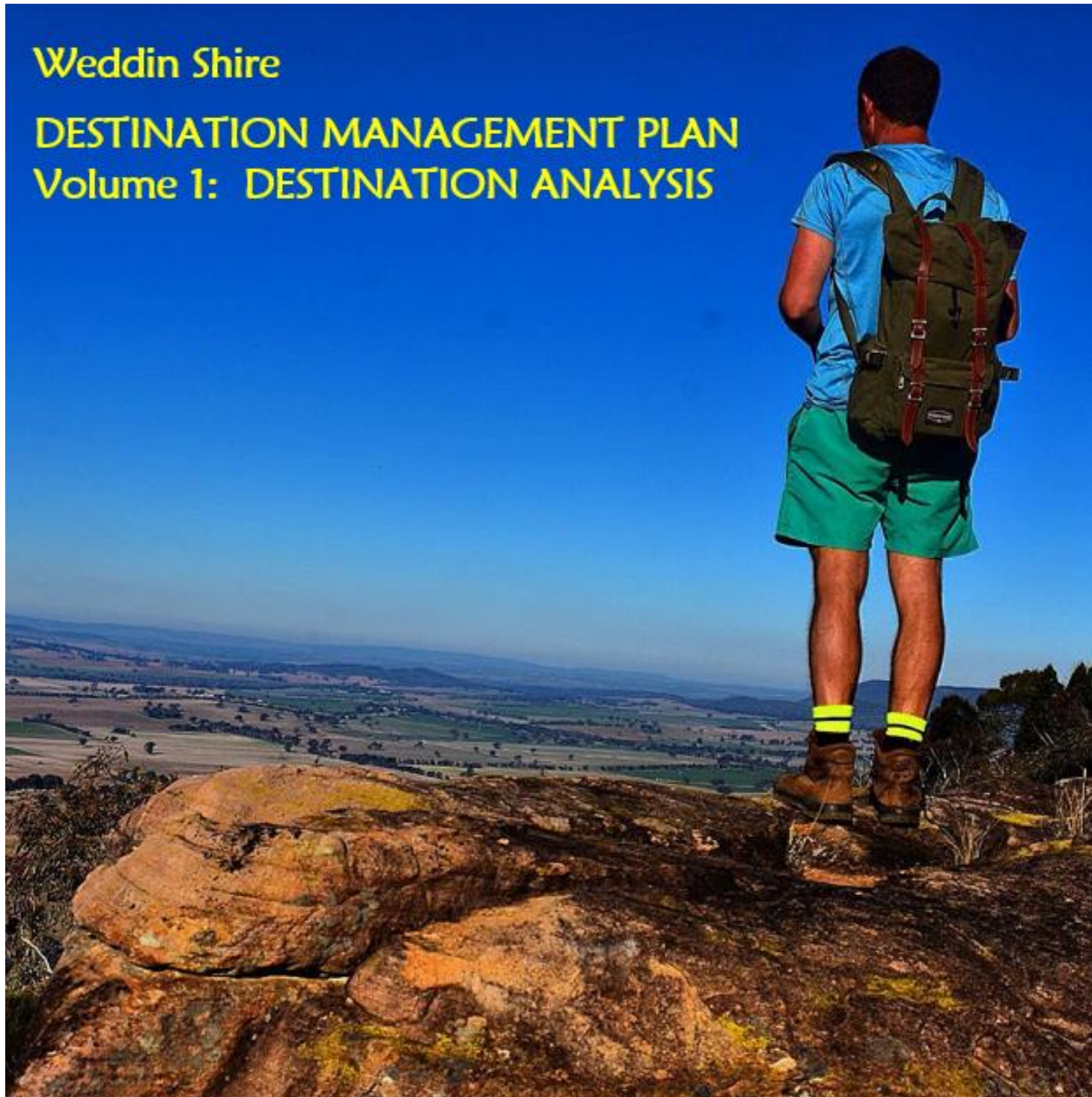


Weddin Shire

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN
Volume 1: DESTINATION ANALYSIS





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WEDDIN SHIRE COUNCIL WEDDIN SHIRE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN (2020-2024) Volume 1: DESTINATION ANALYSIS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Weddin Shire Council wishes to thank all residents, businesses and organisations who attended our tourism workshops, met with our Consultant and provided input and information for our Shire's Destination Management Plan.





1. INTRODUCTION

The on-going development of the visitor economy is a priority for Weddin Shire Council and the Shire community, with the visitor economy recognised as having the potential to:

- Grow and diversify the local economy, reducing its dependence on agriculture and building resilience
- Bring 'new' dollars into the local economy, helping to sustain and retain local businesses and services
- Create employment
- Attract new residents, businesses and investment
- Raise the profile of the Shire and generate awareness

Council is a key driver of, and stakeholder in, the tourism sector. Council owns and operates the Grenfell Visitor Information Centre, Grenfell Art Gallery and Grenfell Caravan Park, and has a significant investment in the parks and gardens, infrastructure and facilities that underpin visitation. It also supports events and activities and actively markets and promotes the Shire.

In accordance with Federal and State Government policy, Weddin Shire Council is adopting a 'destination management' approach to growing and managing its visitor economy.

1.1 Destination Management

Destination management introduces a 'holistic' approach to the development, management and marketing of tourist destinations. The approach requires that all tiers of Government, the tourism industry and business and community leaders work together to develop and manage destinations to ensure that tourism adds value to the economic and social fabric of the area, is sustainable into the future, is resilient to external shocks and is responsive to changes in both the marketplace and competitive environment. It involves formulating a strong vision for the future of the destination and putting in place the framework and resources to 'deliver' this vision.

Destination Management Plans (DMPs) are one of the tools introduced by the Federal and State Government, to identify the product and infrastructure needed to support and facilitate growth in visitation and to set the directions and priorities. A DMP is a pre-requisite for accessing the Regional Tourism Fund and will assist in accessing a range of Federal and State Government grant programs.

1.2 Purpose of the Weddin Shire Destination Management Plan (DMP)

The purpose of the Weddin Shire DMP is to provide the direction and framework for taking Shire's tourism sector forward over the next five years. The primary goal of this Plan is to increase visitor expenditure within the Shire, with resultant economic and social benefits for the Shire community. To achieve this, the Plan focuses on:

- Improving and expanding the product base of the Shire – attractions, activities and experiences
- Ensuring that the infrastructure, facilities and services needed to attract and support visitation are in place
- Setting the directions for marketing and promoting the Shire
- Identifying priorities to ensure the most effective use of limited funds and resources

The Plan is presented in two volumes:

- **Destination Analysis** which provides an assessment of the current status of the visitor economy in Weddin Shire and explores opportunities to improve the Shire's tourism products and infrastructure to stimulate and support growth in visitation.
- **DMP Action Plan** which provides the strategic framework and actions to grow and support the Shire's visitor economy.



1.3 Outcomes being Sought

The main outcomes being sought from the Weddin Shire DMP are:

- Increased visitation to and visitor expenditure within Weddin Shire.
- Increased appeal and competitiveness of Weddin Shire as a service centre and destination – leveraging the Shire’s key assets to build its attraction, activity and experience base.
- Increased viability and long-term sustainability of existing businesses and services and investment in new businesses and services.
- A stronger, more resilient community enabling the retention of existing residents and attraction of new residents.
- A higher profile and increased awareness of Weddin Shire.
- Framework and directions to assist Council in the allocation of funds and resources.

1.4 Consultation

Consultation with the Shire community and external organisations has played a major part in the preparation of the DMP, with input provided by:

- Councillors and Council staff
- Tourism and business operators
- Venue managers and event organisers
- Community representatives, businesses groups and service clubs – Grenfell, Caragabal, Greenethorpe and Quandialla
- Tourism and Economic Development Managers from the surrounding LGAs
- Destination Network Country and Outback
- Central NSW Joint Organisation of Councils
- NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Forestry Corporation of NSW
- Central West Local Land Services and Weddin Landcare Group

The main themes from the consultation were:

- The Grenfell silo art has been very effective in attracting visitors to Grenfell.
- The lack of accommodation is a major constraint to growing visitation and holding events. There is a need for new motel accommodation in Grenfell.
- Attractions (eg O’Brien’s Hill, Company Dam) need to be improved and the Shire needs to provide more things for visitors to do.
- The deteriorating presentation of the Grenfell town centre with the increasing number of vacant buildings and buildings that are not being maintained, being of major concern.
- The heritage provisions in the Shire are too restrictive and are too difficult and costly to comply with – it is easier to leave a building vacant.
- Signage to and throughout the Shire is poor.
- The need to improve facilities and infrastructure at the Grenfell Showground, Racecourse and Kart Club to retain and grow existing events and attract new events.
- The villages have potential but need support from Council to:
 - Improve their presentation
 - Improve signage
 - Provide / upgrade visitor facilities (eg public toilets)
 - Maintain / upgrade venues – Halls, recreation grounds, showgrounds
 - Remove restrictions / make it easier for communities to hold festivals and events.
- The Henry Lawson Festival is a great event for the community; however it is tired and needs new ideas and activities.
- Mobile phone coverage outside of Grenfell is limited and needs to be improved.
- Access and facilities for people with disabilities need to be improved.



- The Shire is too dependent on volunteers to operate / maintain facilities and run events. Volunteers are aging and numbers are declining, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to attract the numbers needed to hold events, keep the Grenfell Museum open, maintain reserves etc.

1.5 Implementation

The Weddin Shire DMP is the starting point for consolidating and growing the visitor economy over the next five years. It will however take time, funds and resources and commitment to implement the strategies and actions incorporated in this Plan.

Given the limited resources available within the Shire actions need to be prioritised. While there are a number of relatively simple, cost effective actions that can be undertaken in the short-term that will result in growth in visitation, sustaining visitation in the medium to longer term will only be achieved if the Shire's tourism product and infrastructure base continues to be improved and expanded. This will require a strong partnership between Council and the Shire communities; support from tourism and business operators; and strategic relationships with surrounding LGAs, touring route marketing groups, Destination Network, Central NSW Tourism, land management agencies (NSW National Parks and Wildlife, Forestry Corporation, Crown Lands) as well as funding support from the State and Federal Governments.

To be effective, the DMP must be a living document that is constantly evolving. The recommended actions need to be implemented and the results evaluated. Periodically the DMP will need to be revised, building on what has been achieved, so that Weddin Shire can continue to move forward.

1.6 Abbreviations Used in this Plan

4WD	Four-wheel driving (off road)
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
B&B	Bed and Breakfast accommodation
DCO	Destination Country and Outback (Destination Network Region)
DMP	Destination Management Plan
DNCO	Destination Network Country and Outback
DNSW	Destination NSW
FNSW	Forestry Corporation of NSW
LGA	Local Government Area
MTB	Mountain Bike
NPWS	NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
REDS	Regional Economic Development Strategy
RMS	Roads and Maritime Services
RV	Recreational Vehicle (eg motorhome, campervan)
TRA	Tourism Research Australia
VEAP	Visitor Economy Action Plan
VFR	Visiting Friends and Relatives
VIC	Visitor Information Centre





2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Weddin Shire Tourism Destination Management Plan (DMP) was prepared within the framework set by Federal and State Government policies for the development and management of tourism destinations. It is also consistent with the NSW Government's priorities for Regional NSW and key regional plans and strategies (Destination Country and Outback DMP), and with the directions and strategic directions of the Weddin Shire Strategic Plans.

2.1 Policies for the Development and Management of Tourism Destinations

2.1.1 Australian Government - National Long Term Tourism Strategy

The National Long Term Tourism Strategy for Australia recognised that the future of tourism is dependent on providing 'compelling and sustainable experiences' to consumers. It also recognised that for Australia to move up the international tourism value chain and to remain competitive, required 'innovation, continuous improvement and renewal' of products, experiences and infrastructure. To facilitate this, the Commonwealth Government, in conjunction with the State Tourism Agencies is advocating for integrated planning, development and management of tourism destinations, with localities encouraged to prepare and adopt Destination Management Plans (DMPs). The Strategy is currently being reviewed with the draft directions including a focus on dispersal of visitors into regional Australia, developing unique Aboriginal tourism experiences, harnessing technology to enhance the visitor experience, addressing transport and accommodation capacity constraints and building a skilled workforce.

2.1.2 NSW – Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan (VEIAP) 2030

Building the visitor economy is a key priority of the NSW Government, with the visitor economy recognised as having the potential to drive growth in the State's economy. The VEIP sets a target to increase visitor expenditure in NSW to \$55 billion by 2030. The Plan has a strong emphasis on growing tourism in Regional NSW and has set targets of achieving \$20 billion in visitor expenditure in Regional NSW by 2025 and \$25 billion by 2030. Key directions include a focus on:

- Product development: nature-based activities, aboriginal experiences, tours and trails, interest-based activities, events and regional conferencing
- Investing in infrastructure: including accommodation and signage
- Industry development: including workforce skills

2.1.3 Destination NSW – Strategic Objectives¹

Destination NSW's eight key strategic objectives are:

1. *Position Sydney and NSW as world leading tourism and events destinations*
2. *Attract and secure high value major events*
3. *Build a sustainable events calendar for NSW*
4. *Increase industry stakeholder and customer engagement*
5. *Deliver value in partnership cooperative programs*
6. *Develop and sustain a high-performance organisation*
7. *Maximise yield and dispersal from the visitor economy*
8. *Implement the Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan*

For product development, Destination NSW's priorities include:

- Food and wine
- Aboriginal experiences
- Regional conferencing
- Events
- Nature-based

¹ Destination NSW Annual Report 2018-19



- Agri-tourism
- Touring routes and trails
- Interest-based activities

2.1.4 Statewide Destination Management Plan

The Statewide Destination Management Plan sets the directions for tourism product, infrastructure and industry development in NSW to deliver on the Government's visitor expenditure targets for NSW. The Plan has 10 Strategic Focus Areas:

- *Destination NSW will continue to take a leadership role in aligning Government and industry across the state to deliver the 2030 Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan and grow the NSW visitor economy sustainably and raise the importance of the sector with all levels of Government.*
- *Position the visitor at the heart of the NSW visitor economy by making best use of data and developing deep customer insights that drive destination development, management and marketing strategy.*
- *Develop and deliver statewide experiences and products strategies in partnership with the Destination Networks.*
- *Support the Department of Industry, National Parks & Wildlife Service and other Government departments in the development and delivery of sustainable statewide tourism infrastructure and access improvement strategies.*
- *Work with Roads and Maritime Services and the Destination Networks to develop and deliver a streamlined statewide wayfinding and visitor information services strategy.*
- *Develop and deliver an enhanced statewide industry development strategy, in partnership with the Destination Networks and the Department of Industry.*
- *Develop and deliver an enhanced statewide industry development strategy, in partnership with the Destination Networks and the Department of Industry.*
- *Develop and deliver an enhanced statewide digital and content strategy and plan, in consultation with the Destination Networks.*
- *Develop a Destination Management Plan for Sydney.*
- *Prepare for future industry disruption, innovation and global trends.*

For product development, DNSW will focus on supporting the Destination Networks to create and maintain a pipeline of 'hero' experiences, better 'bundling' of assets, developing touring routes and trails, industry development and increase the number of 'export ready' and 'China ready' experiences. The DMP identifies 20 experience categories that DNSW and the Destination Networks need to focus on.

The experiences that Weddin Shire can contribute to / deliver on are:

- **Nature and adventure**
- **Arts and culture**
- **History and heritage**
- **Agri-tourism (farm tours)**
- **Special interest**
- **Journeys and touring routes**
- **Events and festivals**
- **Caravan and camping**
- **Short-breaks**

2.1.5 Destination Country and Outback NSW - Destination Management Plan (DMP)

In 2016, DNSW established six Destination Networks in NSW. Weddin Shire lies within the Country and Outback Destination Network. The Network, which incorporates the New England North West, Central NSW, Orana and Far West Regions of NSW, is administered by Destination Network - Country and Outback (DNCO). The Destination Network has adopted a DMP for the Region, with the core ambition of the Plan being to:



‘Provide an inspiring and innovative approach to grow the visitor economy of Country and Outback NSW and create meaningful connection between the place, its communities and businesses with visitors to the region’.

The DMP has six high level goals:

- *Create a positive collaborative culture to support the growth of the visitor economy*
- *Increase visitation and yield to Destination Country and Outback NSW*
- *Strengthen the perception and awareness of Country and Outback NSW*
- *Build the capacity and capability of the industry and local government, to deliver on the expectations of visitors to the region.*
- *Facilitate the development or enhancement of products, experiences and events*
- *Enable effective and efficient communication with stakeholders and communities across the network.*

The Destination Network is looking to grow existing markets:

- Touring, with the focus on 55+ years
- Visiting friends and relatives
- Event participants
- Nature and cultural visitors
- Short breaks with an emphasis on food and wine.

The Destination Network is also looking to diversify and build new markets including:

- Active families
- Younger adults
- More active 55+ years
- Conference and meeting markets
- International visitors – focusing on nature, cultural, and food and wine visitors.

For product development the Plan’s positioning statement is:

‘Explore the unlimited possibilities of Country and Outback NSW, as mesmerising as the stars that stretch across the evening sky’.

The Plan has 7 strategic product themes:

- **Celebrating Culture on Country:** enhancing existing and developing new meaningful and immersive Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences.
- **Wine Lovers and Foodie Finds:** food, wine and agri tourism experiences including events and be-spoke experiences.
- **Unlimited horizons:** developing drive journeys and touring routes, flying tours and leveraging the night sky (eg camping under the stars).
- **Exploring Our Nature:** leverage opportunities for outdoor activities and adventures – bush walking, cycling, canoeing etc – both independent and guided tours.
- **Revealing our Heritage:** enhancing and expanding heritage experiences to bring heritage to life. This include events, trails and use of technology in storytelling and interpretation.
- **Little Places Big Stories:** leveraging small town stories and events to encourage travellers to explore and stay longer in the region.
- **Conferences and Events**

Weddin Shire’s strengths lie in outdoors and nature-based activities, heritage and little places with big stories and potentially in ‘unlimited horizons’.



2.1.6 Central NSW Destination Management Plan

In 2014 the (then) Central NSW Regional Tourism Organisation adopted a 10 year Destination Management Plan. With the dissolution of the RTO, this Plan is now being implemented by the Central NSW Joint Organisation of Councils, of which Weddin Shire is a member.

The Plan's vision is:

By 2025 Central NSW will be the leading visitor economy in Regional NSW. It will evoke a passionate desire in visitors to unearth the treasures our region has to offer and share the simple pleasure of experiencing great food and wine where it's produced. Ours will become a highly desirable destination, offering authentic experiences that reflect the character, charm and culture of the community, high quality and value for money products that surpass visitor expectations and encourage visitors to immerse themselves in extraordinary skies and landscapes.

The Region is being marketed under the banner of 'Unearth Central NSW' with the core experiences being:

- Culinary and agritourism
- Nature and magnificent landscapes
- Rich culture and heritage

Weddin Shire's product primarily align with nature and heritage.

The Plan has four core objectives:

Objective 1: Provide a regional platform for collaboration, leadership and good governance in all aspects of destination management subject to available resources.

Objective 2: Expand our visitor economy

Objective 3: Facilitate LGAs to grow and evolve our product and experience offering

Objective 4: Build demand by developing the destination's brand and appeal

2.2 Regional Strategies and Plans

2.2.1 Priorities for Regional NSW - A 20 Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW

In July 2018, the NSW Government released its priorities for driving economic growth in Regional NSW². In relation to tourism, the NSW Government is looking to:

- *Draw in more domestic and international tourists in areas with tourism potential*
- *Attract more domestic and international students to regional NSW*

The Plan is also looking to 'Grow vibrant places to live and work to encourage business and population growth.'

2.2.2 Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2036³

The Central West and Orana Regional Plan applies to twenty LGAs across the Central West and Orana Regions of NSW. The Plan designates Dubbo, Bathurst and Orange as Regional Cities; and Lithgow, Mudgee, Parkes - Forbes and Cowra as Strategic Centres. Grenfell is designated as a 'centre'.

The vision for the Region is: ***The most diverse regional economy in NSW with a vibrant network of centres leveraging the opportunities of being at the heart of NSW.***

² NSW Government (2018) A 20 Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW

³ NSW Planning and Environment Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2036.



The Plan has 4 core goals:

- GOAL 1: The most diverse regional economy in NSW*
- GOAL 2: A stronger, healthier environment and diverse heritage*
- GOAL 3: Quality freight, transport and infrastructure networks*
- GOAL 4: Dynamic, vibrant and healthy communities*

Strategic Direction 4 of the Plan seeks to 'promote and diversify regional tourism markets' with the tourism actions being:

- 4.1 Align land use and tourism strategies with a Destination Management Plan for the Country and Outback NSW Destination Network.*
- 4.2 Work with councils to improve tourism-related transport services.*
- 4.3 Develop the region's capacity to grow food and wine tourism.*
- 4.4 Enable opportunities appropriate for tourism development and associated land uses in local environmental plans.*
- 4.5 Target experiential tourism opportunities and develop tourism management frameworks to promote a variety of accommodation options.*
- 4.6 Encourage tourism development in natural areas that support conservation outcomes.*

The Plan identifies agri-business, tourism, and health as the key growth opportunities for Weddin Shire.

Other relevant sections of the Plan include:

- *Strategic Direction 13 (Goal 2): Protect and manage environmental assets:* which recognises the potential to use Travelling Stock Reserves for recreation activities (Action 13.5)
- *Strategic Direction 17 (Goal 2): Conserve and adaptively re-use heritage assets:* which recognises that cultural heritage enriches the character of places and can generate economic returns, particularly through tourism. The Plan recommends enhancing main streets and town centres and removing barriers to the adaptive re-use of heritage items to help communities to retain physical connections to their settlement history and promote the benefits of re-use.

The Plan's narrative for Weddin Shire includes an initiative to 'enhance tourism by developing Weddin's built and social heritage environment'.

2.2.3 South West Slopes - Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) 2018-2022

The State Government, through the Department of Premier and Cabinet, has prepared Regional Development Strategies (REDS) for 37 Functional Economic Regions in NSW. Weddin Shire, along with Bland, Cootamundra-Gundagai, Hilltops and Temora LGAs, form the South West Slopes Region. The vision for the South West Slopes Region is:

The South West Slopes Region will be a thriving community of choice, working together to leverage its endowments and core competencies in agriculture, mining, manufacturing and tourism to achieve sustainable growth

The REDS identifies tourism as a significant potential opportunity and has 'continue to develop and grow the visitor economy' as one of five core strategies. The Plan also identifies the need to improve and maintain roads, invest in telecommunications infrastructure (internet and mobile phone), beautify towns and villages, invest in recreation facilities and encourage the development of a vibrant food and beverage sector. These initiatives will help to support and grow the tourism (and other) sectors.

2.2.4 Central NSW Joint Organisation: Statement of Regional Priorities

Weddin Shire is a member of the Central NSW Joint Organisation of Councils. The Organisation has a four priorities, with Priority 2 being 'Regional Prosperity' with Action 2.1 being 'Initiatives to grow population and increase the visitor economy.'



2.3 Weddin Shire

2.3.1 Weddin Shire Community Strategic Plan 2026

The Weddin Shire Community Strategic Plan 2026, articulates the vision, directions and framework for coordinating development, resource allocation and service delivery within the Shire. The vision for the Shire is:

A progressive rural locality with a vibrant and welcoming community, rich in both heritage and the natural environment with a diverse and resilient economy that supports local employment and business.

The Plan has six core strategies. Strategy 1 looks to grow, strengthen and diversify the local economy, with tourism recognised as one of the sectors that will help to achieve this. Strategy 4 focuses on enhancing community life through developing sporting, recreational, cultural and arts facilities and events. These facilities and events form part of the attraction and infrastructure base for the visitor economy.

Strategy 1: Collaborative Wealth Building (strong, diverse and resilient local economy)

Strategic Outcome 1.2 Weddin Shire's tourism potential maximised: through marketing, accommodation and activities.

Strategy 4: Culturally Rich, Vibrant and Inclusive Community

Strategic Outcome 4.1: Sporting facilities and events are maintained and developed.

Strategic Outcome 4.2: Recreational facilities and events are maintained and developed.

Strategic Outcome 4.3: Cultural and arts facilities and events are maintained and developed.

2.3.2 Weddin Shire Economic Development Plan 2017-2021

The Weddin Shire Economic Development Plan has, as one of its core themes: *Maximise Weddin Shire's tourism potential* with the strategies to achieve this being:

4.1 *Develop regional collaborative approach.*

4.2 *Develop destination marketing.*

4.3 *Build on the success of existing events.*

4.4 *Improve the visitor experience*

2.3.3 Weddin Shire Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020-2040

The Local Strategic Planning Statement recognises that tourism is a growing industry and an opportunity for the Shire, with the Shire having significant natural assets such as Weddin Mountain National Park, historic villages and growing arts and cultural scene. ***Planning Priority 6: Tourist and Visitor Services***, seeks to *broaden the depth, quality and awareness of the local and sub-regional visitor opportunities, attractions and facilities.*





3. WEDDIN SHIRE – OUR DESTINATION

3.1 Overview

Weddin Shire is located in Central West NSW. By road, the Shire⁴ lies approximately 360 kilometres west of Sydney and 210 kilometres north west of the ACT, within 2.5 hours drive of regional cities of Bathurst, Orange, Dubbo and Wagga Wagga and within an hour's drive of Parkes, Forbes, Cowra, Young, Temora and West Wyalong. The Shire is bounded by Cowra Shire to the east, Forbes Shire to the north, Bland Shire to the west and Hilltops to the south. Over 760,000 people live within a 2.5 hour drive of the Shire.

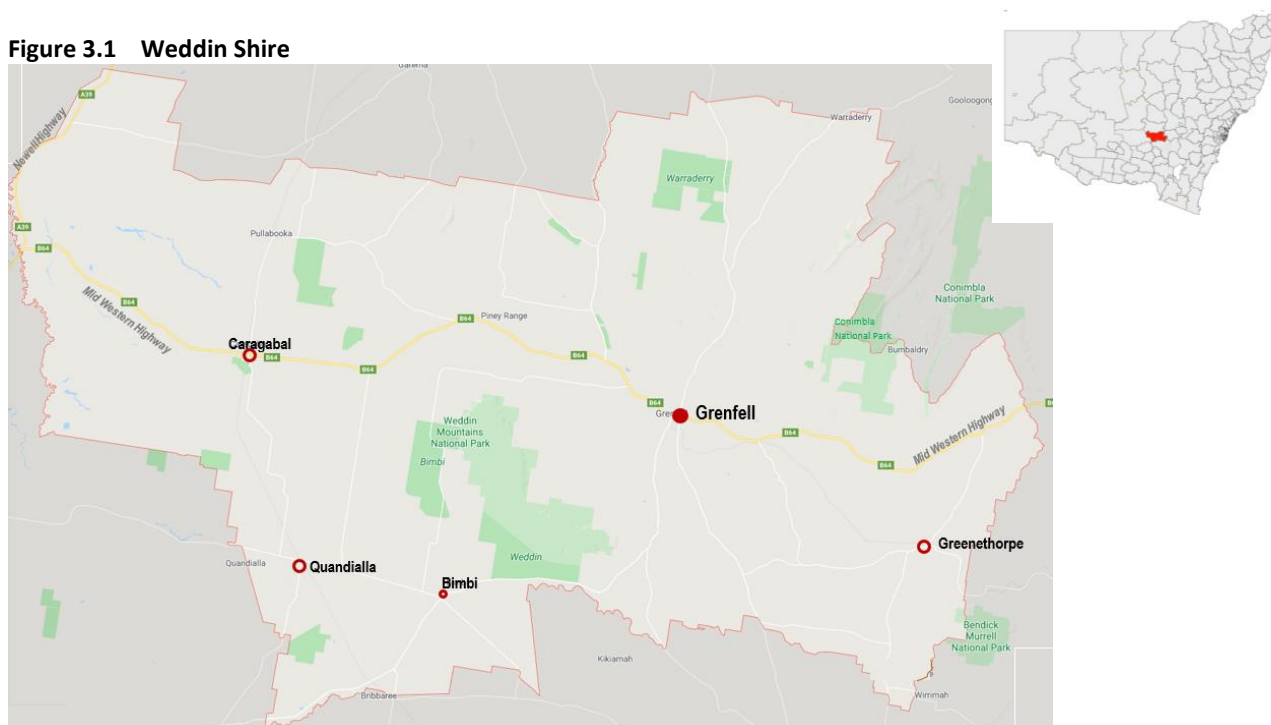
Weddin Shire covers an area of 3,410 square kilometres. The topography of the Shire includes the Weddin Mountains which rise 400 metres above the surrounding plains, the Warraderry and Wheoga Ranges, and the Bland Plains along the western and south western edge of the Shire. The Shire lies within the Lachlan River catchment area.

The Shire extends across the traditional lands of the Wiradjuri nation with the Weddin Mountains being a highly significant site⁵. The area was settled in the 1860's and has a rich colonial, gold mining and farming history. Grenfell was the birthplace of Henry Lawson.

Today, agriculture is the main landuse and economic activity within the Shire. Around 93% of the land area of the Shire is used for agriculture with the Shire being a significant producer of cattle, sheep (for wool and meat), grains, pulses and oil seeds. Tourism is a small, but significant and growing sector for the Shire.

At the 2016 Census⁶, Weddin Shire had a population of 3,664, 70% of whom reside in Grenfell. Grenfell is the administrative and commercial centre of the Shire. Grenfell is located on the Mid-Western Highway at the junction of several regional roads and functions as a service centre for the surrounding district and for highway and regional travellers. Weddin Shire has four small villages – Caragabal (pop. 185) on the Mid Western Highway, Quandialla (pop. 197), Greenethorpe (pop.240) and Bimbi (pop.114). Quandialla has a hotel, bowling club, post office, rural supplier and general store, Greenethorpe has a hotel and café – B&B, with Caragabal having a hotel and golf club.

Figure 3.1 Weddin Shire



⁴ The distances given are by road to the town of Grenfell which is the main town and administrative centre of the Shire.

⁵ National Parks and Wildlife Service – Weddin Mountains National Park – Information Sheet

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics Population Census 2016. Population of Grenfell and the villages is based on ABS suburb areas.



3.2 Access

Weddin Shire is located on the southern edge of the Central West Region of NSW and is readily accessible by road from the Central West, Riverina, Southern Tablelands and Canberra Regions.

The Shire is traversed by the Mid-Western Highway with the Newell Highway located along the western edge of the Shire. The Mid Western Highway forms of the most direct route between Sydney and Adelaide. The Mid Western Highway extends from Bathurst in the east, through to Hay in the west. The Highway links with the Great Western and Mitchell Highways in Bathurst, the Olympic Highway in Cowra, the Newell Highway along the western edge of Weddin Shire and the Cobb and Sturt Highways at Hay.

The Newell Highway is a major interstate Highway connecting Melbourne to Queensland via Central NSW. The Newell Highway is promoted as a touring route. North-bound travellers on the Newell will often take the Mid-Western Highway if they are heading towards Sydney. Being 5 hours' drive from Sydney, Grenfell is well located to become the first night out of Sydney for the long-haul touring caravan and RV market, and the last night before travelling to Sydney for east-bound traffic.

From Grenfell to	Distance by Road	Approximate Travel Time Hour : Mins
Regional Cities		
Bathurst	162	2:00
Orange	135	1:40
Dubbo	220	2:30
Wagga Wagga	189	2:00
Surrounding Towns		
Cowra	55	0:40
Forbes	65	0:45
Parkes	97	1:00
Young	50	0:45
Temora	100	1:10
West Wyalong	105	1:10
Canowindra	75	0:55
Cootamundra	100	1:10
Boorowa	100	1:10
Harden	85	1:00
Blayney	125	1:30

Weddin Shire is well connected to surrounding towns by a network of local and regional roads. Henry Lawson Way connects Forbes to Young via Grenfell; Gooloogong Road connects Grenfell to Canowindra with links through to Forbes, Orange and Bathurst; and Mary Gilmore Way forms part of the links between Grenfell and Barmedman, Temora and Young. In the south of the Shire, the Quandialla Road is the most direct route between West Wyalong and Young.

TrainsNSW provides a coach service between Grenfell and Bathurst and Lithgow, and between Cootamundra and Dubbo via Young, Grenfell, Forbes and Parkes. The nearest airports to the Shire with commercial RPT services are located at Parkes, Bathurst and Orange.

3.3 The Tourism Sector – Overview

3.3.1 Economic Contribution of the Visitor Economy

The Visitor Economy extends across most industry sectors and is not a separate category in the industry classification standards. In providing economic data for the Central West Region of NSW, REMPLAN has endeavoured to identify the economic contribution of the visitor economy. REMPLAN estimates that the output and value-add for the Visitor Economy in Weddin Shire is \$7.105 million and \$3.401 million respectively. The visitor economy within the Shire employs 40 people, with wages and salaries totalling \$1.904 million. Domestic overnight visitors spend on average \$157 per night during their stay in the Shire, with international visitors spend on average \$50 per night.

3.3.2 Attractions, Activities and Events

Weddin Shire has three high profile attractions that draw significant numbers of visitors into the Shire, with these supported by a range of local attractions, events and activities.

- Weddin Mountains National Park:** The Park is located to the south west of Grenfell and accessible from Grenfell, Caragabal and Quandialla. The Park's main attractions are Ben Hall's Cave, Seaton's Farm, the Eualdrie Trail and Peregrine Lookout. Seaton's Farm is unique, with a collection of historic farm buildings, machinery and equipment that demonstrate how a resourceful, frugal farming family lived through the Great Depression of the 1930's. The Park has two campgrounds and a network of tracks that are popular for bushwalking, mountain-biking and trail



running. The Park is also a bird 'hot-spot' and has prolific wildflowers in good seasons. The Park abuts the Weddin and Bimbi State Forests, both of which are accessible to the public and suitable for a range of activities.

- **landra Castle:** Located 11 kilometres south of Greenethorpe, landra Castle and surrounding buildings are a State-heritage listed site. The 57 room Castle, built between 1908 and 1911, is an example of Federation Romanesque architecture. The surrounding landra estate was, in the late 1800's – early 1900's, the largest and most progressive wheat producing property in Australia, being at the forefront in the use of technology, fertilisers and land management practices. The (then) owner also introduced share farming based on the English feudal-style estate, built the village of Greenethorpe for the tenant farmers and was responsible for bringing the railway to Greenethorpe. The Castle is open to the public several times a year and by appointment for groups at other times.
- **Grenfell Commodities Silos:** The Grenfell grain silos were painted in 2019 with images of the landscape and farming activities in Weddin Shire. The silos have become part of the Australian Silo Art Trail and are proving popular with both the regional residents and the touring caravan and RV market.

Figures 3.2 – 3.4 Weddin Shire's Key Attractions: Weddin Mountains National Park, landra Castle and Grenfell Silos



Attractions

- Museums: Grenfell Historic Museum, Chrysler Car Museum, Quandialla Auto Collection
- Galleries: Grenfell Art Gallery, Patina Gallery, Wallangreen Sculpture Garden
- Henry Lawson: Birthplace Memorial Park and bronze statue in the Grenfell town centre
- O'Brien's Hill: lookout, historic gold mining site, endemic garden and iris garden
- Grenfell railway station precinct and big gold pick and pan.
- Ochre Arch Farm Tours
- State Forests
- Bird trails
- Bogolong, Company and Vaughan Dams
- Grenfell Country Club and Golf Course and Caragabal Golf Course
- Heritage buildings and precincts – Grenfell, Quandialla, Caragabal, Greenethorpe and Bimbi + Grenfell historic town walk
- Jane Parletts Country Experience retail outlet (limited opening hours)
- Rustic Maze, Heritage Homestead Garden and Café (located in Hilltops Shire but close to Iandra Castle)

Activities that can be undertaken in Weddin Shire

- Camping
- Bushwalking
- Road cycling – the Shire has a network of low traffic local roads that are ideal for cycling
- Mountain biking – informal trails in the Weddin Mountains National Park and State Forests
- Bird watching
- Trail riding – horses and motorbikes – State Forests
- 4WD – State Forests
- Art workshops
- Farm tours
- Scenic drives

Events

- Henry Lawson Festival of the Arts
- Caragabal Sheep Races
- Iandra Castle Open Days
- Grenfell Rodeo
- Grenfell Quick Shears
- Grenfell Show
- Weddin Mountains Muster (Horse event)
- Grenfell Picnic and Jockey Club Races
- Grenfell Kart Club race days
- Grenfell Pony Club activities
- Team Penning

Figure 3.5 Caragabal Sheep Races





3.3.3 Accommodation

Weddin Shire has a small accommodation sector, incorporating:

- Grenfell Motel – budget property
- Hotels – basic pub rooms with shared facilities: Railway, Criterion, Royal and Albion Hotels in Grenfell, Royal in Caragabal and the Bland in Quandialla.
- B&Bs – 8 properties in Grenfell (including the iconic Grenfell Hall) and Circa 1935 in Café – B&B in Greenethorpe.
- Farm Stay – Wheatfield Cottage near Grenfell.
- Grenfell Caravan Park – 3 cabins, 17 powered and 4 unpowered sites
- Campgrounds – two campgrounds in the Weddin Mountains National Park. Powered and unpowered sites are also available at the Grenfell Showground and the Grenfell Kart Club. The Bland Hotel in Quandialla also has a small camping area with powered sites and amenities, with powered sites (13) and unpowered sites at the Quandialla Showground.
- Free camping areas – railway precinct in Grenfell and adjacent to the park in Caragabal. Camping is also permitted in the State Forests.

The Grenfell Motel (20 rooms), Grenfell Railway Hotel (15 rooms) and the Bland Hotel in Quandialla (15 rooms) are the three largest properties in the Shire.

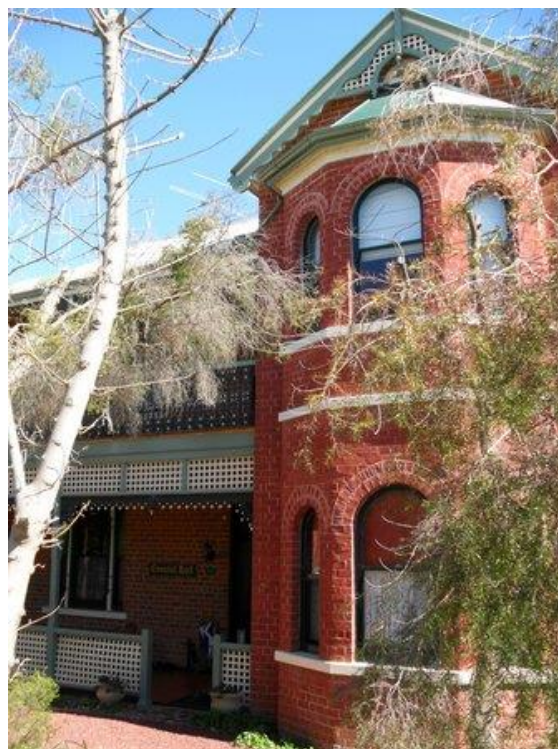


Figure 3.6 Historic Grenfell Hall B&B

The Shire is under-supplied with accommodation, with the accommodation available in Grenfell often booked out mid-week (primarily business travellers) and during events. The former Exchange Hotel in Grenfell (10 rooms) and the Shamrock Hotel in Greenethorpe (6 rooms) may be re-opened in the future.

The on-line presence of the accommodation sector is limited. Very few of the properties have websites and/or Facebook sites, with Grenfell Hall B&B being the only property to be listed on the commercial on-line booking sites (eg. booking.com). Grenfell Hall, the Garden Room B&B and the Criterion Hotel Apartment are listed on Airbnb.

3.3.4 Other Facilities and Infrastructure to Support Tourism

Other facilities and infrastructure available in the Shire to support tourism include:

- **Information services:** Accredited Visitor Information Centre (VIC) in Grenfell.
- **Venues:** Grenfell Showground and Rodeo arena, Grenfell Racecourse, Grenfell Kart Track, Village Halls and recreation grounds
- **Eateries:** Hotels, licensed clubs, cafes and a Chinese restaurant (Grenfell)
- **Retail and support services:** Grenfell is a district service centre anchored by an IGA supermarket. Petrol is available in Grenfell and Quandialla.
- **Conference and meeting venues:** There is a small conference room attached to the Visitor Information Centre in Grenfell and meeting and function rooms at the Grenfell Bowling Club. The Showground also has a very large pavilion which is suitable for exhibitions and large functions.
- **Public toilets:** Public toilets are available in the Grenfell town centre, Grenfell Railway Precinct (showers also available), O'Brien's Hill Lookout and on the Mid Western Highway on the western edge of town. Public toilets are also located in the each of the villages.
- **Dump Point:** There is a dump point for caravans and RVs in the Railway Station precinct in Grenfell.





3.4 Strengths and Assets

From a tourism perspective, the Shire's strengths and strategic assets are:

Strength	Assets to Work With	Opportunities
Central location and connectivity to surrounding towns and cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 760,000 people living within 2.5 hours drive of the Shire, around 80,000 of whom live within an hour's drive of the Shire. Connectivity and relatively short distances between the towns and villages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities to build the day trip and short breaks market. Ready market for events and activities. Attract day trips from VFR and other visitors staying in surrounding towns. Development and promotion of sub-regional touring routes in conjunction with surrounding LGAs. Target interest-based groups and clubs (eg cycling clubs, art groups)
Highway exposure and regional and local road network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid Western Highway – most direct route between Sydney and Adelaide with Grenfell well positioned to attract the first night stay out of Sydney and the last night before travelling into Sydney. Newell Highway along the western edge of the Shire. Network of low traffic, sealed regional and local roads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in Newell Highway marketing group – leveraging Weddin Mountains National Park, landra Castle and Grenfell Silo Art to draw travellers off the Highway and into Weddin Shire. Cooperative marketing with LGAs along the Mid Western Highway corridor. Raising the profile of Grenfell within the Mid Western Highway corridor – encouraging travellers to stop and explore. Promotion of the low traffic routes as alternatives to the Newell Highway for the caravan and RV markets. Use of local and regional roads for a range of activities including car and motorbike touring and rallies and road cycling.
Weddin Mountains National Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPWS brand. Close to Grenfell – with access also available from Quandialla and Caragabal. Sealed road access suitable for caravans and RVs. Good visitor infrastructure within the Park – camping areas, walking tracks, lookout, interpretation, picnic areas, amenities. Ben Halls Cave – Ben Hall has wide recognition amongst travellers and there are links with other towns / LGAs (eg Forbes Shire). Seaton's Farm – quirky and unique. Nature and outdoor activities: camping, bushwalking, mountain biking, bird watching, trail running, horse riding. Adjoining State Forests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signposting the National Park from the Newell Highway / bill-board advertising on the Newell Highway. Featuring images from Seaton's Farm in promotional collateral – capitalising on its uniqueness. Upgrading – sealing Nowlans Road to improve access to the Park from the south and create scenic routes that encourage visitors to explore Quandialla, Bimbi and Caragabal. Expanding the 'offer' by developing strong links between the National Park and the adjoining State Forests and exploring opportunities to use the combined area for a range of events and activities.
landra Castle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iconic building and very attractive gardens and grounds. Significant stories to tell – farming history, introduction of share farming, role in the development of the wheat industry etc. Visible from landra Road. High level of interest in the Castle. Accessible by sealed roads from Grenfell, Young and Cowra. Open days are popular – drawing visitors into the Shire. Open by appointment for groups. Relationship between the Castle and Greenethorpe – shared history and 'stories'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a viewing area with interpretation within the landra Road Reserve to provide 'access' year-round and enabling the Castle to be actively promoted as part of scenic drives and road cycle routes. Use of video clips to provide an 'insight' into the Castle when it is closed and encourage people to visit for open days. Encourage the use of the gardens and grounds for events and activities (eg music festivals). Package the Castle with the Rustic Maze and other attractions and activities and promote to groups, including car, caravan and motorcycle clubs and coach tour groups.



Strength	Assets to Work With	Opportunities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proximity to the Rustic Maze and other attractions proposed for the northern edge of Hilltops LGA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the connection with Greenethorpe – through signage, interpretation and promotional material. Proximity to the Grenfell – Greenethorpe disused rail corridor – potential for the Castle to become a feature of the Grenfell – Greenethorpe rail trail.
State Forests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11 State Forests in the Shire, two of which adjoin the Weddin Mountains National Park. State Forests can be used for a much wider range of activities and events than National Parks Easier to get approval to hold events in State Forests than National Parks. Network of roads and trails through the larger State Forests. State Forests are dog and horse friendly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting the State Forests for a range of soft adventure, outdoor and nature-based activities including camping, off-road touring / 4WD driving, mountain biking and ‘gravel grinding’, horse riding, bird watching, wildflower viewing, bush walking, trail running etc. Promoting the State Forests as ‘venues’ to host a range of events (eg mountain biking, motorcycle endurance events, horse events, rallying, off-road karting, music festivals, trail running, orienteering and rogaining etc.)
Three waterbodies – Bogolong, Company and Vaughan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bogolong Dam and surrounding crown land + ease of access from the Mid Western Highway. Company Dam and surrounding crown land + direct access from Grenfell Showground and Country Club, both of which have facilities to stage events. Vaughan Dam and Reserve – local attraction adjacent to the disused rail corridor and within easy walking distance of the Grenfell Railway Precinct free camping area. All three dams are bird ‘hot spots’. Increasing number of travellers in caravans and RVs that have canoes and/or off-road bikes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting the Grenfell area for canoeing and possibly fishing – three areas to canoe very close to town. Providing picnic facilities at Company and Bogolong Dam. Utilising the Crown Land around Company and Bogolong Dam for bushwalking, mountain-bike and bird trails. Establishing a lookout in the ridge above Bogolong Dam with views to the Weddin Mountains National Park. Utilising Bogolong and Company Dam and the surrounding areas for events and activities – eg ‘Dirty Tri’, Iron Man events, trail running, adventure racing, open water swimming, model boats etc. Improving the walking trails and interpretation in the Vaughan’s Dam Reserve with links along the rail corridor to the Railway Precinct. If a rail trail is developed, the Reserve has the potential to be one of the attractions along the trail.
Weddin Shire is ideal for a range of cycling activities and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closed railway line from Grenfell to Greenethorpe – ideal for a rail trail. Local and regional road network is ideal for road cycling and road cycling events - low traffic, series of different length loops, flat to undulating topography and very attractive scenery. Gravel local roads and trails in the National Park and State Forests suitable for ‘gravel grinding’ Mountain-biking in the Weddin Mountain National Park and the potential for mountain biking trails and events in some of the State Forests and the crown reserves adjacent to Bogolong and Company Dams. Local cycling group plus very active cycle and MTB clubs in the surrounding region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and promote Weddin Shire as a cycle tourism destination for road cycling, mountain biking and gravel grinding. Weddin Shire to become the centre for gravel grinding within the region. Assess the potential to establish an EPIC mountain bike trail. Convert the Grenfell to Greenethorpe rail line into a rail trail.
Cluster of art-based attractions anchored by the Grenfell Silos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grenfell Silos – part of the National Silo Art Trail. Grenfell Art Gallery – quality exhibitions and a growing profile within the region. Patina Gallery and workshops. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signposting the silos from Newell Highway / billboard advertising on the Newell Highway. Organising complementary events / activities around some of the exhibitions held at the Grenfell Art Gallery.



