team across the Arts and Tourism departments
- Close proximity to Brisbane and Sunshine Coast
- Excellent photo and video library ready to be utilised
- Experience Somerset brand and website already in place
- Strong natural assets
- Quaint villages and driving experiences

WEAKNESSES

- Limited volume of accommodation
- Variable standards and style of accommodation
- Limited capacity of operators
- Currently no focus on specific tourism experiences, rather, a broad strokes approach has been adopted
- Uncertainty surrounding the transition between Regional Tourism Organisations
- With lots of players in the destination marketing space, promotions need to be carefully planned and executed to maximise Council's budget
- Limited capacity within Council's Tourism team
- Marketing technologies and an understanding of how these can be used is lacking
- Confusion between "Somerset" and "Brisbane Valley"
- No alignment of town welcome signage which is in need of updating

OPPORTUNITIES

- Assisting the Arts and Culture team by promoting key initiatives and events as part of tourism
- Inclusion in EV Super Highway
- Increased interest in caravanning and short escapes post COVID
- Rail Trail campaigns in partnership with Department of Transport and Main Roads
- Harnessing passionate operators by "streamlining" their DA experiences
- Quarterly marketing campaigns
- Development of a segmented marketing database for cost-effective promotions into the future
- Events in region are currently underdeveloped and large scope for developing this
- The tourism team is highly motivated and keen to succeed. Setting KPIS and a quarterly goal kicking template will be of benefit to ensure enthusiasm continues and is harnessed
- The Arts and Culture team are intrinsically connected. Opportunities exist for better cohesion across strategic plans and general marketing and promotions

THREATS

- Attrition of operators
- Attrition of key council staff
- Passive engagement with local operators
- Growing competition for the leisure dollar means continued development and investment in tourism
- Competing budgets for other Council drive markets (e.g. Scenic Rim)
- Natural disasters

LEVERAGEABLE TRENDS

A silver lining of the COVID 19 pandemic was that it fostered a new trend amongst Australians to explore their own backyard. According to Austrade, regional Australia is seeing major benefits from the desire to holiday locally with domestic tourism still on the rise despite borders now reopening.

Travelling overseas still presents challenges to travellers with additional planning, expense and the risk of cancellation still prominent. There is a significant opportunity for smaller, regional enclaves like Somerset to capitalise on this trend.

In their Domestic Tourism Forecasts 2021 – 2025 Report, Austrade have identified a number of trends which are considered leverageable for Somerset:

The number of day trips is forecast to **increase nationally by at least 14%** as people continue to connect with friends and family

Overnight stays and short breaks will also **see growth** as they require less planning

Road based getaways involving camping or caravans continue to be popular and is an area that Somerset is well positioned to benefit from

Reinforcing this is a recent News Travel Network Trend Forecast conducted by News Corp Australia who used insights of 10.6 million users from their brand network to determine sentiment, intent and motivating factors in domestic travel in 2022.

Their research showed:

Intrastate travel was still **the most popular form** of a planned holiday

Travellers were looking for short, **one to two night trips away** that were easy to plan

The primary motivation for travel **was seeking new experiences** with the majority of travellers planning their trips from photos and social media accounts

Domestic tourism in QLD is **up 5.9% in 2022**

Somerset is a beautiful location, rich in natural landscapes and quaint villages just waiting to be explored. The region has all the makings for a great tourism escape but needs further consolidation of communications and marketing strategies.

This action plan will present a pathway for doing this.

SUMMARY OF LEVERAGEABLE TRENDS

LESS PLANNING

Overnight stays and short breaks will continue to be popular as they require less planning and provide more assurance with less risk of cancellations due to delays, border closures and other air travel related problems.

Opportunity: Develop itineraries and campaigns that will make visitation to region even easier for the short stay market.



NEW EXPERIENCES

For many visitors, the primary motivation for travel is seeking new experiences with travellers planning their trips from photos and social media accounts.

