

Real Country **BUSINESS CASE**

DRAFT FOR CLIENT REVIEW

PREPARED BY
IPA Partners & People, Place and Partnership

PREPARED FOR Gilgandra, Coonamble &
Warrumbungle Shire Councils

Version B
23rd November 2023

KEY PROPOSAL DETAILS

PROPOSAL INFORMATION	
Proposal name	Real Country Business Case
Lead organisation (e.g. XYZ Council)	Gilgandra Shire Council
Lead organisation ABN	
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PROPOSAL SCOPE	
Proposal summary for publication <i>Please provide 150 words or less</i>	<p>The Real Country Project, a joint venture of Coonamble, Gilgandra, and Warrumbungle Shire Councils, is set to transform Central West NSW into a leading destination for authentic Australian “real” experiences. This ambitious strategy aims to integrate the region’s rich cultural heritage and natural beauty into a comprehensive tourism and marketing destination plan.</p> <p>Focusing on the Castlereagh River, the strategy envisages transforming river areas and town centres into vibrant hubs for cultural exchange and economic growth. It includes cultivating the local river’s health, honouring First Nations’ heritage, and promoting environmental stewardship.</p> <p>Infrastructure enhancements and marketing initiatives play a pivotal role, aiming to weave the river into community life and create an interconnected, dynamic visitor experience. This includes leveraging digital marketing to enhance the region’s portrayal and engaging visitors with the true essence of Real Country.</p> <p>Overall, this strategy represents a forward-looking approach to creating a sustainable, vibrant, and prosperous future for the region.</p>
PROPOSAL LOCATION	
Proposal address	<i>Various along the Castlereagh River and the town centres of Gilgandra, Coonamble, Warrumbungle, Binnaway and Mendooran</i>
Local government area	<i>Gilgandra Shire Council Coonamble Shire Council Warrumbungle Shire Council</i>
NSW electorate	<i>Gilgandra LGA and Coonamble LGA :State Electorate: Barwon Warrumbungle LGA: State Electorate: Upper Hunter</i>
Federal electorate	<i>Parkes</i>

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Attachments

Please list out all supporting information provided

Appendix A - Travel to Outback NSW Regional Tourism
Appendix B - Cost Plan (November 2023)
Appendix C - Tourism Impact Report (November 2023)
Appendix D - NPV and BCR Worksheet (November 2023)
Appendix E - 10 year cashflow (November 2023)

Attachment A - Real Country Issues Paper (June 2023)
Attachment B - Real Country Review of NSW Strategic Documents (June 2023)
Attachment C - Real Country Destination Strategic Plan (November 2023)
Attachment D - Real Country Engagement Reports (November 2023)

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Document Summary Information

Version	B
Version Release Date	23.11.23
Document Security	Commercial In Confidence

Document History

Version	Amendment	Amendment Date	Amended by
A	Real Country Business Case	21.11.23	Tim Gavan
B	Real Country Business Case	23.11.23	Jo Kelly

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Acknowledgement of Country

Real Country is home to three Aboriginal nations - Wiradjuri, Kamilaroi and Wailwan. We are proudly a meeting place for family, friends, locals and visitors alike. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we live, work and play and pay respects to our Elders past, present and emerging.

Footnote

This document frequently references the other source documents which go to make up the Real Country Business Case. The reader should read this document in conjunction with those documents. The detail (research, data, strategy alignment, project descriptions and scope) are largely contained in these documents.

The other source documents are:

- Real Country Issues Paper (June 2023)
- Real Country Destination Strategic Plan (November 2023)
- Real Country Engagement Reports (November 2023)
- Real Country Cost Plan (November 2023)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The "Real Country" initiative, pioneered by the collaborative efforts of the Coonamble, Gilgandra, and Warrumbungle Shire Councils, represents a strategic and innovative approach to enhancing tourism and regional development in Central West New South Wales. The initiative is distinguished by its focus on leveraging the area's natural beauty and cultural heritage, with notable highlights including the Warrumbungle National Park, Pilliga Forest, Castlereagh River, Macquarie Marshes, and artesian bore baths. This collaborative effort over the past year has led to several infrastructure projects deeply rooted in community engagement, reflecting the collective aspirations and insights of the local populace. These projects align with the strategic objectives outlined in the Real Country Destination Strategy and contribute to the overarching goals of enhancing local tourism, preserving cultural heritage, and fostering sustainable economic development.

The strategy places significant emphasis on the economic and cultural revitalisation of local towns and villages, such as Coonamble, Coonabarabran, Gilgandra, Mendooran, and Binnaway. The planned outcomes of this revitalisation are comprehensive, spanning economic, social, environmental, and cultural areas. The strategy aims to invigorate local economies, create diverse revenue streams, and achieve long-term financial sustainability. Socially, it seeks to foster community engagement and development, improve quality of life, and bolster resilience against natural disasters. Environmentally, the focus is on sustainable development and ecological balance, while culturally, it emphasises preserving and promoting local identity and revitalising towns and villages.

The Business Case for the Real Country project measures and reports on the impact of planned tourism infrastructure, with the aim of making the Real Country tourism experience a reality that enhances the natural assets of the region and improves the regional economy. There are significant benefits in diversifying employment and providing opportunities away from the main sectors of Health Care, Agriculture, Education, and Retail. In the Orana Region, located in Central West and North West NSW tourism employment represents only 4.5% of the total jobs, a ranking of ninth, indicating substantial room for growth in this sector.

From a social investment perspective, the project is designed to enhance community cohesion and identity. Infrastructure projects, particularly those enhancing the Castlereagh River, aim to foster a stronger sense of community belonging and pride, which is critical for social resilience. Environmentally, the project emphasises sustainable tourism infrastructure, aiming for ecological balance and preservation of natural heritage. Culturally, the initiative focuses on preserving and promoting the region's unique history and identity, contributing to its cultural vibrancy.

The Real Country project is set to build upon its burgeoning relationship with local communities and natural assets, aiming to integrate complementary infrastructure that links key community assets in each of the councils. This initiative is designed to enhance accessibility and interaction with the river, weaving together each town and villages natural beauty with its thriving community life.

Real Country Region overview

The Real Country Strategy closely examines the demographics and economic characteristics of the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Coonamble, Gilgandra, and Warrumbungle. This analysis is pivotal in understanding the potential impacts and opportunities presented by the proposed tourism infrastructure project. By delving into the unique population makeup, labour force participation rates, and predominant industries in these regions, the strategy aims to identify how the project can best align with and enhance the local economic and social fabric.

Implications for Tourism Infrastructure

The information presented in the below table provides a nuanced picture of each region's economic and tourism position. Coonamble, with a population of 2,666 and a notable 39.5% Indigenous demographic, shows a moderate labour force participation and a significant part-time employment sector, suggesting economic diversity. Its tourism sector, though modest, indicates potential for growth in Accommodation & Food Services. Gilgandra, with a population size of 4,295 has slightly an older population (median age 46) and a balanced gender distribution, demonstrates a stronger labour force engagement and a more significant contribution of tourism to employment (4.1%), again led by Accommodation & Food Services.

Warrumbungle stands out with its larger population (9,225) and higher median age (50 years), reflecting a mature community. Its tourism sector, contributing 5.7% to total employment, is the most developed among the three, highlighting a well-established Accommodation & Food Services sub-sector. Across these councils, the presence of a significant Indigenous population, especially in Coonamble, adds a unique dimension to the regional demographics, potentially influencing cultural and tourism activities.

Category	Coonamble	Gilgandra	Warrumbungle
Population	2,666 individuals	4,295 individuals	9,225 individuals
Gender Distribution	49.3% male, 50.7% female	Nearly equal gender split	Even gender distribution
Median Age	38 years	46 years	50 years
Indigenous Population	39.5% Indigenous	14.5% Indigenous	10.7% Indigenous
Labour Force Participation Rate	47.3%	54.2%	47.2%
Full-Time Employment Rate	56.2%	58.2%	55.9%
Part-Time Employment Rate	28.7%	N/A	N/A
Key Occupations	Community and personal service workers, Managers, Professionals	Managers	Managers, Labourers
Median Personal Income	\$641	\$632	\$559
Median Household Income	\$1,206	\$1,149	\$1,068
Key Industries	Primary education, Local government administration	Local government administration, Farming (grain, sheep, beef cattle)	Beef cattle farming, Local government administration
Tourism Employment	35 jobs (2.5%)	62 jobs (4.1%)	178 jobs (5.7%)
Largest Tourism Sub-Sector	Accommodation & Food Services (26 jobs)	Accommodation & Food Services (48 jobs)	Accommodation & Food Services (143 jobs)

The demographic and economic profiles of Coonamble, Gilgandra, and Warrumbungle Shire present a nuanced picture. A significant Indigenous population across the regions highlights the potential for cultural tourism. The presence of a managerial and professional workforce suggests a receptive environment for new projects. Lower median incomes, especially in Warrumbungle Shire, indicate potential economic benefits from tourism-related employment. The predominance of agriculture and local government sectors suggests opportunities for agri-tourism and partnerships with local authorities.

The Strategy Document provides strong detail and analysis of tourism infrastructure for the region, along with significant other analysis. The Issues Paper also provides in-depth analysis, observations and gap analysis which has significantly informed this Business Case.

The strong data analysis has led to observation of opportunity and growth in the tourism sector. These are;

1. Potential for increased profitability through higher visitor spend through targeted high quality authentic infrastructure based on strong community consultation and gap analysis; and
2. Employment growth coming from a low base relative to the rest of Regional NSW.

The detailed insights provided in the table above inform the Real Country project's development of impactful infrastructure plans and concepts. These initiatives are strategically designed to enhance the quadruple bottom line, targeting crucial opportunity areas highlighted in the demographic and economic profiles of Coonamble, Gilgandra, and Warrumbungle. This approach is integral to driving significant improvements across these regions.

The Catalyst Projects

The vision of the project seeks to grow the Real Country region into an experience destination, provide economic support outside of the agricultural industry, engage with communities, enhance natural assets, drive community and visitor access, increase visitation and overnight stays, increase education, provide cultural experience and wellbeing opportunities, improve space for events, and leverage natural assets with initiatives of activities, art and scapes.

Over the past 12 months, a series of infrastructure projects have been developed for each of the three Councils, underpinned by collaborative discussions and engagement with each local community. These projects, created with the aspirations and insights gathered from these communities, reflect a series of strategic directions for the future. This collaborative approach has ensured that the projects not only address the unique needs and characteristics of each area but also align seamlessly with the strategic objectives of the Real Country Destination Strategic Plan.

Coonamble

Business Case Project - Warrena Weir Recreation Precinct

- **Objective** - Activate Warrena Creek, offering diverse recreational experiences to residents and visitors.
- **Approach** - The masterplan encompasses a two-stage development, starting with public access enhancements, amenities upgrade, and water-based recreational infrastructure. Stage 2 envisions further expanding these offerings, adding eco-stay cabins, a landmark viewing tower, and extended walking trails.

Gilgandra

Business Case Stage 1: Town Centre Precinct

- **Objective** - Enhance recreational offerings and engagement with the Castlereagh River.
- **Approach** - Implementing a new pathway along the eastern riverbank, connecting existing trails and creating a comprehensive loop. Additionally, developing recreational areas such as a beach and a timber boardwalk.

Business Case Focus Area 2: Cultural and Heritage Precinct

- **Objective** - Showcase Gilgandra's rich cultural and historical narrative.
- **Approach** - Utilising the Coo-ee Heritage Centre and Gilgandra Museum as focal points, the project aims to create a high-quality cultural precinct that highlights the region's heritage.

Warrumbungle

Business Case Project: Coonabarabran Adventure Precinct and Villages of Binnaway and Mendooran

- **Objective** - Create a nature-based experience along the Castlereagh River, and
- **Approach** - Building upon existing path networks and community infrastructure, the vision involves developing activation nodes within the Coonabarabran, Binnaway and Mendooran.

The Financial analysis

The estimated total cost for the project stands at \$15.8 million, with a detailed breakdown of these costs provided for each Local Government Area (LGA) as illustrated in the section below.

The comprehensive cost plan for the Business Case has been meticulously developed by the registered Quantity Surveying firm T-Cubed. This plan has been tailored to provide insights into the financial dimensions of the project from various perspectives.

In order to ensure a thorough financial evaluation, costs have been reported in two formats: escalated costs, which are crucial for assessing funding requirements and overall project affordability, and unescalated costs, which serve as the basis for a rigorous cost-benefit analysis. This approach is outlined in the below table and facilitates a more nuanced understanding of the project's financial implications.

Project Location	Total Cost \$000	Total Cost Escalated \$000
Coonamble	5,043	5,151
Gilgandra	5,671	5,870
Warrumbungle	5,110	5,219
Total	15,824	16,240

The cost structure for the projects encompasses several key components, ensuring a comprehensive financial plan. Firstly, preliminaries are set at 15% of the Net Construction Cost. This is complemented by a margin calculated at 5% of both the Net Construction Cost and Preliminaries. Professional fees are accounted for at 10% of the Gross Construction Cost. Additionally, authority fees are levied at 2% of the Gross Construction Cost, inclusive of Professional fees. A significant contingency is factored in at 20% of the Gross Construction Cost. The sizeable contingency is a direct reflection of the high-level nature of the project designs, and it accounts for potential uncertainties such as ground conditions, final surveys, and similar exclusions.

With respect to the project schedule, every project is designed to be developed over a duration of three years. The project's upfront phase includes expenses for planning, early works, Development Application (DA), and refined design. These expenses build up gradually to the building costs, which take centre stage in the project's last phases. This staged method guarantees a planned and strategic financial investment in line with the project's advancement.

Projected ongoing costs

To facilitate thorough financial planning and enhance the accuracy of the cost-benefit analysis, a detailed long-term maintenance cost plan has been developed. This plan extends beyond the initial capital expenditures to encompass a comprehensive range of ongoing expenses. It includes operating costs, routine maintenance and repairs, as well as costs associated with the renewal and replacement of infrastructure. These costs are itemised for each Council within Section 3 of the Business Case and provide a clear and structured financial outlook for the long-term sustainability of the project.

Cost Benefit Analysis

The project's total capital cost stands at \$15.82 million, offering a diverse range of benefits, both tangible and intangible, to the communities of each Council and the broader Real Country region. The subsequent tables in Section 3.5 provide a comprehensive overview of these benefits, encompassing various project components, beneficiaries, and timelines. This detailed representation substantiates the assumptions underlying the project's favourable cost-benefit analysis. A key financial highlight is the projected growth in visitor numbers and spending. The Real Country Issue Paper's Gap Analysis pinpoints a specific group of higher-spending visitors likely to be drawn by the new tourist infrastructure. The table below offers a concise forecast of the anticipated increase in visitor numbers and overnight stays, directly attributable to the new infrastructure initiatives.

Project Location	Additional Visitors p.a	Additional nights p.a.
Coonamble	5,110	748
Gilgandra	12,045	1,588
Warrumbungle	7,450	933
Total	24,605	3,269

Source: Issues Paper, REMPLAN, TRA 2022

The forecasting approach for this project has been meticulously segmented into Domestic, Domestic Overnight, and International Overnight visitor categories. This detailed breakdown leverages the insights from the TRA 2022 Tourism Profile and the REMPLAN Tourism Analysis Model. The resultant analysis yields a comprehensive estimate of total visitor expenditure.