Strength	Assets to Work With	Opportunities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sculptures – public art, Wallangreen Sculpture Garden. • Local artists, potter and metal workers. • Grenfell Community Arts and Craft Group • Henry Lawson connection / Henry Lawson Festival of the Arts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use public art to enhance the presentation of Grenfell and the villages, tell the Shire's stories and encourage travellers to stop and take photographs. • Developing and packaging arts workshop and activities for the regional arts and craft groups.
Diversity of venues suitable for a range of events and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iandra Castle • Weddin Mountain National Park • State Forests • Company and Bogolong Dams and surrounding crown reserves • Grenfell Kart Club • Grenfell Showground • Grenfell Racecourse • Grenfell Hub – art gallery and meeting / function room • Golf courses – Grenfell and Caragabal • Village sports grounds / showgrounds / halls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the venues available to potential user groups, encouraging them to hold events and activities in Weddin Shire.
Grenfell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well located on the Mid Western Highway • Attractive town and setting • Historic town centre and historic buildings • Attractive parks and gardens • Eclectic shops / quality boutiques and lifestyle shops – eg Jan Parlett's Country Experience • Museum, Art Gallery, O'Brien's Hill Precinct, silo Art – gold mining relics, endemic garden, iris garden • Quality B&Bs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day trip and short breaks market out of the surrounding region. • Encouraging Highway travellers to explore the town centre. • Preparing a shopping and dining guide for distribution regionally. • Leveraging opportunities (eg when Jan Parlett's Country Experience is open) to generate publicity within the Region and capitalise on the visitors attracted. • Improve the presentation of the O'Brien's Hill Precinct. • Use public art and themed landscaping to improve the presentation of Grenfell and create a reason to visit.
The Shire is ideal for the touring caravan and RV markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of camp sites – Grenfell Caravan Park; Bland Hotel powered sites; Grenfell and Quandialla Showgrounds; free camping – Grenfell, Caragabal and State Forests; 2 campgrounds in the Weddin Mountains National Park. • Network of low traffic regional and local roads that run parallel to the Highways. • Located on the most direct route between Western Sydney and Adelaide. • Range of attractions that appeal to the touring van market – including the silo art 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase presence on on-line caravan and camping directories. • Potential for primitive camping at the Shamrock Hotel in Greenethorpe and/or at the Greenethorpe sports ground.
Small villages which are well located for scenic drives	<p>Quandialla:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bland Hotel – historic hotel with accommodation rooms and powered sites – provides entertainment / small events • Historic motoring memorabilia collection • Quandialla Hall • Interesting buildings in the town centre (most in poor condition) • Attractive setting with views of the Weddin Mountains National Park • Southern entrance to the Weddin Mountains National Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the village communities to improve the presentation of the villages. • Introduce street art / sculptures to tell the village stories and create points of interest: eg Echidnas for Quandialla, Sheep for Caragabal. • Linking the villages through scenic drives – encouraging travellers to stay longer in the Shire. • Incorporate the villages into road cycle routes / develop Grenfell – Greenethorpe Rail Trail. • Linking the Chrysler Museum in Grenfell and the Quandialla motoring memorabilia collection with other attractions in the surrounding region (eg McFeeters Motor Museum in Forbes and the



Strength	Assets to Work With	Opportunities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports ground and showground – potential event venues • Quirky house with a collection of signs • Sealed road from Caragabal and Bimbi • Site for the award-winning mini-series ‘1915’ and connection with the cinematographer Don McAlpine • Name means ‘spiny ant eater’ <p>Caragabal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid Western Highway location • Royal Hotel – historic hotel • Caragabal Sheep Races • Free camping area • Little Caragabal State Forest • Golf Club and Sports Ground – potential venues • Historic buildings (in poor condition) / historic signs (nearly un-readable) <p>Greenethorpe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractive setting • Network of local roads feeding into the area – readily accessible from Grenfell, Young and Cowra • Proximity to landra Castle / part of the landra story – share farming village • Proximity to the Rustic Maze and attractions being developed along the northern edge of Hilltops Shire • Attractive Café and B&B • Shamrock Hotel • Hall + adjoining sports ground • Disused rail corridor – ideal for a rail trail <p>Bimbi:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire shed historic display • Creek corridor – bird hotspot and part of the Weddin Shire Bird Trails 	<p>vintage ambulance and fire engine exhibits in Temora) to target car and motorcycle clubs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and grow village events. Endeavour to re-introduce the Tour de Greenethorpe. • Strengthen the link between Greenethorpe and landra Castle / encourage increased visitation to landra Castle, drawing travellers through Greenethorpe.

Figure 3.7 The availability of caravan and long rig parking in the Grenfell shopping centre encourages the travellers to stop and explore.





3.5 Issues and Challenges to Address

Addressing challenges and removing barriers is fundamental to delivering sustained growth. Challenges faced by Weddin Shire include:

Issue	Challenges for Weddin Shire Council and the Shire Community
Funding and resource constraints within Council and the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resourcing service delivery, including the on-going cost of running the Visitor Information Centre. • Accessing the funds needed to maintain and augment attractions, facilities and infrastructure (eg Bogolong Dam) to support visitation. • Under-capitalised / unfinished attractions and facilities that are operating well below their potential – O’Brien’s Hill, Railway Precinct, Company Dam. • Providing the funds and resources to effectively market and promote the Shire to attract investment, workers, new residents and visitors. • Very limited funds available to access tourism grants (\$ for \$) and cooperative marketing campaigns. • Unrealistic expectations by some sections of the community of what Council should be responsible for and/or what Council can achieve with the funds and resources available.
Limited profile and recognition of Weddin Shire in the marketplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Shire name differs from the main town (Grenfell). Travellers tend to recognise towns rather than LGAs. Visitors to the region are more likely to pick-up promotional material on Grenfell than Weddin Shire. • Promoting the area as ‘Grenfell’ is an issue for the village communities.
Weddin Shire is operating in a highly competitive environment	<p>Finding strong points of difference and compelling reasons to visit Weddin Shire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The landscape and product in the Central West and eastern Riverina area is very similar. • The larger towns surrounding Weddin Shire all have a good supply of accommodation, variety of eateries, larger retail offers and attractive town centres, parks and gardens. • Most of the towns in the region have invested significantly in their presentation of their entry corridors, town centres and parks and gardens, with strategic use of public art and landscaping to create points of interest and enhance the vibrancy of their centres.
Weddin’s ‘Heritage, History, Henry’ branding is not strong and appears to have limited traction in the marketplace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the towns and villages surrounding Weddin Shire have and promote heritage buildings and precincts, with most being of a larger scale and/or more attractive than the Weddin Shire ‘offer’. Most of the towns have some gold and/or bushranger history. • The presentation and interpretation of the Shire’s heritage assets, including Grenfell town centre, O’Brien’s Hill precinct, the Grenfell Railway precinct and the villages needs to be improved, which would require significant investment. • Reinvigorating or replacing the Henry Lawson Festival.
Weddin Shire has limited involvement with other tourism organisations within the surrounding region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LGAs within the surrounding region have entered into strategic produce development and marketing alliances at a sub-regional level, with these LGAs benefiting from cooperative marketing activities. Cowra and Cabonne Shires are working with LGAs to the north and north east, Forbes is working with LGAs to the west, with Hilltops looking towards Yass and the ACT, and Bland and Temora to the Riverina area. Bland, Forbes, Temora and Cabonne LGAs are also part of the Newell Highway marketing group. As a result, Weddin Shire is ‘isolated’.
Accommodation capacity constraints / dated accommodation / very limited on-line presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the supply of accommodation in Grenfell, in particular motel accommodation. • Dated presentation of the Grenfell Motel and some of the pub hotel rooms • Increasing the on-line presence of the accommodation properties – very few of the properties have websites with none of the websites having on-line booking facilities, with Grenfell Hall being the only property listed on the on-line accommodation booking sites (eg booking.com). The booking sites are identifying properties in Young and Cowra in response to searches for accommodation in Grenfell. • Increasing the on-line presence of caravan and camping sites in Weddin Shire including ensuring all sites are listed in the free caravan and camping directories, with detailed information and good images provided.
Limited on-line presence – for Weddin Shire as well as for individual tourism and business operators, event organisers and local organisations and groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positioning the Grenfell Visitor's Information and Exhibition Centre Facebook page as the ‘go-to’ site for visitors looking for information on the Shire. • Encouraging local businesses to improve their on-line presence. Most local businesses do not have a website and/or their website is not semantic search responsive or mobile optimised. • Encouraging local businesses to claim their google business listing so that they can be identified when travellers are searching for services. • Leveraging opportunities to promote Weddin Shire and its attractions and businesses through third-party websites and social media.

Issue	Challenges for Weddin Shire Council and the Shire Community
Ineffective signage – out of date / poorly presented signs, limited directional signage, lack of route/trail markers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removing / replacing out of date and /or poorly presented signs. • Seeking approval from the RMS / TASAC to improve Highway signage. • Improving directional and facility signage.
Seasonality, with very low visitation over summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Region is hot in summer which is a deterrent to travellers. • Travel to the area is concentrated from April through to October. Consideration needs to be given to trying to extend the travel season from March through to November and to build the regional market over summer – capitalising on the Grenfell pool and Bogolong and Company Dams for picnics and water-based activities.
Life span of the silo art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The silo art is currently a significant attraction for Grenfell and one of the main generators of visitation to the Shire. As more towns paint their silos and water towers, the impact of the silo art is likely to decline. Weddin Shire needs to be looking at what it can bring in to ‘replace’ the silo art as a major generator of visitation.
Scale of the businesses & dependence on volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentration of micro and small businesses – generally do not have the funds, resources and often skills, to develop quality promotional materials and market and promote effectively. • Dependence on volunteers to run events, activities and some attractions – issues of volunteer burnout, limited funds and resources, not able to capitalise effectively on value add and marketing opportunities, reluctance to change etc. • Very limited / no funds for businesses to ‘buy into’ local or regional cooperative marketing campaigns
Poor presentation and changing character of the villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding the funds and resources to improve the presentation of the villages and upgrade parks, public toilets, sports grounds etc. • Building local pride – encouraging property owners and occupants to improve the presentation of their properties. • Increasing visitation to the villages to improve the viability of village businesses.
Venue facilities and infrastructure are deteriorating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venues are managed by community groups / trusts – reliant on volunteers to maintain. • Some facilities are at or approaching the end of their physical life and need to be replaced. • Grenfell Kart Club needs to upgrade the track – could lose its accreditation.
Poor telecommunications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limited mobile phone coverage throughout most of the Shire. • Travellers have no access to free WiFi

Figure 3.8 The track at the Grenfell Kart Club needs to be upgraded for the Club to continue to host major events





Visitation &
Market Trends



4. VISITATION

Weddin Shire is highly dependent on the travellers attracted to, and moving through the surrounding region, with every traveller attracted to the area being a potential visitor for the Shire.

Data on visitation is limited and based on the National and International Visitor Surveys conducted by Tourism Research Australia. Destination NSW publishes visitation data at a regional level⁷, with time series data available. Tourism Research Australia provides visitation estimates for some LGAs. In the region surrounding Weddin Shire, data is only available for Cowra and Hilltops LGAs. Data on visitation to Weddin Shire is limited to information collected at the Grenfell Visitor Information Centre.

4.1 Visitation to the Surrounding Regions

Weddin Shire is located along the southern edge of the Central NSW region and shares boundaries with, and draws visitors from, the Riverina and Capital Country Regions. In the year ending (YE) September 2019, the three regions combined attracted 5.825 million domestic visitors and 92,000 international visitors who stayed one or more nights in the region. In addition, there were 7.86 million day trips made to and within the three regions.

The following visitation statistics are for the YE September and summarised from the DNSW Travel to Regions, Time Series data.

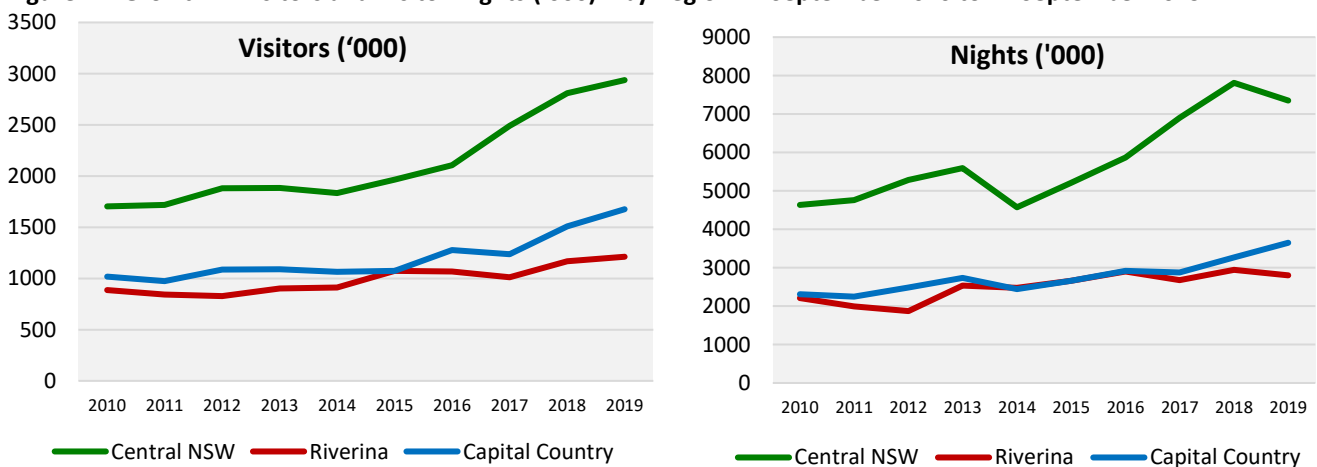
4.1.1 Domestic Overnight Visitors

In 2019, visitation was highest in the Central West Region, with the Region attracting 2.927 million domestic overnight visitors, with these visitors generating 7.347 million nights. Capital Country attracted 1.676 million domestic overnight visitors and 3.649 million visitor nights, with the Riverina attracting 1.12 million visitors and 2.7million visitor nights.

Visitors & Visitor Nights

Over the past decade, visitation to, and nights spent in each of the Regions have increased, with Central NSW experiencing the strongest growth in both visitation (up 72.4%) and nights (58.7%). Visitation to Capital Country increased by 64.5% with nights up by 58.2%. The growth rates in the Riverina Region were lower, with visits increasing by 36.6% and nights by 26.8%.

Figure 4.1 Growth in Visitors and Visitor Nights ('000) – by Region YE September 2010 to YE September 2019



⁷ The statistics relate to the former DNSW RTO regions not the new Destination Network Regions.



Origin of Visitors

The majority of visitors to Central NSW are from Regional NSW (48.0%) and Sydney (31.0%) with 21.0% coming from interstate primarily from Queensland (8.5%) and Victoria (8.0%). Capital Country draws primarily from Sydney (43.1%) and Regional NSW (31.3%), with 25.7% of visitors coming from Interstate, with Victoria (7.1%) and the ACT being significant markets. The Riverina Region primarily draws from Regional NSW (40.7%), Sydney (24.6%) and Victoria (19.3%). The higher proportion of interstate visitors (34.8%) reflects the Region's proximity to Canberra and Victoria and its location on several major interstate routes.

Over the past decade, the number of visitors from all source markets in each of the regions has been increasing. Central NSW has seen very strong growth in visitors for regional NSW and Sydney, with the Riverina Region seeing strong growth in the number of visitors from Sydney.

Figure 4.2 Origin of Visitors by Region
% of total visitors YE Sept 2019

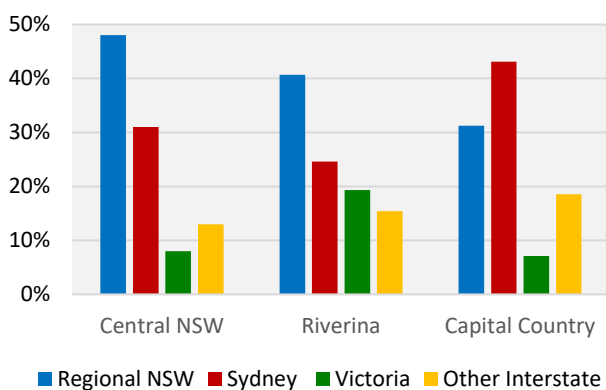
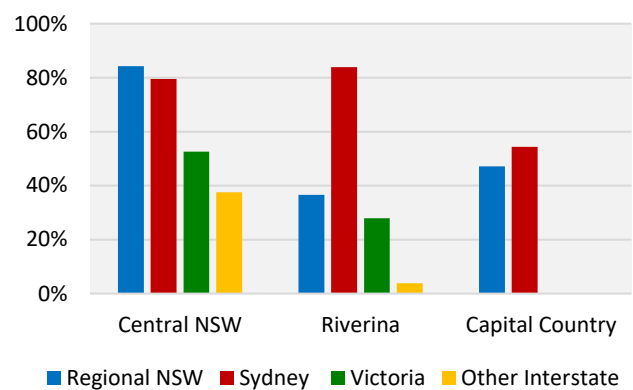


Figure 4.3 Growth in Visitation from Main Source Markets YE Sept 2010 to 2019 % growth



Source: DNSW Travel to Region Time Series Statistics, YE September

Purpose of Visit

Visiting friends and relatives (VFR) is the primary reason for visiting each of the regions, accounting for 35.9% of visitors to Central NSW, 33.5% of visitors to the Riverina and 40.1% of visitors to Capital Country. Holiday and leisure travel rates second, followed by business travel. The Riverina Region has the highest proportion of business travellers. Over the past decade, the business – other travel sector has grown significantly in all regions, with the average length of stay of business – other travellers increasing, while the average length of stay of holiday-leisure and VFR travellers has been decreasing. In all regions, VFR travellers have the longest length of stay, followed by holiday and leisure travellers.

Figure 4.4 Purpose of Visit
% of total visitors YE September 2019

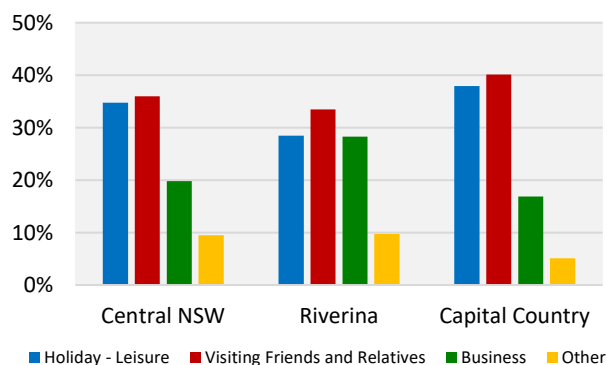
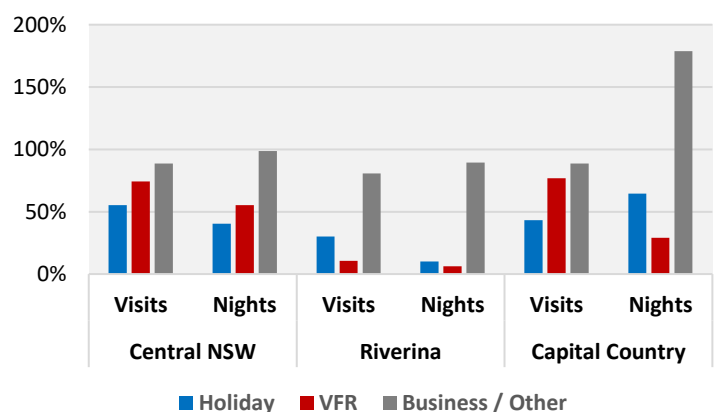


Figure 4.5 Growth in No. Visits and Nights by Purpose of Visit YE Sept 2010 to 2019





Age of Travellers

People aged 50+ years account for just over half of the domestic overnight visitors to each region. Gen Y (15-29 years) is also a significant market for each region. Over the past decade, Central NSW and Capital Country have seen very strong growth in the number of travellers aged 70+ years, with Capital Country also seeing strong growth in travellers aged 40-49 years.

Figure 4.6 Age Profile of Visitors by Region
% of total visitors YE Sept 2019

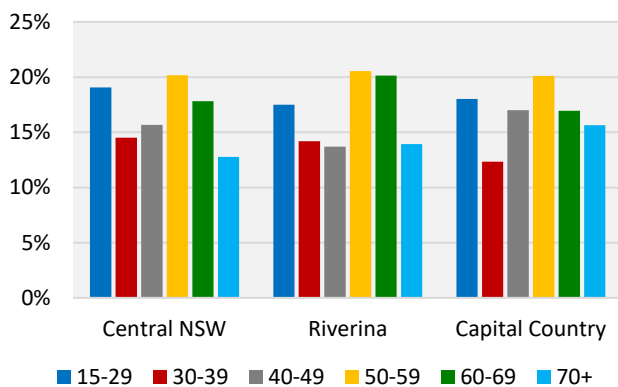
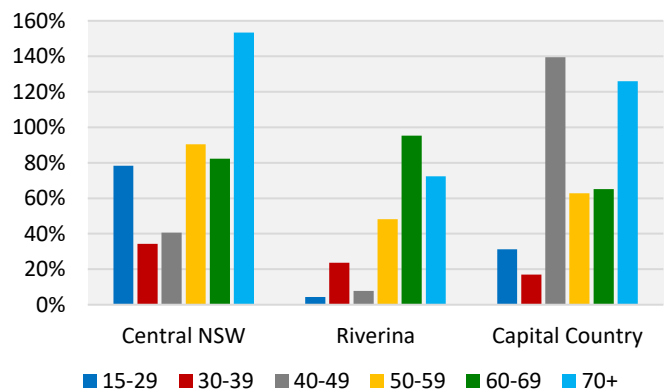


Figure 4.7 Growth in Visitation by Age Group
YE Sept 2010 to 2019



Travel Party

Travellers to the three regions are primarily travelling alone, as adult couples and with friends and relatives (no children). Families with children account for 15.5% of travellers to Central NSW, 13.0% of travellers to Capital Country and 11.9% of travellers to the Riverina. Over the past decade the Central West has seen strong growth in the number of visitors travelling with friends and relative and visitors travelling alone, while Capital Country has seen strong growth in solo travellers.

Figure 4.8 Travel Party by Region
% of total visitors YE Sept 2019

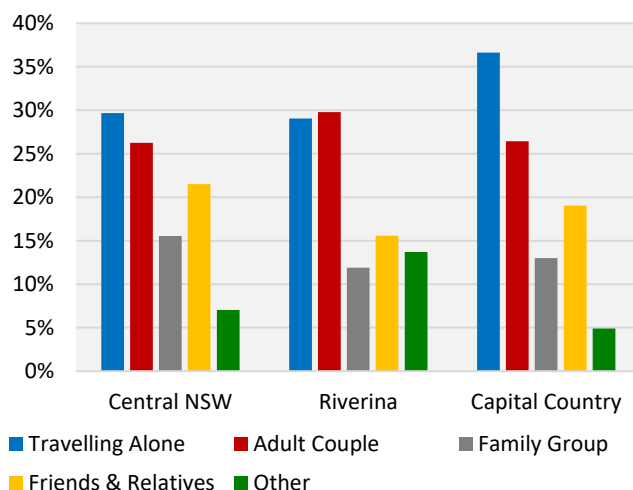
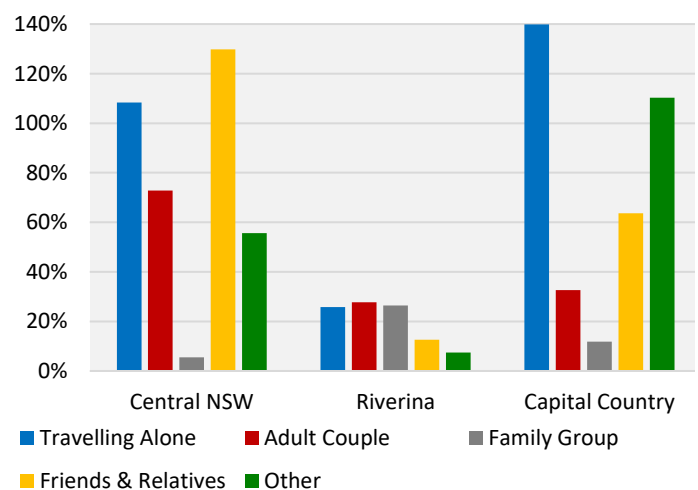


Figure 4.9 Growth in Visitation by Travel Party Type
YE Sept 2010 to 2019





4.1.2 International Overnight Visitors

In YE September 2019, there were 92,000 international visitors, 40,000 of whom visited Central NSW, with 32,000 visiting Capital Country and 22,000 visiting the Riverina. Over the past decade, the number of international visitors to Capital Country increased by 28%, with Central NSW seeing an 8.1% increase and the Riverina Region, an 8.3% decrease.

The majority of international visitors are holiday – leisure traveller or visiting friends and relatives. The main source markets are New Zealand, United Kingdom and the USA.

4.1.3 Visitor Expenditure

In YE September 2019 the average spend per visitor was:

Region	Overnight Visitors per Night		Domestic Day visitors per Visit
	Domestic	International	
Central NSW	\$181	\$38	\$172
Riverina	\$163	\$38	\$157
Capital Country	\$172	\$52	\$ 93

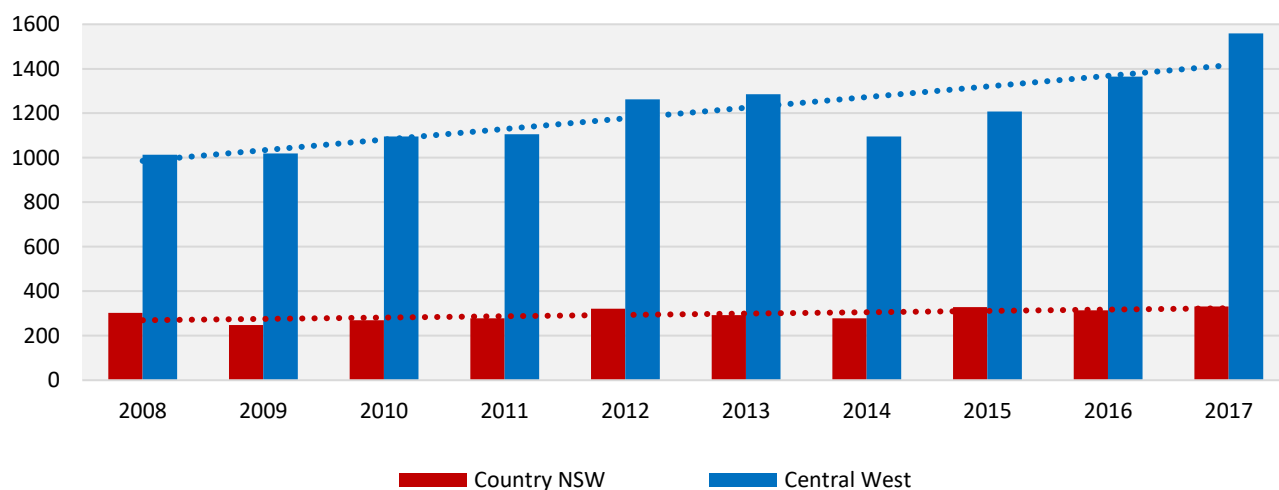
4.2 Visitation to Central NSW Sub-Regions

The Country and Outback DMP divides Central NSW into two sub-regions, Country NSW which incorporates Forbes, Lachlan, Parkes and Weddin Shires and the Central West which incorporates Bathurst, Blayney, Cabonne, Cowra, Lithgow, Mid-Western (Mudgee), Oberon and Orange and Oberon LGAs.

In YE June 2017, 17.5% of domestic overnight visitors to the Central NSW Region (331,000 visitors) stayed overnight in the Country NSW sub-region. Parkes Shire attracts around 36.5% of these visitors. Over the 10 years to June 2017, visitation to the Country NSW sub-region increased by 9.2%, with the increase in visitation being significantly lower than in the remainder of the region, where visitation grew by 53.9%.

In the key insights to the market analysis, DNC&O notes that compared to the total DNCO region, Regional NSW and Regional Australia, the Country NSW sub-region has under-performed on growth in overnight visitors and visitor nights and that while circumstances such as flooding have potentially hindered growth, given the upward trend across other sub-regions within the DCO region, the slow growth suggests that there are critical issues with supply and demand.

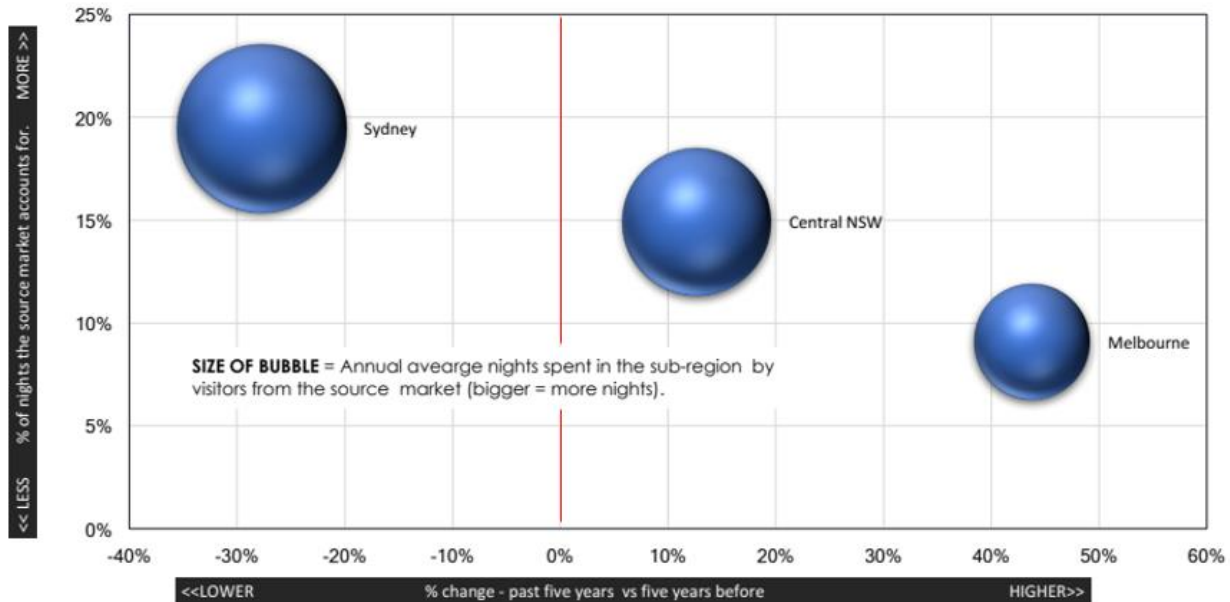
Figure 4.10 Domestic Overnight Visitors to the Country NSW and Central West Sub Regions of Central NSW 2007/8 to 2016/17 (Number of Visitors '000)



Source: Destination Country and Outback DMP – Appendix B Research and Insights Analysis

DNC&O assessed changes in the main source markets for the Country NSW and Central West sub-regions for the five year period YE June 2013-2017 vs the previous 5 years. The analysis shows that the main source markets for both sub-regions are Sydney (the largest) followed by visitors from within the Central NSW. Melbourne is a significant market for the Country NSW sub-region, with this due to visitor traffic along the Newell Highway. The number of nights spent by visitors from Melbourne and Central NSW have increased significantly, while nights spent by Sydney-siders have decreased. (Nights spent by visitors from smaller source markets is not shown due to small sample sizes).

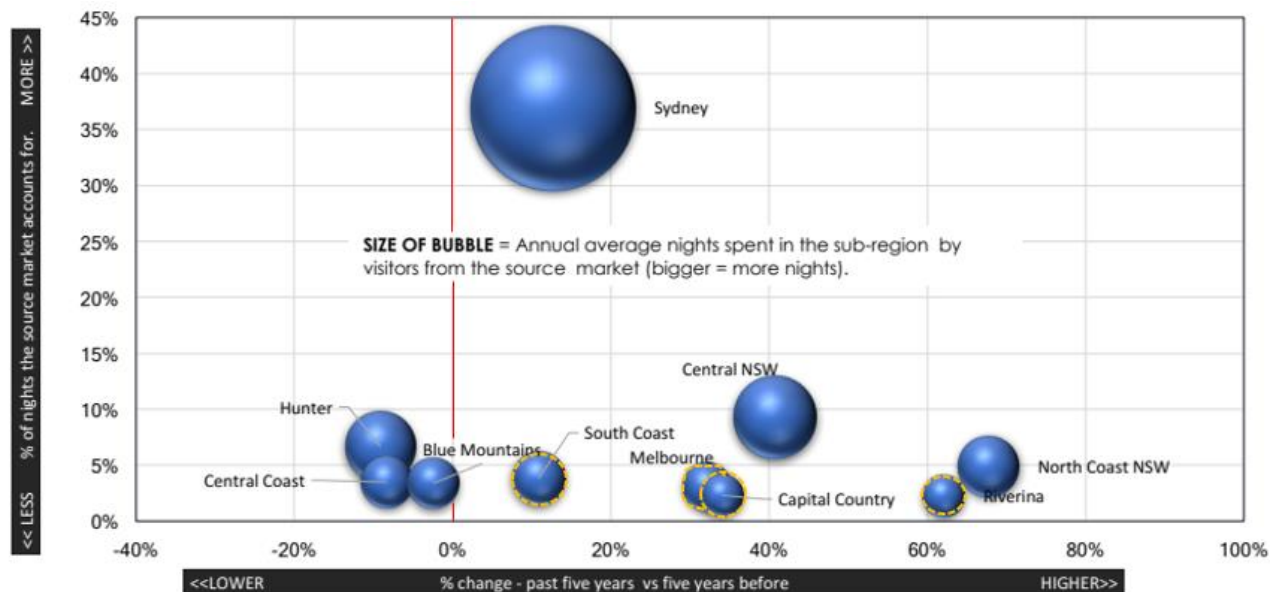
Figure 4.11 Key Markets, Contribution (Nights Spent) and Growth – Country NSW Sub-Region



Source: Destination Country and Outback DMP – Appendix B Research and Insights Analysis

The Central NSW sub-region draws visitors from Sydney, the Hunter Valley, NSW coastal regions, Central NSW, Melbourne, Capital Country and the Riverina. Visitors from the Capital Country, South Coast and Riverina Regions and Melbourne are likely to have travelled through or in close proximity to Weddin Shire, with each of these source markets showing strong growth, albeit from relatively small market bases.

Figure 4.12 Key Markets, Contribution (Nights Spent) and Growth – Central West Sub-Region *Bubbles outlined in Yellow indicate visitors have most likely travelled through or in close proximity to Weddin Shire to reach Central NSW.*



Source: Destination Country and Outback DMP – Appendix B Research and Insights Analysis



4.3 Visitation to Surrounding LGAs

Tourism Research Australia publishes limited visitation statistics for selected LGAs, with statistics available for 2011, 2013, 2016 and 2019. The data is based on rolling averages and, due to small sample sizes is indicative of the scale of visitation. While data is not available for Weddin Shire, based on the accommodation available, the Shire is likely to be attracting around 20,000 to 25,000 domestic overnight visitors per annum.

Table 4.1 Estimated Visitation to LGAs surrounding Weddin Shire

LGA	2011		2013		2016		2019	
	Visitors	Nights	Visitors	Nights	Visitors	Nights	Visitors	Nights
Bland	57,000	126,000	68,000	125,000				
Cabonne	31,000	73,000						
Cowra	104,000	252,000			101,000	275,000	125,000	312,000
Forbes	53,000	162,000						
Temora	37,000	73,000	47,000	107,000				
Young	64,000	158,000	63,000	127,000				
Hilltops					145,000	357,000	159,000	363,000

Source: Destination NSW and Tourism Research Australia LGA Visitor Profiles

In 2019, Cowra Shire attracted 125,000 domestic overnight visitors, 142,000 domestic day trippers and around 2,000 international overnight visitors. Domestic overnight visitors stayed 312,000 nights in the Shire. From 2016 to 2019, the number of domestic visitors to the Shire increased with overnight visitors up 23.8% and day trippers up 23.5%. Night spent by domestic visitors also increased, up by 13.5%. The number of international visitors remained static. In 2019 40.8% of domestic overnight visitors were holiday and leisure travellers, with this market increasing by 34.2% since 2016. 36.8% were visiting friends and relatives (21.1% increase on 2016) with 22.4% travelling for business and other purposes (up 12.0%). 36% of visitors were travelling as adult couples, 24% alone, 20% as families with children and 20% with friends or relatives. 42.0% of nights spent in the Shire were spent in homes of friends and relatives, with 21.5% spent in standard hotels and motels.

In 2019, Hilltops LGA attracted 159,000 domestic overnight visitors, 243,000 day trippers and 3,000 international visitors. Domestic overnight visitors stayed 363,000 nights in the Shire. From 2016 to 2019 the number of domestic overnight visitors increased by 9.7% with nights spent in the LGA increasing by 1.7%. The number of day visitors declined by 8.6%, while the number of international visitors remained static. 40.9% of domestic overnight visitors were visiting friends or relatives, with 32.1% being holiday and leisure travellers and 27% travelling for business and other purposes. From 2016 to 2019, the number of holiday-leisure and business-other travellers increased by 8.5% and 30.3% respectively, while the number of VFR travellers remained static. 28.3% of visitors were travelling alone, 28.3% as adult couples, 22.6% as families with children and 20.8% with friends and relatives. From 2016, there was strong growth in the number of visitors travelling alone (up 36.4%) and with friends and relatives (up 22.2%), with no growth in the adult couples' market and only 2.9% growth in the family market. 51% of visitor nights were spent in homes of friends and relatives, with 17.6% of nights spent in standard hotels and motels.

Table 4.2 Visitation and Trip Characteristics: Cowra and Hilltops LGAs, 2016 and 2019

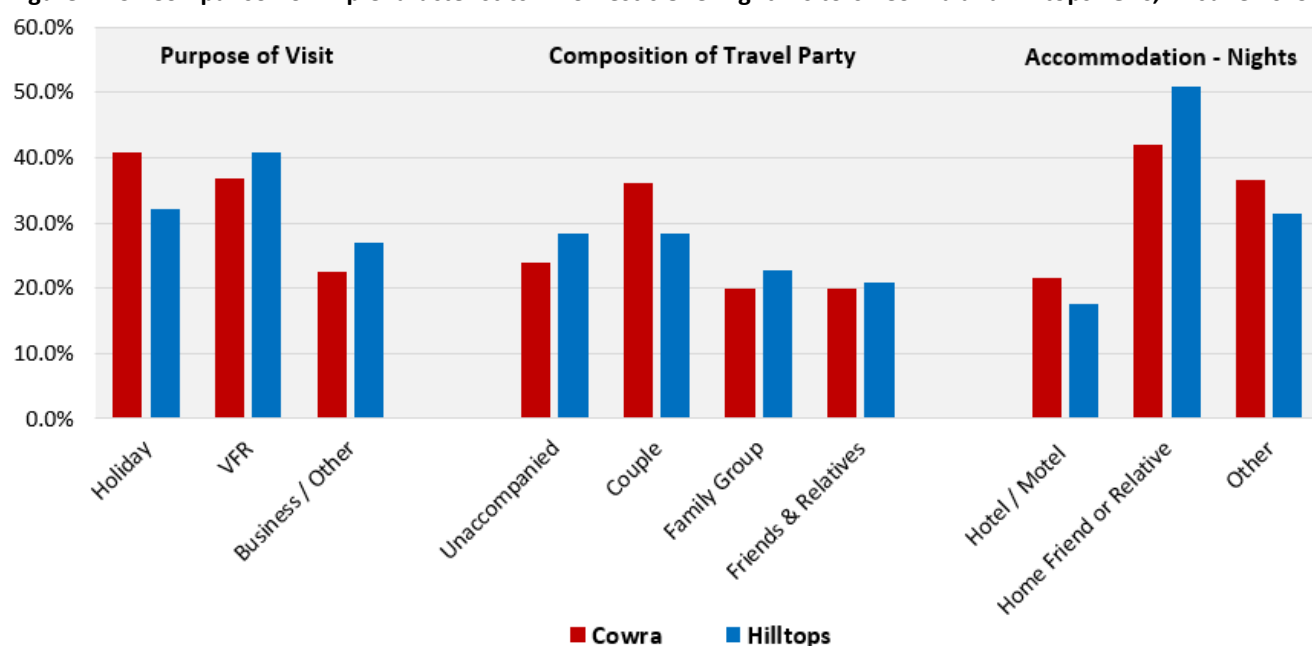
	Cowra				Hilltops			
	2016	2019	Change 2016-19	Share As % of 2019	2016	2019	Change 2016-19	Share As % of 2019
Number of Visitors								
Domestic Overnight Visitors	101,000	125,000	23.8%		145,000	159,000	9.7%	
Domestic Day Visitors	115,000	142,000	23.5%		266,000	243,000	-8.6%	
International Visitors	2,000	2,000	0.0%		3,000	3,000	0.0%	
Av. Spend per Visitor								
Domestic Overnight Visitors / night	\$102	\$118	15.7%		\$138	\$119	-13.8%	
Domestic Day Visitors / night	\$125	\$112	-10.4%		\$100	\$125	25.0%	
International Visitors / visit	\$45	\$34	-24.4%		\$26	\$29	11.5%	



	Cowra				Hilltops			
	2016	2019	Change 2016-19	Share As % of 2019	2016	2019	Change 2016-19	Share As % of 2019
DOMESTIC OVERNIGHT VISITORS								
Nights Spent	275,000	312,000	13.5%		357,000	363,000	1.7%	
Average Length of Stay (nights)	2.7	2.5	-8.3%		2.5	2.3	-7.3%	
Purpose of Visit (Visitors)								
Holiday – Leisure	38,000	51,000	34.2%	40.8%	47,000	51,000	8.5%	32.1%
Visiting Friends and Relatives	38,000	46,000	21.1%	36.8%	65,000	65,000	0.0%	40.9%
Business – Other	25,000	28,000	12.0%	22.4%	33,000	43,000	30.3%	27.0%
Travel Party (Visitors)								
Travelling Alone	23,000	30,000	30.4%	24.0%	33,000	45,000	36.4%	28.3%
Adult Couples	38,000	45,000	18.4%	36.0%	45,000	45,000	0.0%	28.3%
Family with Children	23,000	25,000	8.7%	20.0%	35,000	36,000	2.9%	22.6%
Friends and Relatives	17,000	25,000	47.1%	20.0%	27,000	33,000	22.2%	20.8%
Nights Spent in Accommodation								
Standard hotel / motel	52,000	67,000	28.8%	21.5%	55,000	64,000	16.4%	17.6%
Home of Friend or Relative	120,000	131,000	9.2%	42.0%	190,000	185,000	-2.6%	51.0%
Other	103,000	114,000	10.7%	36.5%	112,000	114,000	1.8%	31.4%

Source: Tourism Research Australia: Local Government Area Profiles: Cowra and Hilltops: 2016 and 2019

Figure 4.13 Comparison of Trip Characteristics – Domestic Overnight Visitors: Cowra and Hilltops LGAs, YE June 2019





4.4 Visitation to Weddin Shire

Information on visitation to Weddin Shire is limited to data collected by the Grenfell VIC and observations of VIC staff and accommodation operators. As discussed in Section 4.3, Weddin Shire is likely to be attracting around 20,000 to 25,000 domestic overnight visitors per year. The Shire is also attracting day visitors, a small number of international visitors and travellers passing through the Shire on route to other destinations.

Markets attracted to the Shire include:

Primary Markets

- Through traffic – travellers passing through the Shire on-route to other destinations.
- Touring travellers – primarily caravanners and RVs, 50+ years, with families during school holidays
- VFR – people visiting friends and relatives
- Event attendees
- Regional residents – most visiting the Shire as a day trip.
- Business and work-related travellers.

Special Interest and Activity-based Markets

- Bush walkers
- Campers
- Bird Watchers
- Cyclists / Mountain-bikers
- Car and motorcycle clubs and enthusiasts
- Go-karters
- Horse riders
- Family history researchers

In 2018/19, the Grenfell VIC collected data from 2,420 visitor groups⁸. Data collected included place of residence (origin); whether visitors were staying / planning to stay overnight in the Shire; the expected length of stay and accommodation used; and the questions asked / area of interest. 332 of the visitor groups were Shire residents. Most of the enquiries from Shire residents related to up-coming events and things to do and/or accommodation for visiting friends and relatives. Residents of Weddin Shire are excluded from the following data. The remaining 2088 travel parties coming into the VIC represented 4,009 visitors.



