

St George Region

RECREATIONAL VEHICLE AND CAMPING STRATEGY REVIEW — JUNE 2021 —



BOLLON | DIRRANBANDI | HEBEL | MUNGINDI | NINDIGULLY | ST GEORGE | THALLON
QUEENSLAND'S SOUTHERN OUTBACK



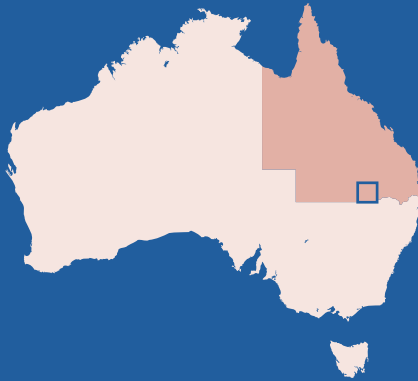


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Introduction

NESTLED ON THE BANKS OF QUEENSLAND'S MIGHTY BALONNE RIVER, THE BALONNE SHIRE IS APPROXIMATELY 500KM SOUTHWEST OF BRISBANE AND JUST ABOVE THE NEW SOUTH WALES BORDER.



Around 4,500 people live in seven communities in the 31,000 km² region. The towns are St George, Thallon, Dirranbandi, Bollon, Nindigully, Mungindi, and Hebel. Each has a water location attracting an abundance of wildlife and picturesque landscapes.

Sitting at the crossroads of five major driving routes, the Moonie, Carnarvon, Castlereagh, Barwon and Balonne Highways, it's a region of surprising diversity. This is where the country meets the Outback, and the Shire offers the best of both worlds. There are vast rural landscapes, beautiful meandering rivers, old-fashioned country hospitality, red dirt and dust, and Outback ruggedness and charm.

Thousands of drive tourists pass through the Balonne Shire every year. Many stay to see the iconic Nindigully Pub, Thallon's silos or the breathtaking sunset and sunrise over the river. Others are there to enjoy the inland fishing, birdlife, and vast open spaces.

Balonne Shire is a transit hub, but it could be so much more. Introducing carefully enhanced visitor experience engagement throughout the Shire will encourage travellers to stay longer in the region.

Purpose

The purpose of this Strategy review is to provide an action-based strategy to attract the self-contained recreational vehicle (RV) traveller market which is the fastest-growing domestic tourism sector in Australia.

The Recreational Vehicle and Camping Strategy provides clear deliverable and measurable goals to capitalise the community's tourism and economic opportunities.

OBJECTIVE

To enhance drive tourism benefits by encouraging an increase in RV visitation and overnight visitor expenditure.

This will assist the safe and sustainable management of the Council's existing caravan and camping assets. A detailed understanding and consideration of stakeholder interests will minimise adverse effects on local residents.

SCOPE

- Encourage RVs to visit the Balonne Shire and enhance their visitor experience, promote overnight visitor expenditure, and prolong the length of stay within the region.
- Proactively respond and adapt to shifting demand patterns and evolving industry trends to cater to diverse travellers.
- Promote a range of camping options within the Balonne Shire which cater to a diverse range of campers.
- Develop a consistent, adaptable approach across the Shire that is flexible to local conditions.
- Sustainably protect and manage Council assets (both natural and cultural) across the Shire.
- Build Balonne's reputation as an RV destination of choice for travellers and visitors.



DID YOU KNOW?

Sitting on the crossroads of five major driving routes, including border crossings with Queensland and New South Wales provides Balonne Shire a unique selling point and strategic advantage in the recreational vehicle market.

What is...

THE RV & CAMPING MARKET?

The RV and camping market in Australia is a highly diverse market, with a wide variety of trip purposes, from grey nomad touring to escape north from the colder weather of southern states to young couples (domestic and international) on a bucket list adventure to a growing family market.

It is important to note, this diverse market often uses a variety of accommodation, from caravan parks and cabins to camping in National Parks and free camping.

What is...

A RECREATIONAL VEHICLE?

'A caravan, motorhome or campervan that has built-in eating, sleeping, food storage and preparation facilities and contains a toilet, shower and holding tanks for both grey and black water, clean water storage and hot water service.'

Source: Queensland camping options toolkit

Background

Caravanning and camping have become the most popular holiday type in Australia, with 60 million holiday nights generated in 2019¹.

The Caravan Industry Association's research indicates that camping and caravan holidays have become established as part of our travelling behaviour. In 2019, Australia's population of 24.8 million people in 8.4 million households, hit a high of 14 million caravanning and camping trips. This highlights the importance of this sector in the tourism industry.

Self-contained recreational vehicles (RV) are a significant growth sector. This includes caravans, motorhomes and campervans that combine transportation and temporary

living quarters. They are used for travel, recreation and camping and provide accommodation for the occupants.

Innovative technology has changed the facilities and capabilities of recreational vehicles and shifted their traditional reliance on caravan parks. With onboard showers, toilets, water storage and the ability to generate electricity, RV tourists are seeking alternative camping options.

They want different accommodation for their self-contained RV and are choosing low-cost, no-frills, freedom camping.

Many Councils and caravan park operators already have adapted to this changing trend.

1 2020 Caravan & Camping State of Industry, Caravan Industry Association of Australia

2 CMCA Position Paper, Low Cost, Self-contained RV Accommodation, July 2018



Strategic Context

THE BALONNE SHIRE RECREATIONAL VEHICLE AND CAMPING STRATEGY HAS BEEN DEVELOPED TO ALIGN WITH LOCAL, REGIONAL AND STATE POLICIES TO ENSURE A COORDINATED APPROACH.

Queensland Tourism & Transport Strategy 2020

*Queensland Drive Tourism Strategy –
Camping Options Toolkit 2014*

*Outback Destination
Tourism Plan (2014-2020)*

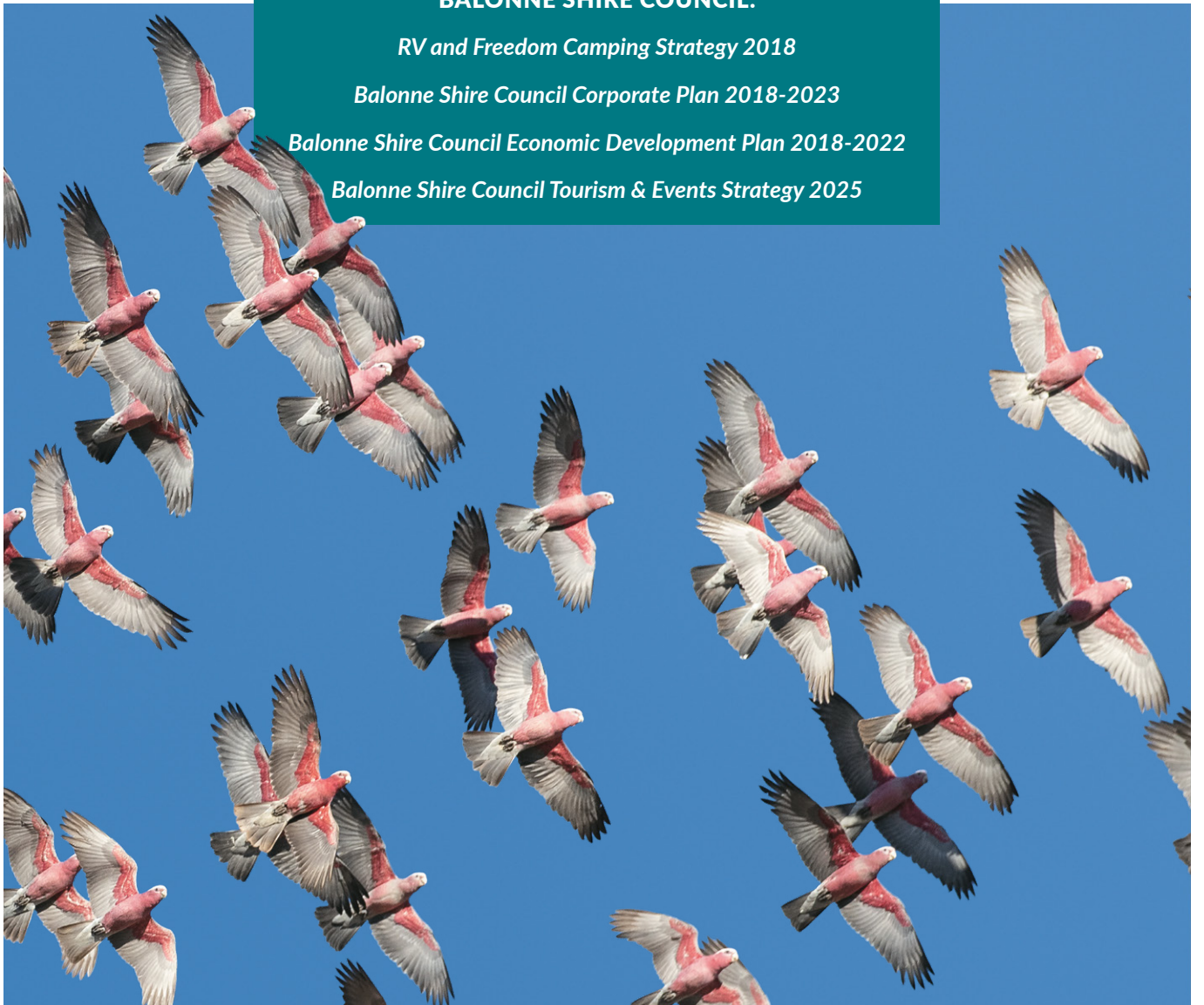
BALONNE SHIRE COUNCIL:

RV and Freedom Camping Strategy 2018

Balonne Shire Council Corporate Plan 2018-2023

Balonne Shire Council Economic Development Plan 2018-2022

Balonne Shire Council Tourism & Events Strategy 2025



RV & Camping Market

THE RV AND CAMPING MARKET IN AUSTRALIA IS A HIGHLY DIVERSE MARKET, RANGING FROM A WIDE VARIETY OF TRIP PURPOSES, FROM GREY NOMAD TOURING TO ESCAPE THE COLDER WEATHER OF SOUTHERN STATES TO YOUNG COUPLES (DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL) ON A BUCKET LIST ADVENTURE TO FAMILIES.

RV VEHICLE TYPES

While the RV market is experiencing rapid growth, the number of commercial caravan parks offering no-frills camping has declined.

More travellers are looking for campgrounds with fewer services as their vehicle can provide facilities traditionally provided by caravan parks. These are the types of vehicles used by campers that are travelling through Balonne Shire.

NON-SELF-CONTAINED VEHICLES AND TENTS

Recreational vehicles which generally include sleeping and cooking facilities, but are unlikely to include toilet and shower, include:

- Caravans
- Camper-trailers
- Campervans
- Vans or people movers converted to provide onboard sleeping
- Tents (e.g., rooftop tents, standalone tents, swags)
- Occupants would generally require daily services including toilets, showers, potable water, and access to electricity.