The projections indicate that attracting an additional 24,605 visitors to the region is expected to generate a significant economic impact. The total estimated expenditure resulting from this influx is calculated to be \$4.05 million. This activity further translates into a value-added impact of \$3.4 million, underpinned by a Type 1 Multiplier of 1.284 and a Type 2 Multiplier of 1.612. These figures underscore the substantial economic contribution that the project is poised to deliver.

In terms of regional economic growth, the Gross Regional Product (GRP) is projected to see an increment of \$3.344 million, a rise of 0.03%, reaching \$10.822 million. This increase is attributed to several key factors. Directly, there's an expected rise in output by \$4.052 million, the creation of 23 new jobs, an addition of \$1.126 million in wages and salaries, and an enhancement in value-added value by \$2.074 million. These figures reflect the direct economic benefits stemming from the project.

Furthermore, the expansion of the local economy is set to initiate a ripple effect through the supply chain. This is anticipated to arise from increased local procurement of goods and services. Indirect impacts from this economic stimulation include an additional \$1.435 million in output, the creation of 4 additional jobs, an increment of \$0.288 million in wages and salaries, and a further \$0.589 million gain in value-added. These indirect effects are crucial in understanding the comprehensive economic uplift that the project is expected to yield.

Projected Impacts from Forecast Visitor Numbers

The Real Country Strategy entails a substantial investment in new construction, totalling \$15.82 million. To comprehensively assess the economic impact of this project within the Orana region, the REMPLAN software was employed. This analysis specifically evaluated the effects of channeling the \$15.82 million investment into the construction of Stage 1 works.

The economic significance of the project is further highlighted by the total value-added, which is a noteworthy \$10.11 million. This figure is underpinned by a Type 1 Multiplier of 1.667 and a Type 2 Multiplier of 2.101, indicating the project's robust potential to amplify economic benefits within the region.

Impact Summary	Direct Effect	Supply-Chain Effect	Consumption Effect	Total Effect	Type 1 Multiplier	Type 2 Multiplier
Output (\$M)	\$15.82	\$8.93	\$3.59	\$28.35	1.558	1.792
Employment (Jobs)	\$25.00	\$23.00	\$12.00	\$60.00	1.765	2.176
Wages and Salaries (\$M)	\$2.41	\$1.88	\$0.77	\$5.06	1.721	2.032
Value-added (\$M)	\$4.75	\$3.30	\$2.06	\$10.11	1.667	2.101
Source:	REMPAN Economy					

Summary of the results

Net Present Value (NPV)

The project's financial viability is underscored by a positive Net Present Value (NPV) of \$8.2 million, set against an initial project cost of \$15.8 million, excluding long-term repairs and maintenance. This is especially impressive considering the project's remote location and ambitious scope.

In the Benefit-Cost-Ratio (BCR) Analysis, the project exhibits a BCR of 0.47. While a BCR below 1 typically raises questions about a project's feasibility, the unique context of this project paints a different picture. The substantial initial investments, reflected in the BCR, are foundational for establishing the necessary infrastructure that will drive long-term financial benefits, contributing to the project's positive NPV.

Additionally, the application of a 5% discount rate, as recommended by the NSW Treasury, significantly influences the BCR. This is particularly pertinent in the context of the project's considerable upfront costs

Indirect Benefits and QBL

Considering the wide range of indirect benefits and the significant positive Net Present Value (NPV), the Real Country project extends beyond the confines of conventional financial metrics. Although it exhibits a Benefit-Cost-Ratio (BCR) of 0.47, the project compellingly justifies investment by aligning with broader economic, social, environmental, and cultural goals. This alignment underscores the project's overall viability and establishes its strong case for funding, reinforcing its potential to deliver multifaceted returns.

Financial Appraisal

The project's financial appraisal reveals that the total annual liability is projected to fluctuate between \$583,000 and \$1,041,490 during years 4-10. It's important to note that currently, there is no revenue generation accounted for in the financial appraisal or the cost-benefit analysis calculations. Future commercial activities possible for the Focus Area Projects encompass opportunities for water-based ventures, potential retail offerings such as a cafe/tavern (specifically at the Warrena Weir in Coonamble), diverse culinary experiences, accommodation and eco-tourism, adventure and recreational activities, along with strategic partnerships and sponsorships. By proactively establishing these commercial revenue streams, we not only enhance the project's value but also unlock the potential for generating significant additional revenue.

Project Governance

The Real Country project is poised to adopt a comprehensive governance structure, emphasising shared responsibilities, collaborative decision-making, and strict adherence to regulatory standards. This approach aims to efficiently manage the project while meticulously integrating the diverse needs and visions of the Coonamble, Gilgandra, and Warrumbungle Shire Councils. It's crucial to recognise that, as funding for the projects has not yet been secured, specific management roles remain to be designated. The following is a proposed structure and accompanying commentary, intended to be operationalised upon securing the next stage of funding. This framework is designed to ensure that the project's execution aligns with its overarching goals and the collective interests of the involved councils.

Project Risks

The primary risks categorised as 'High' in this project encompass areas such as construction, financing and procurement, planning and approvals, cultural heritage, and environmental compliance – especially relevant to activities along the river – as well as the overarching economic viability. The councils involved are well-equipped in risk management, backed by comprehensive structures and processes. This expertise is essential in effectively managing and mitigating the risks associated with such significant projects.

Conclusion

The Business Case for the Real Country project clearly illustrates the dedication of the councils to revitalise the regional economy and community through strategic development in tourism, infrastructure projects, and community engagement. This initiative not only strengthens local economies and preserves the unique cultural and natural heritage of the region but also aligns with broader objectives of regional and state development strategies. It signifies a unified and progressive approach towards sustainable regional growth and development.

2. CASE FOR CHANGE

2.1. BACKGROUND

The "Real Country" initiative, spearheaded by the collaborative efforts of Coonamble, Gilgandra, and Warrumbungle Shire Councils, represents a strategic and innovative approach to tourism and regional development in central west New South Wales. Spanning an area of 27,142 square kilometres, the project aims to elevate the visitor experience by leveraging the area's natural beauty and cultural heritage, with key highlights including Warrumbungle National Park, Pilliga Forest, Castlereagh River, Macquarie Marshes, and artesian bore baths.

Over the past year, this collaboration has given rise to a series of infrastructure projects, deeply rooted in community engagement and reflective of the collective aspirations and insights of the local populace. These projects are not only tailored to the distinctive characteristics of each council area but also align with the strategic objectives outlined in the Real Country Place Strategy.

The strategic integration of various projects under the Real Country initiative is evident through their alignment with the Real Country Destination Strategy Goals. Each project is meticulously designed to align with and contribute to the overarching objectives of the region. These objectives include enhancing local tourism, preserving cultural heritage, and fostering sustainable economic development. This alignment ensures that each project not only meets specific local needs but also contributes to the broader goals of the region, creating a cohesive and comprehensive approach to development.

Furthermore, every project undertaken as part of the Real Country initiative plays a crucial role in contributing to the Regional Real Country Vision. This vision encompasses amplifying opportunities for residents and visitors to explore and celebrate the unique natural and cultural identity of the region. The projects are instrumental in bringing this vision to life, enabling people to connect with and appreciate the distinctiveness of the area's natural beauty and rich cultural heritage. This concerted effort ensures that the development initiatives resonate deeply with the region's identity and aspirations.

The implementation goals include:

- **Local Facility Enhancement:** Directly benefiting visitors and local communities, these projects focus on improving river experiences, introducing new amenities, or enhancing existing facilities.
- **Economic Development:** Aiming to stimulate local economies, these projects focus on job creation, tourism attraction, and local business growth.
- **Sustainability and Environment:** With an emphasis on sustainable practices, the projects aim to preserve the environment and maintain ecological balance.

The strategic pillars and vision encompass:

- **Community Engagement:** Ensuring that projects reflect the desires and aspirations of local residents.
- **Cultural and Heritage Preservation:** A central focus on celebrating and preserving the region's cultural and historical assets.
- **Innovative and Sustainable Solutions:** Projects are designed with innovation and sustainability in mind, supporting a forward-thinking, resilient regional vision.

The projects are categorised into two stages:

- **Business Case Approach (Stage 1):** Selected for their potential transformative impact, these projects represent the region's aspirations and focus on economic revitalisation, community development, and environmental sustainability. They include detailed cost-benefit analyses for financial feasibility.
- **Masterplan Approach (Stage 2):** These projects, crucial for the long-term vision, focus on spatial planning and aesthetic design (not part of this Business Plan).

The Real Country project objectives is focused on the strategic development of natural assets, with the primary objective of transforming the region into a premier tourist destination. This transformation is centred around enhancing and integrating natural assets, such as the Castlereagh River, into the fabric of

community life. By doing so, the initiative aims to create a unique and compelling destination that attracts visitors not only for its natural beauty but also for its integration with the local lifestyle and community. This approach ensures that tourism development is not just about attracting visitors, but also about enriching the experience of the region for both tourists and residents alike, fostering a deeper connection with the natural environment.

In addition to the development of natural assets, the Real Country project places a strong emphasis on the economic and cultural revitalisation of local towns and villages, including Coonamble, Coonabarabran, Gilgandra, Mendooran, and Binnaway. This aspect of the project seeks to reinvigorate these areas, promoting economic growth through increased visitor engagement. The revitalisation efforts focus not only on economic development but also on enhancing the cultural vibrancy of these towns and villages. By doing so, the project aims to create a more dynamic and prosperous region, where increased tourism drives economic growth while also celebrating and preserving the unique cultural identity of each locality.

The planned outcomes are delineated across four key areas:

- **Economic Outcomes:** Invigorating local economies, creating diverse revenue streams, and achieving long-term financial sustainability.
- **Social Outcomes:** Fostering community engagement and development, improving quality of life, and bolstering resilience against natural disasters.
- **Environmental Outcomes:** Prioritising sustainable development and ecological balance, and enhancing the region's natural assets.
- **Cultural Outcomes:** Emphasising cultural and heritage preservation, promoting local identity, and revitalising local towns and villages.

An integral part of the success of the Real Country Project is the dedication to the process and delivery prioritisation of resources by the three Council's. The Councils' delivery priorities are provided below.

Delivery Priorities

The document Real Country Destination Strategy (November 2023) outlines several governance and delivery priorities across different areas, each reflecting the unique needs and aspirations of the local communities.

Coonamble

- **River Restoration and Conservation:** Prioritising the repair and conservation of the river, addressing carp and weed infestations, and improving access to riverbanks.
- **Weir Enhancement and Family-Friendly Spaces:** Enhancing the weir area for family recreation, including water activities and nature engagement for children.
- **Main Street Revitalisation and Accommodation:** Increasing accommodation options for tourism and events, and revitalising the main street, including preserving historical assets and supporting businesses.
- **Community Engagement:** Emphasising community engagement and collaboration among the councils to create a strong regional identity.

Gilgandra

- **Town Centre and River Crossing Design:** Reevaluating the town centre design and the potential for a new river crossing.
- **River Health and Conservation:** Emphasising the maintenance of river health and relocating the town beach to a more accessible location.
- **Cultural Inclusivity and First Nations Identity:** Promoting cultural inclusivity and celebrating First Nations contributions.
- **Promotion of Primary Industries and Rural Strength:** Highlighting Gilgandra's rural strength and heritage.

- **Enhancement of Public Spaces:** Developing public spaces for greater community engagement and recreation, and advocating for regional collaboration.

Coonabarabran, Binnaway, Mendooran

- **Amphitheatre Design and Seasonal Considerations:** Acknowledging climate seasonality and rethinking amphitheatre design.
- **River Health and Ecological Preservation:** Prioritising river health and ecological balance across the region.
- **First Nations Engagement and Cultural Identity:** Recognising the significance of First Nations communities and their contributions to cultural identity.
- **Promotion of Arts and Vibrancy:** Emphasising art and creativity to infuse vibrancy into town and river precincts.
- **Dark Sky and Unique Celestial Views:** Celebrating unique celestial views for nighttime events and stargazing experiences.
- **Community-Driven Maintenance and Tourism:** Focusing on community engagement, promoting local businesses, and enhancing river access and health.

These priorities reflect a comprehensive and collaborative approach to enhancing the Real Country's appeal as a destination, while preserving its natural and cultural heritage and fostering community involvement and economic growth.

In summary, the Real Country Tourism Experience Business Case and Strategy seeks to redefine the visitor experience in central west NSW through a balanced approach incorporating economic, environmental, social, and cultural aspects. The strategy is underpinned by extensive research, community and stakeholder engagement, and alignment with strategic council and state documents. This Business Case, informed by these elements, articulates a clear, strategically aligned vision for the region.

Strong alignment with strategy documents and a solid research base of the tourism market and gap analysis has enabled the Real Country team to understand where the opportunities lie which in turn leads to a compelling rationale for investment.

2.2. RATIONALE FOR INVESTMENT

“Build it and they will come”

In this section, we present a financial and strategic rationale for investing in the Real Country project, a pivotal initiative aimed at transforming central west New South Wales' economy through strategic tourism development. This proposal is meticulously aligned with a quadruple bottom line (QBL) approach, addressing economic, social, environmental, and cultural impacts.

Economic Justification: Central to this investment case is the economic imperative to diversify the Real Country region's economy, which currently has an over reliance on agriculture. This sector's vulnerability to natural disasters such as droughts, floods, and bushfires poses a significant risk. Data from REMPLAN indicates that tourism employment in the Real Country Local Government Areas (LGAs) is below the Orana Region average, signalling a substantial opportunity for growth. Targeting this gap, the project aims to elevate visitor expenditure by 10%, a pragmatic and attainable target. Strategic focus is placed on attracting higher spending visitors and enhancing town centre activities to increase stay durations and spending.

The latest REMPLAN data, as detailed in Table 2.2.1 below, reveals that, relative to the broader Orana Region, the three Real Country LGAs exhibit a lower average percentage of employment in the tourism sector. This discrepancy highlights a significant opportunity for growth. Consequently, tourism, and more specifically tourism infrastructure, has been pinpointed as a pivotal driver of growth and forms the central focus of this Project.

	Coonamble	Gilgandra	Warrumbungle	Orana
Total Jobs	1408	1524	3123	54,887
Agriculture	414	506	944	6,393
Tourism	35	62	178	2,475
% total	2.49%	4.07%	5.70%	4.51%

Table 2.2.1: Real Country Tourism jobs relative to Orana Region

This Business Case measures and reports on the impact of planned tourism infrastructure across the Real Country region to make the Real Country tourism experience a reality, enhancing the natural assets of the Real Country region and improving the regional economy as a result. There are significant benefits in all of the QBL segments in providing diversification of employment and opportunity away from the main sectors of Health Care, Agriculture, Education and Retail. In the Orana Region Tourism employment represents only 4.5% of the total Jobs in Orana, a ranking of ninth.

Understanding the nature and drivers of tourism as well as the target market visitor is crucial for designing effective place making and superior tourism infrastructure to attract those markets. The infrastructure needs to resonate with the desires and preferences of potential visitors. The LGAs of The Real Country - Gilgandra, Coonamble and Warrumbungle- appeal to a diverse range of travellers seeking an authentic country experience, nature-based activities, cultural exploration, and affordable yet memorable adventures.

Financial Analysis and Gap Identification: An Issues Paper was prepared in the development of The Real Country project (June 2023) which explores the current state of tourism, target markets and the gaps which exist in the tourism industries across the region. The Issues Paper identifies specific visitor segments with a propensity for higher spending, essential for directing marketing and infrastructure efforts. These are categorised in the Figure 2.2.1 Tourism Visitors and Expenditure.