Opportunity: Develop content and visual marketing channels to best communicate the variety of experiences on offer and create strong motivation for visitation.



EXPERIENCE STACKING

As a legacy from COVID, travellers are now interested in having multiple experiences on one trip to make the most of their holiday time.

Opportunity: Utilise quarterly campaigns to pull together all available experiences throughout Somerset.



HIT THE ROAD JACK

Road based getaways involving camping or caravans continue to be popular and is an area that Somerset is well positioned to benefit from.

Opportunity: Create evergreen camping and caravan campaigns (fact sheets, landing pages and ads) to promote road-based getaways and touring.



THE MARKETING ACTION PLAN

DESTINATION GOALS

The Tourism Marketing Action Plan has been developed with the below goals in mind:

1. To define and promote hero experiences
2. To enhance the profile of Somerset LGA as a preferred visitor destination
3. To provide strong motivation for visitation
4. To identify actions and steps that will address current destination marketing barriers



STRATEGIC FOCUS

The Tourism Marketing Action Plan will focus on the following strategic priorities:



PRIORITY 1: DEFINING HERO EXPERIENCES

Defining visitor experiences are essential for shaping a destination brand and to ensure that your marketing connects with the right audience through an interests based approach.

To date, Council has taken a broadstrokes approach to visitor experiences, however it is recommended that these are further refined to ensure that the marketing budget can be maximised, the Experience Somerset brand has greater clarity and all communications can be targeted and purposeful.

We recommend the following experiences:

HERO EXPERIENCES:

- Provide a compelling reason to visit
- Focus on what is truly unique or memorable about the destination
- Provide the best opportunity for targeted, interests-based marketing

SUGGESTED EXPERIENCES:

Soft adventure

Brisbane Valley Rail Trail, water sports, skydiving, nature experiences

Self-drive adventure

Villages and touring, caravan and camping

SECONDARY EXPERIENCES:

- Enhance the visitor experience but may not be the sole reason for selecting a destination
- Have a more niche appeal or have potential for future growth and development

SUGGESTED EXPERIENCES:

Arts & Culture

The Condensery, Somerset Civic Centre

Food & Cottage Experiences

Meet the maker, food production, local produce

To ensure that the visitors experience in region aligns with these experiences and what is promoted through marketing and communications, it is recommended that the following actions be implemented:

- Defining "hero" experiences to promote through marketing – for instance, adventure, art, villages
- Develop messaging to align with those experiences
- Ensuring imagery and videography aligns with the hero experiences

In addition to defining visitor experiences, the authenticity of experience also needs to be considered. There were three areas observed while in region that should be reviewed by Council.

Welcome Signage

An opportunity exists to refresh the region's welcome signage to align across the region.

Explore Centres

Visitor Information Centres in region are defined as 'explore' centres which could be confusing and deviates from the far more recognised definition of Visitor Information Centre.

PRIORITY 1 (CONT.)



Kilcoy Visitor Information Centre

The Kilcoy Visitor Information Centre is widely positioned as an “environmental interpretive centre” which it is not. The way the centre is currently defined and promoted would not meet the expectations of a visitor. The centre itself is amazing and underutilised.

Recommendations have been made further about this under Priority 2.

Additional actions relating to Authenticity Of Experiences:

- Welcome signage to region to be improved
- Explore Centres to return to being named Visitor Information Centres
- All references to Kilcoy as being an “environmental interpretive centre” to be removed
- The Centre’s interpretive centre to be repositioned as a learning space with a dedicated program of visiting events and learning opportunities.