SELF-CONTAINED VEHICLES

Recreational vehicles with cooking and sleeping facilities and the capacity to contain all waste matter, including grey/black water, within the vehicle.

- Generally, these vehicles have a toilet, shower, kitchen sink, freshwater tank, grey and black water tank and may have means of generating electricity (e.g., solar panels).
- Fastest growing sector of the market. Most new caravans on the market are fully self-contained.
- Non-self-contained vehicles can be retrofitted to provide self-contained facilities (e.g., portable toilet, portable shower etc).
- Fully self-contained setups generally only require services every few days e.g., rubbish bin, potable water to fill tanks and dump point to empty grey/black water tanks.

AVERAGE RATE AND OCCUPANCY IN QUEENSLAND CARAVAN PARKS³

The trends in types of accommodation in caravan parks has seen a demand increase in occupancy cabins from 2017 - 2021, with decrease in occupancy in unpowered sites.



CABINS

\$177 Avg. Daily Rate
60% Avg. Occupancy



POWERED SITES

\$57 Avg. Daily Rate*
49% Avg. Occupancy



UNPOWERED SITES

\$47 Avg. Daily Rate*
15% Avg. Occupancy

* Please note, these average daily rates for powered and unpowered sites reflect Queensland-wide average rates, and are generally lower in the St George Region, where the average daily rate is currently closer to \$35

³ Accommodation Stats, Jan-May 2021, Average Occupancy, Caravan Industry Association of Australia

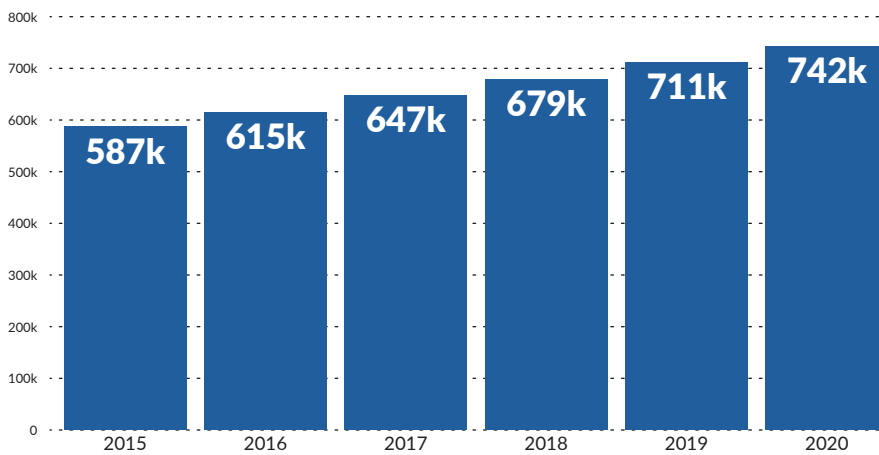


The Caravan & Camping Market

AUSTRALIAN TRENDS

FOR THE PAST 15 YEARS, THE RV SECTOR HAS BEEN THE FASTEST GROWING DOMESTIC TOURISM SECTOR IN AUSTRALIA.

RECREATION VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS IN AUSTRALIA



RECREATION VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS IN AUSTRALIA⁴

Caravan and campervan registrations have **increased by 26.4%** between 2015 -2020 with over 742,000 in 2020.



1 2020 Caravan & Camping State of Industry, Caravan Industry Association of Australia

4 Caravan Industry Association of Australia Motor Vehicle Census Stats

5 RV Consumer Report - 2018, Caravan Industry Association of Australia (2,541 sample size)

6 Commercial and Caravan Camping, Tourism Research Australia, 2019

NIGHTS AND TRIPS IN 2019¹

56
MILLION CARAVAN
& CAMPING NIGHTS



13.7
MILLION
TRIPS



FREE CAMPING SITES⁶



7.2
MILLION TRIPS



SPENDING
\$4.6
BILLION

2020 NUMBER OF RECREATIONAL VEHICLES IN AUSTRALIA⁴



72,062
CAMPERVANS



669,507
CARAVANS

CARAVANS MAKE UP **90%** OF VEHICLE TYPES

TOTAL EXPENDITURE OF CARAVAN AND CAMPING VISITORS⁵

\$7.3
BILLION

90% OF EXPENDITURE IS
IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

AVERAGE AGE⁵

33
YEARS

AVERAGE INCOME⁵

\$48,000
- \$72,000



1 IN 13

AUSTRALIAN
HOUSEHOLDS HAVE A
REGISTERED RV⁵



45%

OF RV OWNERS
HAVE CHILDREN
UNDER 15 AT HOME⁵

AVERAGE RV USAGE⁵

40.9
NIGHTS

FUTURE

27%

OF RESPONDENTS
WILL BECOME FIRST
TIME RV OWNERS
WITHIN 3 YEARS⁵

Who are...

RV TRAVELLERS?⁶

64% of visitors research destinations before travelling.

Travellers who caravan or camp are **more likely** to visit multiple locations.

46% of RV travellers are 50+ years old.

Average length of stay = **5 days**

24% are retired/pension.

7.2 million trips to commercial sites:
27% travelled with a caravan.

34% of trips include children.

Most common type of spend: **32%**
(\$2.1 billion) on food and drinks.

78% of trips are for holidays.

11% of travellers interested in fishing
will stay in free/low-cost campgrounds.

92% of trips are to regional destinations.

What...

DO THEY DO?⁶

66% of travellers eat out.

43% of travellers sightsee.

29% of travellers bushwalk.

26% of travellers visit national parks.

16% of travellers fish.

1 2020 Caravan & Camping State of Industry, Caravan Industry Association of Australia

4 Caravan Industry Association of Australia Motor Vehicle Census Stats

5 RV Consumer Report - 2018, Caravan Industry Association of Australia (2,541 sample size)

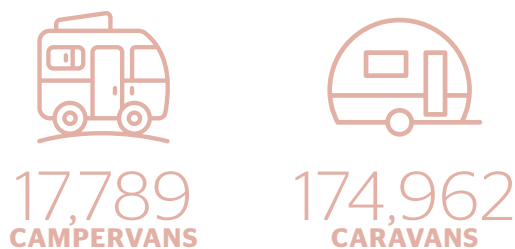
6 Commercial and Caravan Camping, Tourism Research Australia, 2019

QUEENSLAND RV MARKET

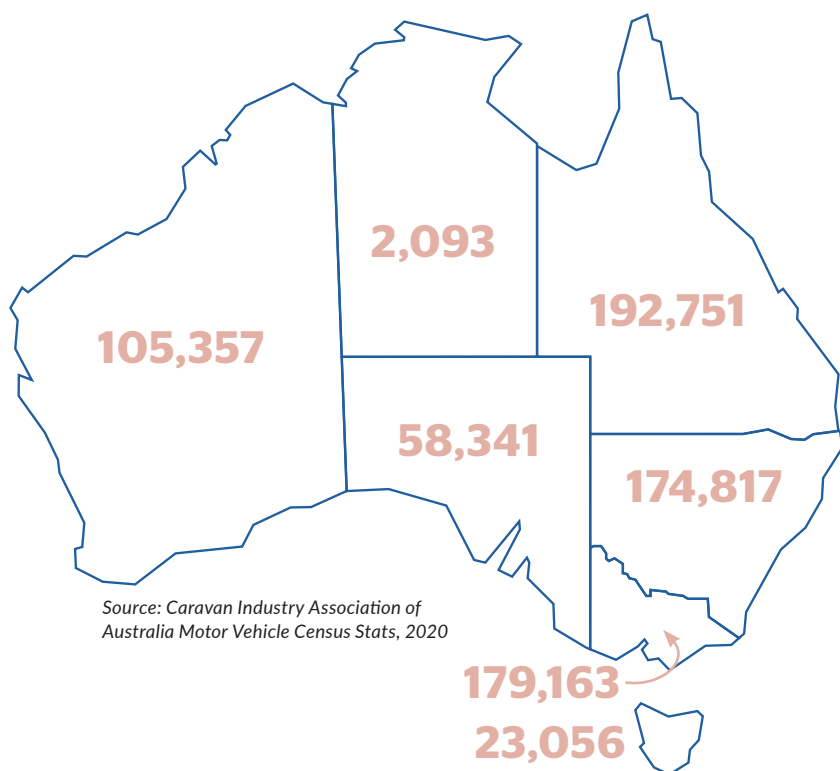
Queensland has experienced significant growth in the RV market with a 29% increase in campervan and caravan registrations between 2015-2020.

Compared to registrations in other states, Queensland has the most registered RVs with a combined total of 192,751 registered RVs. This compares with 179,163 in Victoria and 174,817 registrations in NSW.

2020 NUMBER OF RECREATIONAL VEHICLES IN QUEENSLAND



TOTAL RV REGISTRATIONS IN AUSTRALIA BY STATE



OVERNIGHT VISITOR NIGHTS IN QUEENSLAND

Domestic visitors spent over 82,000 nights, with over 5,000 nights in Southern Queensland Country during 2020. Of the 82,000 nights in Queensland, 6,472 were in caravans/campervans.

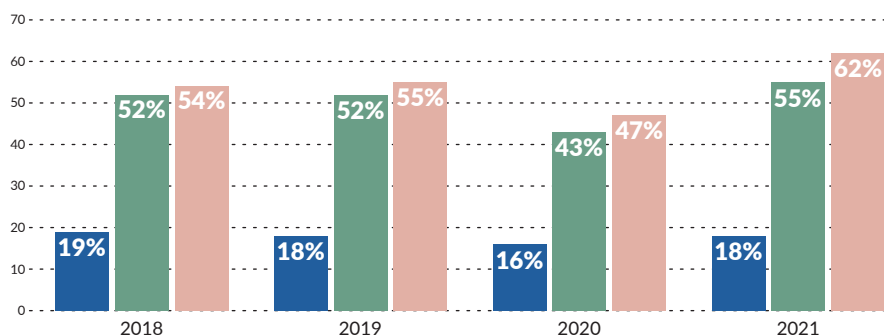
DOMESTIC OVERNIGHT TOURISM TRENDS QLD⁷

Visitors (000)	20,421
Nights (000)	82,101
Spend (\$m)	15,265

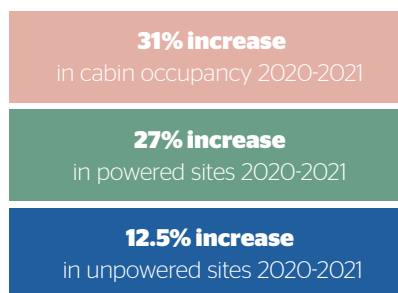
CARAVAN/COMMERCIAL CAMPING⁸

Total Overnight Trips in Queensland (000)	977
Total Nights in Queensland (000)	6,472
Total Average Stay in Queensland	7