Natured Based Tourism



Visitors	37.0 M	Nights	140.9 M	Expenditure	\$24.0 Bn
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Culture & Heritage Tourism



Visitors	14.1 M	Nights	83.1 M	Expenditure	\$14.3 Bn
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Food Tourism



Visitors	5.2 M	Nights	57.4 M	Expenditure	\$9.0 Bn
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Caravan & Parking Travel



Visitors	3.7 M	Nights	13.5 M	Expenditure	\$2.0 Bn
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Aboriginal Tourism



Visitors	514 K	Nights	13.1 M	Expenditure	\$1.6 Bn
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Figure 2.2.1 Tourism Visitors and Expenditure

In summary, the research indicates that in key metrics like tourism employment, output, wages, and value-added (economic margin), the three LGAs match the averages observed in the Orana region, as well as across broader NSW and Australian tourism sectors. However, the area where the region lags behind these

This detailed review provides crucial insights into the current visitor demographics, behaviours, and motivations while identifying areas of untapped potential. The Issues Paper lays the groundwork for the partially data-driven approach to this business case.

Further data was provided from REMPLAN Economy model which provides insights into the performance of key sectors of the Real Country region's economy. Underpinned by the latest data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), REMPLAN Economy delivers estimates of employment, output, wages & salaries, imports, exports and gross regional product for tourism and related industries. A modest increase in visitor numbers, facilitated by small-scale tourism infrastructure, is projected to result in a \$1.433 million increase in Gross Regional Product. This projection includes a direct increase in output of \$1.736 million, the creation of 10 additional jobs, and an increase in wages and salaries by \$0.483 million.

comparative study areas is in the average daily and per night spend by both domestic and international visitors across all segments.


				
REMPLAN is a registered trademark of Compelling Economics Pty Ltd.				
Visitor Expenditure Snapshot				
	Domestic Day	Domestic Overnight	International	
Average Stay (Nights)				
	-	3	12	Gilgandra
	-	4	3	Coonamble
	-	2	11	Warrumbungle
	-	3	8	Orana RDA
	-	3	30	New South Wales
	-	4	39	Australia
Average Spend Per Trip				
	\$177	\$599	\$770	Gilgandra
	\$108	\$728	\$681	Coonamble
	\$135	\$291	\$538	Warrumbungle
	\$184	\$559	\$802	Orana RDA
	\$132	\$742	\$3,334	New South Wales
	\$131	\$851	\$6,096	Australia
Average Spend Per Night				
	-	\$199	\$67	Gilgandra
	-	\$192	\$259	Coonamble
	-	\$135	\$51	Warrumbungle
	-	\$211	\$158	Orana RDA
	-	\$221	\$110	New South Wales
	-	\$225	\$155	Australia
Disclaimer:	This data is provided in good faith with every effort made to provide accurate data and apply comprehensive knowledge. However, REMPLAN does not guarantee the accuracy of data nor the conclusions drawn from this information. Any inference or decision to pursue any action in any way related to the figures, data and commentary presented in this data is wholly the responsibility of the party concerned. REMPLAN advises any party to conduct detailed feasibility studies and seek professional advice before proceeding with any such action and accept no responsibility for the consequences of pursuing any such action.			

Table 2.2.2: Visitor Expenditure Snapshot

Social Investment Perspective: From a social investment standpoint, the project is designed to enhance community cohesion and identity. Infrastructure projects, particularly those enhancing the Castlereagh River, aim to foster a stronger sense of community belonging and pride, critical for social resilience.

Environmental and Cultural Investment: Environmentally, the project emphasises sustainable tourism infrastructure, aiming for ecological balance and preservation of natural heritage. Culturally, the initiative focuses on preserving and promoting the region's unique history and identity, contributing to its cultural vibrancy.

Quantitative Assessment of Current Challenges:

- **Agricultural Dependence:** The region's dependency on agriculture for economic stability is a significant risk factor, particularly considering the unpredictability of climate-related events.
- **Tourism Sector Underperformance:** Current levels of tourism employment and spending are significantly below regional averages, indicating untapped potential.
- **Visitor Expenditure Deficiency:** The region currently falls behind in average visitor expenditure when compared to peer regions, negatively impacting the local tourism economy.
- **Business Profitability and Employment Issues:** The lower profitability in the tourism sector translates to limited employment opportunities and increased operational pressure on business owners.

Risk Analysis for Deferred Investment:

- **Economic Risks:** Continued dependence on agriculture increases the region's susceptibility to climate-induced economic shocks.
- **Lost Economic Opportunities:** Failure to develop the tourism sector could result in missed opportunities for economic diversification and job creation.
- **Social Risks:** A lack of new initiatives could lead to diminished community engagement and hindered social development.
- **Environmental Risks:** Inaction in developing sustainable tourism infrastructure could lead to the underutilisation of natural assets.
- **Cultural Risks:** Neglecting cultural and heritage preservation could erode the region's unique cultural identity.

Through meticulous analysis of our collected data, we have gained several valuable insights that informed the development of our target visitors (which we term 'Personas').

Key Insights from the data

- **Regional and Strategic Context:** Our personas are shaped by the regional context and strategic goals of the Real Country, guiding our tailored strategies.
- **Accommodation Preferences:** Insights into accommodation choices inform suggestions for sector improvements, aligning with visitor preferences.
- **Social Media Assessment:** Understanding visitors' online behaviour shapes our digital marketing, enhancing audience engagement.
- **Events Assessment:** Analysis of event popularity informs the types of experiences that resonate with our audience.
- **Visitor Data:** Comprehensive data on visitor demographics and preferences aid in developing diverse and representative personas.
- **Types of Tourism:** Recognising varied tourism interests (food, nature, Aboriginal, caravan & camping) allows us to fine-tune our offerings, enhancing the visitor experience in the Real Country.

In conclusion, the investment in the Real Country Tourism Experience Business Case is not only a response to current economic and social challenges but a strategic move to mitigate future risks and ensure sustainable growth and resilience of the central west NSW region. The financial metrics and strategic goals outlined in this case strongly advocate for timely investment to capitalise on the identified tourism potential and drive regional transformation.

2.3. STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The Real Country Business Case outlines a strategic vision that aligns seamlessly with a range of government strategies, plans, and priorities across multiple layers. This section provides a detailed exploration of how this key regional project fits into the larger context of regional and state objectives, underscoring its relevance and alignment with broader developmental goals.

Strategic Integration

The infrastructure projects are intricately aligned with the key goals of the Real Country Destination Strategy. This means each project contributes to overarching objectives such as enhancing local tourism opportunities, preserving and showcasing cultural heritage, and fostering sustainable economic development.

The various documents listed from Page 6 of the Issues Paper have been reviewed based on the relevance to the Councils.

Documents have been analysed by the team to further understand the context of the area, in particular:

- Understand the Real Country initiative as a collaborative project between the three Councils.
- Analyse how natural assets and the unique regional setting is acknowledged in existing strategies.
- Investigate the current strategies for the region and align their key directions to economic growth, employment context and key industries.

Recognise and analyse local resilience

In order to understand the current and future issues the following documents provide a framework that assists in delivering guidance for The Real Country vision and outline the engagement process. These documents have informed this Issues Paper and will further provide insights into the opportunity analysis and an initial draft of the vision as this project develops in the Business Case phases.

Alignment with NSW Government Strategies

- **Premier's Priorities:** The Real Country project aligns with the NSW Premier's Priorities, including the creation of new jobs and the delivery of key infrastructure projects, thereby contributing to the state's economic and social well-being.
- **State Infrastructure Strategy (SIS):** As a 20-year infrastructure investment plan, the SIS prioritises strategic fit and economic merit. The Real Country project aligns with these goals by addressing regional infrastructure needs, thereby enhancing the state's economy and community living standards. The strategy's emphasis on diversifying infrastructure investment and embedding resilience is particularly relevant to the Real Country project, which seeks to leverage digital technology and grow public-private partnerships.
- **Restart NSW/Rebuilding NSW:** This initiative focuses on funding high-priority infrastructure projects to enhance state economic growth and productivity. The Real Country project, by improving regional tourism infrastructure, aligns with these objectives. Notably, Restart NSW targets significant funding toward regional and rural areas, which includes the Western Districts of NSW where the Real Country project is situated.
- **NSW Government Agency Plans:** These plans emphasise the role of regional NSW in the state's economic prosperity, with investments in essential services and infrastructure. The Real Country project aligns with this by enhancing tourism infrastructure, an essential service that contributes to the economic and social well-being of the region. The plans also highlight the NSW Government's commitment to growing regional economies and communities, supporting projects that enhance economic growth, wellbeing, and community amenity.

Regional Plans and Economic Visions

- **20 Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW – Refresh:** This vision promotes the development of Functional Economic Regions (FERs), which is a central concept to the Real Country project. By focusing on enhancing regional economic development and tourism, the project aligns with this vision.
- **NSW Closing the Gap Priority Reform 5:** Although specific details were not retrieved, this reform emphasises employment, business growth, and economic prosperity, aligning with the Real Country project's objectives of creating job opportunities and fostering economic development.

Alignment with Regional Strategies

The below policy settings and background documents have undergone additional in-depth assessments in order ensure that the Business Case is feasible to execute and aligned with the strategic perspective of the local environment. The Castlereagh Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) 2018 – 2022

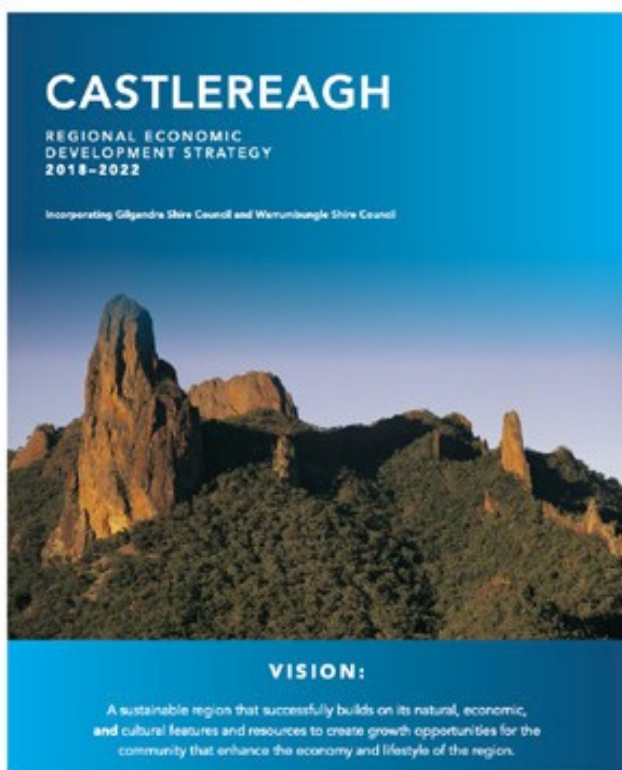
- Western Plains REDS – Regional Economic Development Strategy / 2023
- NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030
- Destination Country And Outback Destination Management Plan 2022-2030
- Community Strategy Plans for all 3 LGAs
- Other docs – i.e. Gilgandra Land Use Plan and Economic Development Strategy

Strategic Alignment with Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS)

The Real Country project encompasses two pivotal Functional Economic Regions, focusing on enhancing regional economies through targeted strategic initiatives. This integration is underscored by our alignment with key strategies outlined in the Castlereagh and Western Plains REDS, demonstrating a commitment to regional growth and diversification.

Alignment with Castlereagh REDS Strategies

The project aligns with three core strategies of the Castlereagh REDS:



- Strategy 3: Focus on developing and enhancing the regional lifestyle to make it more attractive for work, leisure, and business.
- Strategy 4: Aim to develop and promote a diverse event and destination profile, increasing visitation and diversifying the economy.
- Strategy 5: Build robust support for local businesses, leveraging regional advantages to diversify the economy.

Key Takeaways from Castlereagh REDS

- The region's economy is deeply intertwined with its natural assets.
- Agriculture, as the primary sector, is the largest employer, exporter, and specialised industry in the region.
- Tourism emerges as a critical economic sector, benefitting accommodation, food services, retail trade, arts and recreation services.



Alignment with Western Plains REDS Strategies

The project also addresses three strategies within the Western Plains REDS:

Department of Regional NSW



Western Plains Regional Economic Development Strategy
– 2023 Update



- Strategy 2: Enhance economic activity across Agriculture, Mining, and Tourism by improving telecommunications and climate infrastructure to boost business certainty and resilience.
- Strategy 4: Grow Tourism to enrich and diversify the regional economy.
- Strategy 5: Improve the region's social and demographic fabric to foster growth in Mining, Tourism, and Agriculture.

Key Takeaways from Western Plains REDS

- Building resilience across industries is crucial for improving liveability and well-being in the face of increasing natural disasters.
- The tourism sector's investment in the Western Plains region is substantial, supporting 1,083 jobs in 2021 and generating \$88 million in visitor expenditure.
- The focus should remain on supporting continued investment, with a specific emphasis on Aboriginal culture and nature-based tourism initiatives, alongside infrastructure projects that support anticipated visitor growth.

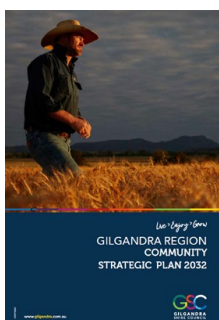
REDS Review and Strategic Outlook

The REDS are currently undergoing a review process, with feedback highlighting the importance of prioritising infrastructure projects in the Real Country region. This feedback underscores the role of the tourism strategy as a central pillar supporting this infrastructure development.

The Real Country project is strategically poised at the intersection of regional economic development and sustainable tourism. With its robust alignment with both the Castlereagh and Western Plains REDS, the project serves as a catalyst for economic diversification, leveraging the region's natural assets and agricultural strengths. This strategic alignment lays a solid foundation for the successful commencement and implementation of the Real Country initiative, heralding a new era of economic growth and community development in regional NSW.

Local Government Strategies

- **Community Strategic Plans for the Three LGAs:** These plans outline long-term visions and priorities for each community, significantly shaping the future of regional collaboration, marketing strategy, and event programming. The Real Country project's initiatives closely align with these plans, enhancing local tourism and cultural promotion, and engaging with community needs.



- **Asset Management Strategies:** The project complements local asset management strategies by investing in sustainable tourism infrastructure, adding value to community assets.
- **Local Economic Development Strategies:** The project aligns with these strategies by diversifying the local economy, reducing reliance on traditional sectors like agriculture, and enhancing regional tourism infrastructure.

The Real Country project represents a comprehensive integration of local, regional, and state objectives, harnessing the region's unique natural and cultural assets to create a sustainable, vibrant tourism industry. This strategic alignment ensures the project is not only viable and sustainable but also serves as a catalyst for broader economic and social benefits in the Western Districts of NSW. This multi-layered strategic fit positions the Real Country project as a transformative initiative for the region, aligning with a wide range of governmental strategies and plans, and enhancing the collective vision for regional development and prosperity.

The Real Country project, emblematic of innovative regional collaboration, is a pioneering initiative undertaken by three Local Government Areas (LGAs) in regional New South Wales. This ambitious project is not just a testament to inter-council cooperation but also garners support from an array of influential entities including the Great Western Plains group of Councils, Western Alliance of Councils, Regional Development Australia Orana, Destination NSW Country & Outback, and various NSW State Government health and education bodies.