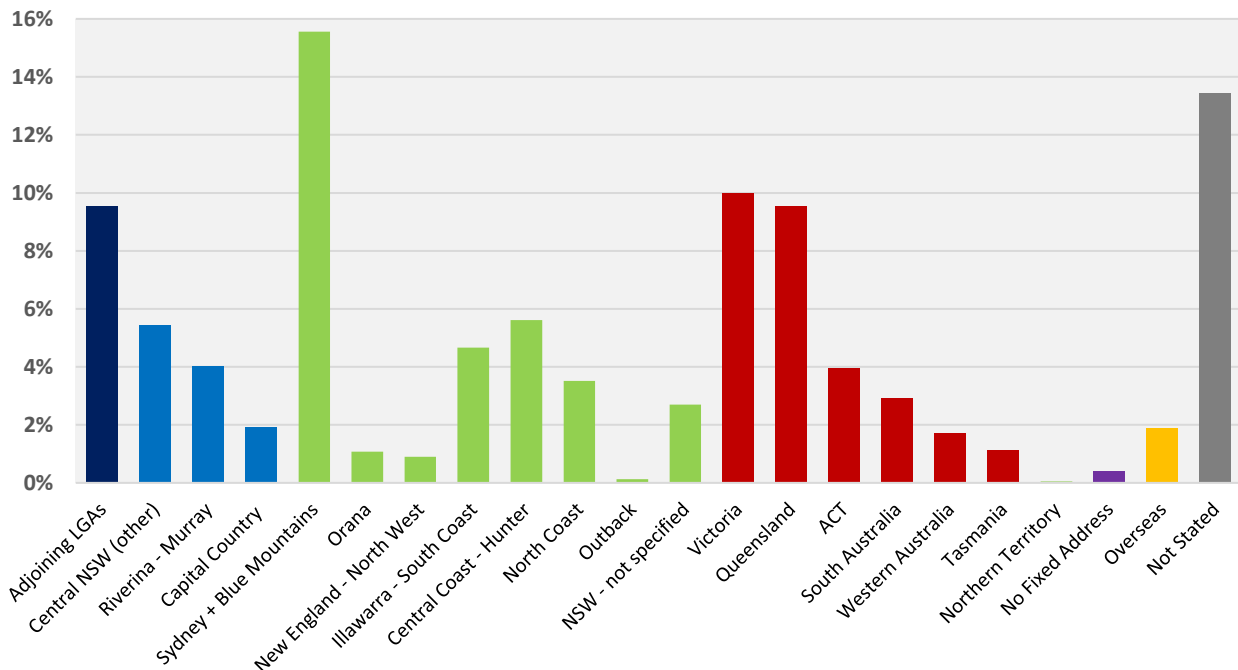
⁸ Not all visitors were prepared to provide information, and during busy periods (particularly during events) it was not possible for staff to collect data from all visitors.



Place of Residence (Origin) of Visitors

55.1% of visitors were from NSW, 29.3% from interstate, 0.4% had no fixed address and 1.9% of visitors were from overseas. The high proportion of interstate travellers reflects Weddin Shire's position on two major interstate routes (the Mid Western and Newell Highways).

Figure 4.14 Place of Residence (Origin) of Visitors to the Grenfell VIC, 2018-19



15.6% of visitors came from the Sydney-Blue Mountains area, 10% from Victoria and 9.6% from Queensland and 9.9% surrounding LGAs. *(The number of visitors to the Shire from surroundings LGAs is likely to be significantly higher than shown in these figures as regional residents have a far lower propensity to visit a VIC than travellers who are not familiar with the area).*

Of the 383 visitors from surrounding LGAs, 167 (43.6%) were from Hilltops LGA, with most visitors coming from Young (122) and Boorowa (31). 95 visitors came from Cowra Shire and 47 from Forbes Shire.

Visitors were recorded from all LGAs within the Central NSW region, with Orange (69 visitors), Bathurst (42), Parkes (34), Blayney (22) and Lithgow (20) being the main source of visitors. Within the Riverina – Murray Region, Weddin Shire primarily drew visitors from Wagga Wagga (39 visitors), the LGAs in the east of the region, and those along the Newell and Mid Western Highway corridors. To the east Weddin Shire is drawing from the ACT (158 visitors) more-so than from the LGAs in the Capital Country Region.

Other significant source markets for Weddin Shire are the NSW Central Coast (97 visitors), Newcastle (72 visitors) and Wollongong (52 visitors).

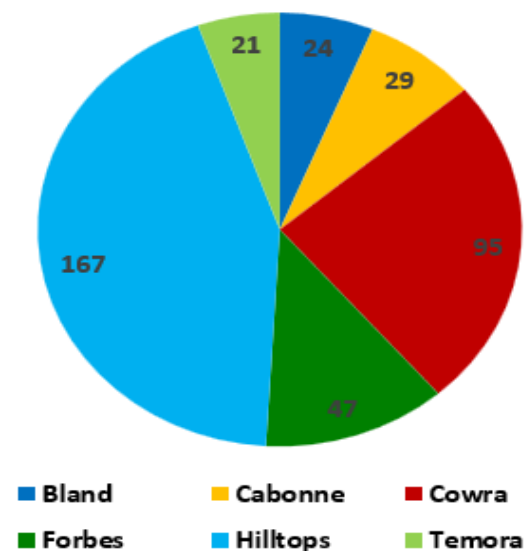


Figure 4.15 Visitors from Surrounding LGAs.



Type of Visit

VIC visitors were asked how long they are planning to spend in the Shire. 27.6% advised that they were staying one or more nights in the Shire, 32.8% were passing through the Shire and were on route to other localities and 9.4% were day visitors for which Weddin Shire was their primary destination. 30.2% were undecided about whether they were going to stay overnight in the Shire or continue their journey.

For visitors staying overnight, the average length of stay in the Shire was 1.93 nights.

The propensity to stay within the Shire increased with distance from the Shire. Visitors from surrounding LGAs had a low propensity to stay overnight, with those that were staying mainly visiting friends and relatives, attending a social function (eg wedding) or camping in the Weddin Mountains National Park. Visitors from the ACT and Capital Country Region had a higher propensity to stay overnight in the Shire than those from Central NSW and the Riverina Regions.

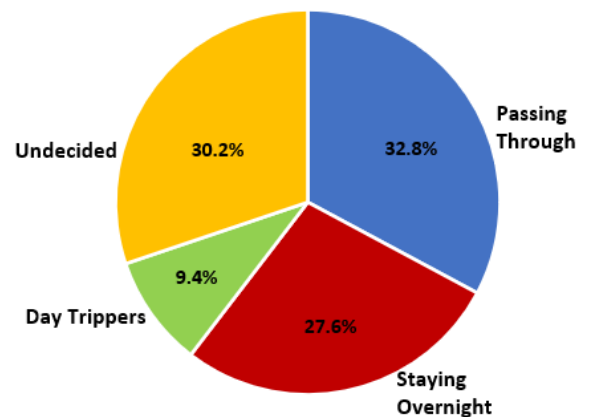
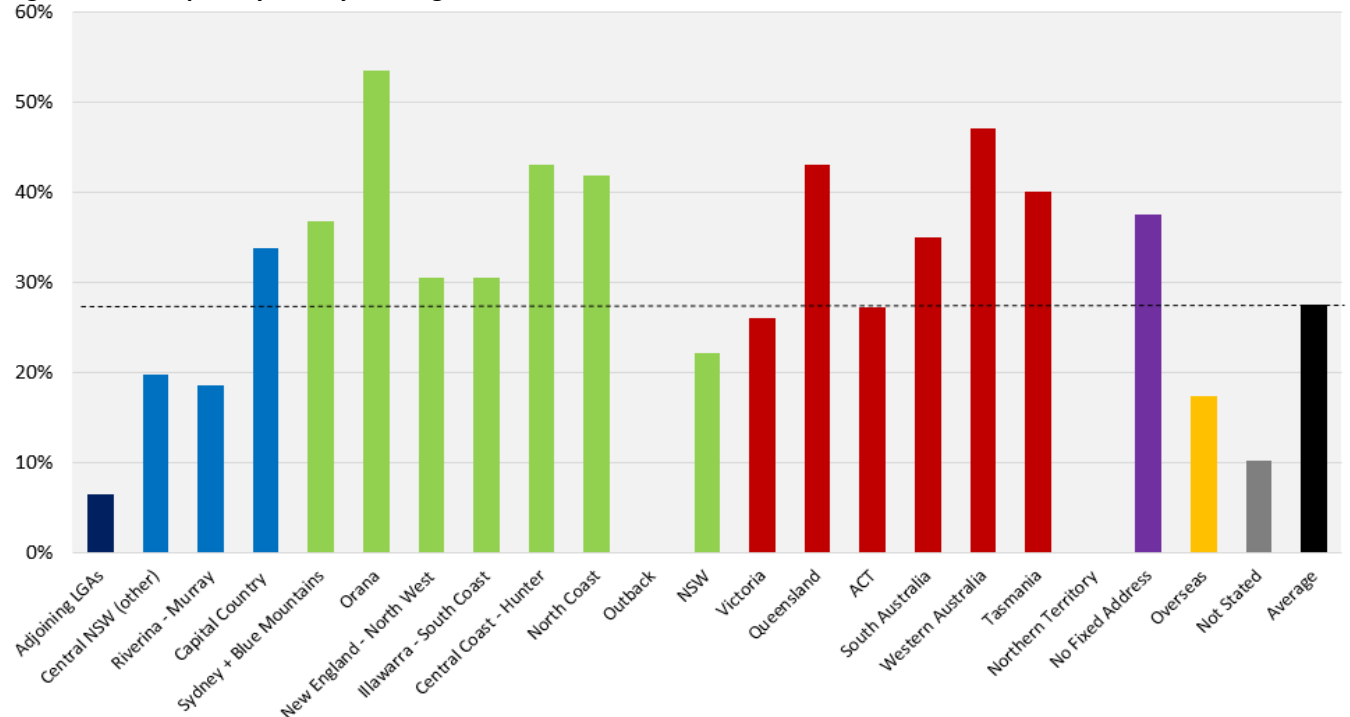


Figure 4.16 Type of Visit to Weddin Shire – Traveller Intentions

Figure 4.17 Propensity to Stay Overnight in Weddin Shire



Accommodation Used

576 visitor groups (1104 visitors) had or were planning to stay overnight in Weddin Shire, with these groups generating 1,111 room / site nights and 2,050 visitor nights for the Shire.

58.7% of visitor groups were caravanners / RVs or campers with these groups free camping (29.7% of total overnight groups), staying in the caravan park (17.5%) and/or in the Weddin Mountains National Park (11.5%). 15.8% of groups were staying with friends and relatives, 14.1% in the motel, 7.8% at B&Bs and 3.6% in a hotel. Groups staying with friends and relatives and in the caravan park had the longest lengths of stay, 2.48 and 2.11 nights respectively, with those staying in the motel having the shortest length of stay (1.36 nights).



Table 4.3 Accommodation Used by Visitors staying in Weddin Shire

Accommodation Used	Visitor Groups		Room / Site Nights		Visitor Nights		Av. Stay (Nights)
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Motel	81	14.1%	110	9.9%	176	8.6%	1.36
Hotel	21	3.6%	32	2.9%	52	2.5%	1.52
B&B	45	7.8%	74	6.7%	139	6.8%	1.64
VFR	91	15.8%	226	20.3%	439	21.4%	2.48
Caravan Park	101	17.5%	213	19.2%	405	19.8%	2.11
Free Camping	171	29.7%	332	29.9%	620	30.2%	1.94
Camping WMNP	66	11.5%	124	11.2%	219	10.7%	1.88
Total	576	100.0%	1111	100.0%	2050	100.0%	1.93

Figure 4.18 Average Length of Stay (Nights) by Type of Accommodation Used

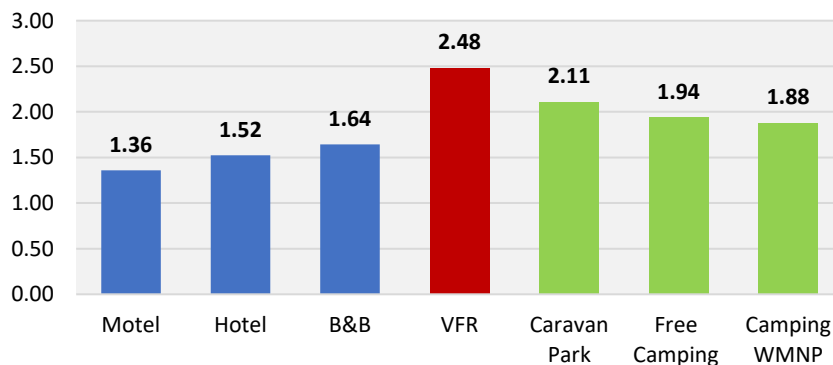
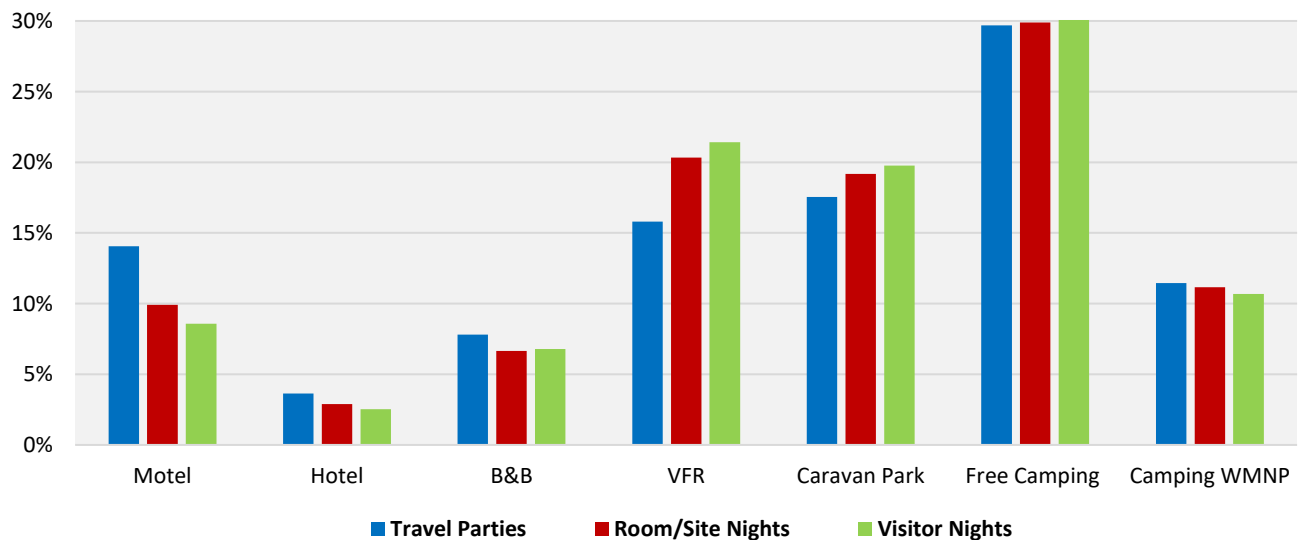


Figure 4.19 Share of Visitor Groups, Room/Site Nights and Visitor Nights by Accommodation Used



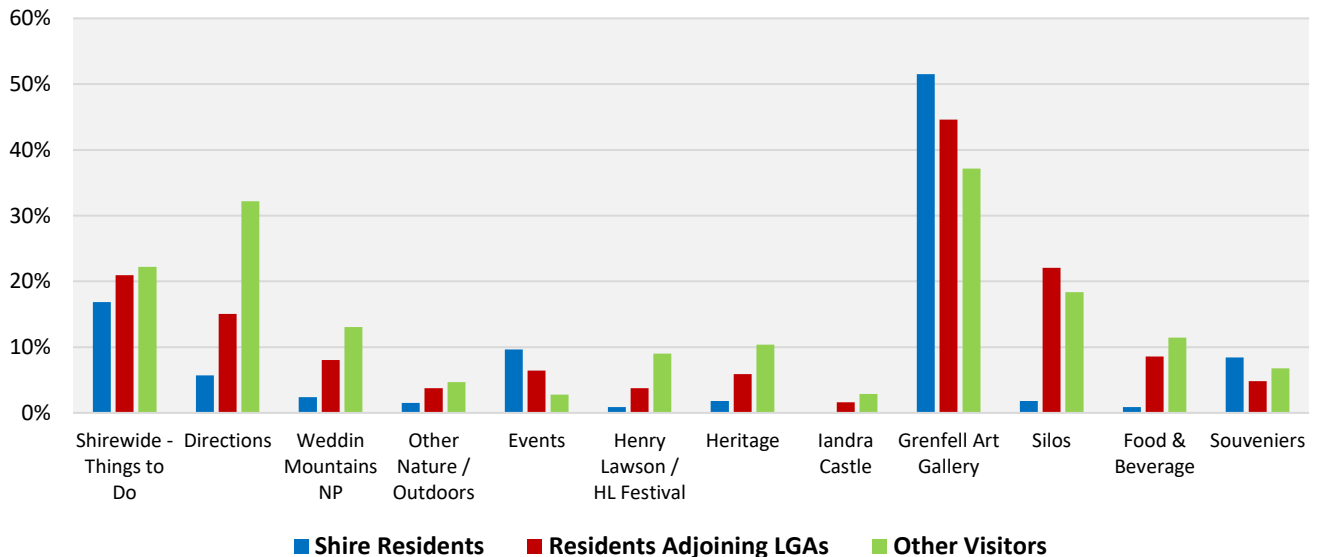
Information Sought

Data is collected on the information sought by visitors to the VIC. There was no data recorded for around 25% of the groups and information is not collected on accommodation enquires. There are also some issues with the way that the data is recorded by different staff (eg a visitor asking directions to the National Park may be recorded as asking directions, or Weddin Mountains National Park or both; questions relating to the Henry Lawson Festival may be recorded as events or Henry Lawson or both). As such the information should be regarded as indicative only. The co-location of the VIC and Grenfell Art Gallery also skews the results for the art gallery.



Broadly, residents of Weddin Shire seek information on things to do in the Shire, the art gallery exhibitions and events and are interested in local souvenirs for presents. Visitors from adjoining LGAs are also interested in the Gallery, and ask about things to do in the Shire, the silo art, Weddin Mountains National Park and eateries. Other visitors to the Shire were the most likely to ask about things to do in the Shire and for directions and were interested in the art gallery, silos, National Park, places to eat and heritage.

Figure 4.9 Information Sought by Visitors to the Grenfell VIC



Directions Forward: Target Markets and Market Development

Weddin Shire will focus on:

- Encouraging through traffic to stop and spend in Grenfell and the villages.
- Growing the touring caravan and RV market and encouraging these travellers to stay longer in the Shire.
- Building the regional market – encouraging residents and their visiting friends and relatives to take day trips and short breaks in Weddin Shire and to attend the Shire’s events.
- Building the group markets – targeting social groups (eg Probus clubs) and caravan and motorhome clubs and working with surrounding LGAs to grow the coach tour market.
- Building special interest and activity-based markets, focusing on:
 - Cycle tourism
 - Car and motorcycle clubs
 - Birdwatchers
 - Bushwalkers
 - Horse riders
- Growing the event market



5. MARKET TRENDS

Understanding, embracing and responding to changes in the marketplace is key to driving growth in the visitor economy in Weddin Shire. The development of tourism products, activities and experiences needs to be based on an understanding of the changing expectations of consumers, while information delivery and marketing and promotions needs to respond to changes in the way that consumers are sourcing information at all stages of the 'path to purchase' and during the journey itself.

Key trends include:

- Changing expectations
- Generational Change
- Growing international markets
- Changing / emerging technology

5.1 Changing Expectations

Over the past decade there has been a paradigm shift in consumer expectations, with consumers increasingly looking for a 'tourism experience'. Consumers have moved away from being 'spectators' passively consuming tourism product. Instead they are being driven by 'learning and interaction'. They want to learn, participate, and engage with local people and the places where they travel. They want to connect with people, lifestyle and environment; have stories of people and places that they can share with family and friends; and create lifelong memories.

Consumers are increasingly looking to:

- Experience something different from everyday life
- Understand and learn about different lifestyles and cultures
- Through participation, experience the lifestyle rather than just observe it
- Meet and interact socially with locals and other travellers – making friends and developing personal relationships
- Challenging themselves – physically, emotionally and/or mentally
- Visit authentic destinations that are not necessarily part of the tourist route
- Have exposure to unique and personally compelling experiences

5.2 Generational Change

The population is often described in terms of generations, with generational analysis providing an insight into the attitudes and behaviours of different age groups within society. Each generation has its own identity, attitudes and core values, with attitudes relating very strongly to the social, economic and technological conditions and events that occurred during the formative years. Research indicates that attitudes and core values do not change over time as the generations age.

There are currently five generational groupings⁹:

- Traditionalists or Builders – born pre-1946, and now aged 74+
- Baby Boomers – born between 1946 and 1964 and aged between 56 and 74
- Generation X – born between 1965 and 1979 and now aged between 41 and 55
- Generation Y – also known as the Millennials – born between 1980 and 1996 and now aged between 24 and 40
- Generation Z – (also known as post-Millennials, Gen Alpha and iGen) born after 1996.

⁹ Researchers tend to agree on the birth years for Traditionalists and Baby Boomers, with some debate on the 'cut-off' years for the later generations.



While Traditionalists have been a significant market for Inland NSW, this market is declining and will disappear within the next decade. Baby Boomers, Gen X and the Millennials will be the primary markets, with Baby Boomers approaching or in retirement; Gen X moving from family formation into having older children and/or becoming 'empty-nesters'; and Millennials becoming the largest generation in the workforce and moving into the family formation stage. Gen Z will also be emerging as a primary force in the travel market.

In Weddin Shire, the majority of long-haul touring travellers are Baby Boomers, with some Gen X family travellers during school holidays. The regional market incorporates all generations, with Baby Boomers dominating mid-week, and Gen X and Millennials on weekends and during school holidays. For the special interest and activity-based markets, the Baby Boomers dominate the bird watching, family history and car club markets. Bushwalking and cycling attract all generations. Key characteristics of Baby Boomers and Gen X are summarised below.

Baby Boomers¹⁰

The Baby Boomers market is at, or approaching, retirement age. The market has a strong sense of freedom and a desire to travel, with lifestyle being the focus. This market is being described as 'recycled back-packers'. It is healthy and active, with people involved in sport and recreation - cycling, jogging, swimming, golfing and visiting the gym. This market is seeking new places, different lifestyles, soft-adventure and new experiences. The most appealing experiences are nature and outdoors based (56%); touring by car – sightseeing (51%); relaxation, health and indulgence (43%); and food and wine (35%), with this market seeking out local produce and patronising restaurants and contemporary eateries.

In addition to being fit and active, this market is knowledgeable, sophisticated and demanding. Travellers are generally prepared to spend to achieve what they want. They are more interested in value for money than in the lowest price and have no hesitation in paying 'top dollar' for something that they really desire. They expect quality customer service and are intolerant of poor service. This market is also technologically capable and uses on-line sources to research and book travel.

Trends in this market include:

- Increasing demand for soft adventure and recreational activities – seeking a variety of activities and experiences on each trip.
- Growth in the number of 'learning' visitors – wanting to come away with new knowledge and/or skills.
- Recognition that the journey is part of the experience.
- 'Slow movement' – travel slowly and immersion in the locale.
- A desire to feel like a local – to be welcomed by locals and treated like a visiting friend rather than a tourist.
- The freedom to interact - the ability to strike up a conversation and make themselves at home.
- Increase in solo travellers, particularly solo women.



- The product base in Weddin Shire is ideally suited to this market.
- This market is flexible: it has the time to stop and explore.
- There is a need to focus on developing and promoting activities that visitors can do within the Shire – walking, cycling, canoeing, workshops etc.
- The market is looking for quality customer service and opportunities to interact with locals.

¹⁰ Information in this section is taken from the DNSW Snapshots: Over 55s Travel; Drive Tourism and the Domestic



Gen X - Family Market

Generation X refers to people born between 1965 and 1979 and now aged 41 to 55 years. This generation has grown up in a period of relative prosperity, with technology and access to information. Generation X is better educated than previous generations, more internationally aware in their knowledge and outlook, and more critically attuned in their thinking.

Generation X is starting to reach the height of their careers and moving into the wealth accumulation stage. X'ers have embraced inner city and higher density living, tending to prefer lifestyle locations within the city, the areas with the restaurant precincts and trendy shops. They are also a market for 'sea change' and 'tree change' lifestyle locations. Generation X is far more health conscious than previous generations. Going to the gym, team sports or individual physical activity (jogging, cycling, swimming) is generally part of the weekly routine.

Socially, Xers tend to have a large circle of acquaintances. They enjoy getting together and dining out. It is a generation that goes away together as informal social groups, for short breaks and long weekends, with 'activity-based', 'pampering / luxury' and 'stress release / escape' breaks are popular being popular.

Work-life balance is a priority with Xers. Research undertaken by TNS Australia, found that domestic travel fulfils a key role in busy family lives by offering a chance for families to reconnect, recharge and have a break from normal routine. A domestic holiday is often a weekend or short break (2 to 4 days) that enables families to relax and open lines of communication between adults and children without time pressures.

'Nostalgia' is also a motivator of travel, with parents wanting their children to experience the holidays that they experienced as a child. Nostalgia often underlays the family 'road trip' with road trips perceived as providing a perfect opportunity for families to bond as a family unit. In selecting destinations, key considerations are localities that are relatively close to home (few hours travel) and are 'relaxed' and 'easy', in attractive surroundings.

Trends in this market include:

- Multi-generational travel and travel with groups of families.
- A focus on experiences – outdoor and adventure, cultural, dining.
- Digital detox – putting aside or limiting use of digital devices / screens, and looking to 'bond' as a family or with friends.
- Food is a core part of the experience – shopping at farmers markets, farm gated and local provedores; 'pick/catch - your-own' activities; dining out; campfire / BBQ cooking.
- Interest in camping (often with camper trailers).
- Nostalgic road trips.



The outdoor products in Weddin Shire are ideal for the family market. The environment offers the opportunity for families to 'reconnect'. Many families aspire to escape from everyday living, to be outdoors in a beautiful setting, get back to nature and a simpler lifestyle, and do 'fun' things together. Weddin Shire is ideally located to draw the family market from surrounding regional towns and cities.

The Shire's B&Bs and the Bland Hotel, coupled with the opportunity to cycle and bushwalk, are also ideal for couples and small social groups looking for weekend break.



Figure 5.1 Families enjoying the Caragabal Sheep Races (left) and Seaton's Farm (right)



5.3 International Markets

Growing global populations and the rise and expansion of the middle-class in second and third world countries, coupled with expansion in airline routes and a reduction in airfares, is resulting in strong growth in international travel.

Pre the Covid 19 pandemic, Tourism Research Australia was forecasting that over the next 10 years, international visitation to Australia would grow by 5.8% per annum, with the number of nights spent by international visitors to NSW and to regional areas within NSW forecast to grow by 5.9% and 5.4% per annum, respectively.

In recent years, China has been Australia's primary inbound market, with the Chinese market forecast to grow by 13.6% per annum over the next decade. Other primary markets for Australia are also forecast to grow – New Zealand (3.1% pa), United States (6.1% pa), United Kingdom (2.9% pa), Japan (4.2% pa), India (9.8% pa) and Malaysia (5.3% pa). While Sydney and other capital cities are likely to remain the primary destinations, the cities do not have the capacity to cater for the forecast growth. Regional dispersal strategies are being formulated and implemented as part of the initiatives to accommodate growth.

DNSW has a strong focus on encouraging and supporting operators in regional areas to become 'export-ready'. They are also endeavouring to encourage regional dispersal through product development and packaging and building the regional conference / business events market and regional events.

With international flights now coming into Canberra, both the Southern NSW and Riverina Regions are looking to target international visitors, with the Destination Networks and DNSW working with selected operators to become 'export ready'. There is currently no export-ready products or experiences in Weddin Shire. Grenfell Hall may have potential for the international market.

5.4 Changing Technology

New technology is changing the tourism industry. Digital technology can be capitalised on for information delivery, communication and marketing and promotion and for enhancing the visitor experience. It also enables growth in the 'shared economy' and provides opportunities for new activities and businesses. Changing technology also requires an investment in infrastructure. Opportunities include:

- Information delivery, marketing and promotion: Digital technology has and is continuing to change the way in which consumers access and share information, select destinations and products, and book and pay for travel. Travellers now have access to an exponentially increasing range of information sources through an expanding number of touch points:
 - Tourism, travel and product websites and travel directories– information and bookings.
 - Google Maps and Google Earth – maps, satellite images, photographic images, routes, directions, distances and travelling times.
 - Trip Itinerary planning programs.
 - Pod casts and applications (eg sound trails, geo-caching) - which can be down-loaded onto MP3 players, smart phones and other hand-held digital devices
 - User generated content (blogs, You Tube, Instagram) both on websites and through the networking sites,
 - Social networking sites such as Facebook, Myspace, Bebo, Twitter etc.
 - Travel specific networking sites – such as Trip Advisor, Google Review, Virtual Tourist, Lonely Planet Thorn Tree. These sites not only advertise destinations, accommodation, attractions, tours, events etc, they also provide forums where travellers can discuss their experiences – providing a digital word-of-mouth referral system

Allied to this is the ability to capture and process data which can be used for personalised, direct marketing of tailored experiences and the application of artificial intelligence – including use of website chatbots and biometrics.

- Capturing the sale and value-adding: the ability to book instantaneously on-line as well as seamless connectivity between products.

- Story telling: the use of virtual and augmented reality to promote destinations visually and through 'story-telling'; enabling 'virtual' access to remote and/or highly sensitive areas; and enhancing visitor experiences by adding additional 'layers' of information.
- The rise in the share economy: home sharing (eg Airbnb, Couch Surfing), farm camping (eg You Camp, Under the Stars), ride sourcing (eg Uber, Go Get), tours (eg Airbnb tours by locals) and more recently dining options – dine with a local.
- Changes in building materials and technologies: to create different accommodation experiences (eg bubble tents, tiny houses) and the ability to go 'off grid' enabling accommodation to be located in remote and/or environmentally sensitive locations and relocated quickly (eg during flooding, bushfires) if needed.
- Introduction of electric cars: Creating the need for charging stations. Over the next decade, the number of electric vehicles in Australia is forecast to grow at 28% per annum and reach 20% of new car sales by 2030¹¹.
- Electric bikes: Increasing access to cycle tourism (particularly for older people) and providing opportunities for cycle hire and cycle tours.

Figure 5.2 Electric Cycle Hire at the Southern Highlands VIC (top left); Electric Vehicle Charging Station at Oberon VIC (top right); Use of QR codes for information delivery and enhancing interpretation (bottom left); 'Off the grid' visitor accommodation (bottom centre); Use of virtual reality to bring historic sites 'to life' (bottom right)



¹¹ ENERGEIA (2018) Australian Electric Vehicle Study



Product
Development



6. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Overview

The attraction and activity base and the experiences provided form the backbone of the visitor economy. Attractions and activities have a major influence on trip behaviour, providing a reason to visit the Shire, and/or encouraging visitors to move around within the Shire, stay longer and spend money. Improving and diversifying the product and activity base of the Shire is critical to growing visitation and extending the length of stay in the Shire.

In Weddin Shire, two of its three high profile attractions are located out of town, drawing visitors away from Grenfell and not necessarily delivering benefits to the nearby villages.

To date, the approach to the development of the attractions and activities within Grenfell has been relatively ad hoc, often driven by an idea or an interest group and dependent on volunteers to develop, maintain and/or operate. Funding and/or resources have often been secured for capital works and/or for production of information and promotional collateral. Leveraging or value-adding to the initial investment has generally not occurred and over-time volunteer input has decreased and/or enthusiasm waned with funds and resources not available to maintain the assets. Council has not had the resources to take on some of the projects that have been started.

Currently a visitor can 'see' Grenfell in less than half a day – a walk down the main street and a quick look around the art gallery and/or Chrysler Museum; driving up to O'Brien's Hill and 15-20 minute walk; drive to Henry Lawson's birthplace and a 5-10 minute stop; a look at the silo art – another 5 minutes; and then possibly a visit to the Museum, Patina Gallery and/or Wallangreen Sculpture Garden – if they are open and/or it can be arranged by the VIC – and then it is time to move on.

6.2 Directions Forward

The keys to growing the visitor economy in Weddin Shire are to:

- Positioning Weddin Shire as a day trip / shorts breaks destination for the surrounding region.
- Continuing to grow the caravan and RV markets with a priority being to extend the length of stay of these visitors. The free camping at the Railway precinct and the Grenfell silos are bringing these visitors into town – the challenge lies in encouraging them to stay longer. This means getting them out of their rigs – providing places for them to walk to; opportunities to use their bicycles and/or canoes; and opportunities to participate in activities locally (eg pole walking, arts workshops).
- Building special interest and activity-based markets – visitors who come to Weddin Shire to 'do'. This includes individuals and groups (eg bushwalkers, bird watchers, cyclists, car clubs).

This can be achieved by:

- Improving the visitor facilities available and presentation of Grenfell and the villages.
- Increasing the focus on outdoor and nature-based activities – Weddin Shire has some great assets that can be leveraged to attract independent travellers, clubs and groups, and events.
- Enhancing, strengthening and consolidating attractions and activities that are already in place, clustering / linking, leveraging and value-adding were possible – building on the Shires heritage, arts and garden themes and integrating them with outdoor activities.
- Working with adjoining LGAs to leverage assets to grow visitation.

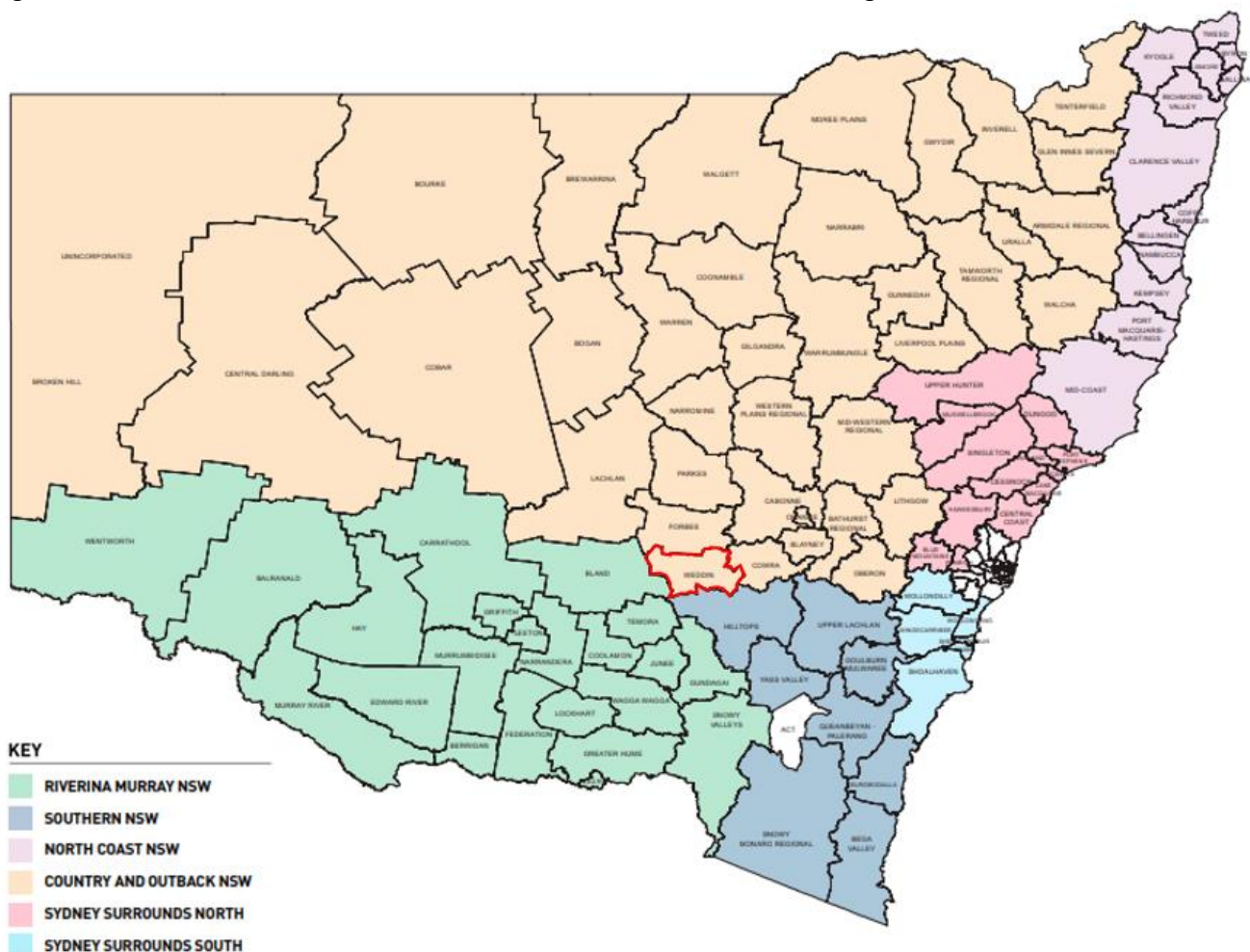
7. REGIONAL CONTEXT AND OPPORTUNITIES

7.1 Destination Networks

For destination development, regional NSW is divided into six Destination Network regions, with each region implementing a Destination Management Plan. These Plans identify key target markets and set the priorities and directions for product and infrastructure development.

Weddin is part of the Central West sub-region of the Country and Outback Destination Network. The Shire shares boundaries with LGAs from the Eastern Riverina sub-region of the Riverina Murray Destination Network and the Tablelands sub-region of the Southern NSW Destination Network.

Figure 7.1 Location of Weddin Shire in the context of the Destination Network Regions



The primary product development themes and the key target markets for each of the Destination Networks are summarised in Table 7.1.

Nature-outdoors, touring routes and food-wine-agri tourism are common product development themes across the three Destination Network regions. Country and Outback are also focusing on Aboriginal and European heritage, fossils, storytelling and the night sky. Riverina Murray (Eastern Riverina) and Southern NSW (Tablelands) have a strong focus on art, with the Riverina Murray Region also focusing on its rivers and waterways, sports tourism and festivals and events.

The touring market, event attendees and short breaks are the primary market segments for each of the Destination Networks. The Riverina Murray and Southern NSW are targeting the ACT as a significant market for day tripper, short



breaks and event attendees. The introduction of international air services into Canberra and the growing number of international students studying in Canberra and Wagga Wagga are identified as opportunities to grow the international market within the Southern NSW and Riverina Murray regions.

Table 7.1 Product Development Priorities and Target Markets – Destination Networks

Priorities	Country and Outback	Riverina Murray	Southern NSW
Key Product Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrating Culture on Country • Wine Lovers and Foodie Finds • Unlimited horizons: drive journeys, night sky • Exploring Our Nature • Revealing our Heritage • Little Places Big Stories • Conferences and Events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major Centre Development • Nature-Based Tourism • Rivers and Waterways • Food and Agritourism • Major Touring Routes • Sport and Recreation • Festivals and Events <p>Eastern Riverina Sub-Region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food, produce, agri tourism • Art – galleries, installations, events • Attracting sporting events • Activating / re-using heritage assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savour the South – produce, dining • Remarkable journeys • Nature and adventure • Heritage <p>Tablelands Sub-Region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme of People Place and Produce: hero experiences of premium produce and agritourism, connecting with the people - their produce, art, creative works and stories.
Target Markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touring, with the focus on 55+ years • Visiting friends and relatives • Event participants • Nature and cultural visitors • Short breaks (food and wine driven) <p>New Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active families • Younger adults • More active 55+ years • Conference and meeting markets • International visitors – focusing on nature, cultural and food and wine. 	<p>Eastern Riverina Sub-Region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortbreaks out of Canberra and Albury • Grey nomads • Event Attendees <p>New targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International • Millennials 	<p>Tablelands Sub-Region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short breaks – 20-40 years / affluent - regional • Wanderers – 45+ - touring • Families – primary school aged children • Events attendee • International – Chinese and Indian

The product development projects identified in the DMPs that potentially have implications for Weddin Shire include:

- Building cycle-based tourism. One of the core themes of the Southern NSW DMP is 'Ride the South' which advocates strongly for the development of rail trails, including a trail from Galong to Boorowa, and to further develop the mountain bike (MTB) infrastructure on the South Coast and Snowy Mountains Region. The Riverina Murray DMP identifies the opportunity to build on the strong interest in mountain-biking (MTB) within the Region and recognises the potential of the proposed cycling precinct in Wagga Wagga which will include MTB trails. Within the broader region, mountain biking is concentrated in Wagga Wagga, the Snowy Mountains, the ACT and the Orange area. Location-wise, there are limited opportunities to ride in the area between Orange and Wagga, a 'gap' that could potentially be filled by Weddin Shire.
- Improving facilities to grow equine tourism, including establishing a large equine precinct in Wagga and upgrading the West Wyalong Showground to better cater for horse events. While these facilities will grow the equine events market within the region, the venues will compete with the Grenfell Showground to attract equine events.
- Place-making – improving the presentation of towns and villages through main street programs, landscaping, town centre activation and public art. To remain competitive, improving the presentation of Grenfell and the villages needs to be a priority for Weddin Shire.



7.2 Central NSW

The focus for product development in the Central NSW DMP is on three key hero experiences:

- **Culinary and agritourism tourism:** ‘Authentic farm to plate experiences – From a simple on farm experience to gastronomic delights of long lunches and food and wine festivals, the region offers visitors an opportunity to unearth a feast of food, wine, cider, beer, spirits and farm gate experiences that connect with our people, place and produce and appeal to a wide variety of markets.’
- **Nature and magnificent landscapes in abundance:** ‘From national parks and waterways, beautiful parks and gardens that transform with each of the four seasons; sculptured agricultural landscapes, big night skies and breathtaking sunrises, the region offers wide open spaces and extraordinary experiences to explore the heavens and earth.’
- **Rich culture and heritage:** ‘From ancient aboriginal cultures, gold miners and bush rangers to legendary sporting events, pop culture, artists and architecture, the region has an abundance of stories to tell and experiences to share that reflect the rich culture of the community past and present.’

The DMP identifies opportunities for joint investment in strategies to further develop and market these products.

The experiences offered by Weddin Shire primarily align with the nature-landscapes and culture-heritage themes.

7.3 Surrounding LGAs

Weddin Shire is highly dependent on the travellers attracted to, and moving through surrounding LGAs, with every traveller attracted to the area being a potential visitor for the Shire. In addition, residents of the surrounding LGAs and their visiting friends and relatives (VFR) are potential day trip, short-break and event attendee visitors for Weddin Shire.

Strategically, Weddin Shire needs to focus on:

- Forging strong relationships and alliances with surrounding LGAs.
- Featuring attractions that are ‘unique’ to differentiate itself from surrounding LGAs and create a reason to visit.
- Areas where the Shire has synergies with surrounding LGAs which, by working together, can be leveraged to target and grow specific market segments.
- Raising the Shire’s profile regionally – targeting regional residents and their visiting friends and relatives.

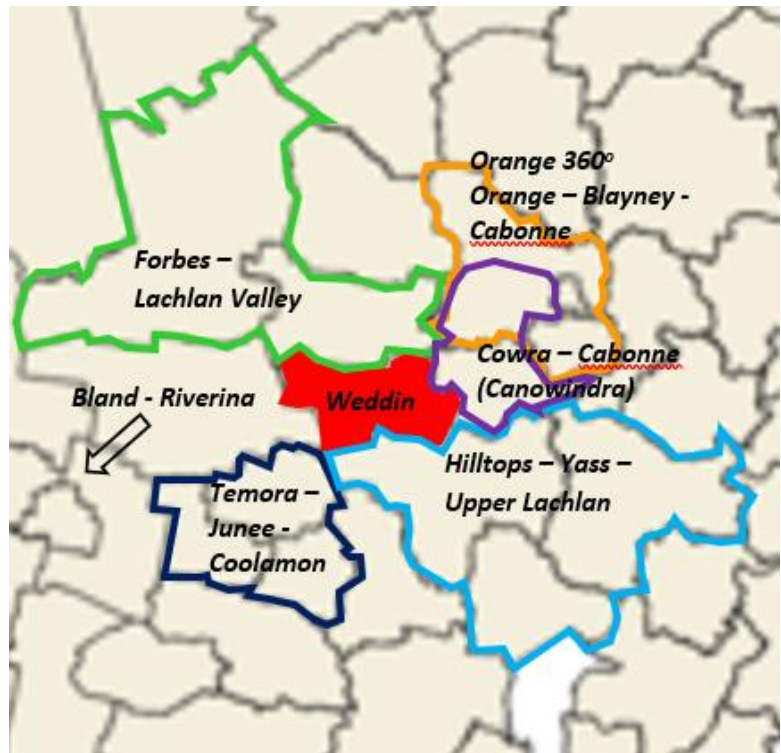
7.3.1 Networks and Alliances

With the dissolution of the Regional Tourism Organisations, the formation of the much larger Destination Network Regions and the focus on the development of quality products and experiences at the State and Federal level, it has become increasingly necessary for LGAs to work together to create products and experiences of sufficient quality and depth to gain traction in the market place. While the Central NSW Joint Organisation of Council’s is providing a platform for cooperative marketing of Central NSW, individual Councils have entered into product development and marketing alliances at a sub-regional level with alliances being:



- Cowra: working with Cabonne Shire and has 'annexed' Canowindra as part of the Cowra product base.
- Hilltops: working with Yass and Upper Lachlan Shires to take product into the Canberra market.
- Cabonne Shire: working with Orange and Blayney LGAs under the banner Orange 360° and with Cowra for Canowindra.
- Forbes: working with Lachlan Shire - 'Somewhere down the Lachlan' themes. Forbes is also part of the Newell Highway marketing group.
- Bland: part of the Newell Highway marketing group and Riverina Arts Trail, and is seeking to work more closely with adjoining Riverina Councils.
- Temora: working closely with Junee and Coolamon Shires to develop a range of products and activities under the 'Canola Trail' banner.