MARKETING ACTIONS REQUIRED

Define Experiences	Create messaging for hero and secondary experiences.
	Develop downloadable tour itineraries around hero experiences.
	Sort and categorise existing imagery and videography into experiences for ease of marketing and PR.
	Identify any “gaps” in the visual assets currently held by Council – ie identify messages that don’t have complementary photography.
	Conduct a photography shoot to fill those gaps.
Authenticity of Experiences	Improve welcome signage to region (particularly from Brisbane entry points).
	Return “explore” centres to the more widely recognised Visitor Information Centre terminology.
	Kilcoy Visitor Information Centre to be repositioned as a learning / education space with a program of events.
Development of Experiences	Engage with local elders and to further develop future Indigenous Experiences in region
	Identify experiences within region that have potential and pair with RTO for growth, training and additional support
	Distribute funding and grant opportunities to operators to promote continual development and growth

PRIORITY 2: ATTRACTING EVENTS IN REGION

Events are a key strategic tool in attracting visitors to region and there is a great opportunity at hand for Somerset to foster the development of flagship events.

Council has a number of excellent public spaces and venues available that would be suitable for event operators. It is not viable, however, for Council themselves to run events as resources and marketing budget is limited. It is recommended that Council looks to:

1. Foster and support operators that are interested in running events
2. Promote events and projects currently being run through the Somerset Civic Centre and The Condensery
3. Attract and secure external commercial operators to hold events in region
4. Consolidate all areas of support currently being administered across departments into one Tourism & Events Funding Program.

MARKETING ACTIONS REQUIRED

Allocate Resources for Events Support

The Tourism team to be responsible for attracting events to region

A strategic approach to event attraction be developed and implemented

Reframing Event Sponsorships

Investigate opportunities to implement a structured event attraction and sponsorship schemes including:

- Consolidating all existing sponsorships into one Tourism & Events Funding Program
- Creating funding rounds, funding criteria and a funding application process for a program, ensuring any program includes an acquittal process
- Promoting a Tourism & Events Funding Program through multiple platforms

Support Major Events

Identify major tourism events in region supported by Council that may be at risk of discontinuation and review sponsorship arrangement and ensure viability through adequate mechanisms

PRIORITY 2 (CONT.)



MARKETING ACTIONS REQUIRED

Foster Developing Events	Provide marketing support for in-region operators by listing events online and including in quarterly marketing programs
	Create a How To Promote Your Event checklist and load to the Experience Somerset's Operators Portal
	Develop a matrix or rating system for the consistent assessing of event opportunities against the Marketing Action Plan objectives
	Develop venues and/or mentor operators with capacity to facilitate flagship events in region
	Work one-on-one with appropriate operators to develop events that align with the brand and have the potential to be highly visitor attractive
	Identify adventure and sport organisers who could potentially establish events in region
Streamline Processes	Develop an Event Prospectus for the region which outlines venues, capacities and Council support that can be used to pitch to potential event organisers
	Update the current Experience Somerset website to allow for better formatting and ease of loading events
	Audit all sponsorships currently being provided, review to determine suitability with new hero experiences. Explore the potential to refunnel through a Tourism & Events program
Allocate Budget for Events Attraction	Look to align current Council run events (such as the Rail Trail Fun Run) with a commercial or charitable operator or tender out for the event (such as the Rocky River Run, owned by Rockhampton Regional Council and managed externally)
	Allocate budget for Tourism attractive events, workshops and displays at both The Somerset Civic Centre and the Kilcoy VIC
	Approach tour organisations, educators and theatre companies to pitch being included in circuits. Use budget to contribute to touring costs if needed

PRIORITY 3: DESTINATION MARKETING

Council has an already established Experience Somerset brand and website. The region's Visitor Guide is also of an excellent quality.

On the flipside of that, however, Council does not have an existing email marketing database nor a large following on social media to allow for adequate destination marketing.