One of the core visions of the Real Country project is to transcend traditional tourism paradigms, transforming the region into a dynamic and multifaceted destination. This involves a comprehensive approach to regional development, with objectives that extend beyond the conventional scope:

- **Capitalising on the Real Country Tourism Campaign:** This initiative aims to elevate the region's profile, making it synonymous with an unparalleled travel experience.
- **Regional Growth as a Destination:** The project seeks to position the Real Country region as a premier destination, fostering significant growth in the regional tourism sector of NSW.
- **Economic Diversification:** A key goal is to extend economic support beyond the agricultural backbone of the region, introducing new avenues of economic activity.
- **Enhancement of Natural Assets and Accessibility:** By augmenting and leveraging the region's natural beauty, the project aims to enhance accessibility, drawing a larger influx of visitors.
- **Community Engagement and Cultural Enrichment:** Engaging local communities and celebrating cultural heritage are pivotal in creating a more inclusive and vibrant tourism experience.
- **Infrastructure and Service Enhancement:** Upgrading visitor infrastructure and services is fundamental to improving the overall quality of the tourism experience.
- **Artistic and Creative Initiatives:** The project promotes art and cultural activation initiatives, enriching the regional cultural landscape.
- **Investment and Economic Opportunities:** Attracting investments and fostering the development of new experiences and operations, the project aims to catalyse regional economic growth.
- **Employment and Career Development:** A significant outcome of this project is the creation of diverse employment opportunities and career pathways within the region.

Strategic Impact Along the Castlereagh River

A focal point of the Real Country project is the strategic development along the Castlereagh River, envisaged as a series of transformational experiences. This development is not merely an enhancement of physical infrastructure but is designed to invigorate the regional economy and community. It encourages prolonged visitor stays and deeper exploration of the region, thereby significantly benefiting local communities and businesses.

In essence, the Real Country project is a visionary endeavour that seeks to redefine regional tourism in NSW. Through its multifaceted approach, it promises to deliver substantial benefits, ranging from economic diversification and community engagement to environmental stewardship and cultural enrichment. The

collaboration between the three LGAs and their partners epitomises a forward-thinking and strategic approach to regional development, poised to yield long-term benefits for the region and its inhabitants.

Strategic Alignment with NSW Government Strategies and Plans

The Real Country project demonstrates a robust alignment with key NSW Government strategies and plans, underscoring its strategic importance and potential impact on regional development. This alignment is pivotal in ensuring that the project's scope and planned infrastructure initiatives resonate with the broader objectives of state-wide economic and social development.

1. NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030



The NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 underpins the Real Country project, with a focus on local resilience, economic growth, and sustainable development in the tourism sector.

Key Takeaways

- **Focus on Rebuilding Post-COVID:** Emphasis on assisting businesses and the industry to regain pre-COVID performance levels until 2024.
- **Importance of Local Resilience:** Adoption of flexible planning and agile market responses to achieve long-term goals.
- **Alignment with Guiding Principle 3:** The project's opportunity analysis aligns with the strategy's principle to 'Lead with our Strengths', forming the basis for developing business cases and campaigns for the Real Country.
- **Commitment to Facilitate Growth:** The NSW Government's dedication to fostering growth, which includes unlocking investment in infrastructure, promoting job creation, industry resilience, and future planning.

2. Destination Management Plan, Destination Country & Outback (DMP)



The DMP emphasises enhancing tourism in the Real Country region, focusing on increasing visitor engagement and experiences.

Key Takeaways

- **Enhancing Visitation:** Developing activities and capabilities based on supply and demand, including events and experiences, and strengthening demand through targeted marketing.
- **Building Industry Capacity:** The DMP outlines a comprehensive strategy for visitor data collection, analysis, industry engagement, and partnership facilitation, which the Real Country project should closely consider, particularly in advocating for key infrastructure needs.

3. 20 Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW

This vision aligns closely with the Real Country project, focusing on transformative infrastructure, job growth, vibrant towns, community support, and economic recovery.

Key Takeaways

- **Transformative Infrastructure:** Emphasis on developing infrastructure that catalyses regional development and economic recovery.
- **Job Growth and Vibrant Towns:** A focus on creating employment opportunities and enhancing the liability of regional towns.
- **Support for Regional Communities:** Efforts to bolster regional communities, leveraging the unique strengths of each area.

Additional Strategic Connections

The Real Country project also aligns with the Premier's Priorities, particularly in creating greener public spaces and enhancing cultural expression through Create NSW. Moreover, it supports Transport for NSW's objectives to develop and enhance walking and cycling paths, further promoting sustainable transportation and community health.

Alignment with Community Strategic Plans and Other Local Initiatives

Community Strategic Plans Overview

The Community Strategic Plans for Coonamble, Gilgandra, and Warrumbungle Shire Councils, which collectively form the Real Country region, serve as foundational elements in the strategic development of this project. These plans offer a detailed and long-term perspective, encompassing the vision, values, priorities, and actionable steps for each community.

Impact on Marketing Strategy and Event Programming

The insights derived from these Community Strategic Plans are instrumental in shaping the future direction of the Real Country project, particularly in terms of marketing strategy and event programming. These strategies are geared towards fostering regional collaboration, enhancing the region's appeal, and ensuring that the proposed initiatives resonate deeply with the local communities.

Other Plans Examined

In addition to the Community Strategic Plans, a comprehensive review of several other local plans and strategies has been undertaken to ensure a holistic approach to regional development:

- **Gilgandra Activation Blueprint:** This plan focuses on activating key areas within Gilgandra, aiming to enhance community engagement and local economic activity.
- **Gilgandra Cultural Precinct Strategic Plan:** A strategy dedicated to developing the cultural precinct in Gilgandra, emphasising the enhancement of cultural assets and heritage.
- **Local Environmental Plan (LEP) (to be reviewed):** An upcoming review of the LEP will provide further guidance on environmental management and land use within the region.
- **Gilgandra Region Destination Management Plan (in progress):** This developing plan aims to strategically manage and promote the Gilgandra region as a key destination.
- **Under the Gums Gilgandra Marketing Plan:** A marketing initiative designed to showcase Gilgandra's unique attributes and attract visitors.
- **River Beautification Masterplan:** A plan to enhance the aesthetic and ecological value of the region's riverine environments.
- **Coonamble Masterplan:** A comprehensive plan focusing on the overall development and improvement of Coonamble.
- **Economic Development Strategy - Coonamble and Warrumbungle:** A strategy aimed at bolstering economic growth and diversification in Coonamble and Warrumbungle.

- **Community Action Plans - WSC:** Action plans developed by the Warrumbungle Shire Council to address specific community needs and priorities.
- **Artesian Bathing Precinct:** A project dedicated to the development and promotion of artesian bore baths as a regional attraction.

Local Policy Integration

The integration of the Community Strategic Plans with these additional local plans and strategies ensures that the Real Country project is not only aligned with the broader vision and goals of the region but also deeply rooted in the specific needs and aspirations of the local communities. This alignment positions the project to effectively contribute to the sustainable development, cultural enrichment, and economic prosperity of the Real Country region.

The strategic alignment of the Real Country project with these key NSW Government strategies and plans reinforces its potential to significantly contribute to regional development, tourism, and community well-being. This alignment ensures that the project not only meets regional needs but also aligns with broader state objectives, paving the way for a more vibrant, resilient, and prosperous regional NSW.

2.4. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

2.4.1 Introduction to the Integrated Methodology

In enhancing the expected outcomes for the Real Country Tourism Experience Business Case, we integrate the detailed SMART methodology with the Quadruple Bottom Line (QBL) approach. This combination offers a nuanced perspective, ensuring each objective is specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound, while also contributing to economic, environmental, social, and cultural sustainability. This comprehensive framework enables a holistic evaluation and implementation strategy, ensuring balanced and sustainable outcomes.

1. Enhanced Visitor Experience

- **SMART Objective:** Implement infrastructure upgrades, such as modernising visitor facilities in Warrumbungle National Park, and cultural projects like interactive local history exhibits, aiming for a 15% increase in visitor satisfaction within a 3-year period.
- **Economic Analysis:** Boosts tourism spending, leading to higher revenue for local businesses and job creation in the hospitality and service sectors.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Upgrades will be eco-friendly, using sustainable materials and designs to minimise ecological impacts.
- **Social Impact:** Enhanced facilities and cultural offerings improve the quality of life for residents and promote social well-being.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Focuses on celebrating and educating visitors about local heritage, ensuring cultural traditions are maintained and shared.

2. Increased Regional Visitation

- **SMART Objective:** Attract a portion of the 1.7M visitors from the Greater Western Plains through strategic marketing and travel partnerships, targeting a 15% increase in visitation over 5 years.
- **Economic Analysis:** Higher visitor numbers translate to increased economic activity, stimulating growth in the tourism sector and allied industries.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Effective management of increased tourist numbers with sustainable practices to mitigate environmental stress.
- **Social Impact:** Creates employment opportunities and fosters community pride in being a renowned tourist destination.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Enhances cultural exchange, promoting understanding and appreciation of the local culture among visitors.

3. Economic Uplift

- **SMART Objective:** Leverage increased visitation to boost local spending, aiming for a \$7M annual increase in tourism-related expenditure based on an average overnight spend of \$180, monitored through local business revenues.
- **Economic Analysis:** Directly enhances the regional economy, supporting existing businesses and encouraging new ventures.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Encourages investment in green businesses and sustainable practices within the tourism industry.
- **Social Impact:** Economic growth leads to improved public services and infrastructure, enhancing community living standards.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Financial gains can be reinvested into cultural projects, ensuring ongoing preservation and promotion of local heritage.

4. Community Engagement and Collaboration

- **SMART Objective:** Deepen community involvement in tourism development through regular forums, feedback mechanisms, and capacity-building initiatives, aiming for sustained engagement and participation.
- **Economic Analysis:** Community-led tourism initiatives often lead to more sustainable economic outcomes.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Involving the community ensures environmental conservation is a key priority in tourism projects.
- **Social Impact:** Promotes social cohesion, empowering residents to shape their tourism landscape, which enhances community welfare.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Community participation is vital for maintaining authentic cultural experiences and heritage.

5. Sustainable Tourism Development

- **SMART Objective:** Develop eco-friendly tourism practices and infrastructure, focusing on conservation and cultural preservation, with a long-term commitment to sustainability.
- **Economic Analysis:** Sustainable tourism models ensure long-term economic viability by protecting the very attractions that draw visitors.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Prioritises the conservation of natural resources, reducing pollution and ecological footprint.
- **Social Impact:** Aims for an equitable distribution of tourism benefits, enhancing local quality of life.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Incorporates measures to protect and promote cultural heritage, ensuring its endurance for future generations.

This enriched SMART-QBL approach offers a robust and multifaceted framework for the Real Country Tourism Experience Business Case. It ensures that each outcome is not only strategically planned and measurable but also contributes positively to the region's comprehensive development, making a tangible impact on its economic, environmental, social, and cultural landscape.

Visitor Numbers and Growth Projections

The Strategy document's comprehensive tourism and related statistics offer a clear overview of the region's tourism industry's current state. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Central West statistical division welcomed 5.4 million visitors, which declined to 3.8 million during the two years of the pandemic. However, in 2022, the numbers rebounded to 4.9 million visitors. Targeting a 10% increase in visitor numbers, as compared to pre-COVID levels, presents a realistic and achievable goal for the Real Country project.

Economic Impact Analysis

Once operational, the project is expected to draw an additional 24,605 visitors. This increase is projected to yield significant economic benefits, including:

- An increase of \$3.344 million (0.3%) in Gross Regional Product.
- A direct rise in output by \$4.052 million.
- Creation of 23 new jobs.
- An additional \$1.126 million in wages and salaries.
- A \$2.074 million boost in value-added.

Moreover, the project’s direct impact on the economy is anticipated to generate positive supply-chain effects, particularly in local purchases of goods and services. These indirect impacts are estimated to further enhance the output by \$1.435 million, create 4 additional jobs, increase wages and salaries by \$0.288 million, and add \$0.589 million in terms of value-added.

Cultural Engagement Metrics

An essential metric for evaluating the success of the Real Country Strategy projects involves assessing the impact on key community and cultural events once a stable operational phase is reached. This measurement will be pivotal in gauging the projects' effectiveness in enhancing local cultural engagement and community participation.

Social Impact Metrics

A notable area of growth identified for the project is the increase in tourism employment numbers and enhanced profitability, driven by higher daily visitor spending. Current data highlights these as key potential growth areas. For instance, in the Orana area, tourism employment accounts for 4.5% of total jobs, ranking ninth. In comparison, the Real Country region's average is slightly lower, with tourism jobs comprising 4.1% of the total. Another metric where the region trails others, including the rest of Orana, is the average spend per visitor. The region's visitor spend lags by about 15% across all categories, including daily and overnight spends for both domestic and international visitors. This discrepancy suggests a less profitable tourism industry in the region, as employment levels are comparable to others. With similar staffing levels but lower revenue, businesses might be facing lower profitability or increased workload for owners. Addressing this spending gap presents a significant opportunity and forms a key objective of the Real Country Strategy.

Beneficiaries of the outcomes

The beneficiaries of the outcomes are diverse and span multiple sectors and groups. A breakdown of how each beneficiary stands to gain:

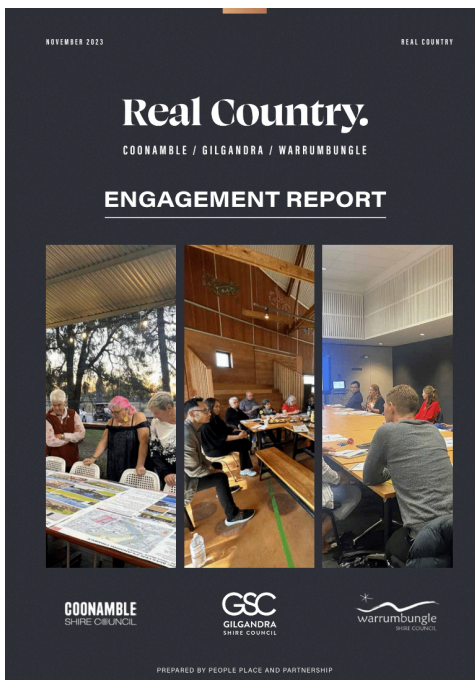
Beneficiary Group	Benefits
Local Councils	Increased revenue from tourism-related activities, enhanced regional reputation, fulfilment of strategic community and economic objectives.
Users/Recipients	Improved visitor experience due to enhanced infrastructure and cultural offerings, access to diverse attractions, increased understanding and appreciation of the region's natural beauty and cultural heritage.
Local Community	Job creation in tourism and related sectors, boosting local employment opportunities, strengthening community identity through the promotion and celebration of local heritage and culture, improved infrastructure and facilities.
Businesses	Economic uplift through increased tourism spending, new business opportunities, expansion of existing businesses, enhanced market visibility, business opportunities and collaborations.
Other Organisations (NGOs, Environmental & Cultural Groups)	Opportunity for collaborative projects with councils or businesses, aligned with their missions (e.g., conservation efforts, cultural preservation), increased awareness and support for their causes due to heightened regional attention.

Table 2.4.1 Overview of Outcomes for Key Beneficiaries

In summary, the Real Country Business Case is set to offer widespread benefits, playing a crucial role in driving economic growth, enhancing social and cultural vibrancy, supporting environmental sustainability, and contributing significantly to the overall development of both the region and the state.