Figure 7.2 LGA Sub-Regional Alliances for Product Development and Marketing



7.3.2 Positioning / Market Awareness

The attractions and higher profile events in the LGAs surrounding Weddin Shire are summarised in Table 7.2. Within the surrounding region, Cowra, Young, Temora, Canowindra and Forbes have good recognition in the marketplace and a high level of awareness of the town and/or their main attractions:

- Cowra: WWII Japanese connection – Japanese gardens / Wyangala Dam
- Young: Cherries and the Hilltops wine district
- Temora: Aviation Museum and Warbirds Downunder Air Show
- Canowindra: Hot air ballooning and Age of Fishes Museum
- Forbes: A very RV friendly town with grand old buildings and Lake Forbes, as well as growing recognition of the 'Somewhere down the Lachlan' sculpture trail.

7.3.3 Core Product Themes

The core product themes in the LGAs surrounding Weddin Shire are:

- Heritage
- Natural areas – nature and outdoors – National Parks, State Forests, Crown Reserves, rivers and waterways.
- Food, wine, local produce and agri-tourism
- Scenic drives / touring routes
- Arts
- Festivals and events



Heritage

Heritage is a core theme for each sub-region. The LGAs have historic towns and villages and promote their historic main streets as key attractions. The LGAs all have as common themes colonial, pastoral, gold and bushrangers and each has a local history museum.

There has been considerable investment in the presentation of the larger town centres, with the restoration of heritage buildings, revamping public areas, art installations, interpretation and quality landscaping. In promoting their historic town centres, some of the LGAs are focusing on their heritage buildings and precincts as attractive 'settings' for vibrant retail, arts and dining activities while others, including Weddin Shire are less dynamic in their approach and 'invite' travellers to look at their 'intact' main streets, with these providing a 'glimpse of the past'.

Each of the LGAs have some heritage dating from the gold rushes in the 1800s. A 'Gold Trail' was established to link the gold attractions and sites within Central NSW and the Riverina area, tell the 'gold' and 'bushranger stories' and encourage travellers to explore. While the Trail has lost traction, its website is still available for travellers interested in the gold story. Within the Weddin sub-region, Young has the strongest 'gold offering' with the product including the Lambing Flat and Blackguard Gully Precincts. Young also capitalises on the Chinese connection through the Chinese Tribute Gardens and the Chinese Festival. Hilltops Council is significantly upgrading the Blackguard Gully Precinct, positioning it to become a higher profile attraction and activity node.

Forbes and Cabonne Shires have a concentration of bushranger sites and exhibits, with Forbes 'claiming' Ben Hall. Cowra has focused on its World War 2 heritage to create a strong point of difference, with its heritage sites brought to life through quality presentation and interpretation (including a hologram) and themed walks. Temora Shire has focused on its aviation heritage as its point of difference.

The sub-region also has a cluster of historic motor vehicle collections – McFeeters Museum in Forbes, the Chrysler Museum in Grenfell, the Quandialla motoring memorabilia collection, the fire engine and ambulance collections at the Bundawarra Centre in Temora, the Gasworks Garage (Ford collection) at Junee and the Vintage Vehicle Club Monthly Open Days in Cowra, as well as events that attract motoring enthusiasts – the Forbes Motor Show, Temora Rod Run and Swap Meets in Bland, Junee and Hilltops Shires.

Weddin Shire has strongly featured its heritage in the marketing and promotion of the Shire, with Grenfell promoted under the banner 'Heritage – History – Henry'.

Although the Shire has focused on being the 'birthplace of Henry Lawson' and the heritage of the Grenfell town centre, these products appear to have limited traction in the marketplace. They are 'local' attractions more-so than providing a reason to visit the Shire.

Council has plans to improve the presentation of the town centre, which may help to make it more competitive with the town centres in the surrounding LGAs. There may also be opportunity to 'activate' the town centre by using technology to tell its 'stories'. The marketing and promotion of Grenfell also needs to change, with the focus on the lifestyle and retail features of the centre with the buildings providing the 'setting'.

The Shire's unique heritage attractions are Landra Castle and Seaton's Farm. Both have 'strength' to draw travellers into the Shire and need to be featured prominently in the marketing and promotion of the Shire.

The O'Brien's Hill Precinct is part of the 'gold' story and has the potential to become a higher profile attraction within the Region. This would require repairing and expanding the displays and interpretation and improving the overall presentation of the precinct (see Section 9.5). Ben Hall's Cave is part of the bushranger story and one of the attractions of the Weddin Mountains National Park. There may be opportunity to strengthen links with other bushranger sites within the region.

Grenfell's Chrysler Museum and the Quandialla motoring memorabilia collection provide opportunities for Weddin Shire to work with other LGAs with vintage and veteran car attractions and events to grow the motor enthusiasts (eg car clubs) markets.



National Parks, State Forests and Reserves

The sub-region is not well-endowed with or known for, its natural attractions. The Weddin Mountains National Park is the highest profile and most visited natural attraction in the region, with the Park promoted as an attraction by the surrounding LGAs.

There are a number of State Forests throughout the Region with the Back Yamma State Forest between Forbes and Eugowra being the highest profile and most visited forest. Back Yamma has a network of mountain-bike trails and hosts the annual 'Big Foot' Mountain Bike Event. Bland Shire promotes the State Forests in its Shire for gold fossicking and bird watching.

Weddin Shire has more National Parks and State Forests than the surrounding LGAs (see Chapters 9 and 10). The Weddin Mountains is a major attraction for both the Shire and surrounding region. The southern end of Conimbla National Park is also in the Shire, with the Bendick Murrell National Park in Hilltops Shire being on the Shire boundary and only 12 kilometres from Greenethorpe. Weddin Shire has 11 State Forests, all of which have prolific bird life and 4 of which have potential to be used for a range of activities and events including mountain-biking.

There is opportunity to increase the 'scale' of the offer by jointly promoting Weddin Mountains, Nangar, Conimbla and Bendick Murrell National Parks, encouraging travellers to detour off the Newell and Olympic Highways and 'channelling' them through Grenfell.

The Koorawatha Reserve and Waterfall (particularly when flowing) on the border of Cowra and Hilltops LGAs provide the opportunity to promote scenic drives from Grenfell, Cowra and Young that include Greenethorpe. There is also a waterfall in the Boginderra Hills Nature Reserve in Temora Shire. Temora Shire Council has been trying to negotiate access to this area, and if successful, could be leveraged by Weddin Shire as a day touring loop which includes Caragabal and Quandialla.

Food, Wine, Local Produce and Agri-tourism

Food, wine and agri-tourism are core product themes in Hilltops, Cowra and Cabonne Shires and in Orange to the north and the Riverina region to the south, with Temora moving into this market with the canola trail and the establishment of a micro-brewery. There is also micro-brewery and an aquaponics farm experience proposed in the Monteagle area (Hilltops LGA), close to the Rustic Maze and readily accessible from both Grenfell and Greenethorpe.

Food, wine and local produce is one of the key drivers of short breaks and day trips within the surrounding regions.

Although Weddin Shire is a significant food producer, there is virtually no value-adding locally, nor is local or regional produce featured on café and restaurant menus. While food, wine, local product and agritourism are not strengths of Weddin Shire there may be opportunities for the Shire to leverage this lucrative market by:

- Working with the pub hotels that 'do meals well' to promote these as part of a country-drive.
- Developing and promoting 'canola trails' and 'canola viewing areas' during the canola season, potentially linking with the trails promoted in Temora and Cowra Shires to draw travellers into Weddin Shire. There may be opportunity for one of the Hotels to install a micro-brewery or distillery, utilising local grain.
- Showcasing / selling local produce (eg honey) through the Grenfell VIC and showcasing production through the use of digital technology.
- Seeking publicity for quirky / quality operators such as 'Spannerman' coffee.
- Promoting businesses that use local and regional produce (eg Grenfell butcher) and those that sell direct (eg Weddin Farms) to travellers.
- Include a crop and harvest guide in the Visitor Guide and on the tourism website to 'educate' travellers



Scenic Drives / Touring Route / Trails

Each of the LGAs promote scenic drives and themed trails. Both Hilltops and Cowra Shires have touring routes that include landra Castle, with landra grouped with Koorawatha Nature Reserve and Falls. The Hilltops drive also includes Tout's Lookout which is located about 23 kilometres by road south of Greenethorpe. landra Castle is also included in a road cycle route from Cowra. Cowra promotes canola touring routes during the canola season, with the south-western routes sometimes including landra. To the south, Temora Shire is part of the Canola Trail which includes Temora, Junee and Coolamon Shires.

There is opportunity for Weddin Shire to work with adjoining LGAs to extend touring routes into and through Weddin Shire. While Hilltops promotes the Weddin Mountains National Park, the Park is not included in the Hilltops Nature and Outdoors Trail. There may be an opportunity to change this.

Establishing a roadside 'viewing area' with interpretation at landra Castle would improve both the viewing experience and safety for travellers wanting to stop and look (see Section 9.4). With 'something to see', both Cowra and Young VICs are more likely to promote the Castle year-round. The viewing area would also be a strategic location to provide an information directory on the attractions and facilities available in Weddin Shire, encouraging visitors to continue onto Greenethorpe, Grenfell and the Weddin Mountains National Park.

Formalising and promoting the walking trail to Mt Crowther in the Bendick Murrell National Park could also help to increase the outdoors product available along the Hilltops Nature and Outdoors Trail, with this then providing opportunities for Greenethorpe.

Canola trails are a seasonal attraction in Cowra, Hilltops and Temora Shires. Tout's Lookout is one of the locations that visitors gravitate to, to view the canola fields. If there are locations within Weddin Shire that offer great views of the canola (including great photo opportunities) these need to be identified and promoted.

The rail corridor between Grenfell and Greenethorpe passes through / has views of canola fields. If a rail trail is developed, there will be opportunities to leverage the canola as a seasonal feature of the route.

Arts

Art (including art installations, workshops and other activities) is playing an increasingly significant role in 'creating' visitor attractions and experiences within the Region. Silo art and sculpture trails have become attractions in their own right, generating publicity, raising awareness and drawing visitors into and through the sub-region. Art installations are being increasingly incorporated into streetscape plans and in parks and gardens as points of interest and photo opportunities. Arts-based attractions and activities are also forming part of food and wine and trail products and increasingly incorporated into festivals and events.

Within the region surrounding Weddin Shire, the Riverina Murray Destination Network has recently launched the Riverina Arts Trail. Forbes is gaining traction with its 'Somewhere down the Lachlan' sculpture trail and is building on this with the addition of 20 new sculptures in the next few years, further art installations in parks and gardens and around Lake Forbes and the establishment of a large arts and cultural centre which will include exhibition spaces and workshops. Bland Shire promotes the Weethalle silo art and is proposing painting the Wyalong Water tower with an Aboriginal theme. Hilltops Shire also has proposals for silo art in Harden – Murrumburrah, with Temora Shire Council looking to include art installations as part of the 'link' between its town centre and railway precinct. Eugowra is known as the mural town with this celebrated in the annual 'Most Wanted' mural festival. Each of the larger towns have public and commercial art galleries and art installations in their parks and gardens.

The Grenfell Silo Art has been very effective in drawing visitors into the Shire and generating publicity for the town. The proposal to paint the other side of the silos should be encouraged as this will generate another round of media coverage for the town. Painting the Greenethorpe Silos was identified as an opportunity by the Greenethorpe community, which would work well with landra, in drawing visitors into the eastern part of the Shire. There are also



silos at Wirega and Brundah in the Grenfell – Greenethorpe rail corridor. If the corridor is re-purposed as a rail trail, there may be opportunity to utilise these silos for art installations. Silo art is evolving (moving to 3D art, use of fluorescent paints and light projections) as localities look to differentiate their ‘offer’.

The Grenfell Art Gallery is gaining recognition regionally for the quality of its exhibitions. There is potential to build on this by working with local artists, the Patina Gallery and/or the Grenfell Artists Incorporated to run workshops and activities which can be promoted regionally.

There are also opportunities for inclusion of art installations in Grenfell and the villages (see Chapters 8 and 9).

The Henry Lawson Festival is an arts-festival and signature event for Weddin Shire. There may be potential to evolve this festival into a vibrant, contemporary arts event for the region.

Figure 7.3 The Grenfell Curtain – a permanent installation in the Grenfell Art Gallery



Festivals and Events

Festivals and events are a core part of the product base of the region and a significant driver of visitation. High profile events include:

- Henry Lawson Festival, Grenfell: 10,000 attendees
- Warbirds Downunder, Temora: 22,000 attendees
- Canowindra International Balloon Challenge / Balloon Glow: 10,000 attendees
- National Cherry Festival – Young: 10,000+ attendees
- Irish Wool Festival – Boorowa: 4,000+ attendees
- Sakura Matsuri Cherry Blossom Festival, Cowra: 3,500+ attendees
- Grazing down the Lachlan, Forbes

Each of the LGAs are actively growing their event programs, focusing on ‘refreshing’ and growing existing events that have the potential to increase visitation, and developing new events.

Most of the larger events book out the accommodation in the host towns providing the opportunity for accommodation properties in Weddin Shire to attract the overflow.



Table 7.2 Main Attractions and Events in the LGAs surrounding Weddin Shire

Attractions-Events	Cowra	Cabonne	Forbes	Bland	Temora	Hilltops
Towns & Villages – close to Weddin Shire	Cowra	Canowindra Eugowra	Forbes Gooloogong	West Wyalong	Temora	Young, Bribbaree, Koorawatha, Monteagle, Bendick Murrell
Marketing Alliances	Cowra-Cabonne Central NSW JO	Orange 360 – Orange, Blayney & Cabonne Shires Cabonne – Cowra Central NSW JO	Forbes – Lachlan Shire Newell Highway Central NSW JO	Newell Highway	Riverina Tourism Canola Trail	Canberra JO Yass – Crookwell – Hilltops Alliance
Positioning / Tag Lines		Discover the Riches – village marketing campaign	Amazing Forbes / Somewhere down the Lachlan	Find Hearts of Gold	Down to Earth: People, Planes and Produce	Young: National Cherry Capital
Anchor / High Profile Attractions	Japanese Garden and Cultural Centre Wyangala Dam	Age of Fishes Museum	Somewhere down the Lachlan Sculpture Trail		Temora Aviation Museum	Cherries Hilltops Wine Region
High Profile Events		Canowindra Balloon Challenge	Grazing down the Lachlan Frost and Fire Winter Solstice Festival		Warbirds Downunder V8 Superboats	National Cherry Festival Irish Wool Festival Boorowa
Natural Areas – National Parks, State Forests, Reserves	Conimbla National Park Bellevue Hill Nature Reserve Koorawatha Reserve / Koorawatha Falls ¹²	Eugowra: Nangar National Park Back Yamma State Forest	Kalari Wetlands – bird hide and trail	Wetlands Board Walk & Green Corridor	Ingalba Nature Reserve Pucawan Nature Reserve Big Bush Nature Reserve	Koorawatha Nature Reserve / Koorawatha Falls Bird trails Rift Valley / Tout Lookout
Waterways	Wyangala Dam Lachlan River Darby's Falls	Belubula River	Lake Forbes Lachlan River Forbes Wetlands and Gum Swamp Bird Hide Jemalong Weir Reserve	Barmedman Mineral Pool Lake Cowal / Conservation Centre	Lake Centenary	Murrumbidgee River Lachlan River
Touring Routes / Trails	Countryside Trail Canowindra Trail Cowra Rides - cycling	Gold Trail	Gold Trail	Riverina Food and Arts Trails Gold Trail	Canola Trail Riverina Arts Trail Gold Trail	Gold trail Nature & Outdoors Trail Antiques & heritage trail
Guided Tours	Canola Wine and Forage Attraction and History	Blind Freddy's Bushranger Rosnay Organics Farm Tours				Wine Tour
Heritage	<u>WW11 Legacy:</u> POW Hologram Theatre Prisoner of War Campsite Garrison Walk War Cemeteries	Canowindra: 19 th Century Main Street / Colonial History Ben Hall (Bushranger Tours)	Forbes: 19 th Century town centre Historic Graves Walk Forbes Heritage Trail	Historic main street True Blue Mining Poppet Head	Aviation history Heritage pub crawl Town walks Off the Rails Walking Tour	Heritage Walks Historic town centre Sportsman Walk of Fame Bushrangers Villages with gold history

¹² Koorawatha Nature Reserve extends into both Cowra and Hilltops LGA, with the Falls and creekline being the boundary between the two LGAs. Cowra Shire Council has management responsibility.



Attractions-Events	Cowra	Cabonne	Forbes	Bland	Temora	Hilltops
	Peace Bell Europa Park Cowra Heritage Walk	Historic Pubs Escort Rock – Eugowra Ben Hall / Frank Gardener Bush Rangers Gold Heritage				
Museums & Collectibles	Lachlan Valley Railway Heritage Centre Tony Mooney Collectibles	Age of Fishes Museum Canowindra Historical Museum The Blue Bowerbird Eugowra History Museum	Forbes History Museum Century of Federation Heritage Trail Ben Hall Experience Room – Forbes VIC Ben Hall’s Grave - Forbes	Wyalong Museum Wheatley’s Wares	Bundawarra Centre – local rural history + Willo’s Wiradjuri Keeping Place Temora Railway Museum Collectibles & Curios	Young Museum Lambing Flat Folk Museum Coronation Collectibles
Silo Art / Murals		Eugowra Murals	Wool Mural	Weethalle Silos		
Arts	Cowra Regional Gallery Aboriginal Murals Cowra Sculpture Park	The Ducks Back Studio Melissa Barber Galleries Riverbank Gallery	Somewhere down the Lachlan Sculpture Trail Albion Park Sculptures Platypus Gallery Wiradjuri Dreaming Centre	Hot Glass Gallery Splatter Gallery / Art Workshop Russell Drysdale Bronze Easel	Valentine Lawler Gallery Glass bead maker	Railway Station Art Gallery
Gardens	Cowra Rose Garden Japanese Gardens			Rose Garden	St Annes Open Garden	Chinese Tribute Garden
Vehicle related attractions and activities	Cowra Vintage Vehicle Club Monthly Open Days	Eugowra Murals and Car Show Weekend	McFeeter Motor Museum Forbes Motor Show	Swap Meet	Bundawarra Centre – largest collection of ambulances, large collection of fire engines	
Food, wine, produce, agri tourism	Farm to fork – local lamb and beef sold locally and featured in restaurants Cowra Wine Region - Cellar doors and eateries	Rosnay Organics – wines, olives, figs – farm gate and farm tours Cellar Doors Delice Coffee Taste Canowindra 100 Mile Dinner	Grazing down the Lachlan Aussie Biscuit Factory Gooloogong – lolly and gelato shop	Blue Mallee Eucalyptus Oil Whispering Pines – food organics	T Town Tennis pop-up café 3 food events	Cherry and stone fruit orchards – farm gate and ‘pick-your-own’ Olive Groves Cellar doors Distillery Poppa’s Fudge and Jam Factory Art of Espresso Numerous cafes featuring local product Hilltops Honey Country Brewer
Adventure		Ballooning			Gliding	
Other			Central West Livestock Exchange	Fossicking – State Forests		Gold fossicking 6 golf courses

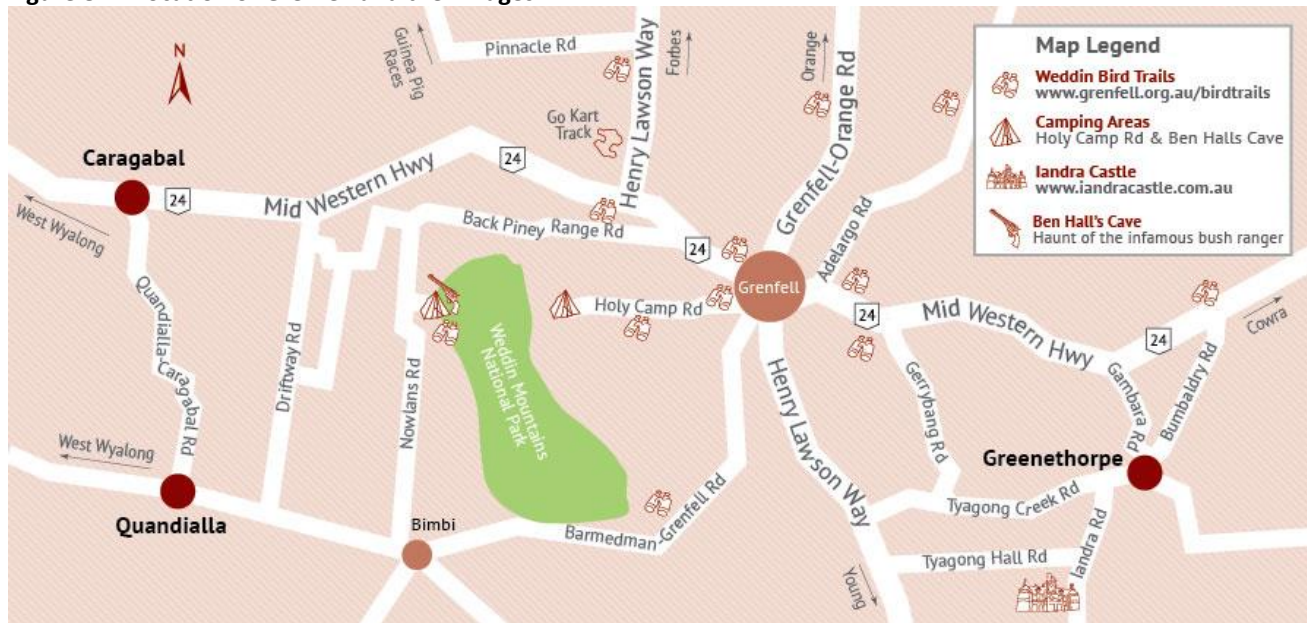


Attractions-Events	Cowra	Cabonne	Forbes	Bland	Temora	Hilltops
Events	<p>Cowra Cup</p> <p>Festival of International Understanding</p> <p>Wyangala Bonfire and Fireworks Spectacular</p> <p>Wine Show</p> <p>Breakout Anniversary</p> <p>Sakura Matsuri Cherry Blossom Festival</p> <p>Open Gardens Weekend</p> <p>Markets</p>	<p>Canowindra International Balloon Challenge</p> <p>Canowindra Show</p> <p>100 Mile Dinner</p> <p>Baroque Music Festival</p> <p>Artful 8 Art Show</p> <p>Moorbel Markets</p> <p>Eugowra Show</p> <p>Canola Cup</p> <p>Yeoval – Banjo Paterson Festival</p> <p><u>Sub-regionally - growing:</u></p> <p>Cabonne Food Festival</p> <p>Cabonne Wine Festival</p> <p>Winter Fire Festival</p>	<p>NSW Barefoot Ski</p> <p>Forbes Rodeo</p> <p>Camel Races</p> <p>Kalari – Lachlan River Arts Festival</p> <p>Country Music Festival</p> <p>Flatland Cycle Sportif</p> <p>Forbes Cup / Spring Races</p> <p>Small Winemakers Show</p> <p>Forbes Motor Show</p> <p>Running Festival</p> <p>Gone Fishing Day</p> <p>Baby Boomers Festival</p> <p>Sculpture Forbes</p> <p>Flatlands Hang Gliding</p>	<p>Harness Racing</p> <p>Yard Dog Championships</p> <p>Swap Meet</p> <p>WW Show</p> <p>WW Campdraft</p> <p>WW Rodeo</p> <p>Annual Trail Ride</p> <p>Mirrool Silo Kick Challenge</p> <p>Barmedman Tractor Pull</p> <p>In the West Festival</p>	<p>Multitude of small events (44) including:</p> <p>Aviation Showcases</p> <p>Bundawarra Open Day</p> <p>RAMS Triathlon</p> <p>7 aside Cricket Day</p> <p>Heritage Week Festival</p> <p>Temora Fisharama</p> <p>Miniatures art exhibition</p> <p>Weekend Rod Run</p> <p>Long Lunch</p> <p>Country Music Festival</p> <p>Freight Train Blues Festival</p> <p>Taste Riverina</p> <p>Mary Gilmore Cultural Festival</p> <p>Harness racing</p>	<p><u>Young:</u></p> <p>Lambing Flat Chinese Festival</p> <p>Cherry Chase Fun Run</p> <p>Young Show</p> <p>Hilltops Wine Show</p> <p>Cherry Blossom Long Lunch</p> <p>Picnic Races</p> <p>Markets</p>
Proposed new attractions, activities and infrastructure		<p>New motel</p> <p>Bicycle trails linking the villages</p> <p>Additional MTB tracks at Mt Canobolas</p>	<p>New VIC</p> <p>\$6.5M art gallery – exhibitions + workshops</p> <p>Gum Swamp – walking trails and bird hides</p> <p>Somewhere down the Lachlan – 20 additional sculptures</p> <p>Further improvements to and activation of Lake Forbes including art around the Lake and Aboriginal heritage interpretation – Rotary Dreaming Centre</p>	<p>Wyalong Water Tank Art – Aboriginal Theme</p> <p>Extending walking tracks – green corridor</p> <p>Drag Strip</p> <p>Upgrading Showground precinct for more horse and dog events</p>	<p>Micro-brewery</p> <p>Up-market accommodation</p> <p>1-2 large flight schools (200-400 students)</p> <p>Pub in the Paddock at Nurraburra</p> <p>Upgrading the railway precinct and developing a strong link to town and airport with shared cycle and walking trail, landscaping and public art</p>	<p><u>Precinct new landra:</u></p> <p>Brewery</p> <p>Aquaponics Farm</p> <p>Sustainable Living Farm</p> <p>Silo Art: Harden & Murrumburrah</p> <p>Rail Trail – Galong to Boorowa / Boorowa to Young</p> <p>Chinese Tribute Garden – significant upgrade</p> <p>Blackguard Gully – significant Gold and Chinese Heritage (riot) site. Heritage interpretation, boardwalks, bushwalks, educational facility, café and shared pathway along Creek to Young town centre</p>

8. GRENFELL AND THE VILLAGES

Centrally located within Weddin Shire, Grenfell is the main town and service centre for the Shire. There are also four small villages: Caragabal, Quandialla, Greenethorpe and Bimbi, each of which are located at the intersection of regional link roads.

Figure 8.1 Location of Grenfell and the Villages



8.1 Role of Towns and Villages

The towns and villages play a very significant role in the visitor economy, providing the services and infrastructure sought by visitors. They also have the potential to become stand-alone attractions.

Presentation and first impressions play a major role in the decision to stop in or visit a locality. If an area presents well and looks interesting, travellers will often decide to stop and have a quick look around. If the experience gained is positive, there is a likelihood of repeat visitation and/or travellers recommending the area to other travellers (word of mouth, blogs etc). Regular travellers along a route will often develop 'favourite' places to stop. In addition, interest stimulated while passing through an area can often lead to a future visit, with a traveller returning to explore the area.

From a visitor perspective, the key areas that make an impression are the gateway entry points, routes through the area, appearance and presentation of the town centres, villages and the parks and gardens. The presentation of businesses, particularly in the smaller centres, is also critical to encouraging travellers to stop, with businesses that present as clean and vibrant more likely to attract patronage than those that appear dated, tired and/or run down.

Presentation is also important for the local community, building pride and confidence in the area. Good presentation is also an attribute for people who are looking to relocate to and/or invest in the area, with tourism being a driver of the 'tree change' process.

The key attributes and services that visitors are generally looking for from towns and villages are:

- Modern, clean, safe public toilets – open 24 hours per day. Good public toilets are available in Grenfell and Quandialla and at the Memorial Hall in Greenethorpe (not highly visible). The public toilets in Caragabal are in poor condition and need to be refurbished or replaced and Greenethorpe needs toilets to service the playground and picnic area.



- Information on the town, surrounding region and route ahead – Map / Directory and/or a Visitor Information Centre. The information directories in Grenfell need to be replaced and directories need to be erected in the villages and in other key strategic locations (eg landra Castle)
- Good gateway, directional and facility signage, using international icons were possible.
- Attractive parks with picnic facilities – playgrounds are also important for the family market.
- A safe, clean environment
- Retail services and food and beverage outlets – limited eateries in Weddin Shire are a constraint.
- Retail services – ATM, newsagent, service station, Post Office, boutique / tourist shops etc.
- For the market towing caravans / trailers – a place to park their vehicle legally and safely close to services. Parking for long rigs is available in the Grenfell town centre and there are no parking issues in the villages.
- Mobile network and Wifi access.

8.2 Grenfell

Grenfell is a small, attractive country town. It is a district service centre and the focal point for business, shopping, services and visitation within Weddin Shire.

Grenfell is located on the Mid Western Highway approximately 40 minutes' drive from Cowra and 70 minutes from West Wyalong. For east-bound traffic (coming off the Newell), Grenfell is a 'natural' pit stop. For westbound traffic, Cowra is more likely to have attracted the pit-stop, with the propensity to stop in Grenfell considerably lower. The VIC data (see Section 4.4), indicates that Grenfell is a popular overnight stop for long haul travellers, particularly for the touring caravan and RV market.

When approaching Grenfell from the east and from the regional roads, the first impressions of the town are positive, the town centre is well signposted; public toilets are clean; it is easy to park; there are some lovely heritage buildings and attractive gardens and street trees. For caravans and long rigs, the ability to park in Forbes Street is an advantage. When approaching from the west (the direction from which travellers are more likely to stop) the impression is not as positive, with the view dominated by run-down buildings. Due to the road alignment, travellers are 'at' and then 'past' the western end of the town centre before they have a chance to make a decision to turn off the Highway. The presentation of and signage in this section of the entry corridor needs to be improved to encourage travellers to turn into the main street. Alternatively, they need to be given a second option to turn into Forbes Street.

Figure 8.2 The western approach to the town centre is not attractive





Grenfell's main claim to fame is that it is the 'Birthplace of Henry Lawson' with this leveraged through a bronze statue in the shopping centre (a photo opportunity for travellers), a Memorial park telling Lawson's story, and the annual Henry Lawson Festival which has been going for over 60 years.

The free camping in the Railway precinct and the Grenfell silo art are major attractions for the caravan and RV markets. Local attractions include O'Brien's Hill, the Art Gallery, Chrysler Museum and the Grenfell Museum. Grenfell Hall B&B also generates a lot of on-line coverage for the town.

The Grenfell town centre is a heritage precinct. The centre is anchored by an IGA supermarket and has a variety of independent retail businesses, including lifestyle, homeware and boutique shops, that appeal to visitors. Some of the shops present beautifully, while others are tired and dated. There are a limited number of food outlets, with the recent closure of the bakery shop further decreasing the options available. The vacancy rate in the shopping centre is increasing. A few of the buildings have been beautifully renovated while others are not well maintained. The combination of vacant buildings and buildings that have been converted to private residences has created 'dead spots' within the Centre. The landscaping within the Centre and at the roundabouts and intersections of Main Street and Forbes Street with the Mid Western Highway is not strategic, with no apparent theming or consistency.

Council is about to embark on the Grenfell Main Street Renewal project. The project will focus on addressing infrastructure and car parking issues, improving footpaths, updating street furniture and providing trees down the middle of the main street. Council is also considering erecting new gateway entry signs on the approaches to the town.

Table 8.1 Grenfell – Assets and Challenges

Strengths / Assets	Weaknesses / Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located on the Mid Western Highway and intersection of several regional feeder roads providing good exposure to passing travellers • Grenfell has an attractive setting. For travellers arriving from the east and on the regional roads, the first impressions of the town being positive – attractive historic buildings, clean, well maintained and safe. • Off highway main street – easy to park. • Railway precinct – free camping area within easy walking distance of the shopping centre. The town is RV friendly and has caravan and long rig parking within the town centre. • Good visitor facilities – accredited VIC, clean public toilets, attractive picnic areas. • Most of the services and facilities that visitors require are available. • Some quality lifestyle, homewares and boutique shops - Jan Parlett's Country Experience (when open); Spannerman – Quirky coffee outlet. • Grenfell silo art – attracting visitors to town • Local attractions with good potential • Gateway to the Weddin Mountains National Park. • Showground and racecourse – event venues • Quality B&Bs with Grenfell Hall having a high profile and strong on-line presence. • Four historic hotels • 'Raw' assets that can be developed to build visitation. • Proposed changes to the planning regulations to enable 'shop top' living. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor presentation when approaching the town centre from the west. • Railway precinct has developed on an ad-hoc basis and lacks a strong physical and visual link to the main street. • Increasing vacancy rate in the shopping centre. • Deteriorating condition of some of the historic buildings in the main street. • Strong perception amongst property and business owners that the heritage requirements are too strict, being both difficult and costly to comply with. • Businesses are struggling to remain viable, with this exacerbated by the drought. Some businesses area also struggling to adapt to the changing retail environment and to leverage on-line opportunities. • On-going delays with the Main Street renewal project resulting in the town being 'in limbo' and traders worried about the impact on their business during construction. • Lack of a strategic approach to landscaping throughout the town. • Very few businesses are open on Saturday afternoons and on Sundays and public holidays • Limited motel accommodation – the existing motel is tired and dated and out of character with the rest of the main street. • Undercapitalised / partially completed attractions (see Chapter 9). • Limited eateries, particularly contemporary cafes. • Dated / ineffective signage. • Restrictions imposed by RMS along the Highway corridor, particularly for signage.

Figures 8.3 and 8.4 While there are some well presented buildings in Main Street (top) others need a revamp (below)



8.2.1 Product Development Opportunities

Product development in Grenfell needs to focus on place-making, improving local attractions and changing and growing business and marketing skills. Opportunities to improve and/or capitalise more effectively on local attractions are addressed in Chapter 9.

Town Centre

The Main Street Renewal Program focuses on the shopping centre and only applies to Main Street and a very small section of Forbes Street. Additional stages are needed to address:

- The entry points to the town centre – the intersections of Main Street with the Mid Western Highway, the section of the Mid Highway between Alexandra and Main Street, and the Forbes Street corridor from the Mid Western Highway to Melyra Street.
- George Street – maintaining and activating this precinct.
- Establishing a strong physical and visual link between the town centre and the Railway precinct, to encouraging travellers staying in the railway station free camp area to venture into Main Street.

Improving the public domain is only part of the equation to revitalising the town centre. Property owners need to be encouraged to upgrade their building facades, while business owners may need to revamp their signage and their merchandise displays. On-street trading needs to be encouraged to activate the footpath, which will encourage visitors to stop, get out of their cars and walk the main street.

Figure 8.5 Activating the footpath attracts attention and encourages visitors to explore





Revitalising the town centre also provides the opportunity to review how the town centre is positioned and marketed, particularly to the regional community. The construction program is likely to attract negative media coverage. To counteract this, consideration needs to be given to an 'opening' event / promotion (eg a long lunch in the main street, a fair, temporary art installation etc) that will generate positive media coverage and encourage regional residents to come to town to have a look.

To position Grenfell as a day trip or short breaks destination for the regional market, the on-going marketing needs to focus on the lifestyle and boutique businesses within the Centre and leveraging Jan Parlett's Country Experience when it is open. These businesses are also important in encouraging visitors to stop and explore the shopping centre. Visitors are also interested in where they can buy local or regional produce – with this providing the opportunity to promote businesses such as the Grenfell butcher and Weddin Farms. The on-line environment and magazines such as Central West Lifestyle, provide the opportunity to feature individual businesses, which in turn raises the profile and increases awareness of Grenfell. For example, travellers are always looking for a great cup of coffee. Spannerman is both a 'quirky' business and attracting great reviews – this needs to be capitalised on.

The following reviews are from Trip Advisor:

●●●●○ Reviewed 5 November 2019 via mobile

Great coffee & country hospitality

We recently stayed in Grenfell and started our day with a coffee at Spannerman expresso. Great coffee, met some friendly locals and talked to owners about country life, made our day.

●●●●● Reviewed 4 September 2019 via mobile

Unexpected

Something different.....car repairs and great coffee in a small country town. Worth a visit if travelling through.

●●●●● Reviewed 15 April 2018 via mobile

Lucas

We had a great coffee here on our way to Adelaide. The next really good coffee we had was here again on our way home 3 weeks later. A credit to Spannerman Espresso



Figure 8.6 Spannerman Coffee outlet

Railway Precinct

The Railway Precinct is a significant visitor node, providing a free camping area within the town. Attractions and facilities within the precinct include the heritage listed railway station, playground and picnic facilities, shower and toilet block to service the free camping area, a civic guide, the Men's Shed, the giant pick and shovel surrounded by some junk-art sculptures, and at the far southern end, the Grenfell Silo Art. The development and activities within the Precinct lack coordination.

The free camping area and amenities are maintained by the Lions Club, with the Club also maintaining (and using) the railway station. The Men's Shed is run by another volunteer group, with the Lion's Club and Men's Shed each operating independently.

The camping area is within 300 metres of the western end of the shopping centre, with access to the Precinct being via Camp and West Street, off the Mid Western Highway. There is no footpath or strong visual link to encourage travellers staying in the free camping area to walk up to the main street. There is also no footpath between the free camping area and the Silo Art, with travellers driving to the silos rather than walking.

The rail infrastructure within the precinct is overgrown and in decay. The former water tower has collapsed and there are plans to replace it with an art installation. Some historic signalling and track-switch infrastructure is located along the rail corridor. The closed rail line provides an opportunity to repurpose the corridor as a rail trail between Grenfell and Greenethorpe with the first stage being a shared walking – cycling track between the Station and Henry Lawson's Birthplace via Vaughan Dam Reserve (see Section 10.1). There is also a road corridor / easement connecting the Precinct to Company Dam that could be used to provide a walking – cycling link between the two areas.

A significant number of travellers staying in the Precinct appear to be travelling with bicycles and canoes. There is opportunity to capitalise on this by promoting cycling and MTB routes and the opportunity to canoe at Company and Bogolong Dams.



Figure 8.7 View from the Station Precinct across to the western end of the shopping centre. There is no physical or visual link that encourages visitors camping in the Precinct to walk or cycle into town.

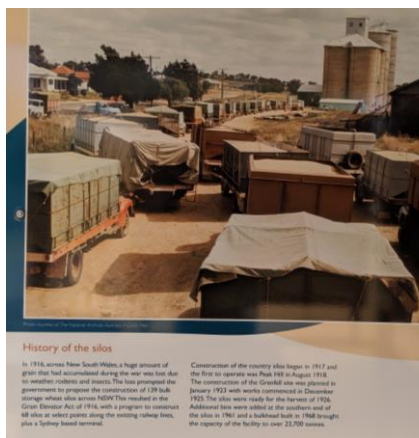


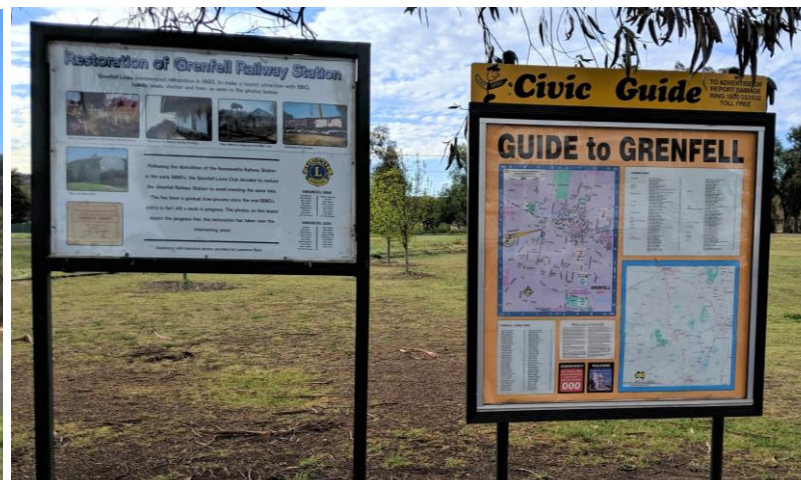
Figure 8.8 There is opportunity to extend the length of stay by encouraging travellers to cycle, mountain bike and canoe in the Shire.





Figure 8.9 Key Elements of the Railway Precinct





It was suggested that this siding could become an art installation with interpretative panels and art-work along the vertical face with a garden (possibly with sculptures) along the top.



A masterplan is needed to fully leverage the potential of the Railway Precinct. Opportunities and issues that the plan needs to address include:

- Pulling together the key elements of the Precinct and improving the overall presentation of the area (including coordinated landscaping).
- Establishing a strong physical and visual link between the Precinct and the town centre.
- The potential for a rail trail (Grenfell to Greenethorpe) with Stage 1 being a walking / cycling trail along the railway corridor to Henry Lawson's Birthplace, with the Station Precinct being the track head.
- The potential to provide a walking – cycling link to Company Dam.
- Opportunities for the use of the Station building and/or Platform.
- Opportunities to incorporate the historic mill buildings (Lachlan Fertilisers) into the interpretation of the Precinct.
- Use of the area for events and activities.
- Directional and facility signage from the Highway corridor and other strategic locations.
- The on-going management of the Precinct and Precinct assets.

The immediate priorities are:

- To provide a comprehensive information directory within the Precinct with the directory to include a noticeboard for the VIC staff to post up-coming events and other relevant information (eg road closures).
- To provide directional and facility signage to the Precinct.
- To delineate the areas where visitors can camp.

8.2.2 Infrastructure Priorities

In addition to beautifying the town centre, the other main infrastructure priority is signage. Council is considering replacing the gateway entry signs, which will enhance the first impressions of the town. Directional and facility signs throughout the town need to be updated, with fingerboard signs to facilities replaced with international icons were possible. Given that caravanners and RVs are a significant part of the visitor traffic, signage needs to include advanced warning signs and directional signs for caravan parking, the caravan park (caravan icon) and the free camping area (tent icon). As Grenfell is a pit-stop for through traffic, it is important that the toilets are well signposted and easy to find, with public toilets often a good place to erect an information directory.

While there are quality toilets at O'Brien's Hill Lookout, these facilities are not signposted on the Mid Western Highway. The most visible public toilet sign along the Highway corridor is on the corner of Warraderry Street, with this sign directing visitors out of town to the toilets in the rest area on the western approach to town. The small finger board sign to the toilets in Taylor Park is poorly located and difficult to read.

The information directories in the town centre, Railway Precinct and O'Brien's Hill are tired and dated and need to be replaced.

There is also a need for frames on each of the approaches to town, to hang temporary signs promoting up-coming events.



Figure 8.10 Sign is directing visitors out of town



8.3 Caragabal

Caragabal is a small historic village located on the Mid Western Highway, 45 kilometres west of Grenfell and 24 kilometres east of the junction of the Mid Western and Newell Highways. It is gateway to Weddin Shire for east-bound traffic coming off the Newell Highway, with travellers often stopping in Caragabal for a toilet break. Caragabal is connected by local sealed roads to Quandialla, 26 kilometres to the south and Forbes, 65 kilometres to the north.

The presentation of the village is poor. While the Royal Hotel has been refurbished, most of the buildings in the shopping strip are vacant and in poor condition. Facilities and services include the Royal Hotel, playground, picnic facilities, public toilets, Memorial Hall, free camping area, Country Club (18 hole golf course) and sports ground. Caragabal hosts several events including the Caragabal Sheep Races (September) and the Camp Oven Cook-off (June Long Weekend) which bring visitors into the Shire. Caragabal adjoins the Little Caragabal State Forest and is the closest settlement to the Pullabooka State Forest.

The Caragabal community has funding to 'wrap' a large bird mural around one of the vacant buildings in the village centre.

Table 8.2 Caragabal: Assets and Challenges

Strengths / Assets	Weaknesses / Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mid Western Highway location – exposure to passing travellers• Western gateway to Weddin Shire – convenient location for eastbound travellers coming off the Newell Highway to have a pit-stop• Royal Hotel – historic, refurbished, presents well and is open 7 days per week• Playground and public toilets adjacent to the highway• Free camping area• Caragabal Sheep Races – popular family event that brings visitors into the Shire• Proximity to Little Caragabal State Forest• Venues – Country Club, Sports Ground, Memorial Hall• Ease of parking for trucks and long rigs• Located on the Inland Rail corridor – first place that travellers on the Mid-Western Highway encounter the Inland Rail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proximity to Grenfell – westbound travellers unlikely to need a pitstop• Poor presentation of buildings / village centre• Poor condition of the public toilets• Lack of a café• Limited mobile telephone coverage

8.3.1 Product Development Opportunities

- Royal Hotel could establish a side-walk café offering coffee and a limited menu.
- Place sheep sculptures in the reserve between the highway and hotel to promote the sheep races and provide photo opportunities to encourage travellers to stop.
- Develop a quirky walk in the Little Caragabal State Forest – using bird and animal sculptures plus interpretative signage.
- Paint / improve building facades and revamp the building signs.
- Interpret / provide information on the inland rail.

8.3.2 Infrastructure Priorities

- Update / replace the public toilets.
- Provide advanced warning signs (using international symbols) for the public toilets, picnic facilities and camping.
- Increase visibility of public toilet sign and add a camping symbol.
- Erect an information directory promoting the village, Shire and surrounding region.
- Continue to improve the event venues – the Hall, Country Club and Sports Ground.

Figure 8.11 Place sheep sculptures in the reserve between the highway and hotel to promote the sheep races and provide photo opportunities to encourage travellers to stop.



Figure 8.12 Explore options to paint buildings and restore the 'signs of yester-year'



Figure 8.13 Assess the potential for a walk(s) in the Little Caragabal State Forest, possibly modelled on the Woodlands Learning Centre at Dunedoo and including bird and/or animal art installations.