It is recommended that Council adopt the following approach to Destination Marketing



**EMAIL MARKETING
STRATEGY**



**CONTENT
MARKETING**



**QUARTERLY
CAMPAIGNS**



**DIGITAL PAID
ADVERTISING**



**PUBLIC
RELATIONS**

Importantly, the Public Relations component of the marketing mix should be both externally and internally geared. There exist mixed sentiments amongst operators at the moment regarding Council's role and support channels. Ensuring enthusiasm and commitment from operators will be a large component of the success of the strategy and as such, it is recommended that Council treats operators as a target PR audience also. In order for this to work, the below strategic recommendations are made:

1. Consolidate internal social media content calendars for the Arts and Tourism teams
2. Hire a freelance content creator to assist both of these teams
3. Key messaging to be defined for use across all destination marketing touchpoints
4. Use "interest" based marketing across digital marketing
5. Include operators as a PR audience

MARKETING ACTIONS REQUIRED

Define the Experience Somerset Brand

- Develop key messaging around hero experiences (including the use of language like "nestled in the Brisbane Valley", "explore the best of the Brisbane Valley in Somerset")
- Develop brand specific call to actions to be utilised on all social media touchpoints
- Set up link tree on Instagram to facilitate those call to actions
- Create a destination video suitable for long and short form video marketing

PRIORITY 3 (CONT.)



Define Brand Assets	Redevelop Facebook assets to be mobile friendly, particularly the FB cover pic
	Create a defined brand book for Experience Somerset for staff and contractors to use and ensure consistency of visuals and messages
	Develop a sizing chart for social media imagery and make available to all staff contributing to social media platforms.
Email Marketing	Set up a Council email marketing system/database using Send In Blue
	Create separate lists under the account for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arts and Somerset Civic Centre ▪ The Condensery ▪ Experience Somerset
	Establish an email sign up form (with interest segmentation) on Experience Somerset website
	Establish an email sign up form also for The Condensery
	Use the Visitor Guide as a "hook" lead magnet to encourage signups to the database
	Use The Condensery program as a "hook" lead magnet to encourage signups to The Condensery list
	Run a FB leads marketing campaign to build the email marketing database for Experience Somerset (this could also be applied to The Condensery using their program)
	Create QR Code signs for all Visitor Information Centres to display promoting signups to the database (can be created from Send In Blue)
Public Relations	Use the Send in Blue list to run quarterly destination campaigns
	Create an evergreen media kit and supporting PR library for visiting journalists
	Identify and target media for famils and coverage for each seasonal campaign
	Engage a specialist editorial photographer to collect a series of shots that can be rolled out for PR purposes
	Create a quarterly PR pitch plan as part of the quarterly marketing campaigns

PRIORITY 3 (CONT.)

Content Marketing

Use social media scheduling software to manage posts and build a content calendar (recommend Loomly)

Set up a calendar for tourism and a second for arts and culture so assets housed together and streamlined

Hire a freelance content specialist to assist the Arts and Culture and Tourism teams with more concerted content curation across blogs, socials and e-newsletters

Establish social content pillars around brand messages and hero experiences

Use brand CTAs on all social media marketing

Use RTO hashtags on all social posts to amplify exposure

Ensure all social media posts are correctly sized (using sizing chart created as part of the brand book)

Post to social media using social content pillars at least 5 times a week.

Identify social media groups that will align with the target audience (eg campaign groups, cycling groups)

Include posting to target social media groups as part of the monthly social media content calendar – ensure posts have targeted imagery and CTAs

Establish regional hashtags for use across social platforms

Repost photos of suitable quality that utilise regional hashtags

Encourage local residents, visitors and stakeholders to utilise regional hashtags on posts

PRIORITY 3 (CONT.)