2.5. STAKEHOLDER & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The Real Country Team have conducted a lengthy series of multi-stakeholder engagement to support this project. Attachment D - Real Country Engagement Report November 2023.



The report outlines the following:

- Key stakeholders
- Key issues/concerns
- How the proposal has adapted to these issues/concerns
- Consultation activities undertaken
- Future communications activities proposed

The Engagement Report articulates a detailed account of the strategies and methodologies employed to involve stakeholders, gain insights, and collaboratively formulate an array of dynamic infrastructure initiatives, along with contributing to the unified Marketing Strategy for Real Country. The engagement framework, crafted to augment existing research, delved into the collective aspirations of the community, stakeholders, and industry associates. Utilising diverse approaches such as workshops, interviews, surveys, and other engagement techniques, the sentiments and ambitions of each local community were acknowledged and integrated into the strategic development process.

Key themes recurrent in these engagement sessions centred on the enhancement of tourism efforts. The focus is on promoting cultural and historical experiences, distinctive events, and activities tied to seasonal variations and the natural environment. Specialised opportunities, including agricultural tourism, astronomical observations, and regional narratives, were also examined, aiming for a multifaceted tourism strategy where technology plays a crucial role within the Real Country framework.

Another vital aspect discussed was the need for enhanced accessibility and connectivity, especially in relation to town interconnectivity and river access. Infrastructure and facilities should be developed to support growth, with a parallel emphasis on rejuvenating river ecosystems and conserving natural landscapes.

Feedback from engagement participants also underscored the community's eagerness to participate in the Real Country initiative and the importance of involving diverse age demographics. Additionally, supporting local businesses emerged as a critical element to ensure a varied range of offerings, adequate accommodation facilities, and a thriving local economy.

Implications and Considerations for the Infrastructure Project

Following is an overview of key findings from the engagement work carried out by the team. This should be read in conjunction with the full Engagement Report referenced above.

Environmental Design Considerations for each of the Focus Areas

In the Design Prioritisation for the project, a strong emphasis is placed on the natural environment. The approach adopted is one of a "light footprint", focusing on preserving and enhancing natural spaces and

significant ecological areas along the riverfront. This commitment extends to ensuring cultural awareness in each focus area of the project, with designs that are inclusive and accessible, catering to the diverse needs of both residents and visitors.

The project also includes specific initiatives to enhance river access and interaction. Plans are in place to develop varied and safe access points to the river, enabling users to fully appreciate its beauty. Efforts will be concentrated on maintaining and augmenting the scenic vistas around the river foreshore, enhancing natural views. This includes incorporating a variety of plant species and opportunities to engage with nature, thereby integrating natural features into the design. Additionally, there will be designated areas and viewpoints established along the river foreshore for water enjoyment, aimed at appreciating the Castlereagh River and contributing to its overall health.

Recreation Space Considerations for each of the Focus Areas

2. ACTIVITIES CONSIDERED FOR THE FOCUS AREA DESIGNS

The Recreation Spaces component of the project is centred around the development of diverse recreational facilities in each focus area, designed to be accessible and enjoyable for people of all ages and abilities. This commitment to inclusivity extends to the integration of business opportunities in town centres, where the design will look to boost year-round visitation by incorporating various concepts that harmonise with the local environment. Additionally, the project places a strong emphasis on water connection, with design elements that foster both visual and physical engagement with the water, carefully balancing safety with the diversity of user needs.

The project also aims to create inclusive play spaces, including universal play areas that cater to a broad range of ages and abilities. Enhanced walkability is a key focus, with the development of accessible, connected, and navigable trails and pathways along the Castlereagh River, augmented by clear way-finding measures. Moreover, the incorporation of active recreation areas, or "wild play" spaces, will blend play infrastructure seamlessly with the natural environment. Areas for rest and relaxation will be integrated throughout, featuring a variety of seating options and age-friendly designs. Safety enhancements, including improved lighting, visibility, and access, will be prioritised to ensure a secure environment along the river foreshore. The overarching theme of the project is a celebration of natural beauty, creating spaces that enable users to connect deeply with nature. Finally, the design aims to activate the river foreshore year-round, enhancing the overall experience across seasons and supporting both existing and new uses.



3. ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSAL

3.1. OBJECTIVES & INDICATORS

Key problem/issue	Key proposal objective	Key success indicator
<p>Agricultural Dependence. The Real Country region has a significant dependence on agriculture to the economy. This sector's vulnerability to natural disasters such as droughts, floods, and bushfires poses a significant risk. Data from REMPLAN indicates that tourism employment in the Real Country Local Government Areas (LGAs) is below the Orana Region average, signalling a substantial opportunity for growth.</p>	<p>These objectives aim to reduce the region's economic dependence on agriculture by boosting tourism as a viable and sustainable economic sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Diversification through Tourism: Focus on developing the tourism sector as a complementary economic driver to agriculture, thus reducing the region's overall vulnerability to natural disasters affecting the agricultural sector. • Attracting Higher Spending Visitors: Implement targeted marketing and develop high-value tourism offerings designed to attract visitors who are likely to spend more during their stay. • Enhancing Town Centre Activities: Develop and promote activities in town centres that encourage longer stays, increasing the likelihood of visitors spending more in local businesses. • Tourism Employment Growth: Create new employment opportunities in the tourism sector, aiming to raise tourism employment levels in the Real Country LGAs to at least match, if not exceed, the Orana Region average. 	<p>These indicators provide a framework to assess the success of the project in reducing agricultural dependence by bolstering the tourism sector and enhancing economic resilience.</p> <p>Qualitative Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity in Economic Activities: Assessment of the region's economic diversification through interviews and surveys with local businesses and community leaders. • Visitor Satisfaction: Feedback from tourists on the quality and appeal of town centre activities and overall experience. • Community Resilience Feedback: Local community perceptions of improved economic resilience against natural disasters. <p>Quantitative Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in Tourism-Related Employment: Measuring the growth in jobs within the tourism sector in the Real Country LGAs. • Tourism Revenue Growth: Tracking the increase in overall revenue generated from tourism, especially from high-spending visitors. • Length of Stay Metrics: Monitoring the average duration of visitor stays in the region, aiming for an increase in overnight and extended visits
<p>Changing nature of tourism. Traveller's purpose has shifted from an observer to a more engaged and interactive level.</p>	<p>These objectives aim to align the Real Country project with the evolving expectations of modern travellers, ensuring the region's offerings meet the demand for more interactive and engaging travel experiences.</p> <p>Transformational Experience Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise the collaboration between the Councils to transform key regional attractions into interactive and immersive experiences. • Focus on developing activities that allow travellers to actively participate and engage with the local environment, culture, and community. <p>Interactive and Engaging Tourism Offerings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create tourism offerings that cater to the desire for hands-on experiences, such as workshops, guided tours, and cultural immersion programs. • Design experiences that enable visitors to contribute to or learn from the local environment and community. <p>Adaptive Marketing and Communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop marketing strategies that highlight the interactive and engaging nature of the tourism experiences. • Use storytelling and social media to showcase the transformational aspects of the Real Country experience. 	<p>Qualitative Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor Engagement Levels: Feedback and reviews from visitors regarding the depth of their engagement and satisfaction with the interactive experiences. • Perceived Value of Experiences: Visitor assessments of the uniqueness and authenticity of their interactive experiences in the region. • Community Feedback: Local community opinions on the effectiveness of new tourism experiences in showcasing regional culture and heritage. <p>Quantitative Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in Visitor Numbers: Tracking the rise in tourist arrivals, particularly those engaging in new interactive experiences. • Growth in Tourism Revenue: Measuring the increase in revenue generated from tourism, specifically from interactive and engaging offerings. • Social Media Engagement: Analysing metrics such as shares, likes, and mentions related to interactive tourism experiences on various platforms.

Key problem/issue	Key proposal objective	Key success indicator
<p>Tourism Sector underperformance. The most recent REMPLAN data also shows when compared to the rest of the Orana Region the three Real Country LGAs have an on average lower percentage of employment in the tourism sector. This points to a growth opportunity. Thus tourism and specifically tourism infrastructure has been identified as a key driver of growth, and the focus of this Project.</p>	<p>The following objectives aim to address the underperformance in the tourism sector by aligning infrastructure development with the needs and preferences of potential visitors and enhancing employment opportunities in Gilgandra, Coonamble, and Coonabarabran.</p> <p>Target Market Analysis and Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct comprehensive research to understand the drivers and nature of tourism in the region. • Identify and profile target visitor segments, particularly those seeking authentic country experiences, nature-based activities, and cultural exploration. <p>Development of Resonant Tourism Infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implement tourism infrastructure that aligns with the preferences and desires of identified target markets. • Focus on creating unique, memorable experiences that highlight the region's natural beauty and cultural heritage. <p>Promotion and Marketing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop targeted marketing campaigns to attract higher-spending visitor segments. • Utilise storytelling and digital marketing to showcase the region's attractions and differentiate the Real Country experience. <p>Strengthening Employment in Tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create employment opportunities in the tourism sector through the development of new infrastructure and attractions. • Offer training and development programs to enhance local skill sets in tourism and hospitality. 	<p>Quantitative Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in Tourism Employment: The percentage increase in jobs within the tourism sector compared to baseline data. • Tourism Contribution to GRP: Growth in the tourism sector's contribution to the region's GRP. • Average Spend per Visitor: Increase in the average spend per visitor (both domestic and international) compared to baseline figures. • Revenue Growth in Tourism Businesses: Increase in average revenue for businesses in the tourism sector. <p>Qualitative Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism Sector Vitality: Surveys and interviews with local tourism operators and stakeholders to assess changes in business conditions and market opportunities. • Visitor Satisfaction and Diversity: Feedback from visitors regarding the quality and variety of tourism offerings. • Visitor Experience Enhancement: Visitor feedback on the quality and value of their experience in the region. • Market Positioning: Assessment of the region's image and appeal in target markets through brand perception studies.
<p>Business Profitability and Employment Issues: The lower profitability in the tourism sector translates to limited employment opportunities and increased operational pressure on business owners.</p>	<p>The following objectives aim to address the challenges of low profitability and limited employment in the tourism sector, contributing to a more sustainable and thriving local economy.</p> <p>Enhancing Business Profitability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract higher-spending visitors through targeted marketing and premium tourism experiences. • Diversify tourism offerings to encourage longer stays and increased spending. • Improve operational efficiency in tourism businesses with training and resources. <p>Increasing Employment Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create jobs through new tourism infrastructure projects. • Offer skills development and training programs in tourism-related fields. • Encourage entrepreneurship and support small businesses in the tourism sector. <p>Alleviating Operational Pressure on Business Owners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide access to funding and grants for business improvements. • Conduct business management training for efficiency and marketing. • Establish a supportive business network for knowledge sharing and cost reduction. 	<p>Quantitative Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism Business Profitability: Improvement in the profitability metrics of tourism-related businesses (e.g., net profit margins). • Employment Growth in Tourism Sector: Number of new jobs created in the tourism sector, including both direct and indirect employment. <p>Qualitative Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Owner Sentiment: Surveys and interviews with local business owners to assess changes in operational pressures and business outlook. • Workforce Development: Evaluation of new training and development programs for workers in the tourism sector, contributing to skill enhancement and career progression opportunities.

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3.2. THE BASE CASE

3.2.1 Current Circumstances and Perceived Problems

Our research, both as a part of the Business Case and earlier in the Issues Paper, suggests that the Western and Outback NSW region has a growing and diverse tourism sector. The proposed infrastructure developments are critical to sustaining this growth and diversifying the region's appeal. Without these developments, the region risks losing its momentum in attracting and satisfying a broad spectrum of visitors.

Economic

The existing economic landscape in the Real Country region, encompassing Coonamble, Gilgandra, and Warrumbungle Shire Councils, is characterised by a slow decline in tourism numbers. This trend has led to stagnant employment in key sectors, including hospitality and retail. The region's heavy reliance on agriculture, while a cornerstone industry, presents vulnerability during times of drought, floods, or other agricultural downturns. This reliance underscores the need for diversification in economic drivers, particularly in the tourism sector. Current data show a gradual decline in visitors to the Western and Outback NSW regions. For example, the "Domestic Overnight Travel" data indicates a decline in visitor numbers, with a corresponding drop in nights spent and expenditure in these areas. This decline has a direct impact on job growth and economic vitality in the region.

Environmental

Environmental concerns are centred around the management of river health, particularly the Castlereagh River. Current budget allocations appear insufficient for addressing issues like river conservation, carp and weed infestations, and maintaining facilities along the river. The lack of adequate environmental stewardship poses a risk to the natural assets that form the basis of the region's appeal.

Social

Socially, some areas within Real Country continue to face challenges, including social disturbances. Our data lacks specific statistics on social disruption directly attributable to project locations. However, indicators such as low socio-economic use, vandalism, and graffiti highlight underlying social issues. These problems could potentially be alleviated through improved infrastructure and increased tourism activity.

Cultural

Culturally, engagement with First Nations and participation in local events remains a crucial area. The connection of Aboriginal communities with landmarks like the Castlereagh River is profound. Currently, there appears to be limited engagement and recognition in tourism activities. Strengthening this aspect could enhance the cultural richness of the visitor experience.

Base Case Analysis and observation from the data

Summary - Domestic Overnight Travel

- **Visitors** (000s): A noticeable fluctuation in visitor numbers has been observed over the years. For instance, the year ending June 2021 saw 607,000 visitors, an increase from 499,000 in 2020.
- **Nights** (000s): A substantial increase in nights spent, from 1,810,000 in 2020 to 2,846,000 in 2021.
- **Expenditure** (\$ million): Tourism expenditure showed an uptick, from \$239 million in 2020 to \$356 million in 2021.

Figure 3.2.1 Overview of Trends in Visitor Numbers

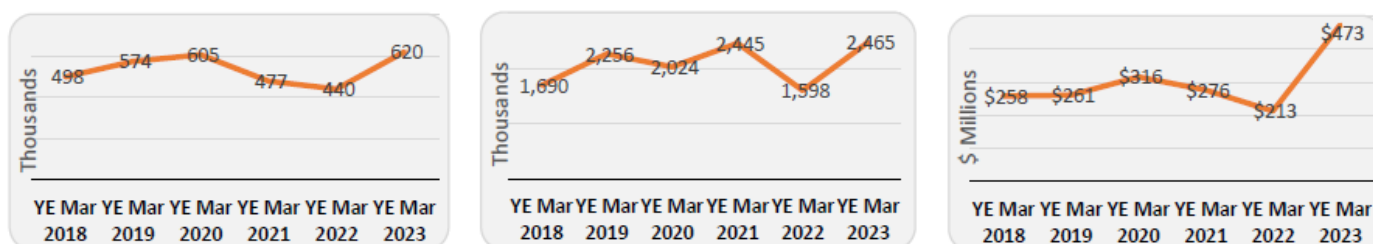


Figure 3.2.1 offers a graphical representation of the fluctuations in visitor numbers (measured in thousands) and tourism expenditure (in millions of dollars) from 2014 to 2023 in Western and Outback NSW. This visual aid effectively highlights the industry's volatility, with noticeable variations in both metrics over the years. Significantly, it depicts a robust post-COVID recovery, an opportunity that the Real Country Project intends to capitalise on. The graph serves as a succinct and informative overview of the economic dimensions of the tourism industry in the region, illustrating key trends and shifts.

