

COONAMBLE SHIRE COUNCIL DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

CoonambleShire Council Local Government Area (LGA) is located on the Traditional Lands of the Weilwan and Gamilaroi Aboriginal communities. Council would like to acknowledge and pay respects to the Traditional Owners of these lands, past, present and future. In acknowledging the Aboriginal communities' deep and enduring connection to Country, it is also recognised that these communities, including the Local Aboriginal Land Councils are integral to the future of the special places and unique landscapes that make up the Coonamble LGA.



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BACKGROUND

In 2018 Destination Country and Outback NSW (DNCO) developed a comprehensive Destination Management Plan (DMP), which guides its program of activities over the period from 2018 to 2020 and beyond. DNCO is one of six Destination Networks across NSW which was created by the NSW Government through Destination NSW (DNSW) in 2016.

Council has relied on the DNCO DMP 2018 – 2020 as the basis for the development of the Coonamble Shire Council Destination Management Plan (Coonamble DMP). The Coonamble DMP will be reviewed when DNCO updates their DNCO DMP, and following evaluation of tourism activity undertaken by Coonamble Shire Council in 2021. The Coonamble DMP outlines a 12 month action plan for tourism initiatives and destination marketing.

This document recognises the relationship between state-wide, DNCO and local-level priorities and defines the local-level approach that Coonamble Shire Council plans to take over the next year in implementing tourism activities. This document has strategic relevance to the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery and Operational Plan, Economic Development Strategy and Coonamble Shire Masterplan.

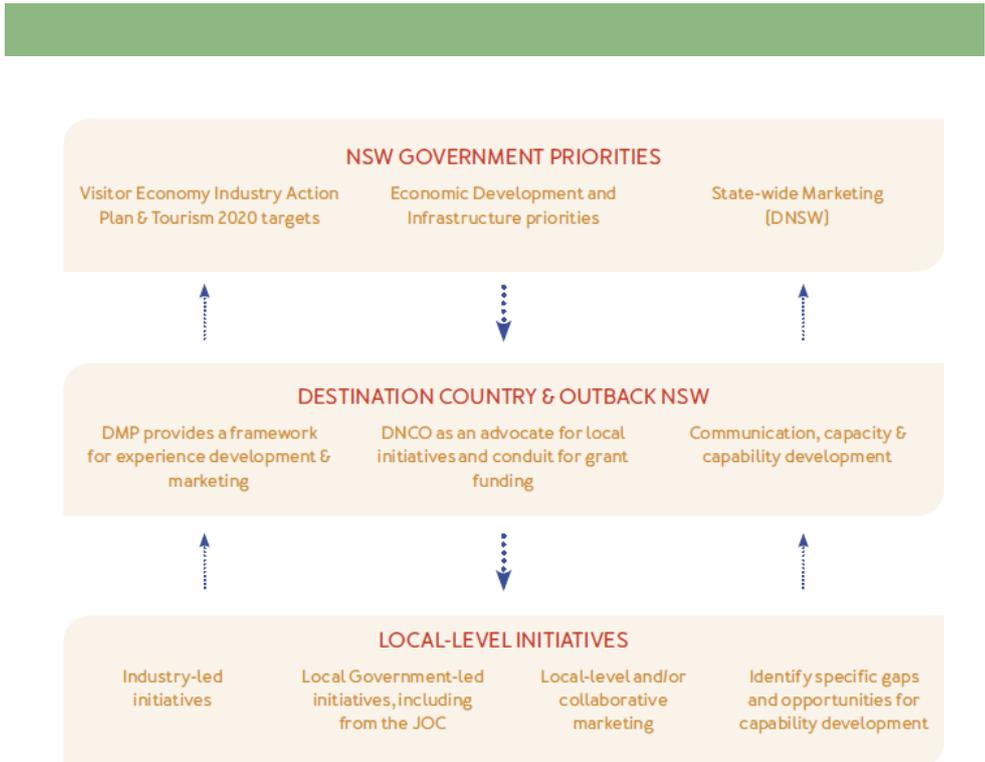


Image source: DNCO DMP



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COONAMBLE TOURISM SECTOR SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Strong potential art & sculpture product
- Well-established community events
- Spectacular natural environment
- Strong Aboriginal heritage
- Expansive sky (especially for viewing of stars and the Milky Way)
- Spectacular natural environment including wetlands of international significance (e.g. Macquarie Marshes) and river systems
- Outback landscapes with unique wildlife, accommodation options, colourful local characters (Nickname Hall of Fame)
- Villages and towns showcasing heritage and rural lifestyle
- High-quality local produce from the broader agricultural sector
- Well-established and popular events including Coonamble Rodeo & Campdraft, Coonamble Challenge & Campdraft & the Coonamble Greyhound Racing.
- Established neighbouring tourism experiences, including Taronga Western Plains Zoo (most visited attraction in regional NSW), accessible Artesian pools, and sculpture trails in the Pilliga