AVERAGE OCCUPANCY IN QUEENSLAND



QUEENSLAND CARAVAN PARK OCCUPANCY



⁷ Domestic Overnight Tourism Trends Queensland, Tourism Research Australia June 2020

⁸ Overnight Trips in Australia by Residents by Accommodation Type, Tourism Research Australia September 2020

⁹ Overnight Trips in Australia by Residents by Purpose and Destination, Tourism Research Australia, September 2020

BALONNE SHIRE TOURISM

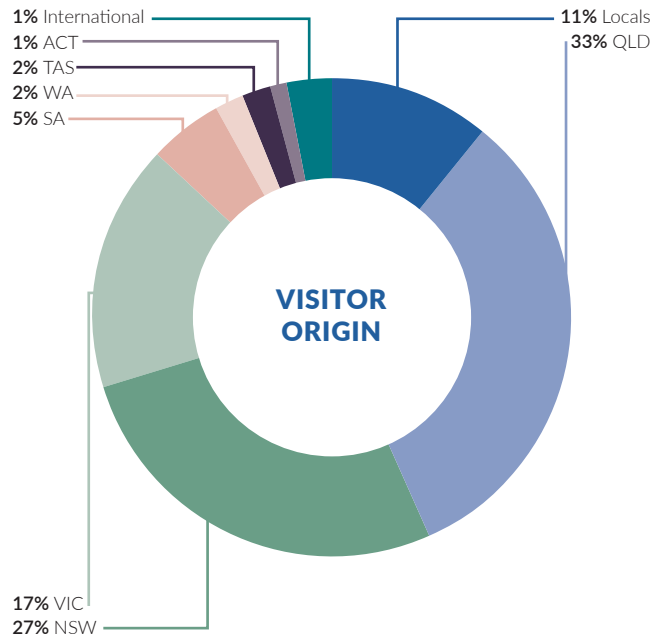
Limited tourism figures are available for the Balonne Shire as they sit below required data confidence levels.

The Balonne Shire Visitor Information Centre (VIC) records tourists that stop at the centre and this chart illustrates steady growth from 2017.

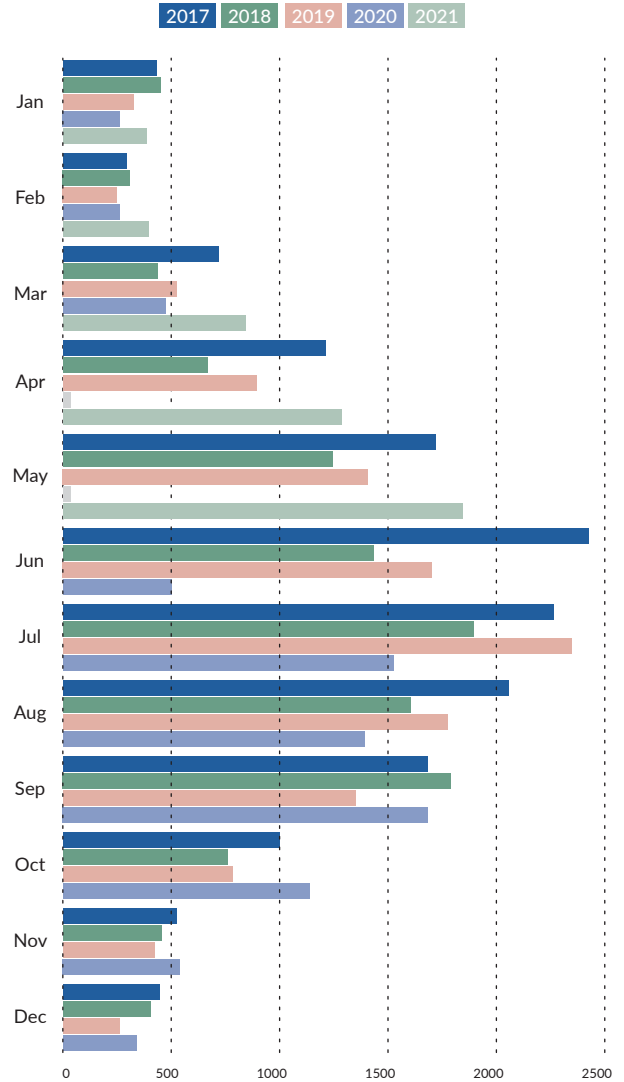
Visitation increased in 2020 with intrastate visitors restricted by Covid border closures. The peak visitation period is between May to September during the cooler seasons.

VISITOR ORIGIN

The charts below illustrate the origin of visitor enquiries at the St George Visitor Information Centre¹².



VISITOR ENQUIRIES AT THE VIC



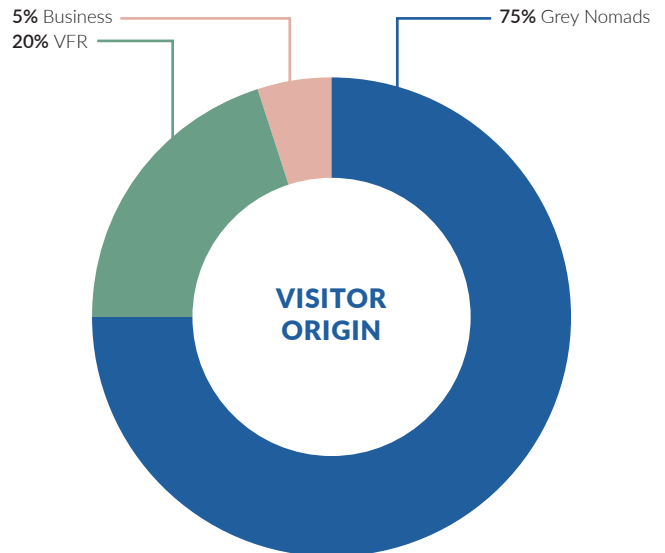
Source: Balonne Visitor Information Centre enquiries

TOP 5 GEOGRAPHIC SOURCE MARKETS

(Prior to COVID-19).

Please note, geographic source markets are changing since COVID-19, with downturns in Melbourne and Sydney.

- 1. SEQ:** Gold Coast, Logan, Ipswich, Lockyer Valley, Moreton Bay, Redlands, Sunshine Coast, Noosa, Scenic Rim, Somerset
- 2. GREATER MELBOURNE**
- 3. BRISBANE METRO**
- 4. SYDNEY METRO**
- 5. WIDE BAY BURNETT:** Banana, Bundaberg, Cherbourg, Fraser Coast, Gympie, North Burnett, South Burnett



Source: Balonne Shire VIC Visitor Report, 2019

ECONOMIC VALUE TO BALONNE SHIRE

VALUE OF TOURISM¹⁰

\$22.7M
2018/2019

GENERATING¹⁰

251,591
VISITOR NIGHTS,
2018/2019



\$191,000
DOMESTIC VISITOR
NIGHTS, 2018

LENGTH OF STAY¹¹

3
NIGHTS, 2018

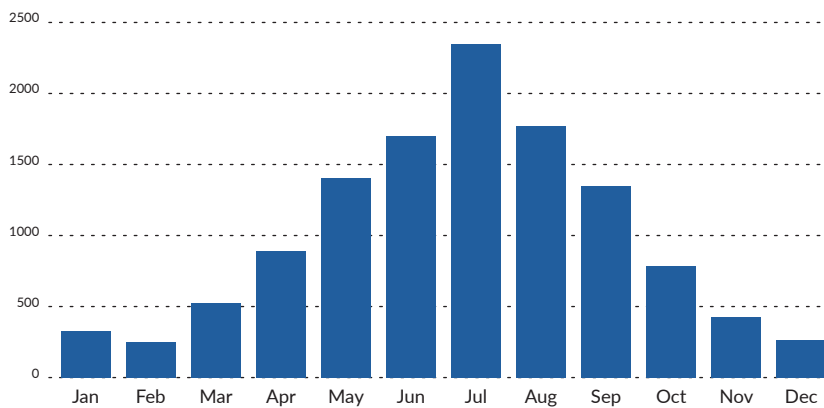
SPEND¹²

\$292
AVE SPEND PER TRIP
2018



\$112
AVE SPEND PER NIGHT
2018

SEASONALITY¹²



Winter is the peak tourism season in the Balonne Shire, peaking in July, followed by the shoulder seasons of Autumn and Spring. The low season is Summer from December to February.

¹⁰ Economy ID, Balonne Shire Tourism & Hospitality Value, 2020

¹¹ Local Government Area Profiles 2018, Balonne, Tourism Research Australia (excluding international visitors due to small sample size)

¹² Balonne Shire VIC Visitor Report, 2019



WHAT DO RV TRAVELLERS NEED?

It is important to understand the unique requirements of RV travellers when considering the provision of low-cost camping.

The Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) have defined the following criteria to meet the needs of RV travellers:

- Provision of appropriate parking within the town centre, with access to a general shopping area for groceries and fresh produce.
- Provision of short term, low-cost overnight parking (24/48 hours) for self-contained recreational vehicles, as close as possible to the CBD.
- Access to potable water.
- Access to a free dump point at an appropriate location.
- Provision of long-term parking for self-contained recreational vehicles.
- Access to medical facilities or an appropriate emergency service.
- Access to a pharmacy or a procedure to obtain pharmaceutical products.
- Visitor Information Centre (VIC) with appropriate parking facilities.
- A town map showing essential facilities, such as short- and long-term parking areas, dump point and potable water should be available from VIC.
- Signage indicating the town welcomes RV travellers.
- Directional signage.
- Access to medical facilities, a pharmacy and grocery shops.
- Safe and friendly environment.
- Although RV travellers often plan their trip in advance, they will respond to a region that offers new experiences and interesting things to do and see and amend their travel arrangements.



BENEFITS OF LOW-COST CAMPING

- Low-cost camping options attract travellers who would typically pass through to stop at the next town that offers more desirable choices.
- These are travellers that could spend money in the community, supporting local bakeries, butchers, independent grocery stores, cafes and restaurants, and other local businesses.
- Most travellers enjoy participating in experiences, tours, and attractions and extend their length of stay in a region to take advantage of these opportunities.

CASE STUDIES

Charleville

Research undertaken by a commercial caravan park owner in Charleville identified that RV travellers were bypassing the centre, travelling directly to the next town with low-cost camping.

To offer an alternative, a low-cost, no-frills Bush Camp camping ground was opened in a fenced-off area within the existing caravan park as a trial. The only facilities available were access to rubbish bins, potable water, and a dump point. Onsite Camp Hosts managed the Bush Camp.

Initially, other caravan park owners in the town were against the low-cost camping, feeling they would miss out on attracting travellers. Some other park owners have noticed RV travellers would stay in the Bush Camp for a few days, then move to their park to access necessities such as recharging power and washing machines.

In some locations, having RV travellers stay in the low-cost campground also stimulated the local economy. It enabled business owners such as the café and butcher to remain viable.

The Bush Camp is now owned and operated by Caravan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA), which gives the region increased marketing exposure through the CMCA membership network.