Purpose of Visit

- **Holiday:** The primary reason for visits, with numbers rising from 204,000 in 2015 to 292,000 in 2023.
- **Business:** Showed a fluctuating trend with a peak of 178,000 visitors in 2023.
- **Visiting Friends & Relatives:** Steady growth with 116,000 visitors in 2023.

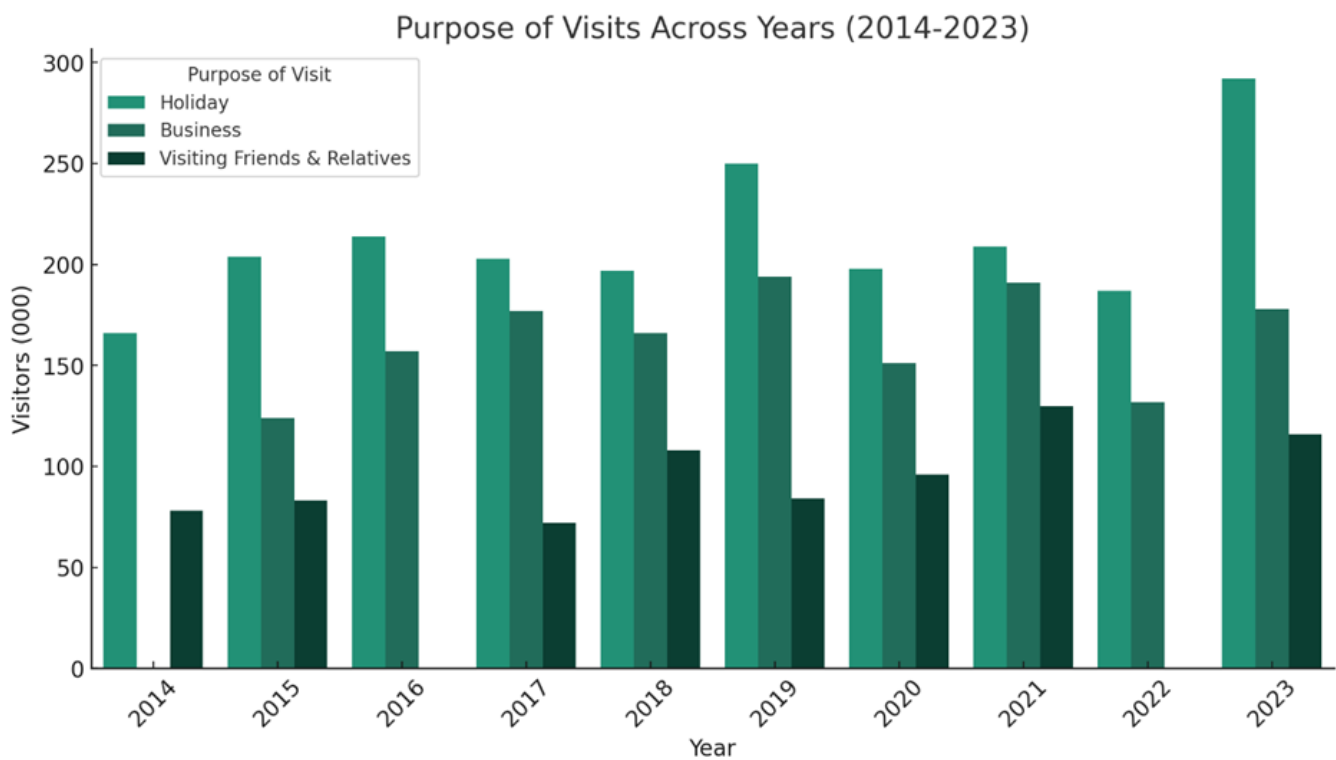
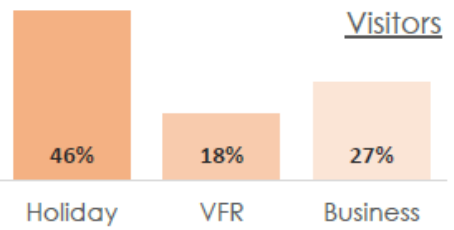


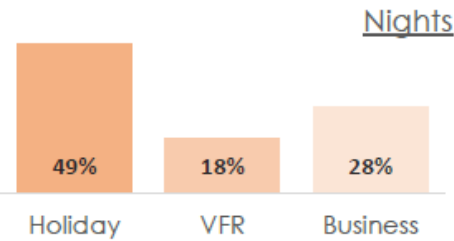
Figure 3.2.2 Overview of Purpose of Visits Across Years

Figure 3.3.2 presents a distinct visual breakdown of the various reasons for visits to Western and Outback NSW from 2014 to 2023, as previously mentioned. It distinctly categorises the visits into holidays, business, and visiting friends and relatives, illustrating the contribution of each category to the total annual tourism figures. This graph provides a clear and detailed understanding of the diverse motivations behind the region's tourism trends over the years.

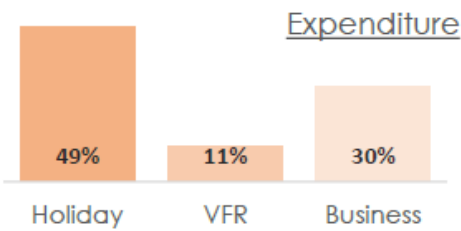
Purpose of visit



Visitors



Nights

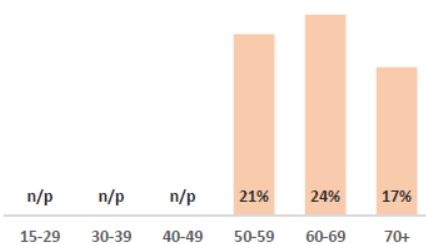


Expenditure

*Visitors may visit for more than one Purpose; VFR indicates Visiting Friends and/or Relatives.

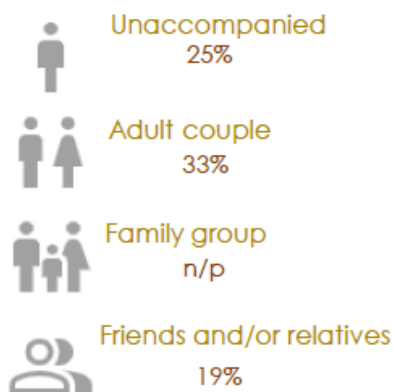
Age

'60-69 years' was the largest age group of the visitors to the region



Travel party

33% of the visitors were adult couple



Origin of Visitors:

- **Regional NSW:** Consistently the largest contributor, with 326,000 visitors in 2023.
- **Sydney:** Fluctuated with a significant number of visitors in some years, such as 86,000 in 2017, but none in others.
- **Demographics and Preferences**
- Understanding the demographic distribution and preferences of visitors is crucial:

Source: Destination NSW Travel to Outback NS Tourism Region y/2 2023

Age Distribution Figure:

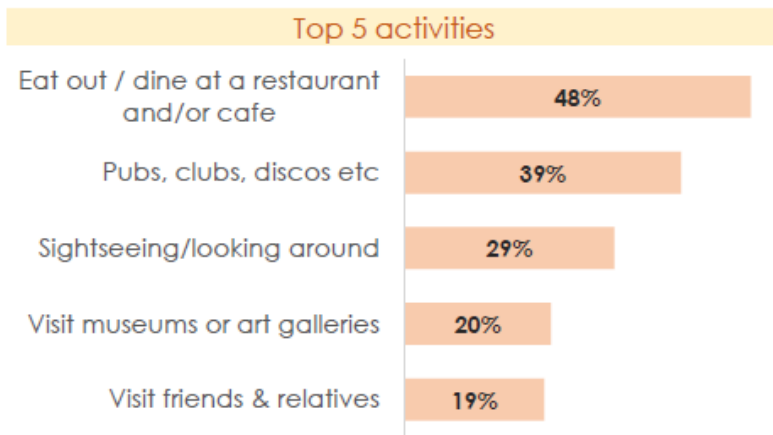
- **50-59 Years:** This group showed significant engagement, with numbers rising from 63,000 in 2014 to 151,000 in 2023.
- **60-69 Years:** Also a significant demographic, with an increase from 70,000 in 2014 to 99,000 in 2023.

Source: Destination NSW Travel to Outback NS Tourism Region y/2 2023

Travel Party Composition:

- **Solo Travellers:** A consistent portion of the visitor demographic.
- **Families and Groups:** Showed varying trends but remained a crucial segment of the travel market.

Source: Destination NSW Travel to Outback NS Tourism Region y/2 2023



Top Activities

- Activities such as local sightseeing, nature walks, and cultural tours were among the top choices for visitors.

Source: Destination NSW Travel to Outback NS Tourism Region y/2 2023

Accommodation and Transport:

- **Accommodation:** A diverse range, with motels and camping sites being popular.
- **Transport:** Personal vehicles remained the predominant mode of transportation.

Day Trip Dynamics

Day trips play a significant role in the tourism industry, with the number of visitors and their spending patterns on these trips offering valuable insights into the economic impact of short-duration travel. This data is particularly relevant to the economic components of the Base Case for the Real Country project. The observed increase in day trip visitor numbers and associated expenditure underscores the potential for economic growth through tourism. Additionally, understanding preferences in accommodation and visit purposes is instrumental in shaping infrastructure development and marketing strategies for the Real Country project.

The data points towards a tourism sector in Western and Outback NSW that is not only growing but also diversifying. The infrastructure projects proposed under the Real Country project are pivotal in supporting this growth. They aim to enhance the visitor experience and ensure the region remains attractive to a wide range of tourists. Without these developments, the region risks missing out on significant economic, social, and environmental benefits, potentially hindering the growth and resilience of its tourism sector.

Conclusion

The current state of the tourism industry in Western and Outback NSW, while showing some positive trends, clearly indicates the need for strategic intervention and development. The Real Country project's focus on enhancing the visitor experience, infrastructure, and engagement with the cultural heritage of the region is a timely and necessary step to elevate the region's tourism profile, ensure economic diversification, and address the social and environmental needs of the area. Without these initiatives, the region risks continued economic stagnation, underutilisation of its natural and cultural assets, and failure to address the evolving preferences and needs of its visitors.

2.3.2 Base Case Analysis Without New Infrastructure:

Given these insights, the consequences of not proceeding with the proposed infrastructure under the "Real Country Place Strategy" include:

- **Economic Opportunities:** The upward trend in visitor numbers and expenditure highlights a growing market. However, without new infrastructure, the region may not fully exploit this potential. The lack of additional accommodations and revitalised public spaces could limit growth in visitor numbers and spending, impacting local businesses and job creation.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** The projects focusing on river health and ecological balance align with the increasing eco-consciousness among tourists. Failure to implement these could lead to environmental degradation, reducing the region's attractiveness and long-term viability as a tourist destination.

- **Cultural and Social Impact:** The initiatives aimed at promoting First Nations engagement and cultural identity cater to a growing interest in culturally rich and authentic experiences. Without these, the region risks a cultural disconnect, impacting both the visitor experience and the local communities' sense of pride and identity.
- **Infrastructure and Accessibility:** The data shows an increase in longer stays (nights spent), suggesting that visitors are seeking immersive experiences. Without improved infrastructure, such as enhanced river access, amphitheatres, and town centres, the region may not meet these evolving visitor expectations, limiting its ability to attract a diverse range of tourists.

In conclusion, the absence of these new infrastructural developments could result in a missed opportunity to leverage the growing tourism trends, potentially leading to economic stagnation, environmental challenges, and a cultural disconnect. The proposed projects are critical in ensuring that the region's tourism sector continues to thrive and evolve in line with current trends and future expectations.

3.2.3 Strategic Recommendations

Sustainable Tourism Development

The strategy places a strong emphasis on eco-friendly and culturally respectful tourism practices. This involves actively engaging local communities in the planning process and ensuring they share in the benefits of tourism.

Infrastructure Development

Key to the strategy is the improvement of infrastructure to accommodate increasing visitor numbers, with a keen focus on preserving the environmental integrity of the region.

Cultural Promotion

There are dedicated initiatives to promote and respect the region's local cultural heritage, with a particular focus on Aboriginal history.

The Base Case analysis in conclusion for the Real Country Tourism Experience underscores the region's potential as a burgeoning tourism hub. It highlights the necessity of a balanced approach to development, prioritising economic growth while simultaneously upholding environmental sustainability and cultural respect. This analysis lays a crucial groundwork for future strategic decision-making in the Real Country project.

Appendix A provides an overview of the raw Travel to Outback NSW Tourism Region data to the Year Ended June 2023. Source National Visitor Survey, TRA.

3.3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The key document Engagement Report produced by the Real Country Team provides a comprehensive outline of the strategic activities and methodologies used to engage stakeholders, gather insights, and co-create a series of vibrant infrastructure projects which were considered as Real Country projects. These 'Other Options' were both variations on an original concept for each of the LGAs or concepts which were brought up during the engagement process and refined in the process.

Also as a part of the process was the influence by the delivery priorities by the three LGAs.

These are referenced in detail in the Real Country Destination Strategy and are summarised below for reference:

3.3.1 Coonamble

- **River Restoration and Conservation:** Prioritising the repair and conservation of the river, addressing carp and weed infestations, and improving access to riverbanks.
- **Weir Enhancement and Family-Friendly Spaces:** Enhancing the weir area for family recreation, including water activities and nature engagement for children.

- **Main Street Revitalisation and Accommodation:** Increasing accommodation options for tourism and events, and revitalising the main street, including preserving historical assets and supporting businesses.
- **Community Engagement:** Emphasising community engagement and collaboration among shires to create a strong regional identity.

3.3.2 Gilgandra

- **Town Centre and River Crossing Design:** Reevaluating the town centre design and the potential for a new river crossing.
- **River Health and Conservation:** Emphasising the maintenance of river health and relocating the town beach to a more accessible location.
- **Cultural Inclusivity and First Nations Identity:** Promoting cultural inclusivity and celebrating First Nations contributions.
- **Promotion of Primary Industries and Rural Strength:** Highlighting Gilgandra's rural strength and heritage.
- **Enhancement of Public Spaces:** Developing public spaces for greater community engagement and recreation, and advocating for regional collaboration.

3.3.3 Coonabarabran, Binnaway, Mendooran

- **Amphitheatre Design and Seasonal Considerations:** Acknowledging climate seasonality and rethinking amphitheatre design.
- **River Health and Ecological Preservation:** Prioritising river health and ecological balance across the region.
- **First Nations Engagement and Cultural Identity:** Recognising the significance of First Nations communities and their contributions to cultural identity.
- **Promotion of Arts and Vibrancy:** Emphasising art and creativity to infuse vibrancy into town and river precincts.
- **Dark Sky and Unique Celestial Views:** Celebrating unique celestial views for nighttime events and stargazing experiences.
- **Community-Driven Maintenance and Tourism:** Focusing on community engagement, promoting local businesses, and enhancing river access and health.

3.3.4 Refinement of options

The engagement process, designed to complement existing research, has explored the collective desires of the community, key stakeholders, and industry partners. Through a series of workshops, interviews, surveys, and engagement efforts, the voices and aspirations of each local community have been heard and incorporated into the strategic planning process.

During this process there were numerous iterations of the Focus Area projects. The projects were refined and re-designed by the Real Country Team and in turn a formal review process was undertaken by the Three Councils.

During the refinement process, along with the quantity surveyor engaged to produce the cost plan which assisted to determine if a project was suitable for the final business case or not.

Business Case vs. Masterplan Projects

The projects in each local government area are identified within a series of Focus Areas and further as either Business Case projects (Stage 1) or Masterplan and future delivery projects (Stage 2).