Paid Marketing	Utilise "interest" based targeting tools for running paid ads on Facebook and Instagram each quarter
	Remove low yield activities (such as trade and travel shows) from the marketing mix and invest those funds into leads campaigns that will grow the email marketing database.
	Engage a small number of influences that fit within the target demographic to promote regional experiences and generate content for use across social media
	Use Instagram Business Partnerships to amplify those influencer posts
	Create short form video series around brand messages and "themes" that can be used for sponsored posts and reels
Stakeholder Engagement	Engage with the new RTO (SQCT) to identify future marketing opportunities.
	Foster positive relationships with stakeholders by touring committee meetings (i.e. holding in a difference location each meeting)
	Encourage operators to tag Experience Somerset as "co-host" on events
	Distributing a quarterly e-newsletter (using Send In Blue) for operators and key stakeholders
	Create a brand tool kit for industry stakeholders to utilise including logos, taglines and hashtags
	Upload brand toolkit to Operators Portal
	Invite stakeholders to submit content and events for each quarterly marketing campaign
	Facilitate a workshop with stakeholders to explore the new marketing effort, explain how to utilise the brand toolkit and provide suggestions for how they can be involved and enhance their own marketing

PRIORITY 3 (CONT.)



Improve Website Conversion	Conduct an SEO audit of the website and implement basic SEO including page titles, metas and rich snippets
	Improve mobile layout of website
	Implement call to action and data capture forms on the website to grow newsletter subscribers
	Implement Google conversion goals in Analytics to track newsletter subscriptions, video views and Visitor Guide Views
	Track Google analytics monthly to ensure visitation growth and conversion rates
Campaigns	Set a campaign theme for each season of the year
	Develop a website landing page template for each seasonal campaign that staff can easily update
	Develop a professionally designed pdf flyer that can be used to market each campaign
	Develop and implement a campaign plan for each season that incorporates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Paid Facebook advertising ▪ Events promotion ▪ Email marketing ▪ PR ▪ Other promotions
	Identify and target media for famils and coverage for each campaign
	Track and measure the success of each campaign using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Geofence data ▪ Website analytics ▪ Email database and social media growth figures ▪ Media monitoring data

PRIORITY 3 (CONT.)



Evergreen Promotions - BVRT	Meet with Department of Transport and Main Roads to discuss an evergreen BVRT campaign and costs
	Develop an annual shared budget to offset costs for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Landing page on website ▪ Updated BVRT flyer or landing page ▪ FB Leads campaign to market the landing page
Evergreen Promotions - EV Superhighway	Update Visitor Guide and touring maps with EV charging station markers
	Run a PR campaign to Brisbane market regarding EV stations and being one of Qld's friendliest EV destinations
Evergreen Promotions - Camping and Caravanners	Update Experience Somerset website with EV charging information.
	Establish an evergreen Google Adwords account to drive traffic to Experience Somerset for these key search terms "top camping spots near Brisbane", "top camping spots near Toowoomba", "top camping spots near Sunshine Coast"

PRIORITY 4: IMPROVING SUPPLY, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMERCIAL INVESTMENT

The geofence research has identified only 6,819 beds in region – well below the average supply of 16,000 for a region of this size.

For Somerset to be a successful visitor destination and for tourism marketing expenditure to provide ROI, a long-term plan for improving accommodation supply in region needs to be developed.

It is recommended that a number of tools be introduced at a Council level to assist with the future development of supply and investment in region:

- Tourism Investment Attraction Policy that will guide interested operators and investors through the approval process with Council. This might include a process for assistance with applications, fee waivers and rebates and marketing support incentives.
- Positioning Somerset as a region of economic potential for investors.
- Implement Infrastructure projects that support hero experiences

MARKETING ACTIONS REQUIRED

Tourism Investment Attraction

Introduce a Tourism Investment Attraction Campaign that will help guide interested commercial operators through the development application process with Council

Include information on the Experience Somerset website about how new tourism operators may establish themselves within Somerset

Media release regarding Tourism Investment Attraction Campaign to be issued to metro audience to stimulate interest and enquiry in region

Attracting Investment

Creating a Destination Prospectus that will assist Economic Development in region, particularly targeting commercial tourism operators

Research and identify all grant opportunities for developing supply and infrastructure

PRIORITY 4 (CONT.)