Figure 8.14 Advanced warning signs are needed for the toilets. The visibility of the existing sign needs to be improved and the camping icon added to the sign



8.4 Greenethorpe

Greenethorpe is located along the eastern edge of Weddin Shire, approximately 30 kilometres south east of Grenfell. The village is on the road between Cowra (35 kilometres to the north east) and landra Castle (11 kilometres to the south). It is also readily accessible from Young (39km to the south) and the attractions in the north of Hilltops LGA including Bendick Murrell National Park (12 kilometres to the south), Koorawatha Reserve and Waterfall (25km to the east), Touts Lookout (25 kilometres to the south) and the Rustic Maze and Country Garden (25km south west). Conimbla National Park is located 32 kilometres north of Greenethorpe. There are several agri-tourism attractions proposed in close proximity to the Rustic Maze – a micro-brewery, aquaponics and sustainable living farm and a petting zoo with camping and bunk accommodation.

Greenethorpe is a historic village, that is part of the landra story. It was established in 1908 to house the workers for the landra Estate and is known as the birthplace of share farming in Australia. The ‘story’ of the share farming is not well told in either the village or at landra. Greenethorpe has a very attractive rural setting, with the surrounding hills covered by canola in spring.

Greenethorpe has a Post Office Café – Bed and Breakfast (3 rooms), the Shamrock Hotel (6 rooms, limited opening hours), a Memorial Hall, recreation ground (no facilities) and a playground with picnic facilities. The community will be celebrating the centenary of the Memorial Hall in 2021. The Hall has a Memorial garden and a history room with an exhibition. The rail line between Greenethorpe and Grenfell was closed in 1991. The rail corridor traverses very scenically attractive countryside that is ideal for a rail trail.

The village holds several small events each year. Its major event, the Tour de Greenethorpe (cycle event) was discontinued in 2018 due to difficulties with development approval and regulations. The event was popular and the community would like to see it re-instated.

Table 8.3 Greenethorpe: Assets and Challenges

Strengths / Assets	Weaknesses / Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proximity to and links with landra Castle. The Castle draws visitors into the area. Proximity to other attractions – Rustic Maze, Bendick Murrell National Park, Koorawatha Reserve and Waterfall, Conimbla National Park and the proposed attractions in Hilltops LGA. Ease of access from Grenfell, Cowra and Young. Very attractive setting, canola in spring. Attractive Café and B&B. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> landra Castle only open 4-5 days per year. Presentation of the village is deteriorating. Hotel struggles to remain open and needs a significant investment in refurbishment. Poor signage. Hall is community owned and volunteer run with minimal Council support – the community is struggling to maintain the Hall and keep it open. No free or low cost camping available.



Strengths / Assets	Weaknesses / Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic Hotel – with accommodation and land that could be used for camping. • Railway corridor – Greenethorpe to Grenfell. • Memorial Hall – event venue with public toilets, and history exhibit. • Recreation ground adjacent to the Hall – ideal for outdoor events, event staging and camping. • Historic buildings and cottages. • Network of local roads that are ideal for cycling and scenic drives. • Several artists living in and around Greenethorpe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The village needs help to re-instate the Tour de Greenethorpe event.

8.4.1 Product Development Opportunities

- Roadside viewing area at landra Castle with landscaping and interpretation. The Castle can then be promoted year-round and signposted from the Mid Western and potentially the Olympic Highway (see Section 9.4).
- Permit / encourage the use of landra Castle as an event venue (eg for markets, concerts).
- Strengthen the link between Greenethorpe and landra Castle through interpretation and signage.
- Improve the presentation of the village.
- Establish a rail trail between Grenfell and Greenethorpe.
- Develop and promote cycling trails which include Greenethorpe.
- Re-instate the Tour de Greenethorpe as part of positioning the Shire as a destination for cycling.
- Work with adjoining LGAs to develop / expand scenic drives and trails – possibly establish a Canola Drive between Cowra and Young via Greenethorpe.
- Build on and promote the history exhibit at Memorial Hall.
- For Greenethorpe to 'claim' the attractions in the surrounding area as part of its attraction base.
- Signpost and promote the walking track to Mt Crowther in the Bendick Murrell National Park.
- Silo Art – utilising the Greenethorpe silos.

8.4.2 Infrastructure Priorities

- Continue to improve the Memorial Hall to increase its capacity to host events.
- Improve directional and facility signage to and within Greenethorpe.
- Provide free and/or low-cost camping options – Recreation Ground and Shamrock Hotel (encourage the Shamrock Hotel to provide powered sites).
- Provide visitor information directories at strategic locations (eg landra Castle viewing area, near the Café).
- Provide a public toilet to service the playground and picnic area.

8.4.3 Other

- To review / remove the DA consent restrictions on the Café, enabling it to hold small events, including live music.
- To change the location of Greenethorpe on Google Maps (location shown is incorrect).

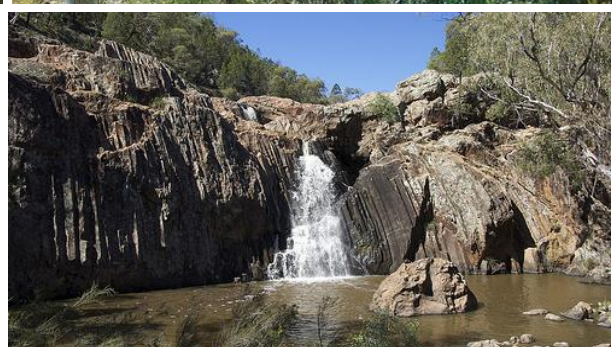


Figure 8.15 Shamrock Hotel, Greenethorpe

Figure 8.16 Greenethorpe is on the cycling route from Cowra to Young, with landra being one of the features of the route



Figure 8.17 Some of the Attractions around Greenethorpe – landra Castle (top left), Rustic Maze (bottom left), Bendick Murrell National Park (right top and centre) and Koorawatha Falls (bottom right)





8.5 Quandialla

Quandialla is located on the southern edge of Weddin Shire approximately 46 kilometres by road south west of Grenfell and 26 kilometres south of Caragabal. Quandialla is located on the shortest route between West Wyalong (57km to the west) and Young (65km to the east) and on the route between Forbes (90km to the north) and Temora (70km to the south). Temora Shire Council is currently upgrading Morangarell Road which links Temora and Quandialla, with this likely to increase traffic (particularly truck traffic) on this route. Via Nowlans Road, Quandialla is 37 kilometres from the Ben Halls Cave precinct of the Weddin Mountains National Park. Nowlans Road is unsealed and in poor condition, with this deterring use by most caravans, motorcyclists (road), 2WD vehicles with low clearance and cyclists.

Quandialla was founded in 1914 as a service centre and railhead for the surrounding rural community. The name 'Quandialla' means 'spiny ant eater'. On the town entry signs Quandialla is branded '1915 town', after the Australian mini-series '1915' that was filmed in the town. Most travellers would be unaware of the connection between the film and the village and wrongly assume that 1915 on the sign relates to when the village was established.

The Village has an attractive setting with views of the Weddin Mountains to the north east. Businesses include the historic Bland Hotel (14 rooms and powered caravan sites with amenities including a laundry), post-office, fuel outlet, rural supplier and general store. Quandialla has a village hall; swimming pool; park with playground, picnic facilities and a public toilet; Bowling Club (limited hours); showground (13 powered sites and unpowered sites) and sports ground.

The Bland Hotel is popular on weekends, attracting regional residents, motorcycle groups, car clubs and 4WD clubs. The Hotel occasionally provides live entertainment which draws patrons from the surrounding region and has a collection of motoring memorabilia which is popular with car and motorcycle enthusiasts. The Hotelier has restored several of historic signs on buildings in the main street with these providing a point of interest for travellers. A local resident also has a diverse collection of signs which travellers often stop to photograph.

Table 8.4 Quandialla: Assets and Challenges

Strengths / Assets	Weaknesses / Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located at the cross roads of two regional roads – good location for a pit stop. • Well located in relation to a day-trip from Grenfell – touring loop incorporating Weddin Mountains National Park, Quandialla and possibly Caragabal. • The Bland Hotel – good reputation for food within the region; provides entertainment; pub accommodation and powered sites; views of the Weddin Mountains • Motoring memorabilia – opportunity to work with other motoring products within Grenfell and the surrounding region. • Potential event venues – Showground, recreation ground, hall, hotel, Bowling Club. • The distance between Caragabal and Quandialla is ideal for a half marathon. • Federation architecture – very different to other villages in Central NSW – cluster of quaint, tiny buildings. • Painting the historic building signs provides a point of interest and improves the presentation of the town centre. • 1915 mini-series 'story' • Inland Rail corridor – possible opportunity for interpretation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of town centre and entry corridors – public domain not well maintained. • 1915 'story' not told; travellers do not understand the 1915 tag line on the town entry signs. • Presentation of the general store is not inviting. • Facilities at the showground and sports ground need to be improved. • Train noise – which will increase substantially with Inland Rail. • Limited directional signage to Quandialla, particularly from the east (Hilltops LGA). • Facility signs (icons) are out of date. • The caravan park is not signposted. • Poor condition of Nowlans Road, discouraging travel between the Weddin Mountains National Park and Quandialla.



8.5.1 Product Development Opportunities

- Possibly capitalise on the 'spiny ant eater' if echidnas can be seen locally (eg showground / sports ground) and/or in the Weddin Mountains National Park or State Forests. Other than Bundanoon which has an echidna sculpture as part of a series of wildlife sculptures, no other towns in NSW appear to promote the echidna. The echidna is an unusual animal and there are lots of 'quirky' facts (particularly the mating process) that could be capitalised upon. Bombala in Southern NSW has created an attraction by 'claiming' the platypus and positioning the town as 'platypus country'.
- Include Quandialla in car, motorcycle and bicycle touring routes.
- Story-telling: providing information / interpretation of the history of Quandialla, the 1915 connection and possibly the Inland Rail.
- Leverage the motoring memorabilia collection by working with similar attractions in the surrounding region to develop itineraries for car and motorcycle enthusiasts (see Section 7.3.3).
- Improve the café offering. The Hotel and/or the Post Office could potentially provide a side-walk café.
- Continue to grow the events sector, including exploring the possibility of a half marathon between Caragabal and Quandialla.

8.5.2 Infrastructure Priorities

- Council to work with the Quandialla community to improve the presentation of the village centre, Blamey Park and around the intersection of Second Street and the Quandialla-Bimbi Road.
- Improve directional signage to Quandialla from Bribbaree and other localities within the surrounding region.
- Update facility signage to include the caravan/camping icon and provide advance warning signs for the town centre on the Quandialla-Bimbi Road on the approach to Second Street.
- Provide directional signage to the caravan park and signage and information about sites available at the Quandialla Showground.
- Upgrade / seal Nowlans Road to improve access to the Ben Halls Cave Precinct of the Weddin Mountains National Park and the Bimbi State Forest.

8.5.3 Other

- List the Bland Hotel Caravan Park and the Showground camp sites on on-line caravan and camping directories – eg You Camp, Find a Camp, Wikicamps etc.
- If the disabled toilet at Quandialla Hall is accessible to the public, signpost from the Quandialla – Bimbi Road and list on the on-line disabled facilities and public toilet sites.
- Assess the need for a truck parking bay close to the village centre / hotel to leverage the expected increase in regional freight traffic using Morangarell Road to access the Inland Rail logistics hub in Parkes.



Figure 8.18 Town Entry Sign: Most travellers would not be aware of what 'The 1915 Town' refers to.



Figure 8.19 Signage needs to be updated to include the Caravan Park



Figure 8.20 and 8.21 Quandialla Town Centre



Figure 8.22 The village has some very ‘quaint’ tiny buildings



Figure 8.23 The Marshall’s Garage building shows what can be achieved with a coat of paint and the reinstatement of the original signage. The Garage houses the Quandialla motoring memorabilia collection.



8.6 Bimbi

Bimbi is a small hamlet located 33 kilometres south-west of Grenfell and 15 kilometres east of Quandialla, at the intersection of Mary Gilmore Way and the Quandialla – Bimbi and Bimbi – Thuddungra Roads.

In the early 1900’s Bimbi was a small town, with the town going into decline when it was by-passed by the railway in 1912. Today Bimbi has a few houses, but no retail outlets or visitor facilities. The Burrangong Creek corridor along the southern edge of the village has prolific birdlife and is included in the Weddin Shire bird trails. Caravanners occasionally picnic or camp along the creek corridor. Other points of interest are the ‘story of Bimbi’ interpretative panels on the side of the fire shed, the war Memorial and the former post office cottage (not accessible) dating from the 1890’s. Bimbi was also used as a location in the 1915 mini-series.

Travellers and cyclists occasionally stop in the area, often looking for toilets.

8.6.1 Product development opportunities

- Bird boxes installed along the creek corridor to encourage and support the bird-life.
- Mural on the fire shed.
- Improved and signposted access to the creek corridor and picnic facilities.

8.6.2 Infrastructure needs

- Public toilet and associated directional signage.
- Directional signage to the interpretive panels at the fire shed.
- Regular maintenance (primarily lawn mowing) of the area around the fire shed and war Memorial.

Figure 8.24 The History of Bimbi – Interpretative Panels



Figure 8.25 The Burrangong Creek Corridor has prolific birdlife



Figure 8.26 Former Post Office – Travellers often stop to take photographs





9. ENHANCING AND LEVERAGING EXISTING ATTRACTIONS

Opportunities to enhance and leverage the Shire's existing attractions are outlined below.

9.1 Weddin Mountains National Park

Weddin Mountain National Park is a significant attraction for both the Shire and surrounding Region. The Park is located around 20 kilometres south-west of Grenfell. It incorporates most of the Weddin Range and rises around 400 metres above the surrounding plains. The Park shares boundaries with the Weddin and Bimbi State Forests.

There are two main visitor precincts – Ben Hall's Campground on the north western edge of the Park and Holy Camp on the north eastern side plus a track head for the Weddin Gap – Black Springs Loop on the western side of the Park. NPWS estimate that the two main visitor precincts currently attract around 10,000 visitors per annum, with around 62% of visitors going to the Ben Hall Precinct and 38% to Holy Camp. Data is not available for other areas of the Park. The camping areas are popular with the touring caravan and RV market, residents from the surrounding region, and school and scout groups.

Activities undertaken in the Park include bushwalking, birdwatching, camping, picnicking and mountain-biking (fire trails only). Horse riding (subject to limits on the number of riders and the need to obtain a permit) is permitted for 3 months of the year (March to May) on the Black Springs Gully Trail (23 kilometre loop). Horse riding is permitted year-round in the adjoining State Forests. The Park is also ideal for trail running and could be used for trail running events.

The Ben Hall Precinct is 31 kilometres by road from Grenfell and 37 kilometres from Quandialla. It is accessed from Nowlans Road which is sealed from the Mid Western Highway to the turnoff to the National Park in the Bimbi State Forest. The National Park access road (approximately 3 kilometres) is unsealed, but in good condition and suitable for 2WD vehicles and caravans. To the south, between the National Park turnoff and the Bimbi-Quandialla Road (approximately 16 kilometres), Nowlans Road is unsealed and in poor condition, with this being a deterrent to visitors entering the Park from the south and a barrier to promoting a touring route that encourages Park visitors to continue south to Quandialla. Young VIC promotes Bribbaree as the southern gateway to the Park, however, warns visitors about the poor condition of Nowlans Road.

The Ben Hall Precinct includes a small camping ground with enviro toilets, a picnic – day use area, Seaton's Farm heritage site, Ben Hall's Cave, interpretative panels and several walking trails. While Ben Hall's Cave is the main attraction, the cave itself is a disappointing experience for some, with on-line reviews stating that while the cave is disappointing, the view from the cave are well worth the climb. Seaton's Farm (established 1936) is a unique example of vernacular architecture and construction techniques using scavenged materials during the Depression era. The Farm is a strong point of difference to other heritage attractions within the surrounding region. Visitors staying at the Campground often access both the National Park and the adjoining State Forests, with the forest used for activities not permitted in the National Park (eg 4WD, registered trail bikes, fossicking).

The Holy Camp Precinct is around 15 kilometres from Grenfell and accessed via Holy Camp Road. The final 3.8 kilometres of Holy Camp Road is unsealed and accessible in dry weather only. The condition of the road is a deterrent to some travellers. The Holy Camp Precinct has a small primitive campground, picnic facilities, enviro toilet and interpretation. It is the track head for the Eualdrie Walking Track which provides access to the Peregrine Lookout and continues across the range to the Ben Hall Precinct.

9.1.1 Issues

- With limited resources, NPWS is decommissioning visitor facilities and trails in low use parks across NSW. At this stage, there are no closures planned for the Weddin Mountains Park, however it is important that current visitation levels are maintained or increased to retain facilities.
- The Park is not signposted from the Newell Highway. NPWS did attempt to get TASAC approval but was unsuccessful. The issue needs to be re-addressed, with Weddin Shire Council (and potentially Bland and Forbes Councils) supporting the application and potentially lobbying Local Members of Parliament and the NSW Tourism Minister.



- The condition of Holy Camp and Nowlans Road, with VICs within the surrounding region warning potential visitors about using these roads. Ideally the roads need to be sealed, however if this is not feasible, they should be maintained to a standard that is suitable for all vehicles.

9.1.2 Opportunities / Directions Forward

- Improve signage: Endeavour to have the Park signposted from the Newell Highway. Include an icon sign (camping, picnic facilities, lookout, hiking, historic site) below the signs to the National Park on the Mid Western Highway, Mary Gilmore Way and the Quandialla – Bimbi Road.
- Significantly raise the profile of Seaton's Farm: The Farm is a unique attraction and well worth the drive to see. The Farm is easy to access for older people and people with mobility limitations, many of whom do not visit National Parks as they can no longer manage the walks to the attractions. The Ben Hall's Precinct day visitor area is also readily accessible. Seaton's Farm can also be promoted to coach tour groups. The access road is suitable for coaches.
- To leverage the interest shown by horse-riders to ride in the National Park by producing a guide to horse-riding trails (eg State Forests, stock routes, Conimbla National Park), facilities (eg Grenfell Showground, Village Recreation Grounds) and events (eg Weddin Mountains Muster) within the Shire.
- To host an annual Weddin Mountains Trail Running event.
- To include the fire trails within the National Park as part of the Shire's mountain-biking product.
- To promote the adjoining State Forests in conjunction with the Park – increasing the range of things that visitors can see and do while in the area.
- If the southern section of Nowlans Road is upgraded, promote as part of car, motorcycle and cycle loops which include Quandialla and Caragabal.
- Explore whether the Park and surrounding area has the potential to become a Dark Sky Park.

Figures 9.1 – 9.3 Seaton's Farm is a unique heritage attraction with quality interpretation







9.2 Conimbla National Park

Conimbla National Park is located on the eastern edge of Weddin Shire. The Park has two parts, the north-eastern precinct which is located in Cowra Shire and the south-western precinct, part of which is in Weddin Shire. The Park is primarily accessed from Cowra Shire, with Major West Road providing access from the Mid Western Highway in Weddin Shire. Major West Road is not sealed and there is no directional signage to the National Park from the Highway.

Visitor facilities including a camping area, picnic area and walking trails, are located in the north-eastern section of the Park. There are fire trails but no visitor facilities in the south-western section of the Park. The main attractions of the Park are the rugged scenery, the waterfalls after heavy rain, the wildflowers and prolific bird life (over 150 species). The main activities undertaken are bushwalking, birdwatching, camping and picnicking. Horse riding is permitted along the Yambira fire trail in the south-western precinct (no permit required). Visitors will occasionally 'bush-bash' from the fire trail to the summit of Mt Yambira, which is the highest point in the area (760 metres).

NPWS advise that visitation to the Park is low, with the Park mainly attracting residents from surrounding LGAs and bushwalking and birdwatching groups from the surrounding region. Due to low usage, NPWS have already decommissioned and removed some visitor facilities and have no plans for providing any additional facilities.

9.2.1 Opportunities / Directions Forward

- As part of the Park falls within Weddin Shire, the Park should be included as one of the Shire's nature-based attractions and marketed in conjunction with the Weddin Mountain National Park. Strategically, Conimbla can be used to encourage travellers who have come off the Newell Highway to visit the Weddin Mountains National Parks to continue east and visit Conimbla. As travellers do not recognise LGA boundaries, Weddin Shire could also 'annex' other National Parks (eg Nangar) and Reserves in the surrounding area.
- Consideration should be given to signposting the Park from the Mid-Western Highway (Major West Road).
- The recent amendment to the Weddin Mountain National Park Plan of Management to allow horse-riding is resulting in enquiries from Pony Clubs, other equine groups and individuals. There is opportunity to develop a guide to riding trails in Weddin Shire which includes the Yambira Fire Trail in Conimbla National Park as well as the Weddin Mountains trails and the State Forests.
- Major West Road is included in the Weddin Bird Trails. This trail should be expanded to include the Conimbla National Park. The Bird Trails map also needs to be updated to include the south-western precinct of the Park. There are some rare and endangered bird species in the National Park
- Mountain-biking is permitted on the fire trails within the Park with suitable trails promoted for mountain-biking / gravel grinding.

9.3 Bendick Murrell National Park

The Bendick Murrell National Park is located on the south eastern edge of the Shire approximately 12 kilometres south of Greenethorpe. Most of the Park is located within Hilltops LGA with a small area in Weddin Shire. The Park was formerly a State Forest and gazetted as a National Park in 2011. The Park has a network of fire trails but no visitor facilities and is not signposted or promoted. The Park attracts some use by local residents and bushwalking and bird watching clubs from the surrounding region.

The highest point is Mt Crowther, with the mountain accessed via Roberts Road and the Trig Trail. Mt Crowther is located on a Crown Reserve, with the Reserve purpose being for Trig and communications infrastructure. The Trig Tail passes through about 200 metres of private land, the National Park and the Crown Reserve. The Trail is controlled by the Crown. The private land-owner permits walkers to cross his land but discourages motorbikes and private vehicles.

NPWS has prepared a draft Plan of Management for the Park, however the Plan has never been placed on public exhibition. Given the low level of use, there is no provision in the Plan for improving access or providing visitor facilities.



The Greenethorpe community identified the walk to Mt Crowther as one of the attractions within the surrounding region and would like to see the Mt Crowther walk promoted. A track head with a small parking area and an information directory could be provided on Roberts Road, with this signposted from surrounding roads (eg Greenethorpe-Koorawatha Road).

9.3.1 Directions Forward

The tourism potential of the Mt Crowther walk needs to be assessed and if positive, the infrastructure (if any) required to service the walk provided.

9.4 landra Castle

landra Castle is a unique, high profile attraction for Weddin Shire and surrounding region. The property includes the Castle and outbuildings, the Mount Oriel Homestead and St Saviour's Church. The Castle is located in the south east corner of the Shire, 11km south of Greenethorpe and easily accessed from Grenfell, Cowra and Young (30 minutes' drive). There are a number of attractions and points of interest in the surrounding area including the Rustic Maze, Bendick Murrell National Park / Mt Crowther, Koorawatha Reserve and Falls, Greenethorpe Village and Tout's Lookout. Several agri-tourism attractions are proposed for the Monteagle area just south of the Castle – a micro-brewery, aquaponics and sustainable living farm and a petting zoo with camping and bunk accommodation.

The Castle and grounds are only open to the public 4-6 days per year and can be opened by appointment at other times for groups of 30+ people. The Castle, gardens and St Saviour's can be hired for weddings and other functions.

The Castle, homestead and church are visible from landra Road and visitors do drive out to the Castle to have a look. The Castle is listed as an attraction in the Grenfell Visitor Guide and is included in car and cycle touring routes and 'country' drive itineraries promoted by Hilltops and Cowra VICs.

9.4.1 Issues

Other than for open days, the Grenfell, Cowra and Young VICs do not actively promote the Castle as an attraction, as there is no where 'safe' for vehicles to stop on landra Road for travellers to view the building. While the road is straight, it is relatively narrow with limited shoulders and open drains running down both sides which prevent vehicles (particularly caravans) from pulling off the road safely. The 100 kilometre speed limit compounds the problem.

Figure 9.4 While the landra Road Reserve is wide, the drains alongside road prevent vehicles, particularly caravans, pulling over to view the Castle.





9.4.2 Opportunities

- To establish a Castle viewing area on landra Road, with interpretation, safe lay-bays for vehicles to pull off the road and advanced warning signs. The viewing area would also be a strategic location to have a visitor information directory promoting Greenethorpe and the attractions in the surrounding area as well as other localities and attractions in Weddin Shire. There is potential for visitors to view a video-clip on their smart phones / tablet as part of the interpretation.
- To work with Young and/or Cowra VICs to develop itineraries, which include landra Castle, the Rustic Maze and Greenethorpe, that can be promoted to coach tour groups, social groups such as Probus Clubs, historic associations and garden clubs.
- To work with Cowra, Forbes and/or Temora VICs to develop packages, which include the Castle, the Rustic Maze and Greenethorpe, for car and motorcycle clubs.
- For landra Castle to be included in the itinerary of coach tours that are already coming through the Region.
- To use the Castle as the anchor to attract caravan and motorhome rallies to Weddin Shire, possibly accommodating the vans at Grenfell (Showground or Racecourse) or Greenethorpe (Sports Ground).
- To use the Castle as the anchor attraction to attract day-trips from social groups within the surrounding region.
- To increase the number of events held at the Castle. The setting is ideal for smaller (up to 3,000 people) music festivals (eg Day on the Green), specialty markets and boutique arts-based events.

9.4.3 Rationale

- Providing a road-side viewing area would enable the Castle to be actively promoted as an attraction year-round and draw visitors into the south-eastern corner of Weddin Shire from Young and Cowra LGAs. Increased visitation in the area would have direct benefits for Greenethorpe and provide the opportunity to attract visitors across to Grenfell and to the Weddin Mountains National Park. It would also help to stimulate and support other attractions and activities in the surrounding area.
- Building the group markets would enhance the sustainability of landra Castle and provide opportunities for other attractions and facilities within the Shire. Working with the surrounding towns, would enable Weddin Shire to penetrate the group market, something that it currently struggles to do due to lack of accommodation.
- Weddin Shire has the facilities to host caravan and RV rallies, with landra Castle providing a high profile attraction for a rally itinerary.
- Using landra as an event venue would raise the profile of the Castle and the locality, increase the sustainability of the Castle and book out the accommodation in Weddin Shire and surrounding region.

9.4.4 Directions Forward

Viewing Area:

- Enter into discussions with the owners / managers of the Castle to determine the best location for the viewing area (or areas – if it is feasible to view Mount Oriel Homestead and St Saviours from landra Road).
- Develop the interpretation strategy, including Greenethorpe as part of the story – to encourage visitors to combine the Castle and Greenethorpe. As part of this, have discussions with Hilltops Council regarding Touts Lookout and the opportunities for improved interpretation and information directories in the Monteagle area (eg Touts Lookout).



- Design and cost the project – including the viewing area construction, interpretation at the viewing area and in Greenethorpe and directional and advanced warning signage.
- Obtain planning approval. As part of this, potentially seek to lower the speed limit on landra Road adjacent to the Castle.
- When developed, organise a famil for VIC staff from the surrounding region.

Growing the Group Markets:

- Meet with the Manager of landra Castle and other tourism operators in the surrounding area (eg Rustic Maze) to discuss the interest in building the group market.
- Undertake preliminary research including identifying target types of groups and formulating possible draft itineraries for different types of groups – clustering attractions and activities that will appeal to different markets.
- Meet with Tourism Managers from surrounding LGAs to discuss the opportunities to grow the group markets, and if interested, develop project plans / strategies.
- For the caravan and RV markets: the target would be the Chapter rallies and the larger informal social events. The first step would be to meet with the key organisations (eg CMCA, CCIA) to gain an understanding of the rally market – their needs and expectations. If Weddin Shire can meet the needs and expectations, formulate potential itineraries and direct market to the caravan and RV clubs. As a starting point for marketing, use the CMCA and CCIA lists of member clubs and associations.
- For the regional markets: Build a data base of social groups (eg Probus and View Clubs, licensed club travel clubs, coach companies that run day trips) that could be targeted. Develop day-trip itineraries and direct market to these groups.
- Existing Coach Tours: Identify the coach companies that are already operating tours to the area and explore options for including landra Castle, and possibly other Shire attractions, into the tour program.

Positioning landra Castle as an Event Venue:

- Undertake preliminary research to scope the market for event venues and explore the competitive environment (eg Heifer Station near Orange, Robert Oatley Vineyards in Mudgee).
- Meet with the Owner / Manager to discuss the events that could be held at landra and, if interested, determine the planning approvals needed and the processes involved.

9.5 O'Brien's Hill Precinct

The O'Brien's Hill precinct is one of the main attractions in Grenfell. Located on the eastern edge of town, the precinct is easily accessed from the Mid Western Highway and is often the first stop in Grenfell for west-bound Highway travellers. The key attractions / elements of the Precinct include:

- Historic gold workings, more than a century of history – dating from the initial discovery of gold in 1866 through to mining activities in the mid 1970's. The gold history and workings have been well interpreted and there is a walking track linking relic mining equipment, shafts and mullock heaps. Most of the walking track appears suitable for wheel chairs and people with mobility issues.
- Lookout with picnic shelter, public toilet, car park and the track head of the gold walk, with interpretative panels.
- Endemic Garden – a small native garden located at the entrance to the precinct. The garden was established by community members and has over 200 native species from the local area, with the main species named.



- Iris Garden – located on the western edge of the precinct and accessed primarily from O’Brien Street. The garden was established as a community project and is maintained by community members. The garden is alive with colour in spring and is one of the attractions of the Grenfell open gardens weekend. The garden has a picnic table – shelter. There is no footpath linking the garden to the gold walk nor to the lookout facilities, nor is the Isis Garden sign posted or included on the visitor directories at O’Brien’s Hill or at other locations.
- Sloane’s Cottage – a vacant, historic cottage dating from the gold rush era. The cottage is located on the south western edge of the precinct. The cottage is in poor condition and not integrated into the precinct.

The prolific birdlife and the Cootamundra Wattles (when in flower) are also features of the Reserve, with the area also popular for sunset viewing.

9.5.1 Issues

A Masterplan and an Interpretative Plan for the precinct were prepared in 2003 and partially implemented. The key elements of the Precinct are not integrated either physically or visually. The interpretative panels were erected in 2015 as part of the development of the Gold Trail and the presentation of the precinct improved.

Since 2015 there appears to have been no further investment in the Precinct. The visitor facilities at the lookout are well maintained, however the interpretative panels, signage and displays for the gold workings are deteriorating. The area presents as ‘unfinished’ with machinery and relics lying around. The following comment from Trip Advisor sums up the current situation:

“We had a lovely walk around the area just a little sad that with all the history there was obviously a huge push to get the history told but like most smaller towns there are always difficulties keeping the area maintained”.

Figure 9.5 The following images illustrate some of the issues with the O’Brien’s Hill Precinct



Signage is deteriorating



Displays are in poor and deteriorating condition and there is potential for parts of the site to become unsafe



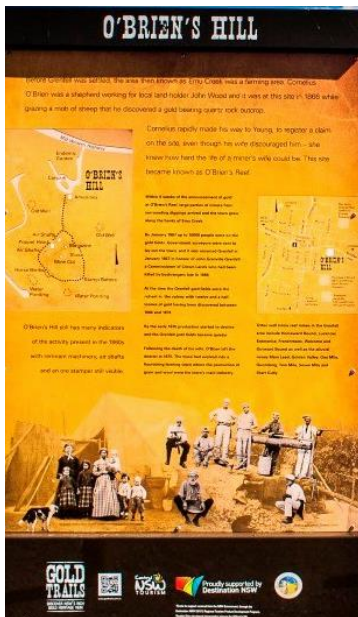
The equipment laying around the site, creates the perception that the precinct is 'unfinished'



The collection of wooden wheels is unusual and provides the opportunity to tell the 'story' of wooden wheel-making. This could be a point of differentiation and interest for the Precinct.



There is no consistency in the design or quality of signage between the Lookout area (top left and middle), Iris Garden (top right) and the Endemic Garden (bottom). The Visitor Guide is dated and needs to be replaced.





9.5.2 Opportunities

- To develop this Precinct into a significant attraction and recreation area for Grenfell, bringing together some of the Shire's key attractions and experiences – gold heritage, Henry Lawson, gardens, art and outdoor activities (walking, bird watching, sunset viewing). Initiatives could include:
 - Improving the presentation of the gold precinct and ensuring that it is well maintained.
 - Forming a display or displays of the old equipment adjacent to the precinct, including a feature on how the wooden wheels were made.
 - Expanding the Endemic Garden to have multiple plants of the same flowering species to create 'colour' clusters, with the Garden also providing a link to the Native Plant Nursery and to the Shire's National Parks, State Forests and Crown Reserves.
 - Strategic planting of Cootamundra Wattles to create a brilliant display during the wattle season (a great photo opportunity, place for wedding photos etc).
 - Expanding the Iris Garden and incorporating art installations to provide an attraction and photo opportunity when the garden is not flowering. Consider changing the shape of the garden to a large iris, using the different colour flowers to create the petals, stamens etc.
 - Installing bird sculptures – reflecting the prolific birdlife within the precinct and building on the bird themes in the Shire (bird trails, eagle sculpture on the corner of O'Brien and Warraderry Streets and proposed bird mural in Caragabal).
 - Expanding the network of trails within the precinct, ensuring that the trails link each of the attractions.
 - Stabilising and interpreting Sloane's Cottage, with this forming another point of interest and 'destination' within the Precinct.
- If the walking path and visitor facilities are fully 'accessible', list the precinct (and other accessible facilities and accommodation in Grenfell) on 'accessibility' websites.
- If suitable (depending on the light pollution in Grenfell), promote the lookout as a place to experience the night skies, possibly installing 'quirky' furniture to encourage sunset and night sky viewing.
- If a rail trail / walking track is developed between the Grenfell Railway Precinct and Henry Lawson's birthplace, explore options to extend the trail to link with the O'Brien's Hill Precinct.

Figure 9.6 Potential Opportunities for the O'Brien's Hill Precinct

Consider mass plantings of some of the endemic species to and planting more Cootamundra Wattle Trees to create wildflower displays





Use floral art installations to create points of interest in the Iris Garden and create photo opportunities



Potential to use bird sculptures to create points of interest



Use Quirky Furniture to Create a Sunset and/or Night Sky Viewing Experience – these could be easily made by the Men's' Shed





9.5.3 Rationale

- O'Brien's Hill Precinct has one of the most accessible gold heritage sites in Central NSW and one of the higher profile attractions on the Gold Trail. The Precinct has an interesting collection of relic equipment, including large wooden wheels. There has been considerable investment in interpretative signage.
- The Precinct combines several of the Shire's key product themes – heritage, Henry Lawson, gardens and birds, and has the potential to include art. Visitors tend to visit lookouts with O'Brien's Hill providing views of the town and of the Weddin Mountains National Park in the distance. It is a great location to 'orientate' visitors and raise awareness of the other attractions available in the Shire. It may also be a good location for night sky viewing.
- The Precinct is ideal for coach tour groups – an interesting, easy half hour walk, toilet stop and place for morning / afternoon tea.
- The Precinct has the potential to appeal to the regional market, particularly when the iris garden and/or the wattles / wildflowers are in bloom.
- There is potential for the Precinct to become a 2+ hour experience encouraging visitors to stay longer in Grenfell.

9.5.4 Direction Forward

- A new Masterplan needs to be prepared for the Precinct, taking into consideration the opportunities identified above, with the Masterplan used to leverage grant funding.
- The Precinct is a strategic location for a visitor information directory.

9.6 Grenfell Art Gallery

Grenfell Art Gallery is a community gallery located adjacent to the VIC in the Community Hub building in the Grenfell main street. The Gallery is curated by Council and manned by volunteers. The Gallery is open 7 days a week. The exhibits are changed approximately every six weeks and feature local and regional artists, sculptors, photographers and artisans. The Gallery is also the home of the Grenfell Community Curtain which permanently occupies the entire northern wall.

The Gallery is attracting around 6,000 to 7,000 visitors per annum and is popular with locals, regional residents and visitors to the Shire. It now has a core group of 'regulars' from the surrounding region.

Lacking sophisticated climate control and security systems and having access constraints, the Gallery is limited in the type and scale of exhibitions that it can host. As such, the exhibitions are often quite different to exhibitions held at the larger regional galleries throughout the Region, and this is reflected in the growing number of regional residents who have become regular visitors.

The marketing of the Gallery is undertaken by Council's tourism staff and funded out of the tourism budget. Exhibitions are promoted through the Council and Grenfell Tourism websites and social media channels, VisitNSW website, the Arts Out West channels, the Discover Magazine and the regional media.



Figure 9.7 The Gallery hosts an eclectic mix of exhibitions. The Grenfell Dramatic Society's costume display was very popular.



9.6.1 Directions Forward

The key to growing visitation is through increased marketing. The Gallery needs a dedicated marketing budget of around \$5,000 per annum. There is opportunity to build a data base of regular patrons and arts groups within the Region and direct market to these groups. For some exhibitions, there may be opportunity to package the exhibition with other activities in Grenfell.

9.7 Grenfell Museum

The Grenfell Museum occupies the former School of Arts building in Camp Street (Mid Western Highway) in Grenfell. The Museum is operated by volunteers from the Grenfell Historical Society. It is open from 2pm to 4pm on weekends and 9am-11am on Mondays and at other times by appointment. The Historical Society has a good relationship with the Grenfell VIC and will endeavour to open the Museum if visitors are particularly interested.

The Museum has a range of exhibits relating to gold mining, Henry Lawson, bushrangers, famous local sports people and life in the late 1800 and early 1900s. The Grenfell Museum has had professional input with the curation of some of the exhibits and presents well. The Society has a display cabinet in the Grenfell VIC and endeavours to change the VIC exhibition every six weeks.

The Historical Society has extensive collections of local historical records, maps and photographs and provides a Family History research service. People coming into Grenfell to research their family history are a small, but consistent visitor market, with these visitors often staying in town for multiple days and/or becoming repeat visitors.

The Museum attracts around up to 1000 visitors per annum including school groups.

9.7.1 Issues

The main challenges facing the Museum are:

- Volunteers are aging and it is increasingly difficult to attract new volunteers. The problem has been exacerbated with the opening of the Grenfell Art Gallery which also relies on volunteers.
- Ineffective signage. As the School of Arts is a historic building, the Museum is not able to have signage on the building, and as it is not open 7 days per week it does not qualify for tourist attraction signage. The signage problem is further compounded by its location on the Mid-Western Highway. The only sign permitted is a small blue finger-board sign on a pole outside of the Museum. The sign is difficult to see – it is small, higher off the ground than a normal street sign and partially obscured from view by the street trees.
- Difficulties in generating sufficient funds to meet outgoings.
- The building is not ideal for a Museum. The display space is limited, moisture comes through the walls and there is a lack of museum-standard storage space for the collection, which is putting items at risk.
- The Museum has a very limited on-line presence with the Historical Society not having a website nor Facebook page. The Museum is featured on the Grenfell tourism website and is listed on the VisitNSW, Gold Trail and NSW Museum websites. The online environment is a challenge for the Historical Society, partly due to limited digital and social media skills amongst the volunteers, but also to the perception that if photos of the exhibits are posted, then people won't need to visit the Museum. As such photography is not permitted in the Museum. This results in very limited user generated content being posted on-line – for example there are no photos of the Museum on sites such as Trip Advisor, and the only photos in the Grenfell and VisitNSW sites are of the exterior of the building (which is not branded as a museum).



Figure 9.8 Grenfell Museum – Visitors often have difficulty finding the Museum due to lack of signage on the building and the difficult to see finger-board sign.



9.7.2 Opportunities

- The Museum could potentially benefit from growth in the coach tour and other group markets.
- Establishing an on-line presence and using social media to promote the exhibits would help to increase visitation. On the downside, both the increase in visitation and the time involved managing the website and social media would increase the demands on volunteers.

9.8 Chrysler Museum

The Chrysler Museum is located at the western end of the Grenfell shopping centre. The Museum was established in 2006 and is privately owned and operated. It has a collection of 18 cars dating from the 1930 to 1981, and include the Valiant Charger, as well as an extensive range of motoring memorabilia. The Museum is open most days, and if closed, can generally be opened by contacting the owner. The Museum is popular with motoring enthusiasts and attracts around 1,300 visitors per year, including car clubs.

In September 2019 the Museum was featured in the Unique Cars Magazine, with the article also available on-line. The on-line article has very good images of the Museum.

The Museum occupies a historic building that was formerly a garage and then a car dealership and workshop. The building is non-descript with limited signage and no window displays. The lack of visibility is an issue for attracting walk-in visitors but assists with security.

The Museum does not have a website or Facebook page. It is featured on the Grenfell Tourism Website and on VisitNSW and the Gold Trail websites. The online Unique Car Magazine article and an on-line article from the Grenfell Record



(August 2018) provide very good information on the Museum. The Museum also has exposure through blogs by motoring enthusiasts and car clubs.

9.8.1 Issues

- The challenge of attracting sufficient visitors to pay overheads.
- The Museum is a one-man operation, with part of the experience being the knowledge and enthusiasm of the operator, with the operator generally providing a guided tour. This makes it difficult to diversify into activities such as offering personalised tours of the area in a custom car.
- Variable opening hours and differing information available about the opening hours. The information on-line ranges from 'open by appointment' to 'open most days – ring Jeff to confirm' with no hours specified. There is no signage on the building with opening hours or contact numbers.
- Limited space to expand the collection or increase the memorabilia displays. The owner is looking for a larger premise.

9.8.2 Opportunities

- To grow the car club / motoring enthusiast market by working with other motoring attractions in the Region (see Section 7.3.3).
- Building the Museum's on-line presence and using social media to promote the exhibits would help to increase visitation.

Figure 9.9 Part of the Museum's car collection



9.9 Company Dam

Company Dam is located on the northern edge of Grenfell, approximately 1.6 kilometres by road from the town centre and within easy cycling distance of the Railway Precinct. The Dam has sealed road access from Newton Street and fire management trail access from several points including Gooloogong Road.

The Dam is part of the Company Dam Flora and Fauna Reserve which has an area of approximately 24 hectares. This Reserve is zoned for public recreation¹³. To the north, east and west the Reserve adjoins a large tract of Crown Land which extends north along the range. There is a network of fire trails through this area. The reserve shares boundaries with the Grenfell Showground and the Grenfell Country Club, both of which have facilities that can be used to stage events.

The area is managed by Council with the Weddin Landcare Group's 'Friends of Company Dam' sub-group undertaking occasional clean-ups and bush regeneration.

The Dam was originally built for the gold mining and was later used by the railway. Today it is used for recreation and to provide water for nearby sporting facilities. When full, the Dam has a surface area of just over 3 hectares and is ideal for canoeing, fishing and swimming. In the past it has been used for sailing model boats. The area near the Dam wall is popular for picnics and there is an informal walk (approximately 900m long) around the dam. The trails through the Reserve and adjoining Crown land are used for bushwalking, bird watching and occasionally mountain biking, four-wheel driving and horse riding.

Visitor facilities at the Dam are limited and very dated. Council is proposing to install a new toilet block. There is also a need for new picnic facilities and directional and interpretative signage.

Figure 9.10 When full, Company Dam is a popular recreation area



¹³ The Company Dam Flora and Fauna Reserve is zoned for Public Recreation under the provisions of the Weddin Shire Local Environmental Plan 2011



9.9.1 Opportunities / Directions Forward

- To upgrade picnic facilities and formalise the walk around the Dam to create an attractive recreation area close to town – with the Dam promoted for picnicking, fishing, birdwatching, canoeing and bushwalking.
- To use the Dam and/or surrounding trails for a range of activities (eg gravel grinding, mountain biking, bushwalking, horse riding) and events, eg: 'Dirty Tri', trail running, gravel grinding, horses and/or motorcycle endure events; duathlon (swim, run or cycle, model boats). The facilities at the Showground and/or Country Club could be used for event staging.

9.10 Vaughan Dam Reserve

Vaughan Dam Reserve (also known as the Grenfell Common) is part of a Travelling Stock Route and comes under the control of Central West Local Land Services. Local Land Services (LLS) has classified the Reserve as a Category 5 Route – which means that it is no longer used or has value for travelling stock, emergency management or biosecurity purposes. As such, LLS has nominally 'transferred' the management of the Reserve to the Weddin Landcare Group.

The Reserve has an area of approximately 8.4 hectares. There is a small dam in the north east corner of the Reserve and an ephemeral creek through the centre of the Reserve. Most of the area has been cleared with a pocket of remnant Box Gum Grassy Woodland vegetation along the western edge of the Reserve. The Reserve has prolific birdlife and should be included in the Weddin Shire Bird Trails. The Reserve has a network of informal walking and vehicle tracks and a basic interpretive sign explaining the vegetation.

The Weddin Landcare Group is proposing to undertake a cultural burn on the site to remove weeds and then progressively revegetate the area. The Group is also looking to install nesting boxes to encourage the bird life and small mammals including possums and gliders.

The Reserve is located along the Grenfell railway corridor approximately mid-way between the Grenfell silos and Henry Lawson's birthplace. The main entry is from Henry Lawson Way with the Reserve also having frontage to West Street and Holy Camp Road.

9.10.1 Opportunities / Directions Forward

The Reserve has the potential to become a tourist and recreational asset for Grenfell as:

- A passive recreation area with walking trails taking in the dam / wetland and the woodland.
- An 'extension' of the Endemic Garden, showcasing the Box Gum Grassy Woodland vegetation. As part of the replanting program it may be possible to create wildflower displays. There is also the potential to link with the Grenfell Native Nursery, with the plants on display in the Reserve available for purchase at the Nursery.
- A point of interest along the rail corridor with a walking track / cycle route linking the Railway Precinct, the silo art and the Henry Lawson Birthplace (and possibly onto O'Brien's Hill).
- An educational asset: a place where Landcare can run workshops and activities, including educational

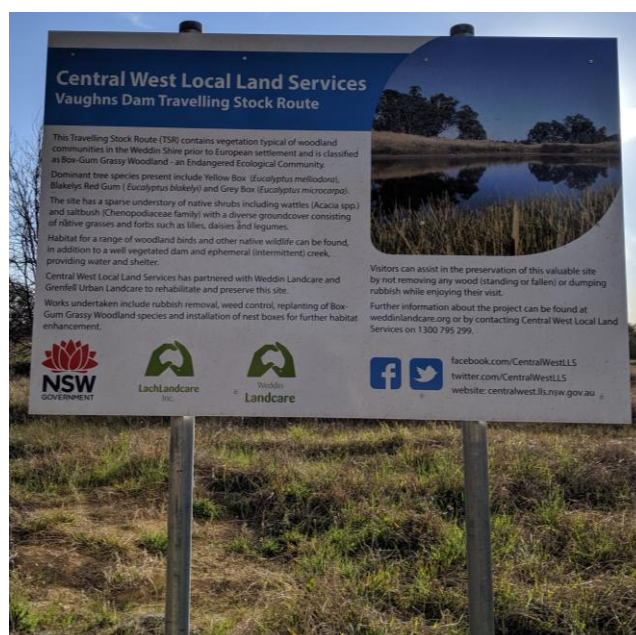


Figure 9.11 Interpretative Signage at Vaughan Dam Reserve



programs for schools. Some of the workshops could be run in conjunction with the Nursery and/or Endemic Garden.