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WEAKNESSES

- Limited resources for development and implementation of signature experiences
- Limited education/knowledge
- Low quality and lack of content for multi-channel distribution, including through third parties, which enhances promotional activities or builds awareness of the diverse and rich offering of the LGA
- Limited range of accommodation types and some capacity issues
- Allocation of existing resources (and lack of resources) not maximising opportunities to build industry capability or encourage the development of new experiences
- Lack of Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences and low levels of engagement with Aboriginal communities
- Limited access to nature-based and other tourism experiences
- Skills shortages and inconsistent standards of customer service and hospitality
- Limited resources for development and implementation of signature experiences
- Limitations in transport access (roads/rail) and distances between destinations and experiences
- Limitations in wifi access, mobile coverage and internet connectivity across the LGA



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OPPORTUNITIES

- Strengthen relationships with potential partners to deliver new products and experiences
- Development of interpretation and signage
- Sharing our Aboriginal heritage, art & sculptures, town heritage, and natural environment
- Short breaks and domestic holiday market are growing – tailor the regional offer to capitalise on this growth – this includes the rise of the female traveller, growth in the Millennials' market and more active 55+ market as well as increasing popularity of tours
- Strengthen relationships with potential partners to deliver new products and experiences, including but not limited to the Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC), the National Parks & Wildlife Services (NPWS) and private sector.
- Attract greater investment across the LGA in tourism experiences, facilities and infrastructure, including from Commonwealth and State Governments and private sector
- Showcase our towns and villages as seasonal or experience-based hubs to strengthen their contribution to the visitor economy



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THREATS

- Poor local-level visitor-related data
- Lack of key performance indicators (KPIs)
- Limited understanding of the benefits of the visitor economy to the region and other businesses, including the retail sector
- Volunteer fatigue, ageing committees and need for event management training for events
- Population decline
- Limited opportunities for packaging and bundling of products and experiences across regions
- Lack of diversity in accommodation options and limited capacity to support increasingly popular events, includes RV and caravan parking
- Poor local-level visitor-related data, lack of key performance indicators (KPIs) and limited understanding of the benefits of the visitor economy to the LGA
- Attracting government funding and ensuring the timing of funding approvals enables delivery of projects on time
- Issues around access, equity, participation, provision and delivery in education and training for people in rural and remote NSW
- Attracting investment for and managing visitor economy infrastructure projects (also at risk if skills shortage not addressed)
- Gaps in infrastructure such as internet and mobile phone coverage, signage, quality of roads and public transport

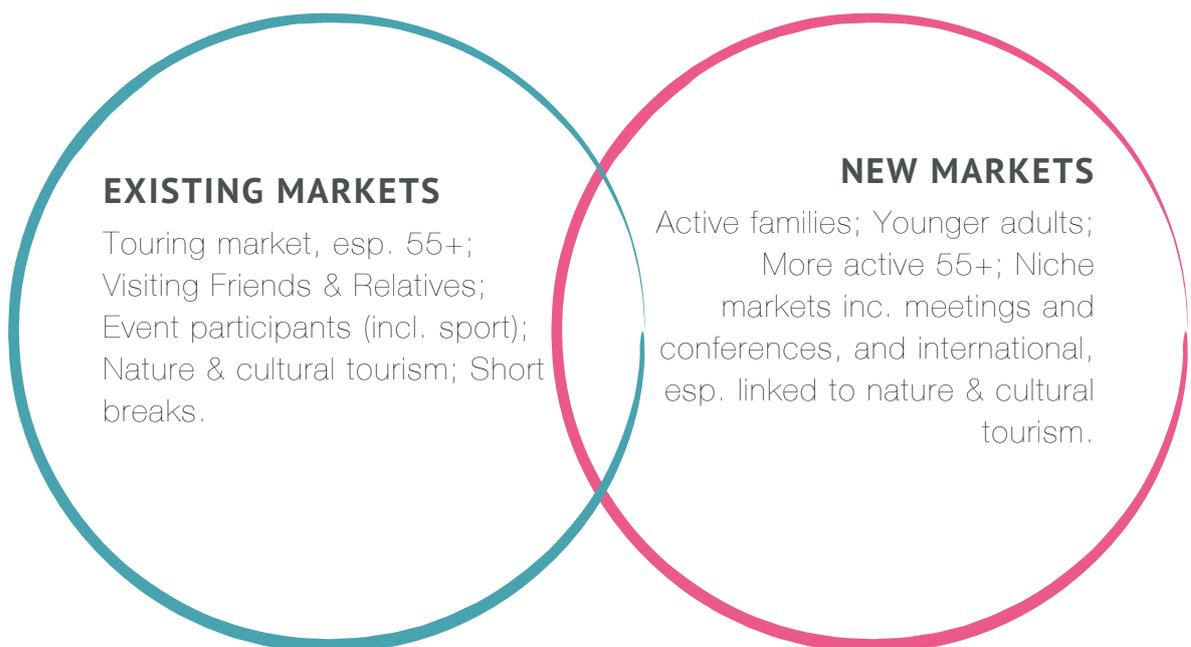
Based on research, consultation undertaken during the development of the Coonamble Shire Masterplan and analysis of the SWOT, the key considerations and challenges for Coonamble LGA in growing demand and visitor services include:

- Delivering new and enhanced/refreshed collaborative, coordinated, visitor-centric products and experiences is critical for invigorating visitation across the LGA, encouraging repeat visitation, reversing declining market share, and increasing length of stay and yield across the region;
- Improving information on and access to nature and cultural-based experiences;
- Improving information on and access to art and sculpture within the LGA

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TARGET MARKETS

The strategic approach adopted for the Coonamble DMP is to maintain existing markets while also targeting new higher-value markets. This reinforces the importance of motivating new people to visit the region as well as encouraging repeat visitation. This is summarised in the diagram below, with identified objectives outlined in the DMP that aim to grow the visitor economy through focusing on both existing and new markets.



The region's most important source markets are domestic markets, which will continue to be a significant focus for Coonamble Shire into the future.

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ATTRACTING MILLENNIALS TO REGIONAL NSW

In November 2017, Destination NSW (DNSW) and Tourism Research Australia (TRA) released a report, *Attracting Millennials to Regional NSW*. Millennials are aged between 15 – 29 years old although for this study, the age range was extended to 15 – 34 years. While this is highly segmented across age groupings within the wider age band, there are some insights that are highly relevant to the Coonamble LGA.

Importantly, they define themselves by their experiences rather than by their jobs as older generations have done. This is significant in regard to focusing on the growing domestic market for younger adults, who are increasingly interested in short breaks, festivals and events as well as more immersive nature-based experiences.

To attract their attention, it is important to create experience-rich imagery (photos and video), highlight the uniqueness of destinations and provide options for them to see and do.

Millennials are heavily influenced by digital and social media; WIFI access is important and they are seeking experiences with the 'bragability' factor.

What are their perceptions of regional holidays?

- Not enough variety in things to see and do
- Peaceful, relaxing and authentic, but can be dull and boring
- Activities mainly relate to nature - hiking, beach, swimming
- Not accessible if you don't have a car

How do their requirements align with regional NSW offering?

- The key pull factor for a regional holiday is having basic, yet sophisticated experiences, such as country food and wine, nature-based experiences, and events.
- Millennials consider regional destinations as peaceful and relaxing, while providing authentic experiences.
- As the level of digital overload is only likely to intensify in coming years, growth in people seeking relaxing and peaceful retreats is an opportunity for regional NSW.



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STRATEGIC THEMES

Country and Outback NSW offers an extraordinary diversity of visitor experiences as well as natural, cultural and built assets. A key element of the DNCO DMP are its strategic themes, which highlight the points of difference of the region compared with other destinations and provide a high-level experience framework, without trying to describe everything that the region offers its visitors.

Not all strategic themes identified by the DNCO CMP are relevant to Coonamble LGA. Some have been chosen as key focus areas for the Coonamble DMP, for which activities and initiatives will be developed and are described later in this DMP.



Image source: DNCO DMP

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COONAMBLE DMP ACTION PLAN

Coonamble DMP action plan consists of 6 key strategic themes as determined by the DNCO DMP. These themes will influence Councils future direction and key actions for tourism in the Coonamble Shire.

These key strategic themes are:

- Celebrating Culture on Country
- Unlimited Horizons
- Exploring our Nature
- Revealing our Heritage
- Little Places, Big Stories
- Events

THEME: CELEBRATING CULTURE ON COUNTRY

This theme is dedicated to greater recognition of the diverse Aboriginal communities and culture across the Network while also celebrating the incredible stories and characters of those communities and profiling the works of Aboriginal artists and artisans, including those in nature such as the Sculptures in the Scrub in Pilliga National Park.

THEME: UNLIMITED HORIZONS

Whether it is by day or by night, the Coonamble Shire offers myriad experiences to explore and feel the sense of freedom offered by unlimited horizons: From star gazing on a cloudless night to heading off-track on an ultimate 4WDing adventure. This theme is all about adopting an experientially-led approach in line with global and domestic travel trends. This includes drive journeys and touring routes, creating new night-time experiences, such as astronomy tours, visiting Australia's first Dark Sky Park and out-of-the ordinary accommodation, dinner under the stars and outdoor concerts at night. An emerging growth market and a potential game-changer for the LGA is charter flights and flying tours.