Develop Tourism Supportive Projects

Consider essential infrastructure projects that are required to support hero experiences in region, specifically:

- Toilets and water access along the BVRT
- In region wayfinding and welcome signage
- Improve food and beverage services available to visitors in key locations including dams, The Condensery and BVRT points
- Redevelop the Kilcoy VIC Environmental Education program and assets
- Outdoor trail development (for e.g Mount Glen Rock)
- Revitalise Cormorant Bay Café
- Improved access to Lake Wivenhoe for operators

Develop a project pipeline for these projects in order of priority

Seek funding opportunities for the projects in the pipeline.

Improving Existing Supply

Advocate for improvements to accommodation that caters to higher yield – caravan, camping, RV Travel and short-stay tourist cabins

- Number of sites
- Toilets
- Dump Points
- Council owned overnight camping opportunities

Utilise Council owned assets to encourage self-contained travelers while supply develops over time (campers and caravanners)

PRIORITY 5: CAPACITY BUILDING

Improving capacity of both Council staff and operators to deliver tourism campaigns, events and high quality tourism experiences will be key to the success and sustainability of tourism in region.

Our research has identified the following:

- Council's team are highly skilled but lack training in areas that could streamline process and reduce the need for expensive external consultants. This includes conducting website updates and running basic digital marketing campaigns.
- Event operators in region are at an entry level and could definitely benefit from both operational and marketing assistance.
- All operators while positive towards Council did flag confusion around communication and procedural understanding.

These are all barriers to future growth and investment that could very easily be addressed with the below course of action:

MARKETING ACTIONS REQUIRED

Council Team Capacity	Deliver capacity building initiatives for the Council team and events specialists
	Deliver capacity building initiatives for Council teams (Arts and Culture) on digital marketing, how to use Facebook and how to use scheduling software (such as Loomly)
	Provide training to Council's team on how to better utilise the Experience Somerset website and Operators Portal
Stakeholder Capacity	Identify venues and/or operators in region with events capacity and deliver capacity building initiatives on risk management and developing event management plans
	Create a "holding an event" page on the Somerset website with an event management plan template and details of the process for applying for permits. The page will also house information on how Experience Somerset can assist.
	Facilitate a workshop with tourism stakeholders in region to explore the new marketing effort, how they can be involved and how to enhance their own marketing (using Trip Advisor, ATDW, Google etc)
	Invite new RTO to tour region and conduct a famil with key operators to identify any ways the RTO can support active operators.

GOAL KICKING

To track the success of the marketing effort and to ensure that the Short Term and Long-Term Goals are being achieved, it is recommended that Council implements a quarterly Tourism Activity Report (TAR) that will evaluate progress and wins every three months.

The TAR would be a templated report that would ideally include a series of metrics including:

- Public Relations ASR value and number of clips
- Social media reach and engagement
- Website visitation
- Website goals (subscribers and visitor guide downloads)
- Email marketing database growth
- Visitor nights in region
- Number of events in region

To this end, it is also recommended that Council includes a sponsorship acquittal process in the suggested refined sponsorship program. This acquittal will request visitor and ticket sale numbers from event organisers to be included in the quarterly TAR.

In order to achieve this, a number of research and marketing tools will need to be in place and allowed for in the marketing budget:

MEDIA MONITORING

We recommend using the Isentia Media Portal platform to track clips relating to the Experience Somerset brand. Council could buy directly from isentia or use a PR agency for a subsidised account.

SPROUT SOCIAL

This program or a similar equivalent will enable Council to track reach and engagements across social pages. If Council proceeds with our recommendation to utilise Loomly, it too provides analytics tracking similar to Sprout Social.

GOOGLE ANALYTICS

Council already has Analytics in place, however, further set up of the accounts and training on how to interpret data is required.

ROY MORGAN DATA ACCESS

Work with RTO to gain ongoing access to Roy Morgan Data to track visitor data in region using geofencing tools and segmentation systems.





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