- An enhanced bird-watching experience – with the revegetation and the nesting boxes increasing the bird-life available; combined with places to sit to observe and interpretative information on the local birds.

9.11 Henry Lawson's Birthplace

Henry Lawson's Birthplace is located adjacent to Lawson Oval, approximately 2 kilometres south of town. The birthplace is marked by a small Memorial park. A large sugar gum, planted by Lawson's daughter in 1924, forms the centre-piece of the park. There is a path around the tree with 12 small white plinths, each with a bronze plaque. The plaques tell Lawson's life story, both his achievements and the challenges faced. Adjoining the path is a small endemic garden and a shelter shed with picnic tables and barbeques. The site adjoins the sports oval and a dog-off-the-leash area.

The Park 'as built' is a scaled back version of the original plan for the area. While the Park is important for the local community, in its current form it has limited appeal as a tourist attraction. The area is not well maintained, with the path eroding, the metal edges around the path and brick inlay symbolising the miner's tent are becoming trip hazards, the drought has decimated the garden and the picnic shelter is out of character with the area. While the information on Lawson's life is interesting, the plaques are difficult to read. There is nothing featuring his work and no 'photo opportunity'.

While the older generation knows who Henry Lawson was, most of the younger generation probably do not, with Lawson's stories and poetry no longer part of the school curriculum. According to the VIC staff, very few visitors are interested in visiting the Park. The VIC mainly promotes it as place to have a picnic or as a place to go for travellers to exercise their dogs.

Figure 9.10 Left: The Bronze Plaques are very dated in their presentation and difficult to read. Right: The area is not well maintained, with weeds in the lawn, very few plants in the endemic garden and the path starting to erode.



9.11.1 Opportunities / Directions Forward

The appeal of the area could be increased by:

- Improved maintenance – removing weeds, repairing the lawn and path and keeping the plinths clean.
- Re-planting the garden to create a 'show garden' either using endemic species that produce a great wildflower display or moving to introduced species that provide a stunning setting for the Park.
- Providing an art installation(s) that celebrates some of Lawson's work – possibly the Loaded Dog or the Drover's Wife.
- Exploring digital technology options (eg an App / sound trail) to bring the site to life. The actor Jack Thompson and others have recorded readings of Lawson's work, that could potentially be used.

If the rail trail proceeds (see Section 10.1), then the Park will become a point of interest along the Trail and it will be important to increase its appeal. There may be options to place some Henry Lawson related art installations within the rail corridor in the section adjacent to the Park.

If there is a local resident who is passionate about Henry Lawson and is willing to act as tour guide and possibly read some of his work, the Park could be included in itineraries for coach tour and other groups.

Figure 9.11 There may be opportunity to feature some of Lawson's better known works through art installations and digital technology. The following book covers and pictures could provide inspiration for art installations. The Loaded Dog and other humorous stories would appeal to the family market. 'While the Billy Boils' and the 'Drovers Wife' are also well known and could potentially be interpreted on the site.





10. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Weddin Shire has several assets which, if developed will strengthen and consolidate the Shire as a lifestyle destination for quality outdoor attractions, activities and events. Key projects are:

- Grenfell to Greenethorpe Rail Trail
- Bogolong Dam and surrounding Bogolong Hills
- Leveraging the State Forests
- Leveraging assets to grow cycle tourism
- Establish a Night Skies viewing experience
- Agri-tourism

The Rail Trail, Bogolong Dam and State Forest projects will contribute in part to growing cycle tourism.

10.1 Grenfell to Greenethorpe Rail Trail

The closed rail corridor between Grenfell and Greenethorpe should be re-purposed as a rail trail, with this project having the potential to be an anchor attraction for Weddin Shire providing a focal point for cycle, equine and walking related tourism. It would also become a regional recreational asset.

The Grenfell Branch line opened in 1901 and was closed to passenger services in 1974 and to freight services in 1991. The line was constructed to 'pioneer standard' using light rails and earth ballast. The line extends from Grenfell to the Blayney-Demondrille Line at Koorawatha, a distance of 52 kilometres. The section from Grenfell to Greenethorpe, suggested for the rail trail, is around 30 kilometres. The section of the line to the east of Greenethorpe falls partly into Weddin Shire and partly into Cowra and Hilltops LGAs.

Over most of its length, the Grenfell rail corridor is relatively wide, with the disused railway line and a vehicle track adjacent to the line. The railway line is in poor condition, with some sections of the line being flood damaged while other sections are overgrown. There is sufficient width in the corridor to enable the development of a beside-the-rail trail, with the rail line remaining in place. Trails adjacent to railway lines have been built in some areas where the rail corridors are wide and there is room for both uses; where lines have been transferred to tourist railways (eg Oberon); or where there is pressure to retain the lines for future use. In the latter case, the rail trail is a temporary use that 'protects' the rail corridor from being subdivided and sold off.

Attractions along the route include:

- Grenfell Station heritage precinct – linking to the Grenfell town centre, Company Dam and other local attractions
- Views of the Weddin Mountains National Park
- Grenfell Silos (silo art)
- Vaughan Dam Reserve (potential for walking / cycling trails)
- Historic rail equipment and infrastructure including signals, track switches and wooden bridges.
- Henry Lawson's Birthplace
- Stunning countryside, particularly in spring when the canola is flowering
- Silos at Brundah and Wirega – which may provide opportunities for silo art
- Greenethorpe – Café and B&B, Shamrock Hotel and the attractions in the surrounding region.

In Grenfell, the trail could be linked to the town centre, Company Dam and possibly the O'Brien's Hill Precinct. From Greenethorpe, there is the opportunity to cycle to landra Castle, the Rustic Maze, Bendick Murrell National Park and Tout's Lookout. The rail trail could potentially be extended east past the Bendick Murrell National Park to Koorawatha, providing access to Koorawatha Falls and Reserve.



Figure 10.1 Historic Rail infrastructure could provide points of interest



10.1.1 Rail Trails in NSW - Overview

There is a move within NSW to re-purpose closed railway corridors for rail trails. Introduced in Victoria in 1994, rail trails have been established in all Australian States, with the trails being significant commuter, recreational and/or tourism assets. Trails are used for walking, jogging, cycling and horse riding, with some trails also being used for events. Studies into the benefits of rail trails in Australia, New Zealand and the USA, consistently show:

- Significant increases in visitation – both day trips and overnight, with visitors staying longer in the area
- Injection of new dollars into the local economy
- Increased profitability of hospitality and other businesses
- Investment in new businesses
- Enhancement of the lifestyle and health of the local community

The profile of tourists attracted to rail trails is consistent across all three countries: well-educated, middle-aged (35-65 years of age) individuals travelling with family or with groups of friends.

Although there has been a very strong push for the establishment of rail trails in NSW, the legislation protecting rail corridors and strong opposition from some landowners along the corridors have been major barriers to development. There are several rail trails within the Sydney Region and some short trails in the Blue Mountains and Hunter Regions and in Dubbo and Oberon (built adjacent to the line in the railway corridor).

The Tumbarumba to Rosewood is the first longer trail in regional NSW to be developed on a State-owned rail line closed by an Act of Parliament. Opening in April 2020, the trail forms the first stage of the Riverina Highlands Rail Trail, with Stage 2 being Wagga to Ladysmith. The trail was designated as a 'pilot project'. Government funding has been provided for Stage 1 of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail from Casino to Murwillumbah via Lismore and Byron Bay. The State Government has funded feasibility studies for several proposed trails in other parts of the State. Some projects have sought sponsorship and 'crowd funding' to provide 'matching' funds for grant applications.

Within the regions surrounding Weddin Shire there are two advanced rail trail projects in Central NSW, three in the Riverina Murray Region and three in the Tablelands Region of Southern NSW. The Southern NSW DMP also recommends the re-purposing of the Boorowa Branch Line (Boorowa to Galong: 29km) as a rail trail. Most of these trails have had the corridor assessed, formulated a route plan, undertaken a feasibility study and/or costed the project. The trails are a mix of 'on-rail' and 'beside-the-rail' proposals. The projects are primarily being driven by project committees with the full support of the Council/s.

Central NSW:

- Dubbo to Molong via Yeoval and Cumnock, a distance of 130 kilometres. The first 12.5 kilometres at the Dubbo end is open.
- Pioneer Trail from Oberon to Tarana, a distance of 24 kilometres. The first 6 kilometres at the Oberon end is open, with the trail being located in the rail corridor adjacent to the railway line.

Riverina Murray Region:

- The Murrumbidgee Valley Rail Trail which incorporates two sections Coolac to Gundagai to Tumblong (23km) and Tumut to Batlow (32 km).
- Riverina Highlands Trail – Stage 2: Wagga to Lady Smith, a distance of 16 kilometres.

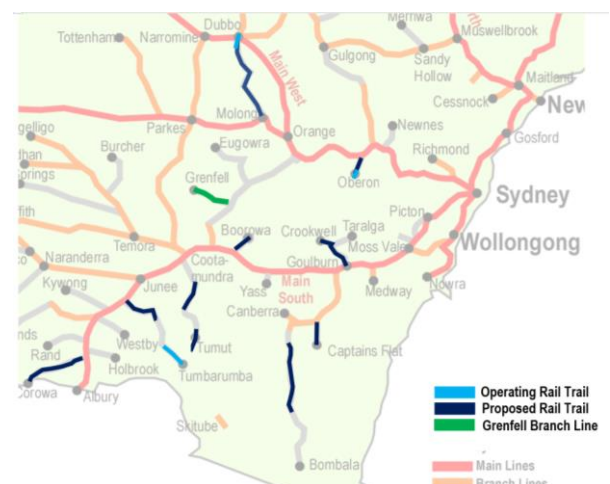


Figure 10.2 Existing and Proposed Rail Trails – region surrounding Weddin Shire



- Culcairn to Corowa (73km) and across the border to Wahgunyah in Victoria to join with the Murray to Mountains Trail.

Tableland Region of Southern NSW:

- Molonglo Trail from Bungendore to Hoskinstown to Captain Flat, a distance of 36 kilometres.
- Goulburn to Crookwell – 54 kilometres with this being a mix of on-rail and rail-side trail.
- Monaro Trail – from Michelago to Cooma.
- Galong to Boorowa – proposed but no planning has been undertaken.



Figure 10.3 Tumbarumba to Rosewood Trail

Experience in other States has shown that visitors often come to a region to ride multiple trails over a 5 to 10 day period. A trail in Grenfell would be centrally located, enabling it to be ridden in conjunction with the trails in the three surrounding regions. In addition, each of the cities and larger towns within 2.5 hours drive of Weddin Shire have large cycling communities (including social groups and clubs) which are potential users of the rail trail.

10.1.2 The Planning and Development Process

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has been assisting Councils and Community Groups to plan Rail Trails and prepare businesses cases and funding applications.

State Government's position is that it will support any rail trail project which demonstrates overwhelming community support, (demonstrated through extensive community consultation). If grant funding is being sourced, the project must demonstrate a benefit-cost ratio of greater than 1.0.

Where a line needs to be closed permanently, five steps need to be undertaken before an 'application to close' can be lodged:

1. **Extensive community consultations** involving project proponents, stakeholders, Council(s), relevant regional organisations (eg Destination Networks, RDA) and regional representatives of relevant State Government departments.
2. **Project is scoped out and planned** – In most cases this has been paid for by Councils. For some projects there has been some funds raised locally through sponsorship and crowd funding to assist with the planning and design process.
3. **Preparation of a Business Case** – This has generally been funded by sponsorship and crowd funding, with some support from Councils. In the New England Region, RDA Northern Inland has prepared the Business Case for the first stage of the Armidale to Tenterfield trail. The Business Case needs to meet the NSW Treasury guidelines for capital funding and must be ratified by Council.
4. **Complete the full Rail Trail Development Plan** for the project.
5. **Funding:** When the documentation is completed, apply for funding from relevant grant programs or via a local State member.

Once funding is secured, the application to have the rail corridor 'closed' by an Act of Parliament can be lodged.

For a beside-the-rail trail where the rail line remains, it may not be necessary to permanently close the line. It may be possible to lease the corridor (for a peppercorn rent), with the rail trail being an interim use.

Considerable information, resources and support are available from Rail Trails Australia (www.railtrails.org.au) and the Rail Trails for NSW (www.railtrailsnsw.com.au). While the planning process has been protracted in NSW, there is an expectation that now the Tumbarumba and North Coast lines have been officially closed, rail trails will gain momentum



and the process will be stream-lined and applications potentially processed in 'groups'. If Weddin Shire wishes to proceed, now would be the time to act, leveraging off the work being done at the State and regional levels.

10.1.3 Directions Forward

Prior to embarking on the five steps outlined above, Council needs to undertake research into rail trails to gain a comprehensive understanding of the:

- Processes involved and whether a lease is possible
- Benefits of the trails
- Issues that have arisen in other areas (perception vs actual experience) and how these issues have been addressed
- The best approach for engaging landowners along the rail corridor and the local community
- Best practice in the planning, design, management and marketing of trails
- Costs involved and potential funding sources
- The implications for Council

Consideration should also be given to whether the trail should continue east of Greenethorpe. This would require working with Hilltops and Cowra Councils.

Once Council is 'informed' then it needs to decide whether to proceed and if so, embark on community consultation.

As Stage 1, it may be possible to use the rail corridor to establish a shared walk – cycle route from the Grenfell Railway Precinct to Henry Lawson's Birthplace, incorporating the silos, Vaughan Dam Reserve, the historic rail equipment along the corridor and an area to view the Weddin Mountains National Park. The walk should be linked back to the town centre to create a loop and bring people into the main street. Future links could include the O'Brien's Hill and Company Dam precincts.

Figure 10.4 Images of the condition of the railway line – with parts of the line being flood damaged and other parts overgrown.







Figure 10.5 Images showing the width of the rail corridor and the existing vehicle track that could be used for a beside-the-rail trail.



10.2 Bogolong Dam

Bogolong Dam is located approximately 6.8 kilometres northwest of Grenfell, with access from Bogolong Dam Road off the Mid Western Highway. Bogolong Dam Road is unsealed between the Highway and the Dam access point, a distance of around 500 metres. The Bogolong Road corridor continues north and provides access to land owned by Council and Crown Land.

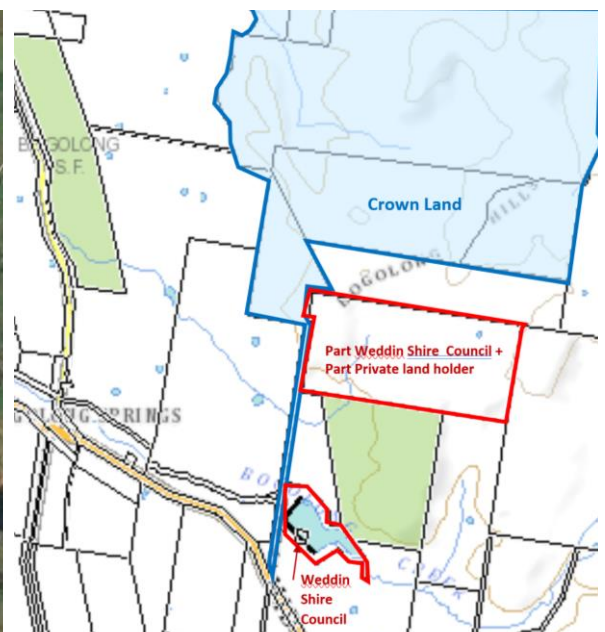
Bogolong Dam was constructed on Bogolong Creek in 1931 to supply water for Grenfell. From 1944 to the early 1970's the Dam was a popular recreation area, used for boating and water skiing. In the 1970's the high cost of insurance resulted in the Dam being closed to the public. Council purchased the Dam site in 2011. The site has an area of approximately 22.2 hectares, with the Dam when full, having a surface area of approximately 9.95 hectares. Council is in the process of establishing basic recreation facilities on the southern foreshore with the Dam to be used for water skiing and other activities. There is also a proposal to develop a cycleway linking Grenfell and the Dam.

Bogolong Dam site is located along the southern edge of the Bogolong Hills – Warraderry Range. The Range rises approximately 180 metres above the Dam and extends north for approximately 6.7 kilometres. The Range is rugged and forested. The ridge above the Dam provides extensive views across the Dam and farming properties to the Weddin Mountains in the south. The area surrounding the Dam site, including the adjoining forested ridge, is in private ownership. Further north, Weddin Shire Council owns part of the Range, with most of the area to the north of Council's property being Crown Land.

Figure 10.6 Location of Bogolong Dam



Figure 10.7 Land Ownership Council and Crown Land



Land ownership information provided by Weddin Shire Council

Figure 10.8 The Ridge on the northern side of the Dam would be ideal for a lookout and potentially for bushwalking and possibly mountain bike trails (note: Dam was drained to enable earth works)



10.2.1 Opportunities

Potential opportunities for Bogolong Dam, Bogolong Hills and adjoining properties include:

- Promoting the Dam for boating, fishing and canoeing – encouraging travellers to stay longer in the area.
- Joint promotions with and/or at, other similar recreational dams and lakes within the surrounding region – Lake Forbes, Centenary Lake at Temora, Wyangala Dam, Lake Canobolas, Carcoar Dam etc.
- Shared walking / cycleway around the Dam, possibly with a birdwatching hide.
- Walking trail and lookout on the ridge adjacent to the northern side of the Dam – possibly suitable for night sky viewing. The car park on the southern side of the Dam could also be promoted as a night sky viewing area.
- Mountain bike trails through the Bogolong Hills area (subject to the area being suitable) – the area may be suitable for an EPIC trail (see Section 10.4).
- Temporary or permanent visitor accommodation on private property – primitive camping, glamping (permanent tents), tiny houses, cabins, farm stay etc, particularly if the area becomes popular for water sports, mountain biking and/or other activities.
- Community and competitive events eg Adventure racing, dirty tri, open water swim, orienteering, trail running, boating, fishing etc.

Figure 10.7 There may also be an opportunity for a canoe and possibly bicycle hire business – as an additional revenue stream for an existing business or as a micro business for a local resident.



Figure 10.8 Examples of accommodation that could be provided by private landowners in close proximity to the Dam



10.2.2 Directions Forward

While Council is currently focused on providing basic picnic and boating facilities at the Dam, the combination of the Dam and the Bogolong Hills potentially opens up a range of opportunities. An assessment of the potential of the combined area needs to be undertaken, with this including evaluating the suitability of the area for bush walking and mountain bike trails. A masterplan will be needed for the project.

The potential to link the Dam to Grenfell, Company Dam and Warraderry State Forest should also be considered. There may also be opportunities to work with the near-by Grenfell Kart Club which has a small camping area, kitchen – kiosk and amenities.

10.3 Leveraging the State Forests

The State Forests in NSW are managed by the Forest Corporation of NSW. Recreation and tourism are designated uses of State Forests, with the Corporation having a Recreation and Tourism Policy that encourages public access to the forests. State Forests:

- Cater for a wider range of recreational activities than National Parks, with permissible activities including horse riding, registered trail bikes and 4WD vehicles, single trail mountain biking, hunting, fossicking and foraging.
- Permit dogs and horses.
- Are receptive to allowing the Forest estate to be used for a diverse range of events – including music festivals, motor sports and mountain-biking.
- Are willing to enter into partnerships and other arrangements with Councils, community groups, commercial operators and other organisations to develop attractions, facilities and infrastructure and to host events.

There are 11 State Forests within Weddin Shire. These Forests currently attract low levels of use for 4WD and trail bikes, horse riding, camping, bird watching, mountain biking and hunting. Fossicking (with a permit) is permitted within all Forests within the Shire. Hunting also requires a permit. Grazing (under license) occurs in the Weddin and Bimbi State Forests. Grazing does not prevent public access or use; however users cannot camp at watering points or prevent stock from accessing water.

The Forestry Corporation advise that in some of the Forests within the Shire there are issues with trail bikes not remaining on the Forest Roads and defined tracks, with this resulting in environmental damage. As such they do not want to see an increase in trail bike users. They would however support trail bike events.

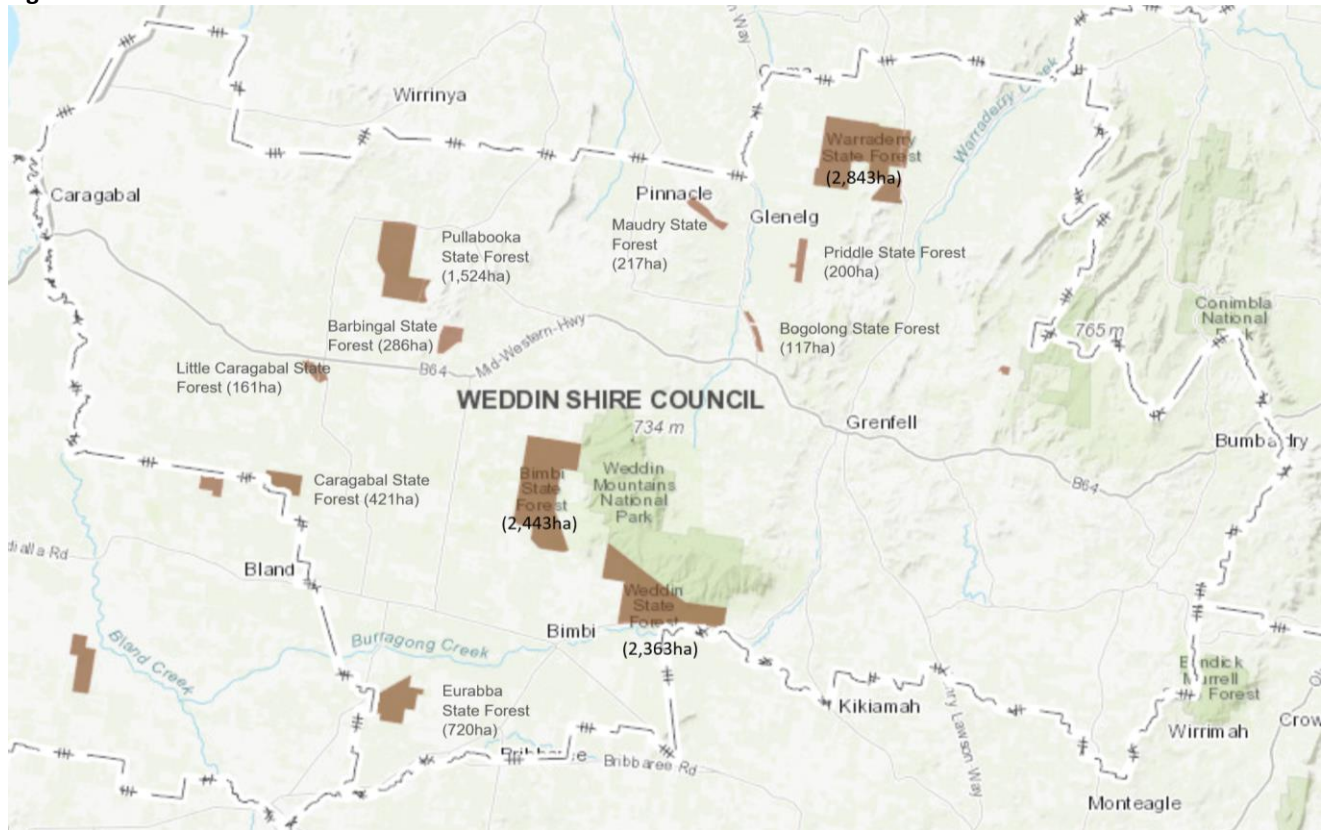
The larger Forests in the Shire are ‘working’ forests. Pullabooka was recently logged, and parts of Bimbi and Weddin will be logged in the next few years.

The three larger forests in the Shire – Warraderry, Bimbi and Weddin, and the Little Caragabal Forest have the most tourism potential. The Priddle State Forest could be part of a link between the Bogolong Hills area and Warraderry State Forest.



Figure 10.9 Mountain Bike and Walking Trail developed in the Kindra State Forest – a partnership between the Forest Corporation, Coolamon Shire Council and the local Rotary Club

Figure 10.10 State Forests in Weddin Shire



Source: Forestry Corporation of NSW

Bimbi and Weddin Forests abut the Weddin Mountains National Park. National Park visitors, particularly those in 4WD vehicles, will sometimes use the Forest trails. The Stony Creek Fire Trail in the Weddin State Forest is fenced as part of the National Park, with NPWS including the Fire Trail on the Horse Access permits. As horse riding is only permitted in the National Park for 3 months of the year, it may be possible to promote the State Forests as year-round opportunities for riding.

The topography of the Bimbi Forest is very 'flat' and potentially suitable for car rally events and may also be suitable for off-road kart racing events. The Forestry Corporation will consider granting access to un-registered vehicles (such as Karts) for sanctioned events. Being part of the foothills to the Weddin Mountains, the Weddin State Forest has more varied terrain and vegetation communities and is more attractive for horse riding and mountain biking. Forestry have allowed stock yards in other forests and would consider basic horse yards if horse groups wanted to camp in the Weddin or Bimbi Forests. The entrance signage for both the Bimbi and Weddin State Forests is in poor condition and there is no information about the forests or permissible activities. Warraderry also needs new signage.

The Warraderry State Forest has the most rugged terrain and possibly the best location for cross country mountain bike trails similar to the trails in the Back Gamma and Kindra State Forests.

As discussed in Section 8.3, Little Caragabal State Forest may have potential for a bird walk to encourage travellers to stop in Caragabal.



Figure 10.11 Signage at the entry to the Bimbi (top) and Weddin (bottom) Forests



10.3.1 Directions Forward

- The tourism and recreation potential of the Forests within the Shire needs to be assessed. The assessment process should include:
 - An initial inspection, preferably with someone who is familiar with the areas, to understand the terrain, road and track network, natural environment, views etc.
 - Meetings with existing users to understand how they use the Forest, its strengths and challenges and potential opportunities to enhance the experience and grow visitation.
 - Review of activities and events held in other State Forests to explore whether these are options for the Forests in Weddin Shire.
 - Seeking advice from potential user groups – mountain-bikers, bush walking clubs, horse riding groups, event organisers: showing them possible locations within the State Forests and gaining feedback.

Activities to be assessed should include:

- Attractive places to camp
- Mountain biking – trails and event circuits
- Gravel grinding
- Bush walking (dog friendly)
- Trail running, orienteering, rogaining
- Fossicking
- Horse riding – including places to camp with horses
- Trails suitable for enduro events – horse, mountain bike, registered trail bikes.
- Off-road rally events
- Off-road kart events

The outcome of the assessment will determine what needs to happen to realise the opportunity.

- Seek to improve entrance signage to the Forests, with the signage to include a directory with a map and information on permissible uses. Key locations for signage include the entry to Bimbi State Forest on Nowlans Road and at the entry to Ben Hall Precinct (Forest side of the fence), at the entry to the Weddin State Forest on Mary Gilmore Road and at or near the track head for the Weddin Gap to Spring Gully trail.
- Produce information and promotional collateral for the larger State Forests:



- Consider producing a 'Guide to State Forests' in the Shire or information sheets on individual forests for distribution through the VIC.
- Include the State Forests on the Grenfell tourism website and in the Shire's promotional material.
- Endeavour to list the Forests on Visit NSW and other relevant tourism websites.

10.4 Cycle Tourism

10.4.1 Overview

Cycle tourism is a strong and high-growth, high-yield niche market. Broadly, the cycle tourism market incorporates:

- Cycling enthusiasts who are motivated to travel to destinations primarily or solely because of the routes, trails and the riding experience available.
- Event attendees – cyclists who travel to participate in or watch community and competitive cycling events.
- Cycling tours – independent, supported and escorted.
- Recreational cyclists – visitors who will ride while visiting a destination, with cycling not the primary reason for their visit. This is the primary market for bike hire.

Research into cycle tourism has identified a diverse range of benefits for the host destination, including:

- Cycling enthusiasts have a higher propensity to travel to regional areas and generally stay longer.
- Cyclists have a higher level of repeat visitation and change the way they 'experience' the location – they may visit the area initially to attend an event, returning as part of a club organised ride, visit as part of an informal social group and/or visit with their families.
- Cyclists are a high yield market, spending across a range of sectors.
- Cyclists tend to travel frequently – day trips, short breaks and extended holidays.
- Cycle tourism creates opportunities for business investment: accommodation, eateries, bike hire, bike sales and maintenance, transfers, tours etc.
- Cyclists are an easy and cost effective market to target.

10.4.2 Regional Context

Cycling is a popular activity in the three regions surrounding Weddin Shire. Each of the towns have one or more informal road cycling clubs or groups that organise weekly rides. There are also a number of affiliated cycling clubs within the Region.

Table 10.1 Affiliated Cycling Clubs located within 3 hours drive of Weddin Shire

Region	Cycle NSW	Mountainbike Australia	NSW Bicycle Users Group
Central NSW / Orana	Dubbo Cycle Club Orange Cycle Club Bathurst Cycling Club Mudgee Cycle Club	Dubbo MTB Mudgee Region MTB Orange MTB Bathurst MTB Central Tablelands MTB	Dubbo BUG
Riverina Murray	Coota Cycle Club Wagga Cycling Club Riverina Interclub Racing Narrandera BUG Griffith Cycle Club	MTB Wagga Cycle Tumbarumba Albury-Wodonga MTB Talbingo MTB	Cootamundra BUG Albury- Wodonga Pedal Power Riverina Highlands Rail Trail
Southern NSW	Goulburn Cycle Club		



Within the surrounding region, mountain biking is concentrated in and around the regional cities in Central NSW and Wagga and the Tumut-Tumbarumba area to the south and south east. The trails available in the area surrounding Weddin Shire are summarised in Table 10.2. In addition, there is a Pump Track at Stockinbingal. Detailed information on MTB tracks and facilities is available from the Trailforks website and Mountain Bike Australia.

The LGAs surrounding Weddin Shire host a range of annual cycling events as well as one-off charity and competitive events. The cycling and MTB clubs also hold a range of club, interclub and community events. High profile annual events are summarised in Table 10.3. The Wagga Gears and Beers Festival has recently introduced 2 gravel grinding rides (Filthy 50 and Dirty 130) as part of their event program.



Figure 10.12 Location of Mountain Bike Parks and Trails in the region surrounding Weddin Shire

Table 10.3 High profile annual cycling events in the region surrounding Weddin Shire

Month	Event	Type	Duration
March	Newcrest Challenge – Orange	Road	1 day
	Bathurst Classic + Blayney to Bathurst	Road Criterium Hill Climbs Gran Fondo World Qualifier	2 days
Easter	Tour de Cowra	Road – mix of competitive and recreational	4 days
	Mudgee Bike Muster	Family Weekend of cycle activities	4 days
September	Coota Bike Festival	Criterium Road Recreational and competitive	1 day
	Back Yamma Big Foot	Mountain Bike	1 day
October	Gears and Beers – Wagga	Road loops Gravel loops Recreational and competitive	1 day



Figure 10.13 Back Yamma Bigfoot MTB Race



Table 10.2 Purpose-Built Mountain Bike Trails in Central NSW and the Eastern Riverina Sub-Region

	Central NSW						Eastern Riverina					
	Orange City / Cabonne Shire				Forbes	Bathurst	Wagga Wagga		Coolamon	Cootamundra		
	Lake Canobolas MTB Park	Kinross State Forest	Mt Canobolas	Mullion Creek	Back Yamma State Forest	Bathurst Bike Park	Pomingalarna Park	Willans Hill Reserve	Kindra Forest	Coota MTB Park	Pioneer Park	The Iron Barks Jindalee National Pk
Type	X Country	X Country	Gravity / Down Hill	X Country	X Country	X Country	X Country	All Mountain & Down Hill	X Country	X Country	X Country	X Country
Approved / Sanctioned	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Av. Trail Rating	4*	4*	4.5*	nr	nr	1	3	nr	4.5		1	
Number of Trails	19	38	26	17	13	24	35	5	1	8	8	16
Total Distance	10km	30km	51km	35km	29km	13km	26km	604m	10km	10km	4.75km	27km
Longest Trail	2.3km	2.8km	3.4km	3.8km	5.3km		1.6km				1.1km	4.026km
Longest Loop	5.6km	7.8km	19.3km		27.1km	9.9	12.7km		10km	2.9m		
Descent	229m	1071m	2483m	1861m	301m	383m	558m	59m	87m	279m	147m	566m
Vertical	72m	126m	558m	257m	81m	84m	240m	59m	20m	70m	104m	87m
Trail Grade (White = Easiest by number of trails (all colour coded trails are single track))												
White					1							
Green	6	20			4	12	5	1				1
Blue	9	16	2	5	7	8	28	2	1	4	8	3
Black	3	2	7	5				1				
Double Black Diamond			4	1								
Double Track	1	3	13	6	1	4	2	1		4		9
Event Courses	5.6 km	Enduro – 3 loops 19.2, 10.9, 13.8km			Back Yamma Big Foot 27.1km course	Chilla in Bathzilla	6 hour course 12.7km					
Other Facilities	Skills Park Jump Track					Olympic Standard BMX track						
Listed by NSWMTB	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No

Source: Trailforks and NSWMTB



10.4.3 Suitability of Weddin Shire

Weddin Shire is ideal for cycle tourism. Its strengths include:

- Diversity of areas to ride for road cycling, gravel grinding and mountain-biking.
- Network of low traffic local and regional sealed and unsealed roads enabling various size 'loop' rides for both road cycling and gravel grinding.
- Crown reserves and State Forests that could be used to develop a network of gravel grinding and mountain-bike trails.
- Potential for a 30km long rail trail through stunning country – providing a signature attraction and focal point for cycling in the Shire.
- Suitable topography for cycling – primarily flat to undulating with a few hills for those looking for a challenge.
- Scenically very attractive area to ride, with rich agricultural land, bushland, Weddin Mountains National Park, State Forests and forested ranges.
- 'Well-spaced' towns and villages within Weddin Shire and surrounding LGAs, most with cafes / eateries.
- Enthusiastic groups of local cyclists.
- Strong and growing cycling fraternity within the surrounding region, with the region having a range of social groups and affiliated cycling and MTB clubs.
- The Shire is already part of informal cycle touring routes, with a visit to the Shire generally part of a longer route linking the ACT, Young, Cowra and return.
- Weddin Shire has some recognition for the Tour de Greenethorpe and has been approached to host other cycling events.

The limited supply of accommodation and lack of a bicycle shop /or access to bicycle spares are constraints. The limited supply of accommodation can be partially overcome by targeting day trips from the regional market and promoting the pub hotel accommodation available in Grenfell and the villages. Both the Railway Hotel in Grenfell and the Bland Hotel in Quandialla are ideal for smaller groups. For events, Weddin Shire will need to work with adjoining towns with Cowra, Forbes and Young having the accommodation to support a large event in Weddin Shire. There is also potential to hire in a 'tent city' which could be located in the railway precinct, Showground or racecourse in Grenfell or the sports grounds in the villages.

There is potentially an opportunity for an existing business in Grenfell that is open 7 days per week, to carry a limited range of bicycle spares. As cycling grows, there may be opportunities for a bicycle shop and/or bicycle hire. Bicycle shops in popular cycling destinations have introduced a small café.

Figure 10.14 Members of the Audax Cycling Club visiting Grenfell as part of their Sydney – Melbourne Ride



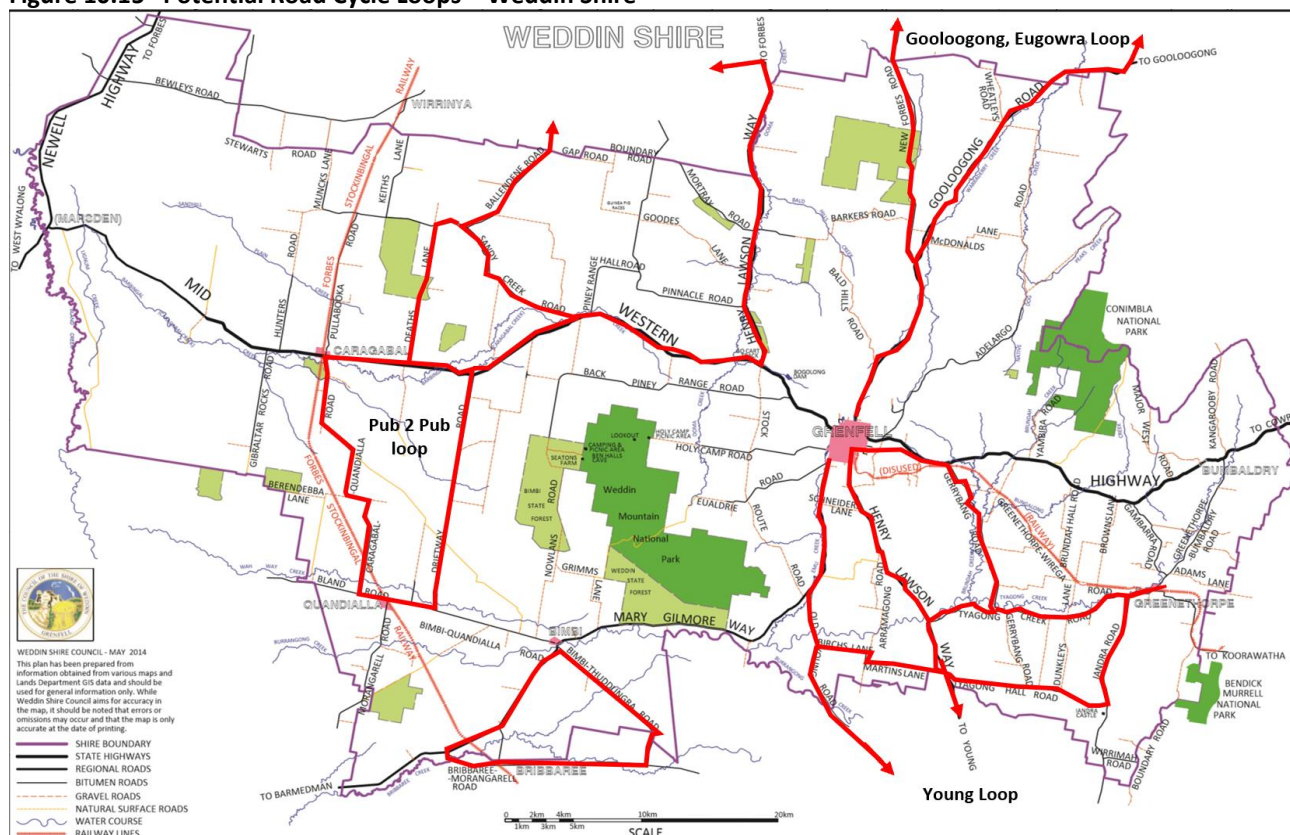


10.4.4 The Opportunities

With the road network there is opportunity to promote road and gravel grinding almost immediately, with this supported by promoting the mountain-biking opportunities currently available. Road and gravel grinding cycle events could also be introduced almost immediately. Investment will be needed to assess the Shire's potential for the development of a mountain-bike park and/or a network of trails and to establish off-road cycleways, including a rail trail.

- **Road Cycling:** Weddin Shire has a network of low traffic, local and regional roads connecting Grenfell to the villages and other attractions and points of interest (eg landra Castle) and onto towns and villages in surrounding LGAs. This provides the opportunity to promote a range of road cycling loops, ranging in length from 10km around town to 200+ kilometres. Road cycling loops suggested by Grenfell cyclists are shown in Figure 10.13. There may be potential to re-instate the Tour de Greenethorpe as a road cycling event and to introduce other events.

Figure 10.15 Potential Road Cycle Loops – Weddin Shire



- **Gravel Grinding:** Gravel grinding is the newest and fastest growing cycling sector. It involves routes that incorporate a mix of sealed and unsealed roads as well as fire trails and if accessible, mountain bike tracks. It is suitable for some road bikes as well as hybrid and mountain bikes. While other LGAs in the region are promoting road cycle routes, there appears to be no promotion of routes for 'gravel grinding'. The Gears and Beers Festival in Wagga has introduced two gravel grinding races (Filthy 50 and Dirty 130) which have proved very popular. A few other destinations in NSW have also introduced gravel grinding events which are attracting increasing numbers of participants. With the road network and access to State Forest roads and fire trails in the National Parks and Crown Reserves (eg Company Dam), Weddin Shire has the potential to become the centre for gravel grinding for Central NSW and the Eastern Riverina Area. It would need to move quickly to 'claim the space'.

Gravel grinding routes suggested by Grenfell cyclists include:

- **Weddin Mountains National Park loop** – potentially including sections of Back Piney Range Road, routes in the Bimbi State Forest and the fire trails in the Weddin Mountains National Park, Nowlans Road, Grimms Lane, Weddin State Forest and Stock Route Road.



- **The Northern Loop** – Adelargo Road turning west at McDonalds Lane, Stumpy Lane to the Warraderry State Forest, or going further north and using Wheatleys and Borehams Road to access the State Forest, returning via Barkers Road and Bald Hills Road and the trails that feed into Company Dam.
- **Greenethorpe – Conimbla National Park Loop** – utilising the roads to and through the Park. There is also potential for a longer route between Grenfell and Greenethorpe via Adelargo, Peaks Creek and Kangaroo Roads.

In addition, there is opportunity to:

- Promote the trails in the Conimbla and Bendick Murrell National Parks, other State Forests within the Shire, the Bogolong Hills (if accessible) and around Company Dam.
- Organise one or more gravel grinding events – the Grenfell Grind (possibly linked with coffee), the Weddin Mountains cycle muster.

Figure 10.16 Gravel grinding as part of Wagga’s Gears and Beers Festival



- **Mountain Biking:** The Shire’s State Forests and Crown Reserves may be suitable for cross country style mountain bike trails. There may also be an opportunity to build a pump track (eg in an old quarry or garbage tip area), a skills park (eg near Company Dam) and/or an Epic Trail in the Bogolong Hills or Warraderry State Forest. To attract mountain-bike enthusiasts and MTB events, the trails need to be professionally designed and constructed and then well maintained.
- **Rail Trail and Off-Road Cycleways:** Re-purposing the Grenfell – Greenethorpe rail corridor as a rail trail would provide a high-profile attraction and a focal point for cycle tourism (see Section 10.1). Council is also considering an off-road cycleway between Bogolong Dam and Grenfell. If the rail trail proceeds, there may also be opportunities to provide cycleway links to the O’Brien’s Hill precinct and to Company Dam.



- **Multi-sport events:** Weddin Shire could potentially host multi-sport events, such as a 'Dirty' Triathlon, Adventure Race, IronKids, and Ironman, using Bogolong and/or Company Dam, the Crown Reserves, the local road network, State Forests and the trails in the Weddin Mountain National Park (which are ideal for trail running).

10.4.5 Directions Forward

Road cycling and gravel grinding can be activated almost immediately, while mountain biking will take longer to establish.

Road Cycling and Gravel Grinding:

- Establish a Grenfell cycle tourism working group involving Council's Tourism and possibly engineering staff and local cycling enthusiasts.
- Identify and assess potential road cycling and gravel grinding routes. The assessment needs to include driving / riding the routes and identifying any potential issues, places where road works may be needed, signage requirements etc.
- Provide cycle support infrastructure: signage; bike racks in Grenfell and potentially outside of the village pubs; a cycle hose-down area.
- Explore with local businesses, the opportunity to carry a range of bicycle spares.
- Prepare detailed route maps and accompanying route notes.
- Produce information and promotional collateral (print and on-line) – with information to include the routes, accommodation and other services.
- List the routes on relevant on-line data bases and directories, eg: 'map my ride', Bicycle NSW rides, Cycle NSW rides etc.
- Distribute print information to all cycle shops within 3 hours of Weddin Shire.
- Formulate possible itineraries and packages and direct market to cycle clubs and groups within the surrounding region.

Mountain Biking:

- Commission a study to assess the mountain-bike potential of Weddin Shire, including the development of an MTB park, MTB trails, pump track, skills park and an EPIC trail.