WHAT ARE CAMP HOSTS?

Camp Hosts are travellers who volunteer to oversee a camp site for a set period, collect site fees and maintain the grounds.

In return for managing the site, they are provided with a free site and often given access to power and water.

FREE & LOW COST CAMPING CHALLENGES

Commercial caravan park owners, particularly in St George, have identified several challenges of Free and Low Cost Camping.

Some areas, such as the Calliope River Rest Area Campground in the Gladstone Region is a highly popular free camping site by a river. Although most abide by the rules of the site, the site does not have full-time on-site supervision. Issues of environmental damage and rubbish being dumped have been cited. It has been estimated upwards of 200 RVs can be on the site overnight.

During the COVID-19 era, health issues are particularly heightened as unmanaged sites are not able to ensure COVID compliance. This includes ensuring visitors use the Qld Check In App for contract tracing and monitoring of the geographic source of visitors.



Local Government Benchmarking

TO IDENTIFY HOW OTHER COUNCILS MANAGE LOW-COST CAMPING, PHONE CONSULTATIONS WERE UNDERTAKEN WITH SOUTHERN DOWNS REGIONAL COUNCIL AND GYMPIE REGIONAL COUNCIL.

GYMPIE REGIONAL COUNCIL

Gympie Regional Council has undertaken extensive research including three rounds of community, industry and traveller surveys to assess the benefit of low-cost camping for the region.

The research identified low-cost camping would positively impact the region, increasing visitation with an economic benefit.

Council investigated the following considerations:

- Local law issues – how to manage time limits and the environmental impact to the site.
- Camp Hosts – should camp hosts be engaged to manage free camping time limits?
- Base level parks with the provision of basic amenities.
- Dump points are available throughout the region.
- Potable water is available with a user pays system.

The decision to provide low-cost camping has been endorsed and will commence shortly.

SOUTHERN DOWNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

The council previously researched the benefits of low-cost campsites in the region and positive results were revealed.

However, at the time the Council chamber was against the introduction of low-cost camping, and the motion failed.

Further recent research was undertaken into free camping in Texas Queensland. This research found:

- Travellers can free camp for up to two weeks by the creek.
- Enough free campers shop at Foodworks to require the employment an additional full-time person.
- Free camping travellers go to the pub for dinner.
- These travellers prefer to buy their meat from the local butcher.
- The commercial caravan park owner placed signs at the free campground to help travellers with TV and phone reception.

Following this research, caravan parks in the Southern Downs Region have successfully trialled \$15 nights that exclude using park facilities in existing parks.

The Chamber is now advocating for the introduction of low-cost camping. The region is in the process of obtaining CMCA RV Friendly Town certification.

Future Travel Trends

In the wake of COVID-19, Australians are keen to travel and want destinations closer to home. The domestic market is embracing Australia's sparsely populated land and natural environment looking for wide-open spaces and fresh air.

Travellers are moving towards self-drive holidays to discover something new in the vast landscapes.

Research by Tourism Australia in October 2020 identified⁶:

- 5% of travellers will take an interstate road trip in the next 12 months.
- 27% will travel on roads they would not usually use.
- Travellers want to support local communities by shopping with local shops such as the butcher or bakery.
- 74% of travellers seek out travel experiences that allow them to give back to a destination.
- Desired road trip experiences include visiting regional areas and small towns, visiting new destinations, adventure activities, food, and wine experiences.
- Travellers are seeking indigenous experiences.
- Visitors are travelling to regenerate. They want destinations and experiences that leave them feeling calm and rejuvenated.
- The rise in agritourism gives visitors an authentic taste of a place and an insight into the culture of the destination.

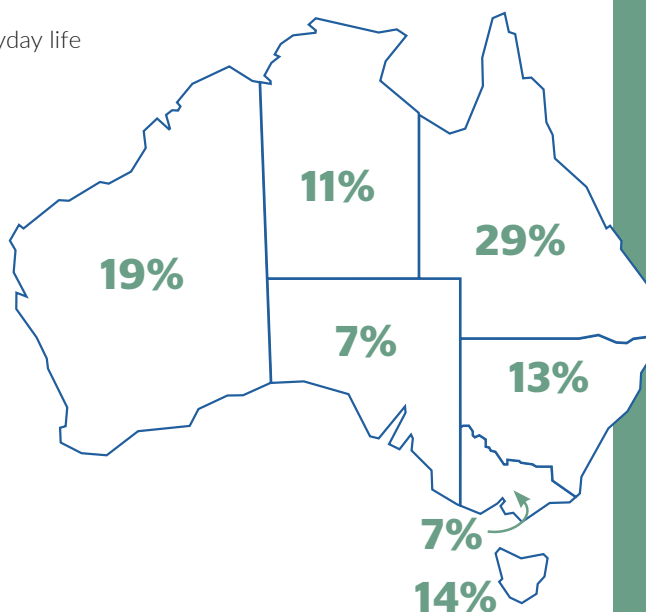
MOTIVATION FOR HOLIDAYS

Research by the Caravan Industry Association of Australia (CIAA)¹⁰ identified traveller's future motivation for holidays and enjoyment factors as:

- Feeling close to nature
- Experiencing new things
- Escaping the grind of everyday life

MOST ASPIRATIONAL TRAVEL LOCATION

The most aspirational state to visit for 29% of respondents in the Caravan Industry Association of Australia research is Queensland, followed by Western Australia 19% and Tasmania 14%.



AUSSIE CARAVAN SALES AT 30-YEAR HIGH AS CAMPING BOOM EXPLODES

Australian caravan production is at a 30-year high as COVID restrictions and closed international borders prompt many families to holiday closer to home.

From grey nomads to young families, Australians are buying caravans, campers and off-road trailers in droves with the majority of sales going to local manufacturers.

Hugh Fitzpatrick from the Caravan Industry Association of Australia says that since the start of COVID caravan sales have boomed.

The caravan industry in Australia contributes more than \$23 billion annually to the Australian economy and has extensive local supply chains that involve more than 6,000 businesses across manufacturing, dealerships, servicing, repair and tourism.

There are currently more than 750,000 recreational vehicles such as caravans and motorhomes registered on Australian roads, with 90 per cent of these vehicles being built in Australia.

"The caravan manufacturing sector is the largest remaining bastion of automotive manufacturing in Australia with 25,000 units built per year in Australia." said CEO of Caravan Industry Association of Australia Stuart Lamont.

Story by Stuart March, Ch 9 National News.

⁶ Commercial and Caravan Camping, Tourism Research Australia, 2019
¹⁰ Caravan Park Consumer 2019, Caravan Industry of Australia

RV TRENDS

Domestic travel soared in 2020, with overcrowding in caravan parks inspiring people to find new ways to travel. Some of the new RV travel trends include:

- Hipcamp – private landowners invite visitors to their properties listing them on hipcamp.com
- Share economy – private online RV rentals such as sharecamper.com.au, letsgomotorhomes.com.au, and camplify.com.au.
- Extending the RV Trip – Travellers are enjoying their travel so much they are extending the length of time they spend travelling. The increase in people working remotely has expanded this trend.

TREND TOWARDS LOW-COST CAMPING

Research by the Campervan & Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) has identified that more travellers opting for low-cost camping and moving away from traditional commercial caravan parks for the following reasons:

- Caravan parks are replacing camping sites with ensuite cabins.
- Caravan parks becoming de facto social housing with a significant number of permanent sites.
- Caravan parks being sold to developers for over 50s villages.
- RVs are getting increasingly larger in length and height to accommodate self-containment options, meaning many cannot access traditional parks because of their size.

LOW-COST CAMPING VISITATION

CMCA have seven operational low-cost camping grounds where travellers regularly are surveyed to identify if they would have stayed in the region if a low-cost camping option were not available¹³.

Except for Charleville, over 60% of respondents indicated they would not have stayed if there was no low-cost camping. The survey results are illustrated in the table below.

PARK	AVERAGE STAY LENGTH (NIGHTS)	AVERAGE SPEND PER RV PER NIGHT	WOULD NOT HAVE STAYED IN THE REGION IF LOW-COST CAMPING WERE NOT AVAILABLE
Bundaberg	2.0	\$263	73%
Charleville	1.6	\$149	47%
Ingham	1.7	\$161	83%
Temora	1.8	\$92	64%
Railton	1.8	\$47	81%
Geeveston	1.7	\$45	Not available yet
Penola	1.5	\$133	80%

RV Industry Leaders

CAMPERVAN AND MOTORHOME CLUB OF AUSTRALIA (CMCA)

The Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia is a not-for-profit membership-based club established in 1986 to advocate for members with industry and government bodies. It is the largest recreational vehicle club in the southern hemisphere supporting RV travellers in Australia.

Built on the foundations of adventure, enjoyment, education and fun, CMCA assists its members through benefits and promoting environmental sustainability.

The association owns seven low-cost parks and has four in development. An additional 20 parks are planned to be operational within three years. CMCA supports the development of a no-frills RV network of parks across Australia.

Low-cost camping options, access to GeoWiki, subscription to the Wanderer, participation in events, access to offers, discounts and industry news are membership benefits for CMCA members.

There is a one-time membership joining fee of \$16.50 plus a \$44 annual membership fee. The association is open to domestic and international travellers.

LOW-COST ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS

CMCA provides members with a wide variety of low-cost accommodation options:

CMCA Member Stop Over Facility: Members can stay in a friendly, non-commercial environment on fellow members' private properties.

CMCA RV Parks: Managed accommodation facilities that provide low cost, no frills accommodation for members with self-contained vehicles in a safe and relaxed environment.

CMCA Dollar Wise Park Network: A partnership with numerous parks Australia wide to bring members affordable accommodation options of just \$10 or less per night (conditions may apply).

CMCA Friendly Caravan Parks: With over 300 participants around the country, these parks offer members a discount of 10% or greater off current rates.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP¹⁴



38,000
MEMBERS



81%
MEMBERS ARE OVER
61 YEARS OLD



94%
MEMBERS ARE OVER
51 YEARS OLD



35,000
MEMBER VEHICLES



20%
CARAVANS



50%
MOTORHOMES

¹⁴ CMCA Statistical Information, CMCA 2021

RECREATIONAL VEHICLE FRIENDLY TOWN (RVFT) PROGRAM

WHAT IS IT?

The RV Friendly Town™ (RVFT) program is a Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia Limited (CMCA) initiative.

An RVFT is one that has met a set of guidelines to ensure they provide a certain number of amenities, and level of services for these travellers. When RV tourists enter a town displaying the RVFT sign, they know they will be welcome, certain services will be provided and they will have access to a safe place to stay overnight, and possibly for a longer period.

CMCA promotes RV Friendly Towns by dedicating one page to the town on the Club website, publishing a one-off article on the town in the Club's monthly magazine, The Wanderer, and listing the town in each edition of the magazine.