Business Case Approach:

The projects selected for their transformational impact are poised to drive economic revitalisation, community development, and environmental sustainability in the region. They exemplify the regional aspirations by manifesting commitments to innovation, community-centric development, and ecological stewardship. Accompanying these initiatives is a detailed Cost Benefit Analysis, which zeroes in on economic viability and the potential returns. This analysis is crucial for securing funding and demonstrating the financial feasibility of these projects, ensuring they not only embody regional ambitions but also stand on solid financial ground.

Masterplan Approach: These projects involve a deferred process suitable for planning in following stages:

- **Spatial Planning:** Focusing on spatial planning and aesthetic design, these projects are crucial for ensuring the long-term vision of the area's development.
- **Future engagement:** Comprehensive approaches to future infrastructure development, shaped by community input and aligned to the Real Country vision, sets a solid foundation for the sustainable and inclusive growth of tourism recreation across the region, reflecting its unique character and aspirations.

The cost plan was produced by the Quantity Surveyor after workshops with the project team to understand the scope of all of the projects. The refinement process was a product of the following:

1. Project team would design and workshop with Stakeholders and Community
2. Re-design would take into account feedback
3. QS would cost design and a series of project refinements by project to discern what category and time frame a project would fit into
4. Further feedback from Councils and their sector specialists (engineers etc) would assist in refinement of cost plans in light of local experience
5. Final agreement of project categories based on cost, scope development/design and timing.

The numerous projects which have undergone this well-defined and rigorous process can be seen in the comprehensive Engagement Report.

Economies of scale

While this is detailed in S3.5 Projected Costs, briefly the process was significantly improved by the holistic regional-based approach taken by the three Councils, Community and project team. From a cost perspective common design and construction methods and materials allow for a significant cost saving due to economies of scale. Items such as footpaths, walkways, recreation materials treatment and the like all benefit from both a common flowing, integrated, distinct Real Country Brand design across the whole region but the reduction in costs which will flow from this consolidated approach.

3.3.5 Alternate options

In terms of the traditional Business Case project categories such as; a do-nothing option, a do-minimum option and a do-later option the following may apply:

1. **Do nothing.** This is fully outlined in Base Case Section 3.2. in short this option is not viable for the economic, social, environmental and cultural benefit of the region.
2. **Do minimum.** This approach can be seen to be adopted but with an emphasis on not minimum but rather do the right amount to enable an equal spread of grant funds across the region while ensuring an integrated, cost effect design which meets the Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural needs of the changing tourism sector and local community stakeholders.
3. **Do later.** This aspect has been adopted in the staging of projects as can be seen by the Business Case and Masterplan nature of the program. To this end no practical important but un-refined projects have been rejected but rather earmarked for future due diligence, design and funding.

3.4. INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPOSAL

3.4.1. SCOPE OF WORKS

Over the past 12 months, a series of infrastructure projects have been developed for each of the three Councils, underpinned by collaborative discussions and engagement with each local community. These projects, created with the aspirations and insights gathered from these communities, reflect a series of strategic directions for the future. This collaborative approach has ensured that the projects not only address the unique needs and characteristics of each area but also align seamlessly with the strategic objectives of the Real Country Place Strategy.

Business Case vs. Masterplan Projects

The projects in each local government area are identified within a series of Focus Areas and further as either Business Case projects (Stage 1) or Masterplan and future delivery projects (Stage 2). Only the Business Case projects (Stage 1) are included for reference in this work. Masterplan projects will be subject to further due diligence and future business cases.

Detail Cost Benefit analysis

The Business Case has analysed the data (both in the Issues Paper, REMPLAN and other Tourism statistics) to understand what aspects of the Tourist Market in the whole Orana Region can benefit from the Real Country Strategy and projects. It has been shown that the quality, authentic and well-designed nature of the projects will attract a higher-spending visitor which in turn will improve tourism industry profitability, employment growth and numerous indirect other market segments.

3.4.2 Project Details

Following is the detailed overview of each project which is the subject of this Business Case. The detailed cost plan document fully outlines the size of each project, areas covered, building materials and quantities and should be read in connection with this Section.

3.4.2.1 Coonamble

Coonamble town centre is well positioned to take advantage of its proximity to the Castlereagh River, sitting at the heart of the 'wishbone' created by the river and the weir. This allows the town to be activated by nature-based infrastructure and water recreation activities along much of its perimeter. The Real Country project has established three key focus areas for investment to support local economic resilience and encourage repeat visitation across the seasons. Several strategic projects have been identified that align to tourism driven outcomes whilst also enhancing the amenity of Coonamble for its local population.

Business Case Project:

Focus Area 1 – Warrena Weir Recreation Precinct (Stage 1)

Objective: Activate Warrena Creek, offering diverse recreational experiences to residents and visitors.

Approach: The masterplan encompasses a two-stage development, starting with public access enhancements, amenities upgrade, and water-based recreational infrastructure. Stage 2 envisions further expanding these offerings, adding eco-stay cabins, a landmark viewing tower, and extended walking trails.

The intention for this business case project is to enable greater public accessibility to Warrena Creek and a broader diversity of recreational experiences for both Coonamble residents and visitors. The project seeks to renew the area adjacent the existing weir and install infrastructure to enable delivery of a safe and dedicated public swimming area. Other upgrades and activation opportunities proposed in Stage 1 of this project include a new amenities building, a café/kiosk, designated zone for RVs and overnight camping, picnic shelters and barbecue facilities, and two floating pontoons to allow swimming and the launching of kayaks and stand-up paddle boards. Stage 1 would also look to deliver an accessible path from Coonamble town centre out to the weir and along the eastern side of Warrena Creek, supporting walking and cycling and encouraging engagement with the natural landscape. The pathway would be complemented by additional planting, interpretations, and wayfinding to deepen people's knowledge of indigenous stories and practices while nurturing an appreciation for local flora and fauna. Stage 2 of the project would seek to

further expand the activation opportunities for the precinct as a regional destination, including the potential for eco-stay cabins, a landmark viewing tower, and additional connections to broader walking trails.

Key Improvements:

- **Recreational Activation:** Varied activities including swimming, kayaking, and stand-up paddleboarding.
- **Commercial Development:** Facilities for RVs, camping, and eco-stays.
- **Cultural and Environmental Engagement:** Enhanced pathways with educational elements about local indigenous culture and natural history.

Stage 1 scope:

1. Walkway connection through CBD, eastern shore of the reserve and back onto Tooraweenah Road into town Stage 1 - allow for 1.25km walkway from CBD to Warrena Weir and one low level creek crossing.
2. Demarcated boat-free public swimming area near weir wall.
Note: 80m floating rope line
3. Clearing of debris from front of weir wall to allow use of flood gates
4. 2 x floating T-pontoons: one in the public swimming area (about 3m frontage onto water) and another further south for launching of canoes, kayaks, etc (about 5m frontage)
5. New and larger combined amenities and café building
6. Daytime carpark
7. Shaded picnic and barbecues facilities
8. Children’s playground equipment
9. Creation of a Yarning Circle along eastern shore
10. RV camping area for 10 vehicles
11. Wayfinding, plant ID, QR code Story and usage signage

Stage 2 plan for the Warrena Weir Reserve is designed to be future works to complete this significant and important project. The design and planning has been done to ensure a seamless continuation of the Stage 1 work. These comprise, additional ecologically sensitive walkways, low level creek crossings, a 100-150m public art/sculptural lookout tower and ancillary works.

REAL COUNTRY / DESTINATION STRATEGIC PLAN

12.4 / Coonamble

Coonamble town centre is well positioned to take advantage of its proximity to the Castlereagh River, sitting at the heart of the 'wishbone' created by the river and the Warrena Weir. This allows the town to be activated by nature-based infrastructure and water recreation activities along much of its perimeter. The Real Country project has established three key focus areas for investment to support local economic resilience and encourage repeat visitation across the seasons. Several strategic projects have been identified that align to tourism driven outcomes whilst also enhancing the amenity of Coonamble for its local population.

1 BUSINESS CASE PROJECT

Objective
Activate Warrena Creek, offering diverse recreational experiences to residents and visitors.

WARRENA WEIR RECREATION PRECINCT

Approach
The masterplan encompasses a two-stage development, starting with public access enhancements, amenities upgrade, and water-based recreational infrastructure. Stage 2 envisions further expanding these offerings, adding eco-stay cabins, a landmark viewing tower, and extended walking trails.

The intention for this business case project is to enable greater public accessibility to Warrena Creek and a broader diversity of recreational experiences for both Coonamble residents and visitors. The project seeks to renew the area adjacent the existing weir and install infrastructure to enable delivery of a safe and dedicated public swimming area. Other upgrades and activation opportunities proposed in Stage 1 of this project include a new amenities building, a café/kiosk, designated zone for RVs and overnight camping, picnic shelters and barbecue facilities, and two floating pontoons to allow swimming and the launching of kayaks and stand-up paddle boards. Stage 1 would also look to deliver an accessible path from Coonamble town centre out to the weir and along the eastern side of Warrena Creek, supporting walking and cycling and encouraging engagement with the natural landscape. The pathway would be complemented by additional planting, interpretations, and wayfinding to deepen people’s knowledge of indigenous stories and practices while nurturing an appreciation for local flora and fauna. Stage 2 of the project would seek to further expand the activation opportunities for the precinct as a regional destination, including the potential for eco-stay cabins, a landmark viewing tower, and additional connections to broader walking trails.

KEY IMPROVEMENTS

Recreational Activation
Varied activities including swimming, kayaking, and stand-up paddleboarding.

Commercial Development
Facilities for RVs, camping, and eco-stays.

Cultural and Environmental Engagement
Enhanced pathways with educational elements about local indigenous culture and natural history.

SECTION C

1 FOCUS AREA 1
Main Street revitalisation projects; Macdonald Park and Aquatic Centre Upgrade

2 FOCUS AREA 2

3 FOCUS AREA 3

4 FOCUS AREA 4
Artesian Bathing Precinct
This focus area is an existing strategic project of Council and not being considered as part of the Real Country Business Case. However, it is highlighted here as a relevant strategic project for Coonamble’s local economy and tourism offering for the wider region.

New Business Case Project

Strategic Project being developed under another funding grant



A River Crossings
2 x creek crossings, at Baradine Road and at southern end of Warrena Creek Reserve

B Footpath
2.5m x 7km concrete footpath through CBD, eastern shore of the reserve and back onto Tooraweenah Road into town

C Daytime Carpark

D Amenities
New and larger combined amenities (toilets) and café building

E RV Camping Area
RV Camping area x 10 vehicles with all-weather surface and landscaping (including access to potable water)

F Cabin Accommodation
10 x off-grid cabin accommodation with sealed pump-out septic systems

G Look out tower
Construction of a 100-150m public art/sculptural lookout tower

H Wayfinding
Wayfinding, plant ID, QR-code 'story' and usage signage

I Bush tucker
Bush tucker and bird-attracting plantings along eastern shoreline (following the path)



J Yarning Circle
Creation of a yarning circle along eastern shore of the reserve

K Children's play equipment

L Shaded picnic areas
Shaded picnic and barbecue facilities

M Floating T-pontoons
2 x floating T-pontoons: one in the public swimming area (about 3m frontage onto water) and another further south for launching of canoes, kayaks, etc (about 5m frontage)



N Public Swimming Area
Demarcated boat-free public swimming area near weir wall

O Clearing of Debris
Clearing of debris from front of weir wall to allow use of flood gates (and the functionality of self-dredging)



Art Impression: Concomable View 1 - View looking east from the Warrena Weir with new public swimming zone with picnic shelters and pontoon

Prepared by Jasmax and PPLP for the Real Country Project

12.5 / Gilgandra

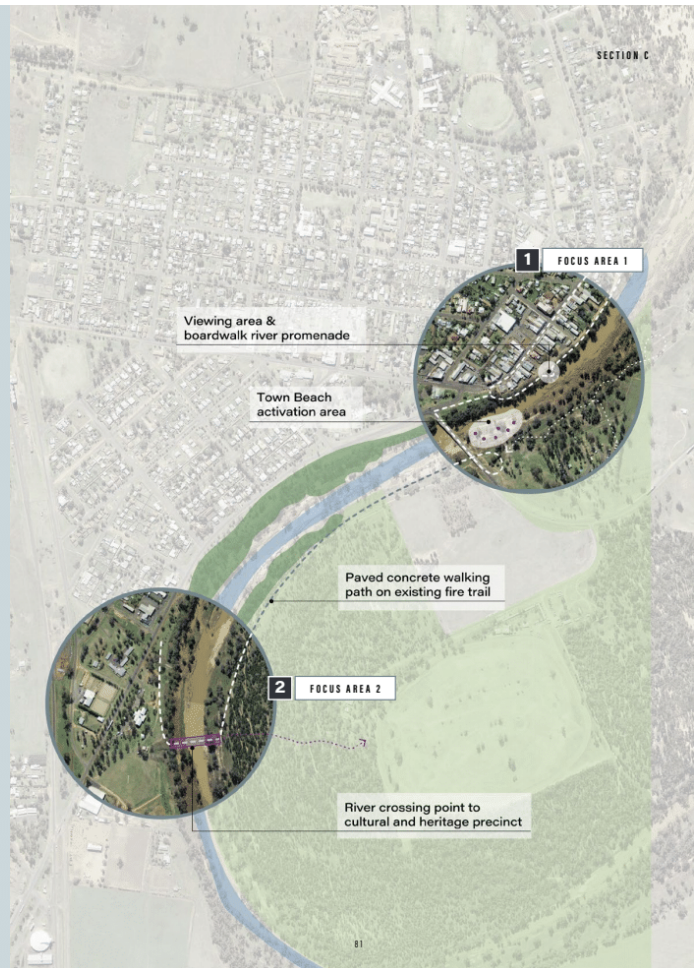
The town centre of Gilgandra is located on the elevated bend of the Castlereagh River, offering views over the water. To the south, the Coo-ee Heritage Centre and cultural precinct are connected to the town via the Windmill Walk, a formal path tracing the elevated riverbank between them. The town centre has begun implementing a strategy to connect public spaces and retail experiences from Miller Street (Castlereagh Highway) to the river. Building on this strategy's success, there's a chance to draw locals and visitors nearer to the river by extending the Windmill Walk, including pathways to the river's eastern bank, which is currently isolated from the town centre. A similar strategy to consolidate activities in and around the cultural precinct could create a more extensive 'connected loop' from north to south along both riverbanks.

<p>1 FOCUS AREA 1</p> <p>TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT</p> <p>Objective Strengthen the synergy between the main street businesses and the riverfront, enhancing public engagement.</p> <p>Approach Capitalising on the dual frontages of businesses towards the river, the strategy involves integrating key community assets - the new Gilgandra Library & Community Hub, its adjoining plaza, and the Windmill Walk - to improve river accessibility and engagement.</p>	<p>2 FOCUS AREA 2</p> <p>CULTURAL & HERITAGE PRECINCT</p> <p>Objective Showcase Gilgandra's rich cultural and historical narrative.</p> <p>Approach Utilising the Coo-ee Heritage Centre and Gilgandra Museum as focal points, the project aims to create a high-quality cultural precinct that highlights the region's heritage.</p>
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The revitalisation of Gilgandra's main street, ongoing for the last 3 years, has included a key focus on businesses maximising their unique dual frontages. This strategic approach has been geared towards opening up towards the river, thereby creating new public engagement and activity opportunities. The recent unveiling of the Gil Library & Community Hub and its adjacent public plaza has greatly strengthened the connection between the main street and the river. The Real Country project plans to further this burgeoning relationship, aiming to integrate complementary infrastructure that connects key community assets - the library, plaza, and Windmill Walk. Additionally, Stage 2 presents an opportunity for a strategic masterplan focusing on CBD public domain upgrades. This initiative is aimed at improving accessibility, amenities, interaction with the river, seamlessly blending the town's natural beauty with its vibrant community and business life.