Figure 10.17 MTB Pump Track (left) and Skills Park (right)



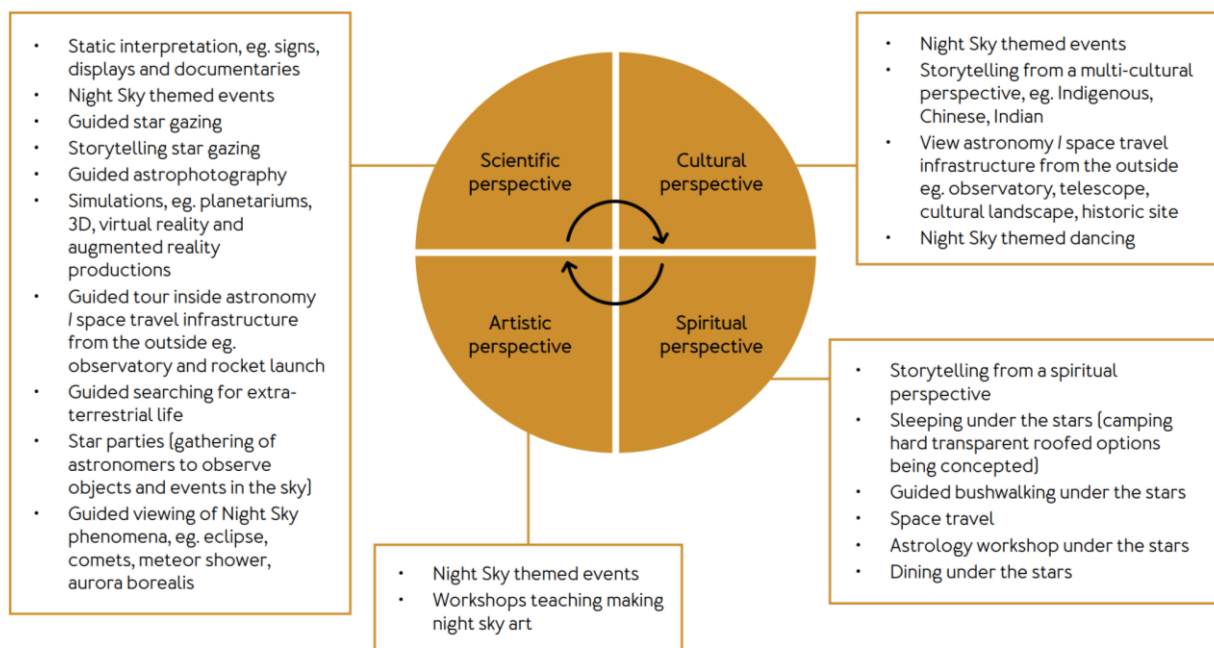
Events:

- Re-instate and grow the Tour de Greenethorpe.
- Assess the potential to introduce a signature 'Gravel Grind' event.
- Assess the potential to introduce a cycling festival – community and/or competitive events; single or multiple disciplines.
- Explore options for cycling clubs / groups in the surrounding area to run events in Weddin Shire.
- Explore options to encourage commercial event organisers (eg Rocky Trail Entertainment) to host events in Weddin Shire.

10.5 Night Skies Tourism

The Country and Outback Destination Management Plan identifies the night skies as a significant asset for the region, with night skies tourism being a priority for product development. Night skies tourism is defined as 'a focus on the visitor seeing, hearing, sensing, learning and enjoying the sky at night-time'. DNCO have prepared a 'Night Skies Experience Concept Plan' to guide the development of night skies experiences. The Plan focuses primarily on identifying possible approaches to leveraging the night sky and developing commercial activities.

Figure 10.18 Product variations of Nights Skies Tourism positioned in scientific, cultural, artistic and spiritual dimensions



Source: Destination Network Country and Outback (2019) Night Skies Experience Concept Plan

Fundamental to night skies tourism is a high quality, very dark night sky with a high likelihood of clear skies and a lack of light pollution. The night sky above Weddin Shire meets these requirements. Due to the relatively small size of the Grenfell urban area, the distance to larger towns and the surrounding agricultural land, forested ranges and Weddin Mountains National Park, the night sky above Weddin Shire is relatively free of light pollution. The air is also dry which enhances the viewing experience.

10.5.1 Opportunities

Potential opportunities for Weddin Shire to capitalise on the quality of its night sky includes:

- Seek to have the area declared a 'Dark Skies Park'. There are currently three internationally accredited Dark Sky areas in Australia – the Warrumbungle Dark Sky Park, River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve in South Australia and the Jump Up Dark Sky Sanctuary in Queensland. Information on the process of becoming a Dark Sky accredited locality is available from the International Dark Sky Association (www.darksky.org) and the Australasian Dark Sky Alliance (www.australasiandarkskyalliance.org).
- Designate a place or places in the Grenfell area as night sky viewing areas. Possible locations are O'Brien's Hill (depending on the level of light pollution from the town) and Bogolong Dam, with 'quirky' viewing benches provided to encourage use. Star charts could be sold through the VIC. Travellers could also be encouraged to download a star gazing App.
- Incorporate star gazing into itineraries developed for social groups (eg car clubs). The Central West Astronomical Society can be 'booked' to deliver the activity. One of the members of the Society lives in Grenfell and is potentially interested in providing star gazing activities as a micro-business. Building onto this, there may be opportunity to offer highly personalised viewing experiences that travellers can pre-book.
- Encourage one or more property owners to install star-gazing bubble tents.

Figure 10.19 Examples of 'quirky' benches that could be installed as a night skies viewing site



Figure 10.20 Examples of Bubble Tents





10.6 Agri-tourism

Agri-tourism is defined as a visit to a farm or farm-food related business (eg paddock to plate restaurant, farmer's market, cheesery, winery) for enjoyment, education and/or to participate in activities and events. It can include farm stay accommodation, on-farm camping, farm tours, workshops and classes (eg cheese-making), farm gate outlets and paddock-to-plate experiences.

The development of food, wine and agri-tourism is a priority for Tourism Australia, Destination NSW and each of the NSW Destination Networks. Within the region surrounding Weddin Shire, the Orange 360 alliance, Cowra and Hilltops LGAs and parts of the Riverina Region have very strong food-wine-agri tourism products. Temora, Junee and Coolamon Shires are working together as the 'Canola Trail' to build agri-tourism with their anchor attractions being Coolamon Cheese, the Junee Liquorice Factory and a new micro-brewery and distillery that is currently being established in Temora Shire. Temora Shire Council also owns the Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre which has a very strong industry-education-research focus which brings high yield business travellers into the area.

Weddin Shire is a significant agricultural area specialising in mixed farming with the main activities being the production of prime lamb, grains and oilseeds. Visitors to the Shire are interested in the agriculture, with VIC staff constantly being asked questions about the crops, machinery and activities that visitors see as they travel through the Shire. Almost all produce leaves the Shire for processing, with virtually no value-adding occurring locally. Locally produced lamb and beef is not available in local stores. Lamb can be purchased on-line from Weddin Farms for households in Sydney, Canberra and the Southern Highlands, while beef (bulk packs) are available from Ochre Arch Farm for households located within 3 hours of Weddin Shire.

The agri-tourism products and experiences available in Weddin Shire are limited to:

- Weddin Farms: farm stay accommodation (1 cottage) with the fridge stocked with farm produce (lamb, eggs and fresh vegetables and guests able to participate in some farm activities. Weddin Farms also sells its produce (lamb, honey, eggs, chickpeas and flour) on-line.
- Ochre Arch Farm Tours: guided eco and agricultural tours personalised to guest interests. A primitive camping area (no facilities) is available on the farm. Ochre Arch also sells prime beef (bulk packs) on-line within Weddin Shire and surrounding region.
- Mountain View Honey – sold in utilitarian jars and buckets.
- Quandialla Candle Company – producing soy candles, bees wax products and goats milk soaps.

Weddin Shire also has two unique heritage farming attractions – landra Estate and its role in the development of the Australian wheat industry and the introduction of share farming; and Seaton's Farm – a depression era operation.

10.6.1 The Opportunities

In the short-term, there is opportunities to capitalise on the interest in agri-tourism and the Shire's agricultural production by:

- Continuing to promote the farm experiences offered by Ochre Arch and Weddin Farms.
- Developing and promoting 'canola trails' and 'canola viewing areas' during the canola season, potentially linking with the trails promoted in Temora and Cowra Shires to draw travellers into Weddin Shire. There may be opportunity for one of the Hotels to install a micro-brewery or distillery, utilising local grain.
- Showcasing the Shire agriculture through the VIC. This can be achieved cost-effectively using a digital screen with short video clips. (Note there may be logistical issues due to the location and limited size of the VIC). There would also be opportunity to provide virtual reality farm experiences.



- Showcasing / selling local produce (eg honey, candles) through the Grenfell VIC, with the VIC also carrying information and promotional material for producers that sell on-line.
- Seeking publicity for quirky / quality operators such as ‘Spannerman’ coffee.
- Working with the pub hotels that ‘do meals well’ to promote these as part of a country-drive.
- Include a crop and harvest guide in the Visitor Guide and/or as a separate brochure. Information can also be included on the tourism website and with crop up-dates posted on the tourism Facebook page.
- Re-instate the ‘Breakfast Table’ Farmers’ Market or similar style event.

If farmers are interested in agri-tourism, the NSW Small Business Commissioner in conjunction with Service NSW, has recently undertaken an agri-tourism pilot program which involved working with nine farmers on the Liverpool Plains to scope and establish agri-tourism businesses. NSW Small Business Commissioner is looking to roll-out this program in other LGAs. Weddin Shire could ask for the program to be offered locally. Australian Regional Tourism (ART) is also looking at options for delivering agri-tourism training.

Figure 10.20 Agri-tourism experiences and products – Weddin Shire: Collecting eggs and prime lamb at Weddin Farms (top left and right); Ochre Arch Farm – Black Angus Beef (middle right), Canola crops (bottom left) and Quandialla Candles (bottom right)





11. GROWING THE EVENTS SECTOR

11.1 Overview

The events sector includes:

- Festivals and community-based events
- Business events – conferences, meetings, exhibitions, business-related functions
- Functions – corporate, community, social – eg weddings, celebrations, awards etc
- Sporting events
- Entertainment (eg concerts, touring shows)

Events have a core role to play in growing the visitor economy, strengthening key themes, showcasing and celebrating the Shire and its communities, and enhancing lifestyle. Locally, events are part of the cultural and social fabric of the area, providing an opportunity to bring visitors and residents together, ‘tell the stories’, and create memorable experiences. For visitors, events provide a reason to visit – they are essentially a ‘call to action’, encouraging consumers to ‘visit now’. Events also generate publicity and focus attention on the area. They can be a key driver in the economic, social and cultural development and play a role in the ‘tree change’ process. Benefits generated by events typically include:

- **Economic** – money coming into the community with event organizers and visitors spending money in the area (eg venue and equipment hire fees, accommodation, food and beverage, transport and fuel, local services etc). Through the multiplier effect, this money works its way through the community.
- **Social** – opportunity for the local community to interact with other community members and visitors to the area, participate in activities and be exposed to new ideas and concepts. Events can strengthen the community spirit and build pride.
- **Cultural** – adds another dimension to the lifestyle of the area, provides opportunities for creative and cultural expression as well as the opportunity to show-case the area, its people and its skills.
- **Environmental** – places a value on environmental assets and increases the utilization of these assets.
- **Publicity** – generates increased awareness of the area both directly (ie to the participant) and more broadly through media coverage (regional, national, international), digital mediums (eg internet, social networking) and word-of-mouth. The dollar value of the publicity generated can be far more than the LGA’s annual marketing and promotional budget.

On the downside, events are demanding and resource intensive to organize and host. Most events are generally looking for some form of sponsorship from the local community. Many events rely on volunteers, with volunteer burnout being a significant issue in small communities. Volunteers often do not have the skills and resources to ‘grow’ the event, nor to effectively market and promote. The localities that have been the most successful in growing their events sector are those where the event organisers work closely with the Tourism / VIC staff, with the Tourism staff providing specialist skills, eg planning advice, business planning, marketing and promotion, and having in place the information and processes (eg manuals, planning templates etc), that help event organisers navigate the planning and approval process.

While VICs tend to promote most of the events held in their LGAs, in terms of using events to grow the visitor economy, it is important to distinguish between ‘community’ events and ‘tourism’ events. Community events are those that attract mainly local residents and include events such as Australia Day, Naidoc Week, Anzac Day, charity fund raisers, debutant balls etc.

Tourism events are those that attract visitors to the area, generating economic benefits for the host community. There are five broad types of tourism events, each of which has different implications in terms of the demands on Council and the Community, and the funds and resources required.



- **Multi-faceted events:** These include a range of activities generally built around a core theme. These events are generally organised locally by Council and/or an Event Committee and tend to rely heavily on volunteers – eg Henry Lawson Festival. These events are generally the most resource and funding intensive to organise, often requiring planning approval as well as the coordination of a range of venues, facilities, activities and organisations/ people.
- **Open days and exhibitions:** These include historic houses, industry tours, garden festivals and gallery events, with visitors coming to the area specifically to ‘have a look’. The demands on Council and the community are generally minimal.
- **Sporting and sports related events** – eg Weddin Mountain Muster, Kart Races, Golf Tournaments, Horse Races. While these events are often organised or hosted by local volunteers, the organisational process is generally not as complicated as multi-faceted events (although still demanding), with these events using purpose-built venues, having relatively set formats and procedures, and generally not requiring planning approval.
- **Entertainment including Music Festivals:** Can be organised locally or by a commercial promoter.
- **Events organised by external parties:** that use the Shire as a venue – eg. car, caravan and motorcycle rallies, cycling and mountain biking events, music festivals. These events generally come with their own event organiser / organising committee. They have minimal impact on local resources with the main demands being on the venue manager to ensure that the venue is adequately prepared in accordance with the event specifications.

Events organised by external parties are usually the most cost and resource effective events for an area to host.

11.2 Weddin Shire Events

Weddin Shire has a diverse calendar of community and tourism events. The main tourism events are summarised in Table 11.1. Events are concentrated in spring and autumn.

The Henry Lawson Festival is the Shire’s signature event. The Festival has been running for more than 60 years and attracts around 10,000 people over the June Long Weekend. As a multi-faceted event it requires considerable resources to The Festival appears to be part of the community’s identity and has support locally. It draws visiting friends and relatives and residents from the surrounding region. Based on survey results for 2018, it appears that the festival is ‘tired’ and needs to be revamped.

The landra Castle open days are popular and generate on-line and media coverage for the Shire. The Weddin Mountain Muster is popular and books out each year. The Caragabal Sheep Races are a ‘fun’ event for the family market and are gaining traction regionally. The Kart Club holds monthly meetings that bring competitors into the Shire. It has also hosted State events and hires out the complex to other Kart Clubs (including the Vintage Karts in September and a round of the TEKA Endurance Series in June), with these activities booking out the town. The Bob Hinde Memorial Kart Day is one of the largest karting events in NSW, attracting 150 karts and 500-600 people. The Bland Hotel at Quandialla occasionally provides live entertainment, with this being popular with the regional community.

The Grenfell VIC maintains a Shire-wide events calendar and promotes events through the Grenfell tourism website and Facebook page. The VIC staff also list relevant events on NSW Connect / ATDW data base, with these promoted through the VisitNSW and Central NSW tourism websites and Facebook pages. The VIC also prepares local media releases for the Grenfell Record and regional media releases for publications such as Discover Magazine.

Table 11.1 Events that attract visitors to Weddin Shire

Month	Event	Duration (Days)
Annual Events		
March	Jack Grants St Patricks Golf Day	1
	Southern Star Series: Grenfell Kart Club	2
April	Grenfell Picnic Races	1
May	Grenfell Rodeo	1



Month	Event	Duration (Days)
June	Henry Lawson Festival	3
	Caragabal Camp Oven Cook Off	1
July	Bob Hinde Memorial Kart Day	3
September	Grenfell Show	2
	Caragabal Sheep Races	1
	Grenfell Jockey Club Race Day	1
	Weddin Mountain Muster	6
October	Open Gardens	2
	Team Penning	1
Regular Events / Activities that attract visitors to the Shire		
Iandra Castle Open Days		4-6 times / year
Grenfell Kart Club		Monthly Race Days
Grenfell Art Gallery – Changing exhibitions		Every 6 weeks

11.3 Opportunities to Build the Events Sector

Opportunities to build both the events sector and events-based visitation include:

- **Grow participation in and/or attendance at existing events:** This can be achieved by the VIC staff working with the organisers of events that have the potential to attract non-local participants / attendees. The events that appear to have the most potential to increase visitation are the Iandra Castle Open Days, the Caragabal Sheep Races, the Open Gardens weekend and the Picnic and Jockey Club Races. In addition to the support currently provided by the VIC staff, there may also be opportunities to:
 - Raise the profile of the event within the surrounding region.
 - Direct market to special interest groups.
 - Package the event with other accommodation and/or activities in the Shire.
 - Package and direct market the event to coach wholesalers and/or coach companies that organise tours.
- **Organise / attract events that leverage the Shire's outdoor assets** including its road network, Bogolong and Company Dams, the National Parks and State Forests. Events could include road cycling, gravel grinding, trail running, long distance running, dirty Tri, adventure racing, orienteering, rogaining, a birding conference etc. Bogolong and Company Dams may provide opportunities to host events during summer.
- **Grow the Karting Market:** work with the Grenfell Kart Club to improve the track, grow event participation, bid for State events and promote the Kart complex to other Clubs, encouraging them to hold events in Grenfell. There may also be opportunity for the Club to organise / host an off-road kart event in one of the State Forests.
- **Attracting caravan and RV club chapter rallies and events:** utilising the Grenfell showground, racecourse or station precinct and/or the Village facilities.
- **Attracting car and motorcycle club rallies:** potentially working with adjoining LGAs to leverage automotive-based attractions and events.
- **Identify and target footloose events that could be held in Weddin Shire** – bidding for events, as well as direct marketing the Shire's venues to event organisers and promoters.
- **Leveraging major events in surrounding Shires:** positioning Weddin Shire to attract 'overflow' accommodation bookings during major events in surrounding LGAs.



11.4 Challenges Faced

The challenges faced by Weddin Shire in growing its event sector include:

- Limited motel, hotel and BnB accommodation. This results in event attendees staying in surrounding towns and is a deterrent for commercial event organisers holding events in Weddin Shire. This can be addressed by:
 - Working co-operatively with surrounding towns so that everyone benefits. The event program can be designed to focus non-accommodation spending in Weddin Shire and quid pro quo arrangements put in place for overflow bookings to be referred to surrounding towns on the proviso that surrounding towns refer overflow bookings to Weddin Shire during their major events.
 - Focusing on events and activities where participants are happy to camp – eg horse events, karting events.
 - Organising / hosting day events that target participants from the surrounding region.
 - Focusing on smaller events – it is far more beneficial for the local economy to have six events of 200-300 people spread over six weekends, than one large event.
- Most of the Shire's accommodation operators do not have websites and are not listed with on-line booking sites, with some not accepting credit cards. This makes it difficult for event attendees to source and book accommodation in the Shire.
- Most local events are run by volunteers. Volunteer numbers are declining, and the Shire does not have large service clubs to assist. In addition, meeting increased regulatory requirements (including obtaining development approval, need to submit traffic management plans and have accredited traffic controllers) and marketing and promoting the event is well beyond the capacity of most volunteers.
- None of the events held in the Shire appear to have a business plan or framework for growing the event.
- Weddin Shire Council does not have the resources and protocols in place that make it easy for event organisers to stage an event in the Shire. Most Councils have some form of event manual or guidelines in place and a nominated contact officer to advise and assist organisers, negotiate the regulatory process and coordinate Council's support and involvement.
- Infrastructure and facilities at the Shire's primary event venues (Showground, Racecourse, Kart Complex, Village Sports and Recreation Grounds) are deteriorating, with the community groups running these venues not having the funds and resources to rectify the problems. For example, the Kart Track needs an investment of around \$350,000 to repair and extend the track, otherwise it will lose its licence in 2022. In addition, the Showground, Racecourse and Recreation grounds are not being marketed as event venues.

11.5 Directions Forward

- As the first step, Council needs to put in place the framework, resources and protocols to facilitate and support events within the Shire. This includes reviewing planning regulations and policies, formulating event guidelines and/or manual, appointing a point of contact for all event organisers, defining internal communication channels and process protocols and formulating policies/assessment framework in relation to Council funding and in-kind support.
- Identify the events that have the potential to grow and work with event organisers to develop and implement a business / action plan.
- Explore options to leverage the Shire's venues and assets to hold / attract events and support and work with venue managers to upgrade venue infrastructure and facilities (see Chapter 13).



- Identify and target footloose events (eg music festivals, cycling and other outdoor events, birding conferences) that could potentially be held in the Shire.
- Explore options to target car, motorcycle, caravan and RV club rallies and events.
- Leverage major events within the surrounding region to generate bookings for accommodation properties in Weddin Shire.

Figure 11.1 Events in Weddin Shire – clockwise: Henry Lawson Festival, Weddin Mountain Muster, Caragabal Sheep Races, Karting, Grenfell Picnic Races, Grenfell Rodeo.





**Infrastructure
Facilities
Services**



12. ACCOMMODATION

12.1 Supply

There are 19 commercial accommodation properties in Weddin Shire plus a range of caravan and camping options.

15 of the properties are located in Grenfell. The town has:

- A small, basic motel (20 rooms) of around 3 star standard.
- Four historic pub hotels three of which provide basic rooms with shared facilities, and the fourth providing a two bedroom self-contained apartment (4 star equivalent standard).
- Four hosted B&B properties, two of which are self-contained. The historic Grenfell Hall has a high profile and is very popular, while the Calico Duck is known for its breakfasts.
- Four self-contained houses – one of which is serviced daily.
- Farm stay – just out of town, with one of the features being access to the farm's produce.
- Grenfell Caravan Park – operated by Council and providing 3 cabins, 17 powered sites and 4 unpowered sites.

The former Exchange Hotel in Grenfell has 10 rooms which are currently not available but may be refurbished and brought back on-line in the future. Weddin Shire Council is considering amending planning controls to permit the rear and upstairs areas of retail properties to be converted to 'shop-top housing' and visitor accommodation. The Grenfell Bowling Club is exploring the feasibility of developing accommodation – possibly a motel or cabins.

The accommodation available in the villages is limited. The Royal Hotel at Caragabal has 3 basic rooms. The Bland Hotel at Quandialla has 14 rooms with shared facilities and a small caravan park with 10 powered sites and an amenities block. Powered and unpowered sites are also available at the Quandialla Showground, however these are rarely used. Circa 1935 Café and B&B at Greenethorpe provides three rooms. The Shamrock Hotel has six rooms (currently not in use).

The Shire offers a range of caravan and camping sites including:

- Grenfell Caravan Park – 3 cabins, 17 powered sites, 4 unpowered sites
- The Bland Hotel Quandialla – 10 powered sites plus amenities
- The Station Precinct in Grenfell – free camping area with an amenities block which is maintained by the Lions Club.
- Ben Hall Campground in the Weddin Mountains National Park - Campground with toilets and picnic – the area has around 10 formed sites with vehicle parking plus informal sites.
- Holy Camp Campground in the Weddin Mountains National Park – primitive campground with toilet and picnic facilities.
- Conimbla National Park Campground (in Cowra Shire but right on the border of Weddin Shire).
- Ochre Arch Farm – primitive camping area with no facilities. Site fees apply.
- Free camping area adjacent to the playground in Caragabal.
- Low cost powered and unpowered sites at the Quandialla Showground
- Grenfell Showground – powered sites but only available for events.
- Bogolong Kart Track – powered sites but only available for track users.
- State Forests – camping is permitted in all Forests in the Shire, with the only restriction being that no camping is allowed adjacent to stock watering points.

Travellers also occasionally stay overnight at Company Dam, Burrangong Creek corridor in Bimbi and in the highway rest areas. There is also potential for free or low-cost camping in Greenethorpe – adjacent to Memorial Hall, at the Recreation Ground and/or on land owned by the Shamrock Hotel.

Figure 12.1 Grenfell Caravan Park





Table 12.1 Commercial Accommodation available in Weddin Shire

Property	Type	Rooms	On-Line Presence			
			Website	Direct bookings: Website	Acc. Booking Site	Facebook
Grenfell						
Grenfell Motel	Motel	20	Yes			
Grenfell Hall	Hosted B&B	3	Yes	Yes	Booking.com Airbnb	
Calico Duck	Hosted B&B	2	No	No		No
Garden Room	Hosted B&B S/C	1	Yes	No	Airbnb	No
Lonsdale@ Willowcroft	Hosted B&B S/C	1	No	No		No
Wondiligong	Hosted B&B S/C	2	No	No		No
Number 8	Serviced Apt	2	No	No		No
Strayleaves	House	4	No	No		No
Wheatfield Cottage	House / Farm Stay	3	Weddin Farm	No		
James Cottage	House	3	No	No		No
Criterion on Main	Apartment: pub hotel	2	No	No	Airbnb	Yes
Albion Hotel	Pub Hotel	5	Yes	Yes		Yes
Railway Hotel	Pub Hotel	15	No	No		Yes
Royal Hotel	Pub Hotel		No	No		Yes
Grenfell Caravan Park	Caravan Park	3 cabins 22 sites	Yes	No		No
Ochre Arch Farm	Primitive Camping		Yes	No		Yes
Greenethorpe						
Circa 1935 B&B	B&B	3	No	No	Airbnb	Yes
Shamrock Hotel#	Pub Hotel	6	No	No	No	Yes
Quandialla						
The Bland Hotel	Pub Hotel + 10 Sites	14 rooms	Quandialla	No	No	Yes
Caragabal						
The Royal Hotel	Pub Hotel	3	No	No	No	Yes

The rooms in the Shamrock Hotel are currently not available

12.2 Performance

There are no published statistics on the performance of accommodation properties in Weddin Shire. Based on discussions with operators and observations from VIC staff:

- Accommodation in Grenfell is generally booked out during events and large social functions (eg weddings).
- Mid-week, the motel, hotels and some B&Bs primarily attract business and work-related travellers, with mid-week occupancy at the motel being relatively high.
- The main weekend markets are people coming into town to attend events, short-breaks (primarily a B&B market) and long haul travellers. The properties also attract some bookings from major events in the surrounding region.
- Grenfell Hall is the best performing property consistently achieving occupancy rates in excess of 90%. This is due to the quality of the property and the ability to book on-line through booking.com and AirBnB. The Hall is the only property in Grenfell that is listed on a commercial on-line booking website.
- The village hotels mainly attract work-related visitors (railway workers, harvesters, drilling crews etc). The Bland Hotel at Quandialla also attracts regional residents on weekends and car and motorcycle groups.
- There is a constant stream of caravans and RVs staying at the Station Precinct free camping area. Numbers have increased since the silos were painted.
- The Ben Hall Precinct campground is at capacity at Easter and October long weekend, and is generally close to capacity during the Spring and Autumn school holidays. Midweek, outside of school holidays, there is generally a few caravans in the campground, with numbers increasing on weekends.
- At Easter and October long weekend, groups (generally with 4WD and/or registered trail bikes) camp in some of the State Forests.



Figure 12.2 The Bland Hotel at Quandialla is popular with motor cycle groups



12.3 On-line Presence

Travellers primarily seek inspiration, research and book accommodation on-line. World-wide, 94% of travellers are travelling with at least one digital device¹⁴, and use this device to research and book accommodation. The internet is the main source of information used in researching and booking accommodation, with travellers seeking information on accommodation on review sites (eg Trip Advisor), on-line travel agencies (eg booking.com, wotif) and direct from property websites. Travellers also use common search terms, such as 'motel near me' (which draws from Google businesses listings) and social media sites, particularly Facebook and You Tube, in identifying and researching properties.

To be effective in the marketplace, accommodation properties need to have a website that is well presented with quality images and video clips. The website needs to be semantic search responsive (eg respond to an 'okay google find accommodation near me'; 'find somewhere to stay in Grenfell', and optimised for mobile digital devices (smart phones and tablets) and voice search. 88% of travellers researching on smart phones will switch to another accommodation property if the website is not mobile optimised.¹⁵ Websites also need to have a direct booking facilities (a book now option). Accommodation properties also need to be represented on the main on-line travel agency sites.

Travellers are also increasingly looking at review sites such as Trip Advisor and Google Review, as well as aggregator sites such as Trivago. Recent research has shown that 53% of Trip Advisor users will not book an accommodation property unless it has reviews and that 70% of users read up to 20 reviews before booking. Very few of the properties in Weddin Shire appear to be actively encouraging guests to submit reviews, nor are they responding to reviews.

Within the Shire, only 6 of the properties have websites. Three of the websites have been developed by the Grenfell Internet Centre and are very basic. Most of the websites list the accommodation available and the prices, but do not provide information on what to do in the Shire nor do they feature up-coming events. Other than the Weddin Farms (Wheatfield Cottage) website, the sites are not semantic search responsive nor optimised for mobile devices. The Albion Hotel website is not identified by search engines but is listed and linked to the Hotel's Facebook page. The Hotel's

¹⁴ Mytravelresearch.com

¹⁵ Mytravelresearch.com



webpage has a booking engine. Most of the hotels have Facebook pages which feature their eateries and pub activities, but not their accommodation.

All of the properties are listed on the Grenfell tourism website, with VIC staff also listing the properties on NSW connect, so that they are featured on the VisitNSW website. A third-party website, 'planbooktravel' has also 'picked' up the information from the Grenfell tourism website and lists most of the Shire's properties on their website. Grenfell Hall is the only property listed with a commercial on-line booking website (booking.com). Grenfell Hall, the Garden Room and the Criterion Hotel apartment are listed on and bookable from Airbnb.

As the accommodation properties are not listed on the commercial booking websites, these sites identify properties in Cowra, Young and sometimes, Forbes, in response to a searches for accommodation in Grenfell and the Shire villages. Booking.com identifies Grenfell Hall with Airbnb identifying 3 properties in Grenfell with these sites also promoting properties in adjoining LGAs.

12.4 Issues and Challenges

The key issues and challenges with the accommodation available in the Shire are:

- Accommodation capacity constraints, which limit the potential of the Shire to grow and host events.
- The Grenfell Motel is tired and dated and not meeting the needs or expectations of most travellers, particularly business travellers.
- Facilities at the Grenfell Caravan Park are tired. The amenities need to be updated and the cabins are approaching the end of their physical life. The Park would also like additional cabins, a few more concrete slabs and a dump point to meet demand.
- The operators of most of the B&B and self-contained accommodation properties are 'lifestyle' operators rather than 'business' operators. The operators are not interested in building their business or moving on-line and are dependent on the Grenfell tourism website and VIC staff to list and market their properties.
- Booking.com and Airbnb are the only accommodation booking websites that list properties in Weddin Shire. All of the booking websites feature properties from the surrounding region in response to searches for accommodation in Grenfell and the villages. Consequently, the Shire is losing bookings.
- Some accommodation operators in the Shire will not accept credit cards and require a bank transfer and/or cash only. These properties are not 'accessible' to the majority of business travellers, who are travelling on corporate credit cards.
- Signage to caravan and camping sites throughout the Shire is poor and needs to be up-dated.
- The proposed mining activity near Bribbaree just south of the Weddin Shire and at Marsden along the western edge of the Shire may exert pressure on the accommodation sector, in particularly the pub hotels and motel.

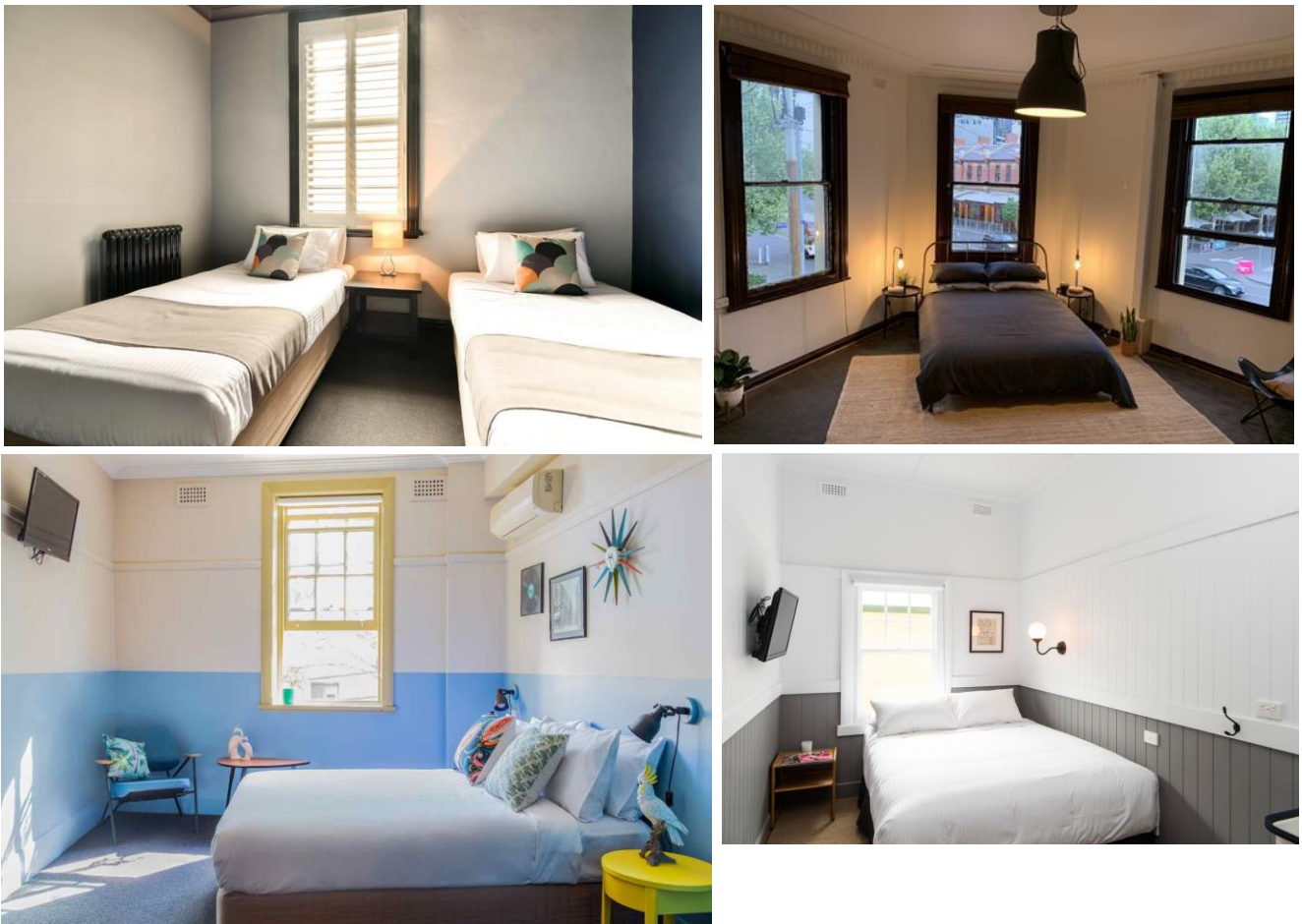
12.5 Directions Forward

- Continue to try to encourage accommodation operators to develop / upgrade their websites and to move to on-line bookings. The properties that need to be on-line and/or improve their websites are the Grenfell Motel, Grenfell Railway Hotel, the Bland Hotel and the Grenfell Caravan Park. By having the Motel and the two larger hotels on-line would give the Shire 39 rooms in the 'on-line' space.
- Encourage the development of a new motel in Grenfell.



- Commence the planning for upgrading the Grenfell Caravan Park. The Park should also be linked to the town centre with a sealed footpath.
- Encourage the establishment of a low cost / free camping area at Greenethorpe. To maximise economic benefits, the preferred location would be at the Shamrock Hotel. The Hotel should also be encouraged to provide a few self-contained cabins.
- Explore options to provide accommodation within the Grenfell Railway precinct – eg using rail carriages for accommodation.
- Produce a caravan and camping guide to Weddin Shire, with this including all caravan and camping options, including the State Forests and list the sites on on-line caravan and camping directories.
- Ensure that all caravan and camping sites in the Shire are well signposted, using international icons for caravans and camping.
- Ensure that planning controls permit visitor accommodation on rural properties and within the Grenfell and the villages and provide for temporary accommodation (eg a tent city) on sporting fields and reserves to support events.
- Encourage the pub hotels to refurbish their accommodation (painting, good mattress, soft furnishings and power points for charging digital devices) – providing attractive ‘pub stay’ accommodation and to list on sites such as pubrooms.com.au. Car clubs, motorcycle clubs and cyclists are potential markets for pub stays, with motorcyclists and cyclist needing somewhere secure to park their bikes.

Figure 12.3 Examples of revamped Pub Hotel Rooms





13. VENUES

Growing and capitalising on regional events and building the regional conference market are priorities of Destination NSW and the Destination Networks. DNSW has in place regional conferencing and regional event strategies which are looking to build capacity and infrastructure in regional NSW. The Destination Network DMPs have identified the need to continue to improve venue and event infrastructure.

As discussed in Chapter 11, events can be used to drive growth in visitation, with the key opportunities for Weddin Shire lying in outdoor events that leverage the Shire's road network, National Parks, State Forests, Crown Reserves and waterways.

13.1 Conferences / Business Events

Although a priority at regional and State level, Weddin Shire lacks the venues, accommodation and air services needed to compete effectively in this space. The Shire's meeting facilities are limited to:

- Grenfell Bowling Club: Three spaces – the Auditorium which seats 300 theatre style or 220 for a function, the Board Room which seats up to 60 theatre style and the Restaurant which seats 50. The rooms are mid-range in standard and basic equipment is available.
- The Hub in Grenfell – which has a small conference room which seats around 60 theatre style plus the adjoining Art Gallery space.
- The Committee Room in Council which seats up to 20, board room style.

The main Pavilion at the Grenfell Showground is suitable for exhibitions.

The focus for the Shire needs to be on ensuring that it hosts its 'share' of regional Council and Government meetings.

13.2 Outdoor Venues

Weddin Shire has a range of outdoor venues that have the capacity to host sporting and other events. The main venues are:

13.2.1 Grenfell Showground

The Grenfell Showground is a Crown Reserve managed by a community trust. The Showground is located on the northern edge of Grenfell and shares a boundary with the Crown Land adjoining Company Dam. The Showground is used for a range of activities including:

- Grenfell Show
- Weddin Mountain Muster – 6 day event with 110 participants
- Grenfell Rodeo – attracts around 300 entries and around 1000-1200 spectators.
- Pony Club
- Team Penning
- Occasional equine event.

Facilities include:

- Main arena
- Rodeo Ground and Pens



- Main Pavilion – The Pavilion is the largest function and exhibition space in Grenfell, able to seat over 300 people banquet style in the main hall. There is also a larger supper room and internal amenities.
- Several smaller pavilions and exhibition spaces
- Main grandstand and portable grandstands
- Stables
- Yards
- Camping area with powered sites and amenities. The camping area only operates during events held at the Showground.

Like many showgrounds in NSW, the Showground infrastructure is aging and needs to be replaced. The cost of replacement is well beyond the means of the Trust, with the Trust dependent on securing grants. The capital works needed include:

- Increase the number of stables: 36 new stables have been funded, with around 85 more stables needed.
- Power poles need to be replaced and the power upgraded and extended to the Rotunda.
- The rodeo ground needs competition standard night lighting and toilets.
- Water pipes need to be replaced.
- Some of the older buildings are white-ant affected.

The Showground facilities are available for hire, with the hire prices set to cover costs. According to local clubs and groups, the hire fees are too expensive, which is resulting in clubs hiring venues in adjoining LGAs for their activities and events. Potential external hirers would have difficulty finding the venue as the Showground does not have a website and there is virtually no information on-line about the venue.

Opportunities

The Showground has the potential to be used for a range of horse, livestock, poultry and other animal events, music festivals, motoring events (eg swap meets / show and shine) and caravan – RV club rallies. With the access to the Crown land adjacent to Company Dam, the Showground could also be used as a staging area for events (eg Adventure Racing). The main Pavilion is ideal for exhibitions, large functions and small entertainment events.

Directions Forward

- If not already in place, a Plan of Management needs to be prepared for the Showground, with this used to guide future development and to assist with securing grant funding.
- If the Showground Trust wants to increase use, then it needs to formulate a marketing strategy, with this to include establishing an on-line presence and direct marketing to potential users. As part of developing this strategy, it would be beneficial to identify activities undertaken at other showgrounds, case study how other showgrounds have increased their use and revenue base, and to compare hire fees.

13.2.2 Grenfell Racecourse

The Grenfell Racecourse is located on Holy Camp Road approximately 3.5 kilometres south west of Grenfell. The Racecourse is a Crown Reserve managed by a community trust. It is used for two horse racing events a year – the Grenfell Picnic Races in April and the Grenfell Jockey Club Races in September. Both events draw day and overnight visitors into the Shire. The course is also used for trotting training (most days) and the school cross country carnival. This year it will also be hosting the Regional School Cross Country Carnival.

The Racecourse infrastructure is very dated and at the end of its physical life. Funding has been secured to install a commercial kitchen and improve the canteen area, and to build a new amenities block. The Trust would also like to build a large multi-purpose room that could be used by the community as a function centre and is seeking funding to install an irrigation system.



Opportunities

The area inside the track could potentially be used to host events, for example:

- A large music festival.
- An obstacle race, such as a 'Raw Challenge', 'Spartan Race' or a 'Tough Mudder' (or a 'Ruff Mudder' for dogs). Obstacle races are growing in popularity and there does not appear to be a venue or event in Central NSW or the Riverina Region. (see www.obstacleracers.com.au)
- Mud trials – for cars. Mud Pits can be easily created and then filled in.

Being on Holy Camp Road, with ready access to Stock Route Road, the Racecourse could potentially be used as a staging area for a gravel grinding event.

13.2.3 Grenfell Kart Club – Bogolong Kart Complex

The Bogolong Kart Complex is a regional sporting facility. Karting is a growing sport, with people willing travel for events.

The Grenfell Kart Club holds monthly race days which bring around 40 families into the Shire. It also hires the complex to other Kart clubs for weekend events. These clubs generally bring around 200-300 people to Grenfell and stay in town for 2 to 3 nights. In the past, the Club has hosted major events, including State titles, that have attracted over 1,000 people for a 3 day stay.

Facilities at the Kart Complex include:

- Sealed track: 670 metres long with the capacity for 30 karts
- Pits
- Canteen
- Camping area with showers and toilets

With the introduction of new track standards in 2016, the Kart Track no longer meets compliance requirements and when the current licence expires (2022) may not be re-licensed. To comply, the site drainage needs to be improved and the track needs to be extended approximately 30 metres and re-surfaced. The Club is seeking grant funding to undertake this work. The Club would also like to install lighting to enable it to host twilight meets.

The Complex, if improved, could also attract more use by visiting kart clubs and regional events. It could also be used for other activities including drone racing, model car racing and solar vehicle challenges. The camping facilities at the Track could potentially be used to support events at Bogolong Dam.

Directions Forward

- Assist the Kart Club to apply for funding to address the issues with the track and to continue to improve facilities, to increase the Club's capacity to host events.
- Assist the Kart Club to bid for events and to market the complex to other Kart Clubs, inviting them to hire the venue for a weekend.
- Explore with the Kart Club, the possibility of holding an off-road karting event in Bimbi State Forest.



13.3 Village Venues

Caragabal, Quandialla and Greenethorpe each have a village hall and recreation/sports ground, with Quandialla also having a showground. While these facilities are primarily used for community events, they are potential venues for small events. The Halls are suitable for small exhibitions, functions, markets and small music events. The recreation / sports grounds could be used by clubs (eg car clubs, motorcycle clubs) for camping, small events (eg swap meets, family fun days) and event staging. The village of Nundle provides a good example, hosting the Nundle Country Picnic and the Great Nundle Dog Race.

Greenethorpe has the advantage of the recreation ground being located adjacent to the Memorial Hall, providing opportunities for functions such as family reunion weekends.

Directions Forward

- Assess the current condition of facilities and infrastructure of the village venues, identify opportunities and the capital works required to realise the opportunities.
- Include relevant projects in Council's Delivery, Operational and Asset Management Plans.
- Assist with identifying possible grants and preparing grant applications, including taking projects to 'shovel ready' stage.
- Assist the village hall and other committees to introduce events and market and promote their venues.

13.4 Potential Venues

As discussed in Chapters 9 and 10, the Shire has a range of assets that could be used to host events. These include:

- Iandra Castle
- State Forests
- National Parks
- Company Dam and surrounding crown reserves
- Bogolong Dam – Bogolong Hills
- Local and regional road network

Figure 13.1 The Shire's combination of dams, Forests, National Parks and gravel road network is ideal for adventure racing and other outdoor endurance style events





14. INFORMATION SERVICES & SIGNAGE

14.1 Importance of Information Services

Information services are integral in supporting visitation. Information services provide the communication link between the locality, the tourist trade and the visitor. These services support the Shire's marketing and promotion, are an important link between local businesses and visitors and, most importantly, make a visitor feel welcome and ensure that they are aware of the products and services available. Information needs to be available and readily accessible from a range of touch points and devices at all stages in the path to purchase, during the journey and at the destination. Information services extend well beyond the visitor, with services provided to tourism and business operators, the travel trade, government agencies, tourism organisations and the local community.

14.2 Sourcing Information

Web and digital technology have and are continuing to change the way in which consumers access and share information, select destinations and products, and book travel. Information sources used by consumers and the importance of different channels are summarised in Figures 14.1 to 14.3. Travellers now have access to an exponentially increasing range of information sources through an expanding number of touch points. To remain competitive, Weddin Shire needs to continue to expand its multiple channel use (traditional and online) to communicate targeted messages to consumers at each stage of the decision-making process.

On the downside, consumers have access to too much information creating a 'data surplus' and an 'insight deficit'. Consumers are increasingly relying on VIC staff to provide the 'insight'. The challenge for the Shire is to provide a range of information services that are authoritative, contemporary, comprehensive and unbiased, in a diverse range of formats that are responsive to individual needs.

Mobile devices (smart phones and tablets) have replaced computers as the starting point to search for inspiration for travel. Travellers are using multiple devices (referred to as 'cross platform') to research travel, with 89% of searches started on one device (frequently a smart phone and/or tablet) and completed on another. Most of the searches undertaken on mobile devices are 'micro minute' - short searches while people are waiting around (eg at the bus stop, on the train, in a cafe etc) with searchers primarily looking for 'inspiration'. At this stage, there is a very high propensity to view images, short videos (You Tube) and deals and offers.

94% of people are now travelling with one or more mobile devices¹⁶ (90% with smartphones, 42% with tablets and 26% with laptops/notebooks). Amongst those travelling with mobile devices, nearly three-quarters (71%) used them to navigate, source travel information, and/or to make bookings during their stay. VICs (42%) and word-of-mouth referrals are leading sources of information while in-region.