CMCA also offers council 2 x 600mm x 690mm roadside 'RV Friendly' signs free of charge. These signs will display the abbreviated 'RV' symbol, followed by the words 'Friendly Town™'.

The CMCA RV Friendly Town™ (RVFT) program is used by more than 36% of councils across Australia as a tool for managing the provision of low-cost accommodation.

HOW DOES A TOWN QUALIFY?

For a town in the St George Region to be appointed to the program, the following set of guidelines that must be met.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

- Provision of appropriate parking within the town centre, with access to a general shopping area for groceries and fresh produce.
- Provision of short term, low cost overnight parking (24/48 hours) for self-contained recreational vehicles, as close as possible to the CBD.
- Access to potable water.
- Access to a free dump point at an appropriate location.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

- Provision of long-term parking for self-contained recreational vehicles.
- Access to medical facilities or an appropriate emergency service.
- Access to a pharmacy or a procedure to obtain pharmaceutical products.
- Visitor Information Centre (VIC) with appropriate parking facilities
- VIC to provide a town map showing essential facilities, such as short- and long-term parking areas, dump point and potable water.
- RVFT signs to be erected within the town precinct.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Other considerations by the CMCA when assessing an RV Friendly Town is the general attitude of the council and the businesspeople. The program is intended to offer town business owners the opportunity to be innovative in meeting the needs of RV tourists, while at the same time growing their businesses.

A consideration may be to consider tendering of sites following consultation and confirmation of potential sites with council approval that meet minimum standards for overflow and potential RV parking.



RVFT BENEFITS TO A COMMUNITY AND LOCAL TOURISM INDUSTRY INCLUDE:

- CMCA promotes the destination as an RV Friendly Town in their GeoWiki, 'The Wanderer' (magazine), on their website and social media. Investment in marketing is optional from Council as CMCA have direct access to the target market.
- A one-off article about the town with images in 'The Wanderer'.
- CMCA provide 2 x 600mm x 690mm roadside 'RV Friendly' signs to council at no cost.
- The RVFT sign indicates to travellers that overnight stops and other RV facilities are available and increases RV tourism market patronage.
- RV visitors are encouraged to contribute to the community environmentally, socially and economically, resulting in an increased patronage of local businesses.

RECREATIONAL VEHICLE FRIENDLY DESTINATION

An RV Friendly Destination is a “one-off” place of interest, such as a homestead or country pub, that is friendly towards all mobile travellers. They are generally businesses where you can visit in any size rig and in many cases, stay overnight.

This classification aims to assist towns and communities not able to meet the criteria of the CMCA RV Friendly Town™ (RVFT) program with an alternative.

Local councils, community organisations and businesses can select a suitable site within the town precinct to become the RVFD. Sites considered for inclusion in this program could include hotels and pubs, clubs, wineries, tourist attractions and businesses that meet the essential criteria listed below.

Camp sites need to demonstrate that the nominated site has a commercial element or has undergone a significant upgrade to facilities. It should provide a level of amenity that sets it apart from a normal campground or roadside rest area.

Existing campgrounds that lie outside town and community boundaries will not be considered for inclusion in the RVFD program.

ESSENTIAL RVFD CRITERIA

- Provision of short term, low-cost overnight parking (24/48 hours) for self-contained recreational vehicles (RVs) in a safe location.
- The nominated parking area needs to be on a solid level surface with enough room for large vehicles to manoeuvre safely.
- If the nominated site is a campground, it needs to be well maintained and offer facilities such as BBQ areas, toilets, power, covered seating, refuse bins. There should also be a commercial element such as a cafe or restaurant.



DESIRABLE RVFD CRITERIA

- Access to a dump point
- Access to potable water
- Longer-term parking

All RVFD applications are assessed on an individual basis with the final decision made by CMCA. The CMCA reserves the right to review any RVFD at any time and withdraw the site from the program should an acceptable standard not be met, or charges levied fall outside the criteria of low cost.

The RVFD will be promoted on the CMCA website, in the Club's monthly magazine, The Wanderer, and on the GeoWiki online database.



Situation Analysis

THE BALONNE SHIRE OFFERS SEVERAL TYPES OF CAMPING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE REGION.

RV FACILITIES

Low-cost and free RV camping areas are located throughout the region supported by the community and providing economic benefit for the towns. Some of the grounds are managed by the community, and others operate through an honesty system. Most Council sites provide amenities.

There are several unofficial sites in the Shire promoted through apps such as WikiCamps and Free Camping Australia. These sites are not serviced or endorsed by the Balonne Shire Council.

CARAVAN PARKS

The Balonne Shire has six commercial caravan parks, four in St George, one each in Dirranbandi and Hebel.

Commercial caravan parks differ from Council sites and usually provide a higher level of services and infrastructure such as showers, laundry facilities, communal areas, powered and non-powered sites, on-site potable water and a dump point for wastewater disposal. These parks often provide swimming pools, activities for the family and playgrounds.

Caravan parks are an essential facility for many RV travellers as they provide an opportunity for self-contained travellers to recharge.

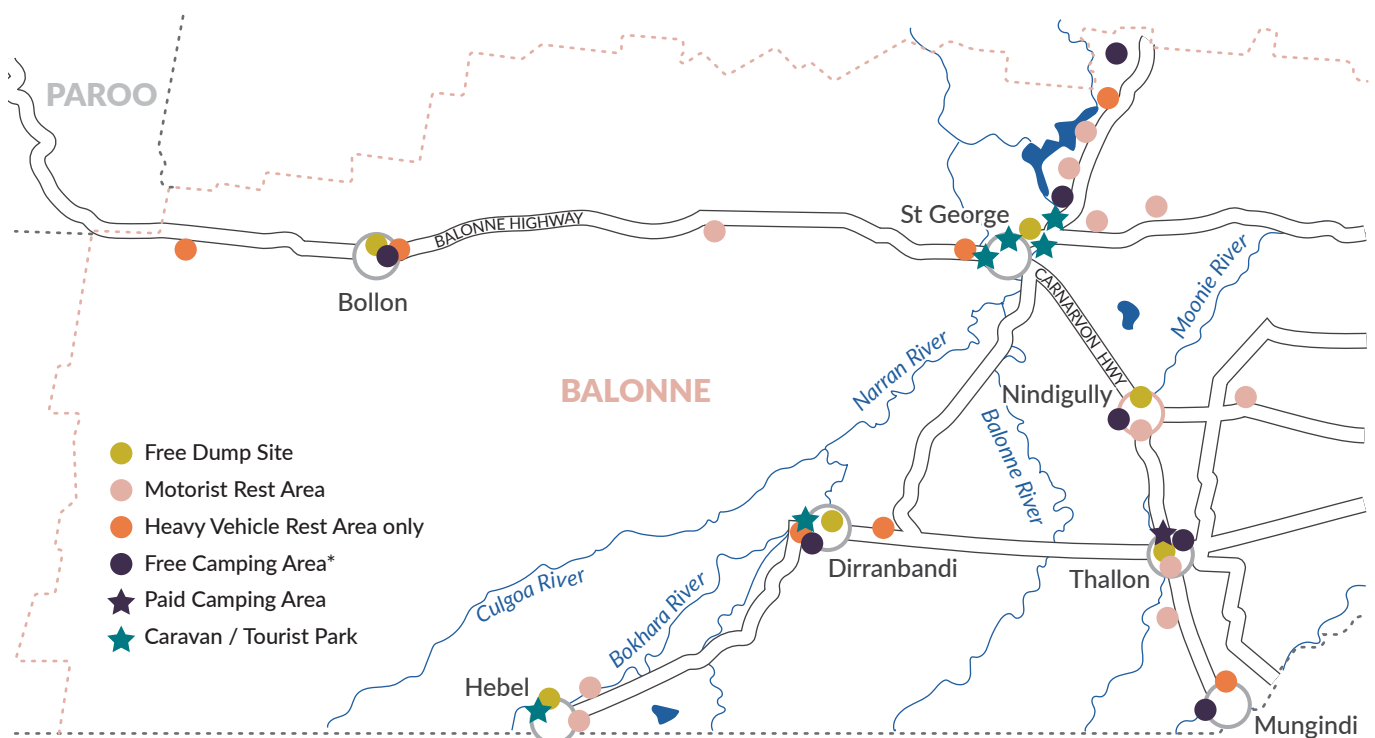
They also offer accommodation options for all travellers.

LOW-COST CAMPING

There are nine free/low-cost camping sites within 100km of St George.

- National Parks - Two National Parks managed by Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service (QNPWS) in the Balonne Shire permit camping. National Parks are not included in this strategy.
- Stock Routes- Stock routes are common throughout the Balonne Shire, imposing additional restrictions and legality to unmanaged camping activities. Stock Routes are not included in this strategy.
- Rest Stops - The Balonne Shire has numerous motorist rest stops and heavy vehicle rest areas in the region. Most provide basic amenities, a shelter shed and BBQ areas. Some have playgrounds. Rest areas are used unofficially as overnight stops by RV travellers and are not promoted or supported by the Balonne Shire Council. Rest stops have not been included in this strategy.

The map below illustrates camping options and rest stop facilities in the Balonne Shire.



* Please note, the site at Beardmore Dam is the Old Youth Camp

Camping & Tourism

OPTIONS ANALYSIS



St George

ST GEORGE IS THE HUB FOR TRAVELLERS HEADING TO THE OUTBACK AND THE LARGEST TOWN IN THE BALONNE SHIRE.

ATTRACTIONS + EXPERIENCES

St George has a number of tourism experiences and attractions. The experiences and attractions include:

- Balonne River & riverbank walkway
- Sandytown River Cruises
- Riversands Winery
- Cotton, vineyard, heritage and birdwatching tours
- The Unique Egg
- Cacti and Succulent Garden
- Beardmore Dam
- Balonne Artesian Thermal Hot Springs (BATHS)
- Model T Rides starting from the Bakery

LOW-COST CAMPING

As St George does not have an approved free/low-cost camping site, RV travellers camp in unmanaged areas along the river, in truck stops and at the cemetery. The lack of a low-cost camping site generates negative social media reviews for St George. People choose to move onto the next town that does provide low-cost camping facilities.

OVERFLOW POLICY

A Camping Overflow Policy has been developed for St George. It states if all four commercial parks are at capacity, the showgrounds can be opened to support camping.

LONG VEHICLE PARKING

St George has three long vehicle parking spaces located at the Visitor Information Centre. The location and distance of the parking spaces to the shops is an issue for travellers transporting groceries and supplies.

POTABLE WATER

St George has potable water facilities for RV travellers.

DUMP POINTS

St George has a public dump point located behind the showgrounds that is free to use.