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THEME: EXPLORING OUR NATURE

From lacing up the adventure boots or grabbing a pair of binoculars for birdwatching, there are many ways to explore nature in the Coonamble Shire. While the region's landscapes are diverse and offer the opportunity for visitors to immerse themselves in nature, the research shows that this theme needs to be further developed to create more remarkable experiences and strengthen promotion of its natural assets. This includes opportunities such as exploring Outback landscapes, making a splash in waterways, artesian pools and rivers, riding cycling trails, relaxing in spectacular gardens and spotting unique Australian wildlife. Key partnerships will be with organisations such as NPWS.

THEME: REVEALING OUR HERITAGE

The Coonamble Shire has a depth of history and heritage, from agricultural and industrial, to the iconic and well-preserved facades of the main street. Revealing our heritage is about creating contemporary, interactive and immersive experiences that attract new markets and inspire a sense of wonder and pride in Australia's history. Delivering on this ambition will take many forms, from industry-linked events, heritage precincts, bringing to life our rail heritage, memorial gardens and bundling experiences to provide a truly memorable holiday.

THEME: LITTLE PLACES, BIG STORIES

In a world seeking more authentic experiences, genuine local characters and off-the-beaten track destinations, little places often deliver the biggest stories. A key to this theme is to profile the experience and events offer of the smaller towns and villages across the region, including showcasing their points of difference and key reasons to visit across the seasons, including identifying when the 'Little Place' can be the hub from a visitor experience perspective.

THEME: EVENTS

The Shire's events provide an ultimate day out or inspire people to visit the region. There are also many smaller, special interest yet very popular events, including community events. This includes events for lovers of music, art and culture, sport and recreation and food and drink or special-interest events such as air shows and vintage car shows.

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THEME

KEY ACTIONS

KPI'S

*Celebrating
Culture on
Country*

- Develop new experiences and lifting the profile of existing experiences as well as capability building to strengthen delivery of meaningful and immersive cultural tourism experiences.
- Build relationships with stakeholders including Coonamble LALC and prominent Aboriginal community members to help deliver their stories and build skills and capability.
- Work with stakeholders to develop these stories
- Share these stories through experiences throughout the LGA
- Join NATOC – bring to Coonamble for workshops / education with local potential operators
- Masterplan references

- Set framework up with CLALC/NATOC for collaboration
- Identify and start to develop one operator or experience

*Unlimited
Horizons*

- Leverage Australia's only Dark Skies Park (Warrumbungle National Park), being only a short drive from our LGA
- Assist in the development of night skies experiences for our LGA
- Council's Outdoor Dining Policy
- NWPS – 4WD map
- Production of marketing materials / collateral to showcase itineraries (the LGA and Neighboring
- Promotional partnership with Dark Sky Park
- Development of an Agritourism offering
- Investigate Aboriginal stories

- Printed collateral
- Development of one current offering

*Exploring
Nature*

- Support the Infrastructure for Implementing Destination Macquarie Marshes Action Plan
- Coonamble River Walk & Gulargambone Creek Walks – create story and plan for these walks
- Build relationships and better information sharing with NPWS
- Identify and market local/neighbouring NPWS product
- Marketing collateral
- Day trip to the Marshes/neighbouring bore baths
- Develop an agritourism operator / offering with a bore bath experience

- Additional offerings



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THEME

KEY ACTIONS

KPI'S

THEME	KEY ACTIONS	KPI'S
<i>Revealing our Heritage</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coonamble Museum Under the Bridge – staff, promote, catalogue collection, expand and develop current offering • Coonamble Town Heritage Walk – expand current offering • Agricultural heritage – explore driving tours, silo art • Railway station - explore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of content/collateral
<i>Little Places, Big Stories</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and highlight the current sculpture and art offering in the LGA • Nickname Hall of Fame - elevate current offering • Catalogue of public art works • Relationship with Outback Arts / Public Arts Panel to provide recommendations to Council • Local 'tour guides' program with our 'living legends' • Develop dedicated story about Quambone and Gulargambone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of content/collateral
<i>Events</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Coonamble LGA community events • Maintain delivery of Council owned events and diversify this offering • Develop new events to attract people to our region • Events calendar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events calendar live and updated
<i>General Marketing & Promotional Actions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook and Instagram – use more effectively with purpose, defined messaging and intended outcome • Build image content (photo and video) • Marketing and promotion – update with new branding • Identify messaging • Investigate an app to collate these offerings/content • Update the website and make it easy to continue to maintain with collateral to be developed as identified by this document. • Source grant funding for identified priorities • Engage with local businesses to develop, promote and participate in tourism campaigns identified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of content/collateral