Videos have become one of the most important promotional tools. Destination videos are primarily used during the 'Dreaming' stage when travellers are searching for ideas and destinations. 85% of travel-related searches on YouTube focus on destinations, attractions, points of interest and general travel ideas¹⁷. Product (including accommodation) videos are more likely to be viewed during the planning stage when travellers are comparing products and prices. Travellers watch a mix of user generated and professionally made video clips. 58% of leisure travellers and 64% of business travellers advised that watching on-line videos influenced their choice of destination and/or products (eg accommodation, activities, tours) selected.

User Generated Content (USG), both as a communication tool and to share travel experiences, continues to increase. User generated content is broadly defined as any content (text, images, videos) posted on the web that is not published by a brand. It includes content such as blogs, comments, posts, forums, reviews, podcasts, videos and images, posted via on-line services, social media and content sharing sites. UGC provides another source of information, from a user perspective, with potential travellers interested in what other travellers have to say about a destination.

¹⁶ Mytravelresearch.com

¹⁷ Travel Content Takes off on YouTube www.thinkwithgoogle.com.au



Figure 14.1 Information Sources used in the Traveller's Path to Purchase and Journey

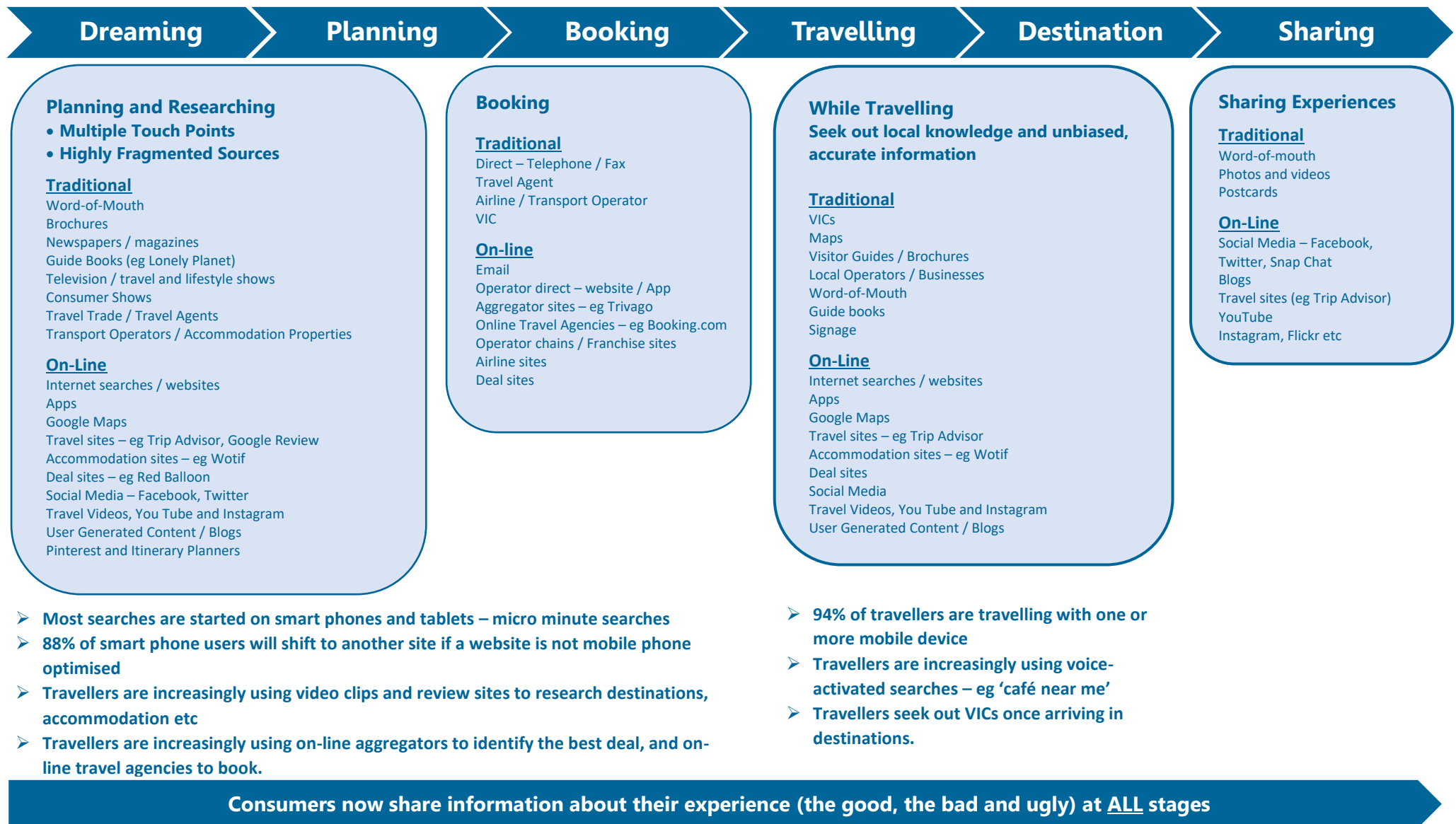




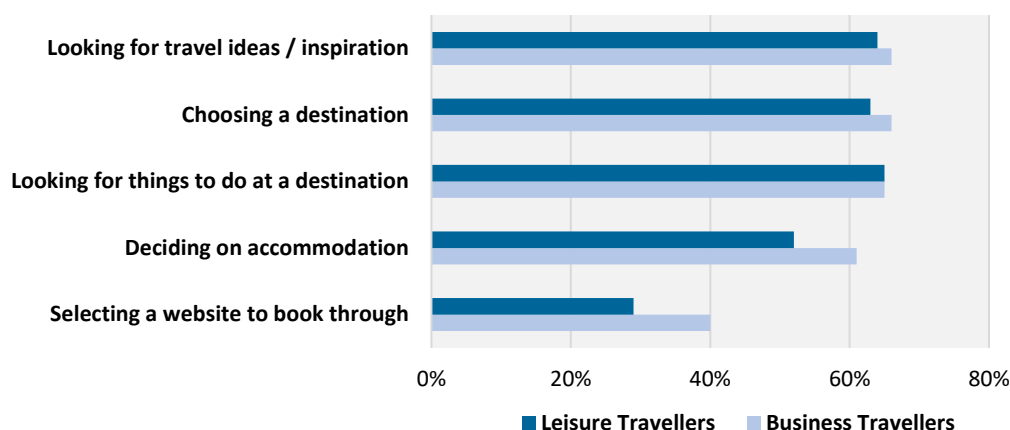
Figure 14.2 Information sources used by Australian travellers in researching and planning (left) and booking (right) trips



Source: Mytravelresearch.com Path to Purchase



Figure 14.3 Use of on-line video clips (eg You Tube) in researching and planning trips



Source: Travel Content Takes off on YouTube www.thinkwithgoogle.com.au

14.3 Changing Nature of Information Services

As a result of the changing technology, the 'back room' activities for information service providers have increased significantly. Tourism organisations / VICs are increasingly employing people with strong digital and graphic design skills to leverage the digital space.

Research within Australia and internationally, has concluded that:

- The tourism website is now the most important information and marketing tool. The website has to be cross-platform (mobile, tablet, computer and in the future – smart watch) and voice optimised, and semantic search responsive and supported by and fully integrated with social media, with social media being used to 'drive business' to the website.
- Despite digital devices, travellers are still looking for contact with and recommendations from locals, as well as print-based information – maps, visitor guides, information sheets.
- Visitor Information Centres are and will remain a significant in-region touch point for visitors, bringing visitors into contact with what the area has to offer – providing visitors with the information, advice and services needed to enhance their visit and encourage them to spend more time and money within the area. VICs are also an integral part of the marketing, distribution and sales process. The key attributes that VICs bring to this process is their ability to:
 - Inspire - to match visitor needs with local experiences in a friendly, professional manner and create a 'wow' factor for visitors.
 - Make sense of the vast amount of information that is available – removing uncertainty and confusion.
 - Deliver current, comprehensive and, most importantly, unbiased information.
- The 'next generation' of VICs¹⁸ will:
 - Continue to evolve to provide an extraordinary experience, including telling inspiring stories.
 - Continue to deliver a high level of customer service underpinned by a wealth of local knowledge.
 - Provide information at all stages of the trip planning, booking and travel phases – using a range of communication media, channels and touch points.
 - Deliver their visitor guide, maps and other key information in both print and digital format.
 - Provide opportunities for booking accommodation and tours.

¹⁸ Australia's Accredited VICs : A Strategic Directions Discussion Paper



- Offer free Wi-Fi and have information available digitally through a variety of mediums. This will be supported by spaces within VICs where visitors can sit and spend time using their own digital device.
- Provide information on a 24 hour basis through a number of touch points – eg static information displays, touch screens, web, Apps, QR codes etc.
- Integrate the use of technology (eg touch screens, tablets, soundscapes etc) into how information is displayed and presented. Tablets are proving very popular within VICs, allowing staff and visitors to search for information, communicate with non-English speaking visitors, book on-line and transfer information digitally to the consumer's smart phone or tablet.

14.4 Information Services in Weddin Shire

Information services in Weddin Shire are co-ordinated and delivered by Council's Economic Development and Tourism staff. Staff provide information to consumers (travellers and potential travellers), local residents, DNSW, the Destination Networks, Central NSW Tourism, and tourism and business operators. Activities and services include:

- Operation of the Grenfell Information Centre
- Production of the Grenfell Visitor Guide and a limited range of other print collateral
- Maintaining the tourism website (www.grenfell.org.au)
- Posting on social media – Tourism Grenfell Facebook page and Instagram
- Posting and updating product and event information on key websites and data bases (eg NSW connect, Central NSW)
- On behalf of operators, listing and managing these listings on the Australian Tourism Warehouse Database (ATWD)
- Providing information to accommodation properties, attraction operators, event organisers and other businesses for distribution to visitors
- Maintaining the Shire's event calendar and distributing information on events to DNSW and Central NSW Tourism
- Keeping business and tourism operators informed (email alerts)
- Producing and maintaining the Shire's Business Directory and Community Guide

The majority of accommodation operators and local businesses have either a weak or no on-line presence and are almost entirely dependent on the Grenfell Tourism Website and the work undertaken by the Economic Development and Tourism staff to list the business / events on industry data bases, for their online exposure.

Other touch points for information within the Shire are:

- Information directories: These are a mix of Civic Guides and directories produced by community groups. These directories are dated and poorly presented and need to be replaced (see Section 14.6)
- Village websites: Quandialla and Greenethorpe Villages both have community websites which have limited visitor information, while Caragabal has a website for the Sheep Races.

14.4.1 Grenfell Visitor Information Centre

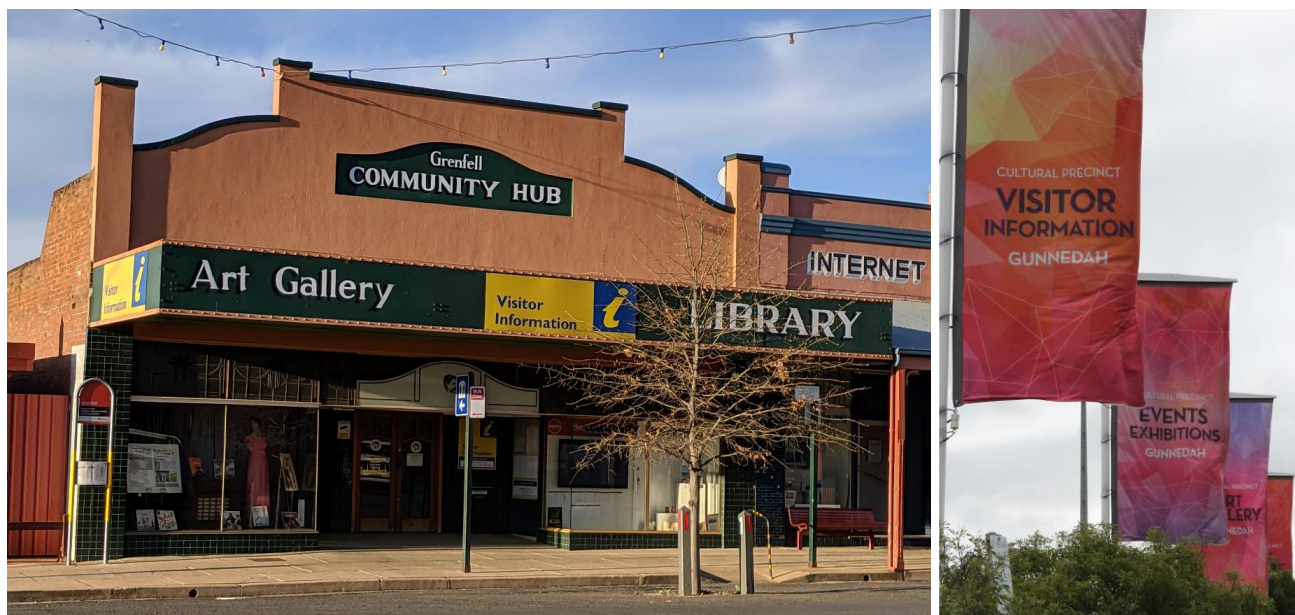
The Grenfell VIC is owned and operated by Weddin Shire Council. The VIC is located within the Grenfell Community Hub in the Grenfell town centre. The Centre is Level 2 accredited and is open 7 days per week, 363 days per year.

The Centre is situated close to the intersection of Main and Forbes Street, and adjacent to the Motel. Parking for caravans is available in Forbes Street, within 100 metres of the VIC. The VIC has reasonable visibility for travellers arriving from the west (Main Street) and from the north via Forbes Street. In winter (when the tree outside the VIC is bare), the Centre is also visible to travellers arriving from the south via Forbes Street. When the tree has leaves, the 'i' sign on the awning is not visible. Travellers arriving from the east, often have trouble finding the Centre, particularly when the tree has leaves. Visibility could be improved by having large 'i' icons on the building façade (adjacent to the community hub sign and on the side wall) and having signage and/or flags on the footpath.



Figure 14.4 (left) Grenfell VIC: The visibility could be improved by having the 'i' icon on the front and side facades of the building and footpath signage and/or flags.

Figure 14.5 (right) Examples of flags used in Gunnedah to increase the visibility of their VIC, Gallery and events



The VIC forms part of the access corridor for the Art Gallery, library and conference room. As such, its position is not ideal. The floorspace and display areas are limited with capacity for only a few visitors. With multiple visitors and/or people passing through the VIC to access the art gallery, library or conference room, the space become congested and often noisy, which significantly detracts from the visitor experience. Lack of sound separation between the conference room and the VIC is also an issue.

The VIC attracts around 5,000 to 6,000 visitors per year. Monday to Friday, the VIC is manned by one full-time staff member, with the Economic Development Officer covering breaks and absences and assisting when the Centre is busy. On weekends the Centre is operated by casual staff. In addition to operating the VIC, staff also program and manage the Art Gallery and the Conference Room and are actively involved in organising the Henry Lawson Festival. Management of the Gallery includes organising and mounting new exhibitions every six weeks, managing the Art Gallery volunteers and marketing and promoting Gallery exhibitions and events. The time invested in the Henry Lawson Festival equates to around 1 FTE staff member for the first six months of each year.

As discussed in Section 14.3, Visitor Information Centres are an important in-region touch point for visitors. With the increase in information available on-line, visitors are increasingly looking for VIC staff for 'validation' of the information and for 'itinerary planning', with itineraries 'personalised' for each group – it is no longer a case of just providing a map or a brochure. As such staff need to have a comprehensive knowledge of the Shire and surrounding region (visitors do not recognise Shire boundaries) and also the skills to source information in response to more unusual requests.

Staff also need to be professional, highly personable, have strong communication skills, be passionate and enthusiastic about the area and be able to 'sell' the Shire – converting an enquiry into a 'sale'. The visitor survey undertaken by the VIC shows that **32% of visitors coming into the Grenfell VIC are undecided about whether they will stay the night in the Shire or move on.** It largely comes down to the skill of the VIC staff as to whether these travellers stay in the area or move on.

14.4.2 Information and Promotional Collateral

There is overlap between visitor information and promotional material. The two main sources of information are the tourism website (grenfell.org.au) and the Grenfell Visitor Guide, with these also being the Shire's primary promotional collateral. The VIC also photocopies street directory and Council maps for visitors and produces, in-house, some flyers and information sheets. Some operators have brochures which are also on display in the VIC.



Grenfell Visitor Guide

The Visitor Guide is A5 in size. The brochure has largely been produced in-house and funded through advertising. The front cover is not 'inspirational'. The Grenfell 'Heritage – History – Henry' logo dominates the top third of the cover, with the cover featuring an image of two people sitting beside the Henry Lawson statue. The use of heritage colours (burgundy) also 'dates' the Guide. While the Guide is useful for visitors already in the Shire, the Guide lacks visibility and traction as a promotional tool and is 'lost' on brochure racks in other VICs. Most visitor guides are A4 in size, with the front covers designed to 'catch the eye'.

For the next edition, the Guide needs to be completely re-vamped, with the focus shifted to the Shires' outdoor and lifestyle assets. The Guide also needs a Shire-wide map and updated images and needs to be available as an e.book on the tourism website as well as downloadable in PDF format.

Tourism Website: grenfell.org.au

The tourism website is an older generation site. While it has the same theming and branding as the Visitor Guide, the Tourism staff have endeavoured to improve the presentation to make it more contemporary and relevant. While the website has been adapted for mobile devices, it can be slow to load and 'clunky' to use. It also lacks the video clips which are becoming an integral part of tourism websites.

Maps

Almost all visitors to the VIC and many who stay in commercial accommodation are looking for maps. The Grenfell VIC has a professionally produced A3 tear-off map for the Central NSW region (produced by Central NSW Tourism) which is popular. The only maps available for Weddin Shire are photocopies taken from Street Directories and the Council road map. While functional, these maps have no promotional value. The Shire needs an A3, professionally designed, coloured, tear-off map, which is printed on both sides and provides Shire-wide, regional and village maps as well as information on accommodation, attractions and other services.

Information / Activity Brochures

Tourism staff have produced in-house, several information brochures including brochures on Henry Lawson, the Railway Precinct, Endemic Garden, Museum, Iandra Castle and Bird Trails. While functional, the brochures are not effective as promotional tools.

As part of realising the opportunities identified in this DMP, Weddin Shire will need to produce a range of activity and locality brochures targeted to niche markets. To be effective, these brochures will need to be professionally produced and provide relevant information for the target group as well as quality images and maps. The brochures need to be downloadable from the tourism websites.

Images

Weddin Shire has limited and dated image library with many of the images taken in 2015-16 and water-marked by the photographer. Most of the images are not suitable for use on the tourism website and in promotional collateral. There are no professional video clips or drone footage available for the Shire. Tourism staff are currently using their personal mobile phones to capture images and make small video clips for posting on social media.

Display Material

The Shire's display material is limited to two pull-up banners, each featuring 3 images. There is no portable digital display material. The material available is not sufficient for the Shire to exhibit at a travel show.



14.4.3 Village Websites

The three larger villages each have websites.

Greenethorpe (www.greenethorpe.nsw.au)

The Greenethorpe website presents as 'fresh' and 'vibrant' and has a strong community focus. Information for travellers is not immediately apparent. 'Tourism' is listed under 'Directory' with the Tourism page providing links to the Grenfell, Cowra and Hilltops tourism websites and the Temora Airshow website. Other than a link to landra in the introduction to Greenethorpe, there is no information provided on what to do in and around Greenethorpe. The Café-B&B and the Shamrock Hotel are listed under 'businesses' with limited information provided and the availability of accommodation not mentioned. The website has a banner on the home page to list up-coming events and news articles.

To encourage visitation, the website should have 'Tourism' or 'Visit' on the main tool bar, with this linking through to pages on 'What to do', 'Stay and Eat' and 'Events'. Under 'what to do', Greenethorpe should feature the attractions in the surrounding area (landra, Conimbla and Bendick Murrell National Parks, Rustic Maze, Koorawatha Falls, Touts Lookout etc) and promote them as part of Greenethorpe (see Section 8.4). Touring / scenic drives and cycle routes starting from Greenethorpe should be included as part of the 'what to do' page. The 'Tour de Greenethorpe' page could be expanded to provide an update on the status of the event as well as an 'invitation' for cyclists to explore the Greenethorpe area, with links to potential road and gravel grinding loops that start and end in Greenethorpe.

The website should also feature the landra Open Days and other high-profile events within the surrounding region. It would also be beneficial to include a 'gallery' link from the tourism page, with this being a 'sub section' of the image gallery and feature images of the points of interest and businesses in Greenethorpe, the attractions in the surrounding area, cyclists exploring the Greenethorpe area, and the landscape (eg canola fields).

Quandialla (www.quandialla.com.au)

The Quandialla website is a community website. Due to the image used on the home page, the website presents as dated, with the site lacking visual impact. The site does not appear to be maintained, with most of the information being from 2014 and 2015, with the last newsletter dated April 2019. Accommodation and eateries are listed under the 'About' tab.

There is opportunity to do far more with the site, including updating images, providing information on the Weddin Mountains National and the State Forests, and featuring the Bland Hotel and local businesses. The information on the village also needs to be expanded, providing more details about the history of the village and the link with the 1915 mini-series. The website also needs to promote up-coming events. The image gallery needs to be re-formatted to show each image (not their reference number) and expanded to include the points of interest in the village and the attractions in the surrounding area.

If the proposed mines at Marsden and/or Bribbaree progress, workers and contractors will be 'googling' Quandialla and accommodation in the area, with this providing an opportunity to raise the profile of the village.

Caragabal (visitcaragabal.com.au)

Although the domain name is 'visitcaragabal' the website relates solely to the sheep races. There is opportunity to expand the site or develop a new site for Caragabal.



Directions Forward

- As part of the Main Street upgrade program, explore options to enhance the visibility of the VIC.
- Re-brand: With the recommended shift away from the History-Heritage-Henry branding, Weddin Shire will need to be re-branded, with new a new logo, imagery and content.
- To improve and expand the Shire's image library, with the inclusion of video clips, drone footage and contemporary images. Images date very quickly and need to be refreshed / replaced regularly.
- Design and launch a new tourism website and refresh the tourism Facebook and Instagram pages.
- Council needs to ensure that all staff employed in the VIC have strong sales, marketing and communication skills; are friendly and welcoming (highly personable); have comprehensive knowledge of the Shire and surrounding region; and have digital skills.
- To produce a new visitor guide, A3 tear-off map of the Shire and a range of attraction and targeted activity-based brochures and information kits (eg coach tour manual, cycle guide, caravan and camping directory etc).
- To significantly strengthen and expand Weddin Shire's on-line presence, and to capitalise more effectively on social media to drive viewers to the Grenfell tourism website.
- To work with the villages to enhance their websites and improve their tourism content.
- To build the digital skills of tourism operators and local businesses to significantly increase their on-line presence and capitalise on the opportunities available for information dissemination and marketing and promotion.

14.5 Telecommunications

Most visitors are now travelling with a smart phone and generally with a Tablet and/or lap-top computer. There is also increasing use of 'wearable' technology (eg smart watches) which are being used to access information. Visitors are highly dependent on access to the mobile telephone network and are increasingly expecting free WiFi to be offered by VICs, accommodation properties, cafes and other businesses.

Mobile telephone coverage in Weddin Shire is poor. Access to the Telstra and Optus networks is available in Grenfell, with Telstra coverage in Quandialla and patchy coverage in Caragabal. Outside of these localities, there is virtually no coverage. The Grenfell VIC does not offer free WiFi and it appears that only one accommodation operator has WiFi available for guests.

Directions Forward

Not only is poor telecommunication infrastructure and services a barrier for tourism, it is barrier for all industries and businesses in Weddin Shire and a deterrent for people and businesses relocating to the area. Council has funding to improve digital connectivity throughout the Shire. This needs to be given priority.

14.6 Signage

Signage plays a very significant role in how an area presents. It also forms part of the visitor information services infrastructure and is a significant marketing and promotional tool. Within the Shire, Council is responsible for signage on Council controlled roads and in the public domain, while Roads & Maritime Services (RMS) is responsible for Highway signage.



To be effective, the signage needs to be comprehensive and integrated at all levels, namely:

- **Motivational and promotional signage** – to raise the profile of the area, develop brand / image recognition and to make travellers aware of the area and the attractions and facilities on offer. Billboards can be effective if well designed (eg quality images) and maintained. The Shire's existing billboard on the Newell Highway is small and in poor condition. It needs to be replaced by a larger billboard, or if this is not possible, re-skinned using quality images that promote the Shire's iconic attractions.
- **Gateway signs** – important in creating a sense of arrival and making a visitor feel welcome. Gateway signs also help to create and reinforce an image or brand for the area. The current gateway signage for the Shire, towns and villages is very dated and lacks visual impact. Council should prioritise the replacement of these signs.
- **Information signs / directories** – on arrival in a new area, visitors frequently look for the Visitor Information Centre 'i' signs and roadside information directories. The Grenfell VIC is reasonably well signposted from the Highway corridor. The information directories / civic guides within the Shire are very dated and need to be replaced by comprehensive, well presented information directories. These directories need to be strategically located within the Shire, with directories in Grenfell (Station Precinct, Town Centre, O'Brien's Hill), the villages and if possible, at key attractions (eg landra Castle viewing area, Ben Hall's Precinct, Bogolong Dam).



Figure 14.6 The Shire's billboard on the Newell needs to be replaced.

Figure 14.7 Existing information directories are not effective at promoting Grenfell and the Shire and need to be replaced.



- **Directional signage** – the primary purpose is to ensure that travellers can find their way easily. Directional signage also provides re-assurance and reinforces the motivational signage by creating the perception that the area has 'a lot to offer'. There is a need to update directional signage to and throughout the Shire. The directional signage needs to include advance warning signs, so that travellers, particularly caravanners, have time to process the information and make a decision.

- **Service & facility signs** – international symbols for public toilets, accommodation, camping areas, car and caravan parking etc. Fingerboard signs are not as effective as the symbols. There needs to be a program in place to progressively replace fingerboard signs with international symbols and to ensure that all facilities are signposted. With caravanners and RVs being a significant market for the Shire, it is important that the caravan parks, camping areas, dump point and caravan parking areas are well signposted.
- **Interpretive signage / information** – this is particularly important at attractions that are not staffed. The opportunities for interpretative signage are discussed in Chapters 9 and 10.
- **Event signage** – frames / hanging points, where event organisers can advertise their events, with this infrastructure strategically located so that it is visible to both local residents and passing travellers.



Figure 14.7 Caravanners are generally on the lookout for caravan parking signs close to town centres.

Figure 14.8 Examples of town gateway signs promoting up-coming events



- **Advertising / shopping centre signage** – shop fronts, awning, footpath – contributes to the atmosphere, vitality and presentation of the town centres.

Directions Forward

- Undertake a comprehensive audit of signage to and within the Shire to provide the basis for progressively improving signage. (Note: Council has undertaken an audit of the town and village name signs, but not directional or facility signs).
- Re-skin the existing billboard on the Newell Highway and possibly provide additional billboards in strategic locations on the Newell Highway and possibly other key routes feeding into the Shire.
- Provide comprehensive, contemporary information directories in strategic locations throughout the Shire.
- Provide infrastructure for event signage in strategic locations throughout the Shire.
- Support the NPWS in gaining TASAC approval to signpost the Weddin Mountains National Park at the Newell Highway / Mid Western Highway intersection.

15. INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

The marketplace is evolving, and tourism and business operators need to keep abreast of changes. In particular, tourism and business operators need to be highly active in the digital space, with this space used to communicate, build relationships, market and promote, and 'make the sale'. The retail community needs to recognise the importance of presentation – of their shop fronts and their merchandise. Tourism operators need to be responsive to changing needs and expectations, recognising that customers are becoming more sophisticated and demanding and less tolerant of inferior customer service.

In the on-line space, most of the Shire's tourism and hospitality businesses and many of the retail businesses have no, or a very limited presence.

Over the past few years, Council has funded a range of business improvement programs and workshops with topics including harnessing the on-line space (websites and social media), customer service and merchandising. The Tourism and Economic Development Officer also keeps tourism operators and local businesses informed about training programs and resources available from Government Agencies and regional organisations.

To date, the level of interest amongst tourism and business operators to up-skill has been low.

Directions Forward

As a service, Council should continue to inform operators of training programs, resources and other opportunities available and to assist operators access business advice and other programs when requested.

To maximise the benefits from the Main Street beautification program, it would be highly desirable for retailers to be up-skilled in merchandise display and window dressing.

Figure 15.1 Coffee at the Unwind Café, Grenfell





16. MARKETING & PROMOTION

16.1 Marketing undertaken by Weddin Shire

Destination marketing and promotion of Weddin Shire is coordinated by the Economic Development and Tourism staff. The Shire has a limited marketing budget (around \$25,000 per year) with this used to fund membership of the Central NSW Tourism Group, the marketing of the Art Gallery and marketing Weddin Shire. The Shire's marketing budget is significantly lower than the marketing budget of surrounding LGAs (eg Hilltops \$150,000pa).

Marketing and promotional activities include:

- Producing and distributing information and promotional collateral, including the Grenfell Visitors Guide.
- On-line marketing through the Grenfell Tourism website, Facebook page and Instagram. Grenfell Tourism also has a Twitter account and a Pinterest page however these are not actively maintained due to lack of resources. (Note: If they are not able to be maintained, then the links to these sites need to be removed from the Grenfell tourism website). Council does not have a social media strategy for tourism.
- Listing and updating the Shire's products, experiences, events and business content on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse / NSW Get Connected data bases that underpin the Destination NSW – VisitNSW and Central NSW Tourism websites.
- Supporting local events, including marketing and promoting these events both on-line and through local and regional media channels.
- Participation in selected cooperative marketing initiatives organised by Central NSW Tourism. Weddin Shire has not had the staff or funds need to participate in trade and consumer show exhibitions in key source markets.
- Promoting the exhibitions at the Grenfell Art Gallery.
- Public relations marketing - endeavouring to generate media and industry exposure for the Shire – press releases and media interviews, capitalising on events and activities, etc.
- Feature articles accompanied by limited advertising in key publications – eg the Open Road; CMCA's Wanderer magazine; regional Lifestyle magazines. This is a challenge to secure as most of the publications are looking for local businesses to take out paid advertisements to support the feature article, with most businesses within Weddin Shire not willing to participate.
- Hosting familiarisation tours for journalists and social media 'influencers', with the activities generally organised through the Central NSW JO.
- Direct marketing to special interest groups – eg bird watching clubs and car clubs.
- Co-operative activities with Destination NSW and other partners, leveraging opportunities as they arise.

Most of the marketing is being undertaken on an ad hoc basis and tends to be reactive, rather than strategic.



16.2 Strategic Alliances

As discussed in Section 7.3.1, Weddin Shire primarily acts independently, rather than cooperatively, with this due primarily to lack of staff resources and funds. Currently:

- Weddin Shire is a member of Central NSW Tourism, however participation in the Region's marketing initiatives is primarily limited to 'free' activities, such as listing on the Central NSW tourism website. Weddin Shire does not have the funds nor staff resources to attend consumer and trade shows as part of the Central NSW exhibit.
- The LGAs surrounding Weddin Shire have entered into strategic alliances for product development and marketing with other LGAs, with Weddin Shire not part of these alliances.
- The Shire is not a member of the Newell Highway marketing group, and as such is not featured in the Newell Highway print and on-line marketing collateral, nor is the Shire promoted as part of the Highway corridor at travel and consumer shows in NSW and interstate.

Given the importance of the drive tourism and caravan and camping markets for the Shire, Council needs to consider joining the Newell Highway promotions group and participating in caravan and camping shows as part of both the Newell Highway and Central NSW.

As discussed in Chapter 7, there are also opportunities to work with adjoining LGAs to leverage product development opportunities. As these LGAs are already committed to other strategic alliances, the initiative will need to come from Weddin Shire, with Weddin Shire also likely to have to drive the projects.

16.3 Marketing Considerations & Opportunities

With limited staff and marketing budget, Council has focused on the operation of the VIC, production of information and promotional collateral and maintaining and leveraging the Grenfell Tourism website and Facebook page.

To build visitation the marketing also needs to include:

- Complete revamp of all promotional material and the production of additional information and promotional collateral (see Section 14.4).
- Attending, or at least ensuring that Weddin Shire / Grenfell is represented at key travel shows in Sydney, the Hunter – Central Coast region, Melbourne and Adelaide
- Membership of the Newell Highway marketing group and participation in relevant marketing activities.
- Billboard advertising along the Newell Highway corridor and potentially along the Mid Western Highway (north of Cowra) and Olympic Highway.
- Participation in relevant Central NSW marketing initiatives, including exhibiting at trade and consumer shows.
- Editorial content in the Visitor Guides from surrounding LGAs. Weddin Shire may need to buy space or enter into a quid-pro-quo arrangement to feature these LGAs in the Grenfell Visitor's Guide.
- Continue to grow its on-line marketing activities to build destination awareness, communicate directly with key target markets and to harness user-generated content. To be effective in this space, the Shire needs to:
 - Continue to develop / improve the content and images on the Grenfell Tourism and the village websites.
 - Formulate and implement a social media strategy
 - Continue to up-skill staff in the effective use of social media



- Continue to build its image and video clip libraries and harness user-generated images and video clips
- Continually up-date and improve Weddin Shire content on third party websites
- Increase its marketing and PR activities within surrounding region (2.5 – 3 hours' drive) to develop the regional day trip, VFR and short-breaks markets.
- Targeted direct marketing and promotional activities to grow the:
 - Touring caravan and RV markets
 - Coach and group tour markets
 - Event markets
 - Special interest and activity-based markets: cycling, bushwalking, horse riding, birdwatching etc.

Targeting these markets will require the production of activity-based promotional material and supporting information.





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Weddin Shire Council / iPlan Projects Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020-2040 (Draft)
Weddin Shire Council / iPlan Projects Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020-2040: Summary of Planning Priorities & Actions
Weddin Shire Council Economic Growth of Weddin Shire: Main Street Transformation Business Case
Weddin Shire Council / iPlan Projects Grenfell Land Use / Settlement Strategy (Draft)
Weddin Shire Council (2003) O'Brien's Hill Landscape and Conservation Masterplan
Weddin Shire Council (2003) O'Brien's Hill Tourism Interpretation and Asset Management Plan
Weddin Shire Council (2017) Economic Development Plan 2017-2022
Weddin Shire Council (2018) Sport and Recreation Facilities Plan
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Western Research Institute (2019) Weddin Mountain Muster Survey Report 2019



REFERENCES: PHOTOGRAPHS

Page	Position	Description	Source
Cover	Top	Weddin Mountains National Park	www.visithilltops.com.au
	Bottom Left	Iandra Castle	Flicka.com
	Bottom Right	Gold Battery, O'Brien's Hill, Grenfell	Jenny Rand & Associates
Contents		Grenfell Chrysler Museum	Jenny Rand & Associates
3		Canola Field and the Weddin Mountain Range	www.weddimappingsolutions.com.au
9		Weddin Mountains Muster	www.weddimountainmuster.com.au
12	Top	Weddin Mountain National Park	www.traveller.com.au
12	Bottom Left	Iandra Castle	Iandra Castle Facebook.com
12	Bottom Right	Grenfell Commodities Silos	www.grenfell.org.au
13		Caragabal Sheep Races	www.grenfellrecord.com.au
14	Top	Grenfell Hall Bed and Breakfast	www.tripadvisor.com.au
14	Bottom	Tourist Facility Signs	Jenny Rand & Associates
18		Caravan and RV Parking Grenfell	Jenny Rand & Associates
20		Grenfell Kart Club	www.grenfellrecord.com.au
21	Top	Weddin Mountain Muster	www.weddimountainmuster.com.au
21	Second	Motorcycle group at Grenfell Silos	Colleen Mills www.australiansiloarttrail.com/gallery
21	Third	Ride for Resilience	www.activefarmers.com.au/bike-ride
21	Bottom	Model A Ford Club's visit to the Chrysler Museum	www.warbosblog.blogspot.com
29		Fishing at Company Dam	www.grenfell.org.au / Five Hours West Photography
35		Cycling Rail Trails is popular with Baby Boomers	www.railtrails.org.au
36	Top	Peregrine Lookout Weddin Mountains National Park	www.grenfell.org.au / Five Hours West Photography
36	Bottom Left	Caragabal Sheep Races	www.visitcaragabal.com.au
36	Bottom Right	Family visiting Seaton's Farm	Jenny Rand & Associates
38	Top Left	Electric Cycle Hire, Southern Highlands VIC	www.southernhighlandsnewa.com.au
38	Top Right	Electric Vehicle Charging Station, Oberon VIC	www.oberonreview.com.au
38	Bottom Left	Use of QR codes to deliver information	www.creative.fwdp.co.uk
38	Bottom Mid	Off-the Grid Tiny House	www.cnn.com
38	Bottom Right	Use of Virtual Reality to bring historic sites alive	www.delights.intermiles.com
39	Top	Canola Fields near Grenfell	www.goldtrail.com.au
39	Middle	Gold Battery O'Brien's Hill Precinct	Jenny Rand & Associates
39	Bottom	Big Foot MTB Race, Back Yamma State Forest	www.orangecitylife.com.au
48		The Grenfell Quilt	www.grenfell.org.au
53		The western approach to the Grenfell Town Centre	Weddin Shire Council
55	Top & Bottom	Images of Main Street - Grenfell	Jenny Rand & Associates
56		Footpath activation – Grenfell Main Street	Jenny Rand & Associates
57		Spannerman Coffee Outlet, Grenfell	Jenny Rand & Associates
58	Top	Area between the Railway Precinct and shopping centre	Jenny Rand & Associates
58	Middle & Bottom	Caravans with mountain bikes and/or canoes	Jenny Rand & Associates
58, 59	All	Key Features of the Railway Precinct	Jenny Rand & Associates & Weddin Shire Council
61		Tourist Facility Signs	Jenny Rand & Associates
63	Top	Median Strip Caragabal – Art Installation opportunity	Jenny Rand & Associates
63	Middle Left	Sheep Sculptures	www.treavorstravels.com
63	Middle - Mid	Sheep Sculptures	www.inhabit.com
63	Middle - Right	Sheep Sculptures	www.artbythesea.nz
63	Bottom - Both	Caragabal Shop Fronts	Jenny Rand & Associates
64	Top - Both	Bird Sculptures Dunedoo	Jenny Rand & Associates
64	Middle Left	Emu Sculptures, Dwellingup Heritage Centre	www.mandurahmail.com
64	Middle Right	Galah Sculptures Gulargambone	www.coonambleshire.nsw.gov.au
64	Middle Right	Nest Sculpture, Wombarra Sculpture Garden	www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au
64	Bottom Left	Junk Art Eagle and Nest	Facebook.com/australianstreetartawards/posts
64	Bottom Right	Eagle in Flight - Sculpture	https://martindebenham.weebly.com
65		Road Signs Caragabal	Jenny Rand & Associates
66		Shamrock Hotel, Greenethorpe	www.publocation.com.au
67	Top	Touring Road Cyclists at Greenethorpe Park	Facebook.com



Page	Position	Description	Source
67	Middle Left	Iandra Castle	Iandra Castle Facebook.com
67	Middle Right (2)	Bendick Murrell National Park	Central West Bushwalking Club – Facebook.com
67	Rustic Maze	The Rustic Maze and Country Garden	The Rustic Maze and Country Garden – Facebook.com
67	Bottom Right	Koorawatha Falls	www.visitcowra.com.au
70	All	Quandialla	Jenny Rand & Associates
71	Top Row (3)	Quandialla Shop Fronts	Jenny Rand & Associates
71	Bottom	Marshall's Garage Quandialla	Pikui.com Instagram posts
72	All	Bimbi Village	Jenny Rand & Associates
73		Seaton's Farm Welcome Sign	Jenny Rand & Associates
74	Top	Building, Seaton's Farm	Jenny Rand & Associates
74	Bottom	Seaton's Farm	www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au
77		Iandra Road Reserve	Jenny Rand & Associates
80	All	Deterioration of Signage, O'Brien's Hill	Jenny Rand & Associates
81	All	Structures collapsing, O'Brien's Hill	Jenny Rand & Associates
82	All	Collection of wooden and metal wheels, O'Brien's Hill	Jenny Rand & Associates
83	All	Signage, O'Brien's Hill	Jenny Rand & Associates
84	Left	Wildflowers – Endemic Garden	Jenny Rand & Associates
84	Right	Cootamundra Wattle	www.gardeningwithangus.com.au
85	Top Right	Iris Art Installations, Scotland	Pinterest.com
85	Top Left	Iris in Granite installation	Pinterest.com
85	Centre Left	Bird Sculpture, Grenfell	Jenny Rand & Associates
85	Centre Right	Bird Sculpture, Wagga	Jenny Rand & Associates
85	Bottom Left	Big Bench, Lookout Broken Hill	www.picsandstuff
85	Bottom Middle	A Big Chair	www.makezine.com
85	Bottom Right	Riverside Seat, Wagga	Jenny Rand & Associates
86		Theatre costume exhibition, Grenfell Art Gallery	Jenny Rand & Associates
88		Grenfell Museum	www.visitnsw.com
89		Chrysler Museum	www.chryslerclub.org.au
90		Company Dam, Grenfell	www.australia247.info
91		Signage, Vaughan Dam Reserve	Jenny Rand & Associates
92	Both	Information Plinths and Plaques	Jenny Rand & Associates
93	Top Left	The Loaded Dog Book Cover	www.Pinterest.com.au
93	Top Right	The Loaded Dog Book Cover	www.goodreads.com
93	Bottom Left	While the Billy Boils Sketch	Walter Syer, Sydney University Press
93	Bottom Right	The Drovers Wife	www.theaustralian.com.au
94		Historic Railway Signal	Jenny Rand & Associates
95		Tumbarumba to Rosewood Rail Trail	www.snowymagazine.com.au
97		Grenfell Railway line	Instagram.com # the honey ark
98	Top Left	Condition of the Grenfell Railway Line	Lawrence Ryan
98	Top Right	Trees growing through the line	Jenny Rand & Associates
98	Bottom	Condition of the Grenfell Railway Line	Lawrence Ryan
99	Top	Vehicle track in rail corridor	Jenny Rand & Associates
99	Middle	Width of the rail corridor	nswrail.net
99	Bottom	Width of the rail corridor	nswrail.net
100		Bogolong Dam and Ridge Line	Jenny Rand & Associates
101	Top Left	Mobile Canoe Hire	www.kangaroovalleycanoes.com.au
101	Top Right	Bike Hire Kangaroo Valley	Facebook.com
101	Bottom Left	Glamping	Booking.com
101	Bottom Mid/ Right	Tiny Houses	www.thespaces.com
102		Kindra State Forest MTB Track Signage	www.visitnsw.com.
103	Both	Signage in the Bimbi and Weddin State Forests	Jenny Rand & Associates
106		Big Foot MTB Race, Back Yamma State Forest	www.orangecitylife.com.au
108		Audax Cyclists in Grenfell	www.grenfellrecord.com.au
110		Gears and Beers Festival, Wagga – Gravel Grind	www.visitnsw.com
111	Left	MTB Pump Track	www.dailytelegraph.com.au
111	Right	Skills Park	www.makin-trax.com.au
113	Top Left	Quirky Benches	Pinterest: architecturedesign.net: Creative Benches



Page	Position	Description	Source
113	Top Right	Quirky Benches	Pinterest: architecturedesign.net: Creative Benches
113	Middle	Quirky Benches	Pinterest: architecturedesign.net: Creative Benches
113	Bottom Left	Bubble Tent	www.tinkertravels.com best bubble tents
113	Bottom Right	Bubble Tent	Facebook.com Coonawarra Bush Holiday Park
115	Top Left & Right	Weddin Farms – Collecting Eggs & Prime Lamb	www.weddinfarms.com.au
115	Middle Right	Ochre Arch Farm – Prime Beef	www.ochrearchfarm.com.au
115	Bottom Left	Canola Fields	www.AGnVETservices.com.au / Julie Gratton
115	Bottom Right	Quandialla Candle Company Products	Instagram: grambo
120	Top Left	Henry Lawson Festival Street Parade	www.grenfell.org.au
120	Top Right	Weddin Mountain Muster	www.everi.events
120	Middle Left	Grenfell Rodeo	Facebook.com
120	Middle Right	Caragabal Sheep Races	www.visitnsw.com
120	Middle Right	Grenfell Go Kart Club Meet	www.visitnsw.com
120	Bottom	Grenfell Picnic Races	www.racingnswcountry.com.au
121	Top	Calico Duck B&B	Jenny Rand & Associates
121	Middle	Showground Pavilion	Jenny Rand & Associates
121	Bottom	Facility Sign	Jenny Rand & Associates
122		Grenfell Caravan Park	www.visitnsw.com
124		Bland Hotel, Quandialla	www.tripadvisor.com
126	All	Revamped Pub Hotel Rooms	www.pubrooms.com.au
130	Top Right	Cycle leg of an Adventure Race	www.gearjunkie.com
130	Bottom Left	Running leg of an Adventure Race	www.runningcalendar.com.au
130	Bottom Right	Canoe leg of an Adventure Race	www.questadventure series.com
136	Left	Community Hub – VIC Building - Grenfell	Jenny Rand & Associates
136	Right	Promotional Flags, Gunnedah VIC	Jenny Rand & Associates
140	Top Right	Shire Billboard – Newell Highway	Weddin Shire Council
140	Bottom Left	Information Directory – O’Brien’s Hill Precinct	Jenny Rand & Associates
140	Bottom Right	Civic Guide – Railway Precinct	Jenny Rand & Associates
141	Top Right	Caravan Parking Sign	www.rms.nsw.gov.au
141	Bottom Left	Event Signage, Shepparton, Victoria	www.visitshepparton.com.au
141	Bottom Right	Event Signage, Kiama	Jenny Rand & Associates
142		Unwind Café, Grenfell	www.grenfell.org.au
145		Visitors to Grenfell	Facebook.com / Grenfell Kart Club