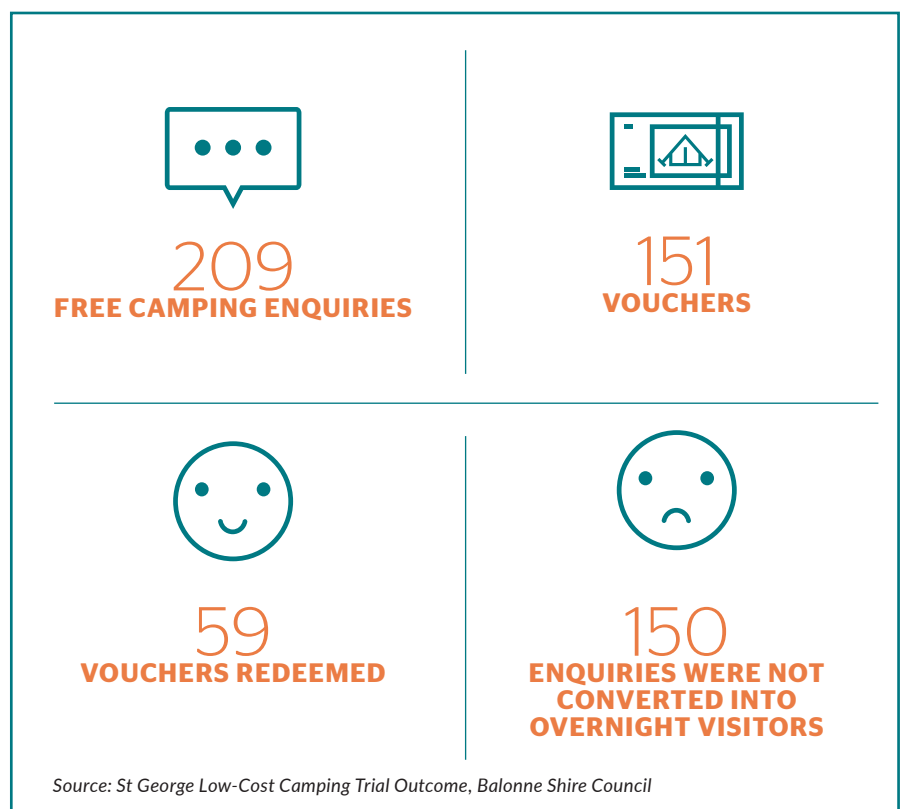
CARAVAN PARKS

St George does not have a Council endorsed low-cost camping site; however, four commercial caravan parks operate in the town offering a range of accommodation options and price points to suit all budget needs as illustrated below. The caravan parks run at capacity during a limited number of events and holiday periods throughout the year.

	KARAMOOKA	ST GEORGE RIVERFRONT	RIVER GUM	PELICAN
CABINS	16	N/A	5	13
SITES	23	Not specified	65	67
SIZE	Average size motor home	Big Rigs	Average size motor home	Big Rigs
POWERED RATE	\$33	\$32	\$33	\$38
UNPOWERED RATE	\$25	\$26	\$22	from \$28

ST GEORGE LOW-COST CAMPING TRIAL

The Balonne Shire Council trialled low-cost camping in St George's four commercial caravan parks in 2019. Visitors who asked for low-cost camping at the VIC were offered a voucher for \$10 to use at commercial parks where \$15 per night sites were offered without the use of the park facilities. Council covered the \$5 difference.



ISSUES

- St George is not considered RV friendly and often receives negative reviews in online free camping sites advising people to bypass the town.
- Existing tourism experiences and attractions are not promoted to their full potential.
- River Gum Caravan Park is the largest park in the town; however, it is not online making it difficult to locate and book a site. When River Gum Caravan Park is Googled, the results point to Goondiwindi.
- Limited RV parking space available and they are not close to the shopping centre.
- St George does not have low-cost camping, hip camps or farm stays. Commercial park owners are hesitant to support the development of a low-cost camp.
- Limited cafes and restaurants are open out of business hours, particularly in peak times e.g. over Easter long weekend.
- Indigenous experiences are not available.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Potential to package tourism experiences, attractions, tours, events, accommodation and meals to extend the length of stay allowing visitors to experience what the region has to offer.
- Evaluate what the council has to offer visitors – example: thermal spring, stop and recharge.
- Development of dedicated RV parking spaces within easy walking of main retail area of town to increase visitor spend.
- Provide scooter/bike hire for RV travellers to move around St George.
- Investigate potential camping at Beardmore Dam.
- Development of a significant visitor attraction to encourage extended length-of-stay.
- Development of an indigenous tour or experience.
- Development of low-cost camping at Beardmore Dam.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Development of tourism packages that encourage an extended length of stay.
- Development of one-, two- and three-day itinerary packages.
- Development of at least three dedicated RV parking spaces at the river end of Scott Street.
- Potential lies in further developing indigenous content by first nations enterprises. Indigenous enterprises to develop within existing visitor experiences, events and packages.
- Apply for RV Friendly Destination (RVFD) status and promote St George welcomes RV travellers.



Dirranbandi

LOCATED ON THE EASTERN BRANCH OF THE BALONNE RIVER, DIRRANBANDI IS KNOWN AS THE TOWN THAT MARKS THE END OF THE SOUTHWEST RAIL LINE. IT IS FAMOUS FOR THE DIRRANBANDI BAKERY.

ATTRACTIONS + EXPERIENCES

- Cubbie Station Cotton Tours
- Dirranbandi Bakery featuring Russian baked treats
- River Precinct
- Rail Precinct with heritage trail and picnic facilities
- Mosaic walkway
- Rural Transaction Centre

CARAVAN PARK

Dirranbandi has one commercial caravan park with:

- 9 cabins
- 3 onsite vans
- 5 unpowered sites
- 22 powered sites

The park owners are currently obtaining CMCA certification as a Dollar Wise Park. As a Dollar Wise Park they have five dedicated unpowered sites available for \$15 per night.

The average stay for guests in the park is 2.7 nights, paying \$25 for the first night and \$20 for the second night.

LOW-COST CAMPING

Low-cost camping is available at the Dirranbandi Caravan Park. Free camping is available at the Balonne Minor River Camping area located approximately 2km from the town centre. Stock routes are often used by travellers for camping.

LONG VEHICLE PARKING

Long vehicle parking is available on the main street however the spaces are not RV dedicated.

POTABLE WATER

Potable water is available at the Dirranbandi Caravan Park.

DUMP POINTS

The dump point is in Theodore Street (beside the showgrounds) and it is free of charge to use.

ISSUES

- Limited iconic visitor experiences.
- The local business operators have inconsistent opening hours.
- The community will only support the caravan park operator providing low-cost camping options.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Further promote the National Parks as a destination.
- The Wanderer magazine is a good source of information and a marketing opportunity.
- New Dirranbandi Dip Spa.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop opportunities for the community to create tourism experience packages to increase the length of stay.
- Apply for RV Friendly Town (RVFT) status.



Thallon

SITUATED ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER BETWEEN MUNGINDI AND ST GEORGE, THALLON IS A POPULAR TOURIST DESTINATION AND PROMOTED AS A SITE IN THE SILO TRAIL.

The Progress Association and local community are committed to providing experiences to attract visitors to the region. Thallon is the only town in the Balonne Shire endorsed by CMCA as an RV Friendly Town.

ATTRACTIONS

- Thallon GrainCorp Silo (Watering Hole Mural)
- Thallon Town Park
- McGeever Recreational Ground
- Francis Hotel (Thallon Pub)
- Giant Northern Hairy-Nosed Wombat statue
- ANZAC Memorial
- History Trail

CARAVAN PARK

Thallon does not have a commercial caravan park.

LOW-COST CAMPING

Thallon has a low-cost camping area adjacent to the main tourist attractions, the painted silos and wombat sculpture. The site has recently been resurfaced with white rock to increase access for all weather conditions. Powered sites are available for \$5.50 per night and the money is collected by the Francis Pub on behalf of the Council.

LONG VEHICLE PARKING

Long vehicle parking is available.

POTABLE WATER

Potable bore water is available free of charge.

DUMP POINT

A dump point is available at the camping area and is free of charge to use.

ISSUES

- The existing amenities block in need of maintenance and restoration.
- A small number of travellers are camping near the river, potentially causing environmental impact.
- Signage is not consistent and requires accurate information.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Camp Oven Cooking: development of a strategy to provide traditional Fijian style meals.
- Watering Hole Heritage: connects the silo to the river, passing sculptures and painted murals on the way.
- The campground is well signed however an attractive campground is the key to the survival of the township. The site needs to be welcoming with modern, clean facilities, kitchen and landscaping to soften the appearance.
- The Progress Association have acquired pylons from the bridge that will be painted by children and used as seating around a central firepit.
- Development of experiences, tours, wildlife watching on the river.
- The clubhouse has a licenced kitchen – cooking for visitors, pop up shops, locals to sell arts and crafts.
- Potential to increase the daily rate from \$5 to \$10 to help cover the beautification of the site.
- Place a donation box near the silos.
- Potable water is bore water.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Promotion of RV Friendly Town endorsement.
- Installation of a track to the river to maintain the environment while connecting the silos to the river for tours.
- Development of tours and experiences unique to the area.
- Consistent signage e.g. replace blue overnight camping sign at the end of the ablution block with copy of the sign that exists in the campground.
- Erect no camping sign/s to deter people free camping on the side of the road, encouraging them to use the designated camp ground.

Bollon

SITTING ON THE BANKS OF THE WALLAM CREEK, ALONG THE ADVENTURE WAY, BOLLON IS A BEAUTIFUL LITTLE TOWN FILLED WITH HISTORY AND CULTURE. THE COMMUNITY WELCOMES RV TRAVELLERS AND RELIES ON THEM TO SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY.

Bollon has six shops. Five are open seven days a week and the cafes and restaurants are open past 8pm.

ATTRACTIONS

- Nullawokka First Nations Gallery & Tours
- Wallam Creek & Aboriginal Dreamtime artwork along walkway
- Bollon Heritage Centre
- Walter Austin Memorial Park
- Thrushton National Park

CARAVAN PARK

Bollon does not have a commercial caravan park.

LOW-COST CAMPING

Bollon has a popular low-cost camping area on the banks of Wallam Creek. The camp area operates under a voluntary donation box managed by the Heritage Centre. During some peak periods, the site reaches capacity and requires an overflow policy.

LONG VEHICLE PARKING

Bollon is equipped to manage long vehicle parking.

POTABLE WATER

Potable bore water is available free of charge.

DUMP POINT

A free of charge dump point is available at the camping ground.

ISSUES

- Occasional overuse or overstaying of visitors in peak periods.
- Limited experiences available to encourage increasing length of stay.
- Limited tourism marketing.
- Lack of safe swimming locations, particularly during summer to extend the season and cater for family market.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Add a second donation box near the ablution block.
- Development of experiences to encourage visitors to extend their length of stay.
- Development of markets during events in other regions to attract passing travellers to stay.
- Development of food experiences, indigenous bush tucker tours to increase length of stay.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Apply for RV Friendly Town or RV Friendly Destination status
- Development of lighting along the creek footpath.
- Install a donation box at the shower amenities.
- Develop 3-day package/itineraries to encourage longer stays.
- Promote facilities and experiences to new markets.
- Develop experiences to increase length-of-stay e.g. promote Bollon burgers & scones.
- Develop food experiences e.g. camp oven cooking, day tours, best sunrise/sunset.
- Develop the town as an RV Friendly Town.
- Development of markets when events are on in surrounding regions e.g. Paul Kelly and Friends (Dirranbandi), Big Red Bash, Birdsville Races
- To extend the shoulder seasons and attract visitors in Summer, provide a safe swimming area.
- Consider use of tennis courts for kids.
- Promote through digital and social media channels that businesses are open 7 days a week to welcome visitors

Mungindi

MUNGINDI IS UNIQUELY SITUATED ON BOTH SIDES OF THE NSW AND QUEENSLAND BORDER AND THE CONNECTING POINT OF FOUR SHIRES. DIVIDED BY THE BARWON RIVER, IT IS THE ONLY BORDER TOWN IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE WITH THE SAME NAME IN TWO STATES.

ATTRACTIONS + EXPERIENCES

- One Ton Post
- Mungindi Hot Artesian Pool
- Two Mile Hotel
- Barwon River Parkland
- Rural Transaction Centre

CARAVAN PARK

Mungindi has a commercial caravan park with:

- 5 cabins
- 14 unpowered sites
- 18 powered sites

LOW-COST CAMPING

Mungindi has a popular, beautifully landscaped campsite with an ablution block and playground. The free of charge camping sites are on the banks of the river and free camping is supported by the local community due to the economic benefit it provides the town.

LONG VEHICLE PARKING

The town has long vehicle parking however it is not dedicated space.

POTABLE WATER

Potable bore water is available.

DUMP POINT

A dump point is available at Mungindi on the NSW side of the border.

ISSUES

- Some RV travellers are staying for over extended periods of time.
- With extended stays, tourists feel they own the location and direct other travellers where to park, occasionally causing conflict.
- The camping site along the river is the same access the local community has to the river – locals feel like they are intruding when they walk through occupied camp sites.
- The local community hold functions in the park by the river – difficult if the camp site is at capacity.
- Locals cannot park by the river if it is at capacity.
- The ground along the riverbank is black soil – when it's wet, it is soft causing cars/RVs to bog.
- The river can be subject to algae and flooding which visitors are not aware of when they fish/swim/camp.
- The only police station is on the Queensland side, with one Officer.
- The library staff do not have contact numbers for issues with plumbing etc at the camp site.
- An overflow policy has not been developed.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop interchangeable River Condition Warning signage that advises of rising flood waters, if red or green algae is present.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Apply for RV Friendly Town or RV Friendly Destination status.
- Install River Condition signage – warning for floods and algae.
- Provide safe local resident parking space.
- Resurface the black soil with all-weather surface.
- Provide the library staff with a list of 24/7 emergency contacts.

Nindigully

JUST 45KM SOUTH-EAST OF ST GEORGE, "THE GULLY" AS IT IS LOCALLY KNOWN, IS A SMALL SETTLEMENT WITH HISTORIC HOTEL ON THE RIVERBANK.

ATTRACTIONS + EXPERIENCES

- Nindigully Pub (est. 1864, longest continually licensed pub in Qld)
- Nindigully Tourist & Visitor Area
- Moonie River Fishing and Camping Area

CARAVAN PARK

Nindigully does not have commercial caravan park.

LOW-COST CAMPING

Nindigully has a picturesque low-cost camp site at the front of the Nindigully Pub. Based on an honesty donation box, the site has amenities, a dump point and access to private potable bore water.

LONG VEHICLE PARKING

Nindigully has long vehicle parking but it is not dedicated space.

POTABLE WATER

Potable bore water is available.

DUMP POINT

There is a dump point at the Nindigully Hotel which is free of charge to use.

ISSUES

- The site attracts large numbers of vehicles during peak periods and events causing potential environmental issues. *Please note, TMR is currently addressing this issue by adding amenities.*

OPPORTUNITIES

- Encourage as a possible low-cost camping area close to St George

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Apply for RV Friendly Destination status.
- Further promote its RV friendly status



Hebel

IN THE LITTLE TOWN OF HEBEL, IT FEELS LIKE TIME HAS STOOD STILL, LEAVING BEHIND TALES OF THE NED KELLY GANG, COBB AND CO, AND DANCE HALLS. HEBEL IS LOCATED ON THE QUEENSLAND BORDER WITH NSW, VIA THE GREAT INLAND WAY.

ATTRACTIONS + EXPERIENCES

- Historic Hebel Hotel
- Hebel General Store (est. 1890s)
- Culgoa Floodplain National Park
- Bokhara River

LOW-COST CAMPING

The affordable price point of Hebel sites classifies the park as a low-cost camp site.

CARAVAN PARK

Hebel has a commercial caravan park with:

- 3 cabins
- 6 budget rooms
- 3 unpowered sites
- 5 powered sites

Please note at time of writing the strategy, the capacity of the Hebel Caravan Park was being expanded.

LONG VEHICLE PARKING

Hebel has long vehicle parking, but it is not dedicated space.

POTABLE WATER

Potable bore water is available.

DUMP POINT

Hebel has a dump point available in Main Street which is free of charge to use. The caravan park would like to install a dump point in the camping grounds.

ISSUES

- Please note at time of consultation limited information was available with the Hebel Caravan Park under contract sale.
- Currently does not have a dump point or access to potable water.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Free camping and tours to encourage travellers to stay.
- New ablution blocks are being installed to replace the existing ones.
- Potable water access to be installed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Apply for RV Friendly Town status.
- Promote as a major entry point to Queensland and Balonne Shire



Critical Success

STRATEGIES

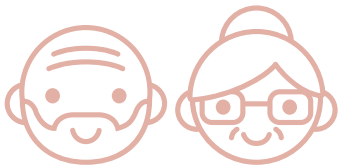


Target Markets

As identified in the Balonne Shire Tourism & Events Strategy 2025, the Caravan, Camping, RV market is a primary target market for the St George Region. The geographic source of most visitors, in order of priority being from:

1. **SOUTHEAST QUEENSLAND**
2. **GREATER MELBOURNE**
3. **BRISBANE METRO**
4. **SYDNEY METRO, AND**
5. **WIDE BAY BURNETT**

During the COVID-19 era, further emphasis needs to be placed on closer geographic markets within Queensland, while still maintaining presence in key interstate markets.

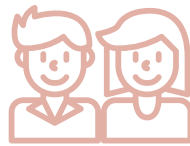


GREY NOMAD

SEQ/Wide Bay, Victoria and New South Wales.

Travelling as couples or caravan clubs.

Nature and wildlife, beauty spots, fishing, Outback experiences and hospitality, places to enjoy the surroundings, history and heritage, the start of the Outback experience.



ACTIVE CAMPING COUPLES

SEQ, Victoria and New South Wales.

Travelling as couples and/or groups of friends.

Food and beverage, events, bushwalking and ways to experience nature, explore off the beaten track and the "untourist" experiences.



FAMILY CAMPERS

Brisbane Metro, SEQ and Northern NSW.

Travelling as core families, extended families, and groups of families.

Places to create family memories, shared family time doing traditional family holidays and activities.

Getting out in nature – bushwalking, fishing, learning about a different type of lifestyle, camping, looking at the stars, riding bikes along the river.

Positioning, Objectives + Outcomes

Positioning...

TO POSITION THE ST GEORGE REGION AS AN OASIS FOR THE CARAVAN AND RV MARKET, PROVIDING A HASSLE FREE AND EXPERIENTIALLY REWARDING LOCATION TO SPEND TIME – A WONDERFUL PLACE TO STRETCH YOUR LEGS AND EXPLORE FOR A WHILE IN AN OUTBACK OASIS.

Objectives

INCREASE LENGTH-OF-STAY AND OVERNIGHT VISITOR EXPENDITURE ACROSS THE SHIRE.

INCREASE SHARE OF THE GROWING CARAVAN AND RV MARKET.

POSITION THE REGION AS A KEY ENTRY POINT INTO QUEENSLAND AND OUTBACK QUEENSLAND FOR THE CARAVAN AND RV MARKET.

Goals

MAKE IT EASY

PROVIDE CHOICE

DEVELOP EXPERIENCES

Critical Success Strategies

1.

DEVELOP RV FRIENDLY TOWNS & DESTINATIONS

2.

VISITOR EXPERIENCES & SERVICES

3.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

4.

POSITIONING & MARKETING

5.

COVID SAFE DESTINATION

Develop RV Friendly Towns & Destinations

Currently, Thallon is the only town listed on the CMCA RV Friendly Town map as being an RV Friendly Town within the Balonne Shire. All towns within the Balonne Shire have long vehicle parking, potable water and dump points, with designated long vehicle parking they would be eligible to become RV Friendly Destinations.

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
DESIGNATE LONG VEHICLE PARKING (DAY USE) WITH SIGNAGE	<p>Ensure designated long-vehicle parking in all towns with priority in St. George (e.g., river end Scott Street).</p> <p>Parking sites must be very easy walking distance to groceries, public toilets and essential items (e.g., pharmacy, café) for mature age visitors and family visitors with young children/prams.</p> <p>Ensure signage of long vehicle designated parking areas.</p>	BSC	2021 – 2022
RV FRIENDLY TOWN (RVFT)	<p>Investigate and work with communities to facilitate meeting their RV Friendly status (e.g., Mungindi, Dirranbandi, Bollon, Hebel).</p> <p>Apply for RV Friendly status for towns in the Balonne Shire which meet the RVFT essential criteria.</p> <p>Ensure towns in the Balonne Shire has RVFT signs on each entry to town (these signs are provided by the CMCA free-of-charge) and are identified on CMCA maps.</p>	<p>BSC</p> <p>Tourism Committee</p> <p>Chambers of Commerce</p> <p>Progress Associations</p> <p>District Community Groups</p>	2021 – 2022
RV FRIENDLY DESTINATION (RVFD)	<p>Investigate and work with communities to facilitate meeting their RV Friendly status (e.g., Nindigully, St George).</p> <p>Apply for RV Friendly Destination status for towns in the Balonne Shire which meet the RVFD essential criteria.</p> <p>Ensure towns in the Balonne Shire has RVFD signs on each entry to town (these signs are provided by the CMCA free-of-charge) and are identified on CMCA maps.</p>	<p>BSC</p> <p>Tourism Committee</p> <p>Chambers of Commerce</p> <p>Progress Associations</p> <p>District Community Groups</p>	2021 – 2022
OVERFLOW POLICY IN PEAK PERIODS	<p>Further develop policies and promote overflow campgrounds in peak periods.</p> <p>Where possible adopt camping fees with online bookings for overflow areas.</p>	BSC	2021 – 2023
STANDARDISED FEES + CHARGES WITH AN ONLINE BOOKING SYSTEM	<p>Where possible ensure standardised fees and charges and develop online booking system for council owned camping areas.</p> <p>Build the capacity of caravan park industry within the region for online booking and digital marketing systems.</p>	<p>BSC</p> <p>Industry Operators</p>	2022 – 2024
ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATION	<p>Where possible encourage existing caravan parks and accommodation providers to upgrade and expand facilities to cater for the different sub sections of the market.</p>	<p>BSC</p> <p>Industry Operators</p>	2022 – 2025

2.

Visitor Experiences & Services

To meet the needs of the growing RV market, further development of visitor experiences and services is recommended to increase length-of-stay and overnight visitor expenditure.

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
DEVELOPMENT OF A SIGNIFICANT VISITOR ATTRACTION TO SUIT THE MARKET	Development of a significant and accessible visitor attraction in St George within walking distance of commercial caravan parks and RV parking locations to encourage overnight stays.	BSC	2022 – 2025
DAWN, DUSK AND EVENING EXPERIENCES	To increase overnight, encourage tourism businesses across the St George Region to develop visitor experiences to suit the needs of the market. This could include sunrise and sunset experiences, camp oven dining and water experiences to lengthen the season into summer.	Tourism businesses BSC	2022 – 2025
SPECIFIC RV SERVICES	Encourage and ensure information specific to the sector including breakdown services, fuel, repairs, after hours medical is available on: Tourism and business websites Visitor information centres/services and businesses in every town.	BSC Private sector that can service the market.	2021 – 2022

Strategic Partnerships

As the market self-drives across multiple locations, the need to work collaboratively with neighbouring regions, highway routes and partners is a critical success factor.

PARTNERS	ACTION
RV INDUSTRY	
RV AND TOURISM INDUSTRY OF THE BALONNE SHIRE	Active involvement of RV industry, including caravan parks and service operators in Balonne Shire tourism committee.
RV INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS	
CARAVANNING QUEENSLAND. CAMPERVAN & MOTORHOME CLUB OF AUSTRALIA (CMCA)	Participation and partnership to identify opportunities and increase share of voice.
TOURISM ASSOCIATIONS	
OUTBACK QLD TOURIST ASSOCIATION (OQTA)	Increase share of voice and influence through ongoing participation in Outback Queensland marketing, media and capacity building programs.
TOURISM & EVENTS (TEQ), QLD TOURISM INDUSTRY CORPORATION (QTIC)	Ongoing sharing of information about product and experiences available in the shire to increase awareness and inclusion (e.g., ATDW listings).
LOCAL GOVERNMENT NETWORKS	
SOUTH WEST REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS (SW TOURISM COMMITTEE)	Continued participation in SW Tourism Sub-committee, including visitor website and programs, highlighting St George Region RV locations, services and experiences.
HIGHWAY COMMITTEES	
GREAT INLAND WAY ADVENTURE WAY	Continued participation in highway committee activities to ensure St George Region RV locations, services and experiences are highlighted in highway drive guides, marketing, digital and social media.

4.

Positioning & Marketing

As some of the region is not considered RV friendly and has previously received negative reviews its important to continue to grow and position the St George Region in the different RV markets to ensure visitors stop and explore more of the region.

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
tone of voice	Include welcoming messaging to encourage responsible RV and camping behaviour across all communications, from camping sites to brochures to social media.	BSC Industry operators	2021 onwards
RV Content Development	Inclusion of RV friendly and camping locations and facilities across all St George Region marketing.		2021 – 2022
Digital and Social Media Curation for Caravan, Camping and RV Travellers	<p>Add more RV support services and camping section on the St George Region visitor website that details information specific to their needs – parking, dump spots, potable water etc.</p> <p>Ensure all social media has a call to action to the relevant content on the website to drive traffic.</p> <p>Subject to available funding, develop a specific RV campaign with dedicated resourcing including content creation and distribution on Facebook groups, social media, SEO & SEM of website specifically for caravan and RV market.</p>		2022 – 2023
Strategic Partnerships	<p>Regular supply of content and participation in campaigns with strategic partners to ensure increased share of voice of the St George Region.</p> <p>Attend Caravan and Camping Shows, Expos and Industry Functions with OQTA to ensure St George Region presence with “Welcome Mate” badges and bumper stickers.</p> <p>Use of the third-party hashtags.</p>	BSC OQTA, TEQ Highway committees Caravanning Qld CMCA	2021 onwards
Familiarisations	<p>Continual familiarisations with industry within the region of each other’s properties and experiences, with strategic partners and media to ensure ongoing awareness of St George Region to position itself strongly in the RV Market.</p> <p>Potential annual mega famil ahead of each season.</p>	BSC OQTA, TEQ Highway committees Caravanning Qld CMCA Visiting journalists/ influencers Industry operators	2021 onwards

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
MATE TO MATE CAMPAIGN EXTENSION*	Extension of the “Welcome Mate” campaign with a support Mate-to-Mate project encouraging visitors to share their secrets and reviews on the St George social media and digital channels.	BSC Industry operators	2022 - 2024
SELF-DRIVE ITINERARIES AND BUNDLING OF EXPERIENCES	Further continuation of the self-drive itineraries with bundling of experiences, e.g. 7 night bundle with 24 hours in each town itinerary.	BSC Industry operators	2022 - 2024
ST GEORGE INDUSTRY PRESENCE ONLINE	Encourage St George Region caravan and RV parks and camping sites to be listed on ATDW, Trip Adviser and third party sites (e.g. The Grey Nomads, Wikicamps, Camlify, Wanderers etc.) Encourage and facilitate training to ensure businesses are on Google (i.e.. “Google My Business”) Encourage and facilitate where possible onsite training for RV businesses to have onsite booking systems.	BSC Industry operators	2022 - 2024

*MATE TO MATE CAMPAIGN EXTENSION

Mates tell each other things they don't tell everyone.

Mates know you and what you like, and they help you out with things they know you will enjoy.

Mates help out when you need a hand or bit of extra information.

The concept of mate to mate can be used to share information, hidden secrets, experiences and updates from the region, in a fun and colloquial way that connects with the brand of the region. These insights can be tailored to the market and can be adapted to suit all occasions.

Here are some examples: -

- Mate to mate – the best place in town to get a coffee is at the “ABC” café in the main street.
- Mate to mate – if you drive 3km down the road from the Police station, turn right and drive for 400 mts – best place to catch a yellow belly.
- Mate to Mate – if you don't book early for the Mungindi Races, you'll be sleeping with the horses.
- Mate to Mate – If you're going to tackle one of those Road Trains at the Nindigully Pub, don't have breakfast.
- Mate to Mate – the best place to watch the sunset, anywhere along the banks for the Balonne River (make sure you have the appropriate beverage in hand)
- Mate to Mate – If you're looking to see something you don't see every day – try the Miniature Car Collection or even the Unique Egg.
- Mate to Mate – e.g. 2 for 1 offers on Wednesday nights.

The concept can be extended as a communications tool to share and collect reviews.

- Mate to Mate – this is what Joyce from Brisbane shared about the Rivergum Caravan Park.
- Be A Mate – Follow Us on Facebook or Instagram

5.

COVID Safe Destination

As a region on the border with Queensland and New South Wales, sitting on the crossroads of five major driving routes, the region has faced significant challenges during the COVID era.

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
COVID COMPLIANCE	Encourage and facilitate where possible COVID safe practices by business servicing the RV and camping market to enable promotion of COVID Safe business practices, particularly ensuring the use of the Check-in Qld App.	Tourism industry BSC with Tourism Committee	2021 – 2022
COMMUNICATION RESOURCES	Encourage and facilitate up-to-date information distribution to the tourism industry in the region on COVID safe compliance and support from the Qld State Government and Qld Tourism Industry Council.	Qld State Government (e.g., Qld Health, Business Qld) Qld Tourism Industry Council Tourism industry BSC with Tourism Committee	2021 – 2022
UNMANAGED SITES	Work with appropriate state authorities to monitor unmanned sites, particularly monitoring entry from hotspots and illegal camping.	Qld Police Service Qld National Parks	2021 – 2022

Consultation Process

The Recreational Vehicle and Camping Strategy consultation process included discussions with groups in the region, one-on-one meetings with the Progress Association in each town, and participation in the Tourism Committee meeting.

One-on-one interviews also were conducted with council officers, councillors, and industry, including three commercial caravan park owners. Follow up Zoom meetings were held with individuals and associations unable to meet in region. Unsuccessful attempts were made to consult with the remaining caravan park owners.

Site inspections were conducted at Nindigully Hotel, Thallon Recreational Grounds, Beardmore Dam, Wallam Creek, Dirranbandi Caravan Park, Rivergums Caravan Park and Kamarooka Tourist Park

Additional Zoom meetings were conducted outside the region with Queensland councils, caravan park owners in regions with low-cost camping and CMCA to identify how they manage low-cost camping.

CONSULTATION LIST

We would like to thank the following list of people for giving up their time to assist with the development of the strategy.

NAME	ORGANISATION	POSITION
Andrew Boardman	Balonne Shire Council	
Bill Speedy	Nullawokka Tours Bollon	Owner
Bill Winks	Balonne Shire Council	Councillor
Brett Schweikert	Sandytown River Cruises	Owner
Cr Robyn Fuhrmeister	Balonne Shire Council	Councillor
David Blacket	Riversands Winery	Owner
Debi Bateman	Deb's Cafe	Owner
Frank Deshon	Hebel Caravan Park	Owner
Garnet Radford	Balonne Shire Council	Economic Development Officer
Ivan Bradley	River Gum Tourist Park	Owner
Jacque Hemming	RTC	CEO
Janice Teunis	The Anchorage Homestead	Owner
John Travers	St George Chamber	Manager
Judith Russell	Nullawokka Gallery	Owner
Kim Wildman	Balonne Shire Council	Tourism Manager
Laurie Bateman	Deb's Cafe	Owner
Leanne Brosnan	Thallon Progress Association Inc	Secretary
Lesley Carley	Mungindi Progress Association	President
Libby Brosnan	Francis Hotel	Owner
Liz Hill	Connect South West Qld	Owner
Lynden Goddard	Bollon and District Community Group	President
Michael Campbell	Lucid Economics	Director
Nikki Pulfer	Dirranbandi Caravan Park	Owner
Phil and Sheryn Blundstone	Pelican Rest Tourist Park	Owner and Hosts
Richard Crook	Francis Hotel	Owner
Samantha O'Toole	Balonne Shire Council	Mayor
Sandra Lee	Visitor Information Centre	Senior Visitor Services Officer
Steve Burns	Nindigully Pub	Owner
Trent Challenger	St George Bakery	Owner
Victoria Nancarrow	Bollon Post Office	Owner
Wade Cameron	Kamarooka Tourist Park	Owner
Warren Morris	Francis Hotel	Lessee



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TOURISM · EVENTS · MARKETING



2021
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