The recently refurbished and expanded Coo-ee Heritage Centre provides an in-the-round visitor destination within this precinct that offers a diversity of amenities and opportunities for obtaining knowledge of the region's natural features, cultural richness, and heritage fabric. This tapestry Gilgandra's legacy is further showcased in the adjacent Gilgandra Museum, with its grand collection of historical agricultural machinery and farming practices through the years. This precinct is also home to several popular local events and offers a relaxed high-amenity setting overlooking the Castlereagh River.

KEY IMPROVEMENTS	
<p>Business Frontage Enhancement Encouraging businesses to utilise river-facing aspects.</p>	<p>Infrastructure Integration Linking the library, plaza, and Windmill Walk for cohesive public space and a detailed masterplan for the CBD.</p>
<p>Cultural Centre and Open Space Enhancing the Coo-ee Heritage Centre's role as an immersive visitor destination, with upgrades to the music rotunda, gardens, playground and connected pathways.</p>	<p>Museum Integration Linking the museum's historical agricultural collection to the broader cultural narrative.</p>



3.4.2.2 Gilgandra

The town centre of Gilgandra sits on the elevated bend of the Castlereagh River with opportunities look out and over the water. To the south lies the Coo-ee Heritage Centre and cultural precinct, which connects back to the town via the windmill walk, a formal path that follows the elevated riverbank between the two. The town centre has commenced a strategy of connecting public domain and retail experiences from Miller Street (Castlereagh Highway) through to the river. Building upon the success of this strategy there is an opportunity to bring locals and visitors closer to the river through a continuation of the windmill walk, including links across to the eastern bank of the river which is currently disconnected from the town centre. A similar strategy of consolidation of activation in and around the cultural precinct could enable a broader 'connected loop' from north to south following both sides on the riverbank.

Focus Area 1 – Town Centre Precinct

- **Objective:** Strengthen the synergy between the main street businesses and the riverfront, enhancing public engagement.
- **Approach:** Capitalising on the dual frontages of businesses towards the river, the strategy involves integrating key community assets - the new Gil Library & Community Hub, its adjoining plaza, and the Windmill Walk - to improve river accessibility and engagement.

The revitalisation of Gilgandra's main street has been underway for the last 3 years, and a key initiative has been focusing on encouraging businesses to capitalise on their unique dual frontages. This strategic approach involves opening up towards the river, creating fresh opportunities for public engagement and activity. The recent opening of the Gil Library & Community Hub, along with its adjacent public plaza, significantly reinforces the connection between the main street and the river. The Real Country project is set to build upon this burgeoning relationship, aiming to integrate complementary infrastructure that links key community assets the library, plaza, and Windmill Walk. This initiative is designed to enhance accessibility and interaction with the river, weaving together the town's natural beauty with its thriving community life.

Key Improvements:

- **Business Frontage Enhancement:** Encouraging businesses to utilise river-facing aspects.
- **Infrastructure Integration:** Linking the library, plaza, and Windmill Walk for cohesive public space.

Focus Area 2 – Cultural & Heritage Precinct

- **Objective:** Showcase Gilgandra's rich cultural and historical narrative.
- **Approach:** Utilising the Coo-ee Heritage Centre and Gilgandra Museum as focal points, the project aims to create a high-quality cultural precinct that highlights the region's heritage.

The recently refurbished and expanded Coo-ee Heritage Centre provides an in-the-round visitor destination within this precinct that offers a diversity of amenities and opportunities for obtaining knowledge of the region's natural features, cultural richness, and heritage fabric. This tapestry Gilgandra's legacy is further showcased in the adjacent Gilgandra Museum, with its grand collection of historical agricultural machinery and farming practices through the years. This precinct is also home to several popular local events and offers a relaxed high-amenity setting overlooking the Castlereagh River.

Key Improvements:

- **Cultural Centre and Open Space:** Enhancing the Coo-ee Heritage Centre's role as an immersive visitor destination, with upgrades to the music rotunda, gardens, playground and connected pathways.
- **Museum Integration:** Linking the museum's historical agricultural collection to the broader cultural narrative.

Business Case Project: Stage 1

- **Objective:** Enhance recreational offerings and engagement with the Castlereagh River.





Art Impression: Gilgandra View 1 - New viewing platform opposite the G11 Hub overlooking river towards the Jack Renshaw Bridge

Prepared by Jasmax and PPA&P for the Real Country Project

1 BUSINESS CASE PROJECT STAGE 1



Art Impression: Gilgandra View 2 - New town beach below the existing Jack Renshaw Bridge

Prepared by Jasmax and PPA&P for the Real Country Project

1 BUSINESS CASE PROJECT STAGE 1



Art Impression: Gilgandra View 3 - View of new Castleleigh River crossing looking towards the Coo-ee Heritage Centre

Prepared by Jasmax and PPA&P for the Real Country Project

- **Approach:** Implementing a new pathway along the eastern riverbank, connecting existing trails and creating a comprehensive loop. Additionally, developing recreational areas such as a beach and a timber boardwalk

The Real Country project has identified a range of priority infrastructure elements to strengthen the activation and recreation offerings in Gilgandra to further encourage and support visitation and dwell time. The focus of these works is enabling greater engagement with the river – in particular enabling accessibility to the water’s edge. The project proposes a new section of pathway along the eastern bank of the river connecting to the existing Windmill Walk via the Jack Renshaw Bridge and a new level ford crossing to connect back to the Coo-ee Heritage Centre. This new pathway will close the loop on a 3km accessible walking and cycling trail with integrated lighting and interpretative wayfinding signage. Two other key activation nodes to be developed in the scope of this project are: a new designated beach area adjacent the existing caravan park on the eastern side of river to enable water recreation, and a new timber boardwalk and viewing platform overlooking the river on the western bank connecting back to the town centre and terminating to align with the new public plaza of the library, so as to draw people across the street to the water’s edge and allow them to engage with the natural ecology of the Castlereagh River.

Key Improvements:

- **Pathway Expansion:** Completing a 3km accessible walking and cycling trail.
- **Recreational and Activation Nodes:** Establishing a beach area and a viewing platform to facilitate river interaction.

3.4.2.3 Warrumbungle

Coonabarabran sits as the primary gateway to the Warrumbungle National Park, famous for its unique rugged landscape and expansive dark skies. This adventurer’s playground caters to visitors from the region, as well as domestic and international travellers who come specifically to immerse themselves in the natural wonders of this special place. The town centre of Coonabarabran sits to the south of the Castlereagh River, with the Oxley Highway forming its main street. This presents a challenge, as the town’s spine is a high traffic corridor for vehicles moving through the region. At the southern end of the main street sits the existing visitor centre and aquatic centre, while the northern edge of town is framed by the river and parklands to both sides of the bank (including a sports precinct to the northern side).

Business Case Project:

Focus Area 1 & 2 – The Adventure Precinct

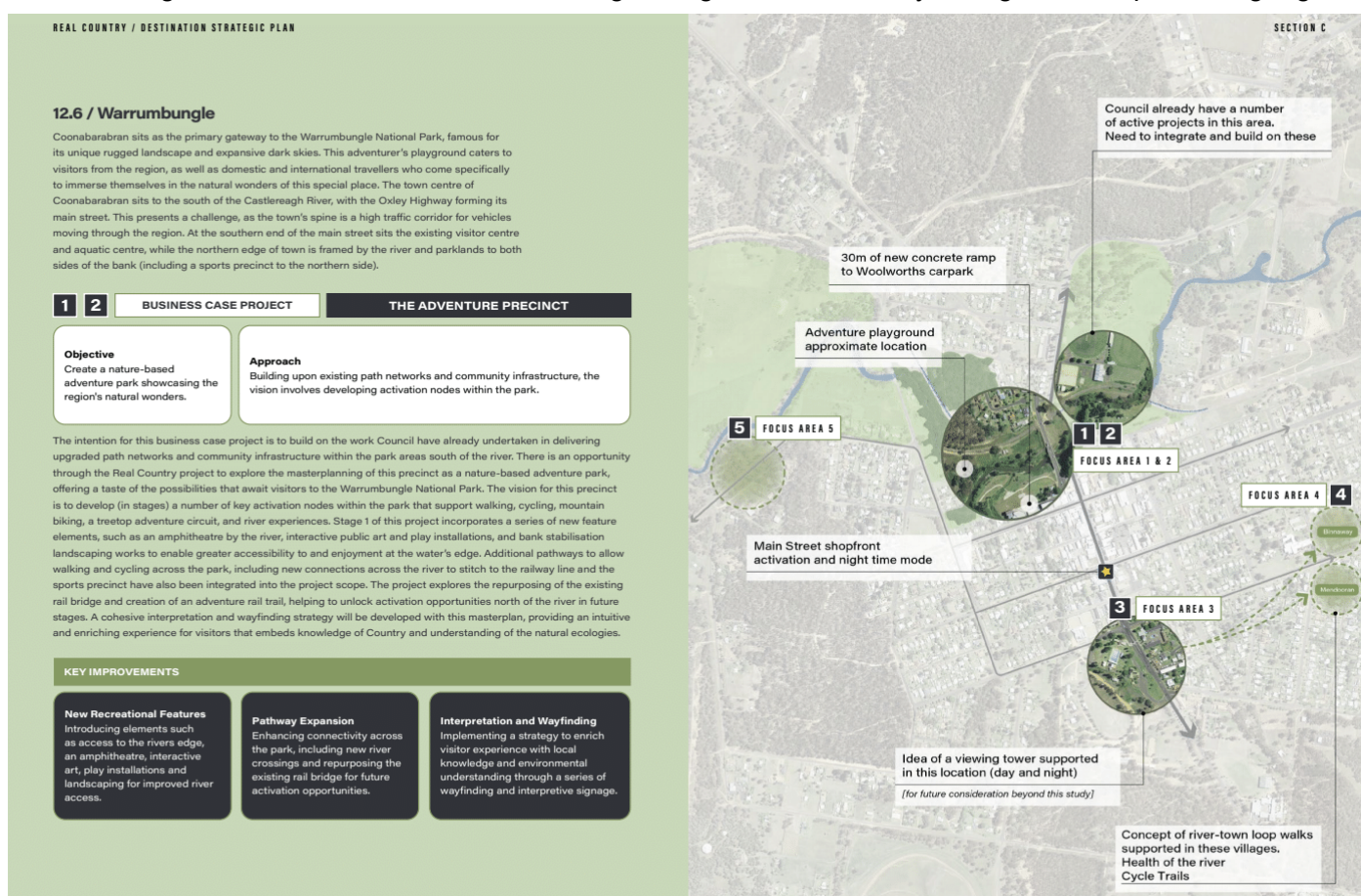
Objective: Create a nature-based adventure park showcasing the region's natural wonders.

Approach: Building upon existing path networks and community infrastructure, the vision involves developing activation nodes within the park.

The intention for this business case project is to build on the work Council have already undertaken in delivering upgraded path networks and community infrastructure within the park areas south of the river. There is an opportunity through the Real Country project to explore the masterplanning of this precinct as a nature-based adventure park, offering a taste of the possibilities that await visitors to the Warrumbungle National Park. The vision for this precinct is to develop (in stages) a number of key activation nodes within the park that support walking, cycling, mountain biking, a treetop adventure circuit, and river experiences. Stage 1 of this project incorporates a series of new feature elements, such as an informal amphitheatre by the river, interactive public art and play installations, and bank stabilisation landscaping works to enable greater accessibility to and enjoyment at the water's edge. Additional pathways to allow walking and cycling across the park, including new connections across the river to stitch to the railway line and the sports precinct have also been integrated into the project scope. The project explores the repurposing of the existing rail bridge and creation of an adventure rail trail, helping to unlock activation opportunities north of the river in future stages. A cohesive interpretation and wayfinding strategy will be developed with this masterplan, providing an intuitive and enriching experience for visitors that embeds knowledge of Country and understanding of the natural ecologies.

Key Improvements:

- **New Recreational Features:** Introducing elements such as access to the rivers edge, an amphitheatre, interactive art, play installations and landscaping for improved river access.
- **Pathway Expansion:** Enhancing connectivity across the park, including new river crossings and repurposing the existing rail bridge for future activation opportunities.
- **Interpretation and Wayfinding:** Implementing a strategy to enrich visitor experience with local knowledge and environmental understanding through a series of wayfinding and interpretive signage.





A Outdoor Amphitheatre
A dedicated space for performances and community gatherings.

B Night time Experience
Initiatives to leverage the unique dark sky fortnight time activities and celebrations.

C River Access Solutions
Infrastructure to improve public accessibility to the river.

D Connecting Pathways to Visitor Information Centre
Walkways and signs that link the Visitor Information Centre to the Main Park seamlessly.

E Wayfinding Elements
Comprehensive signage to guide residents and visitors.

F Neilson Park Connectivity
Introduction of a new crossing to enhance accessibility within the park.

G Additional Pathways and Signage Across Neilson Park
Expansion of pathways and informational signage on the opposite side of the river.

H Gateway to Warrumbungles Art/Wayfinding
Creative installations that are both artistic and functional for public use.

I Rail Trail & Sports Precinct Bridge Connection
Detailing the specific location and extent of this rail trail to connect to existing sports facilities.
- 1.2km Mesh Walkway
- 10m Concrete connection
- 60m bridge
- 320m Mesh walkway

J Acoustic Infrastructure
Installation of noise-reduction measures near the main bridge or proposed amphitheatre.

K Adventure playground approximate location

L 30m of new concrete ramp to Woolworths carpark



Art Impression: Coonabarabran View 2 - New river's edge activation adjacent to the Mary Jane Cain Bridge with new acoustic treatments

Prepared by Jassax and PPRP for the Real Country Project

Focus Area – The Villages of Binnaway and Mendooran

- **Objective:** Enhance tourism infrastructure in Binnaway and Mendooran, aligning with regional development goals.



- **Approach:** *Delivering a strategic response focusing on connecting Binnaway and Mendooran villages to the Castlereagh River and enhancing recreational access and opportunities.*

This project seeks to develop a strategic masterplan for delivering additional tourism infrastructure to the villages of Binnaway and Mendooran. These initiatives would align with the objectives of the Real Country project, focusing on connecting to the Castlereagh River and providing opportunities for residents and visitors to engage with and obtain a greater appreciation for the unique natural assets of the region. The works would seek to deliver on ideas for upgraded walking and cycling pathways, interpretations and wayfinding, and opportunities for on water recreation.

Key Improvements:

- **Infrastructure Development:** Upgrading walking and cycling paths along the rivers edge, wayfinding signage, adding interpretative elements, and creating opportunities for water-based access and recreation.

3.4.3 PROPOSAL EXCLUSIONS

The scope of each project is fully detailed in the Cost Plan. Within the QS scope there are exclusions around costing which should be read in conjunction with that report. In brief they include;

- Road work & Traffic Signals
- Remediation
- Service diversions
- DA conditions
- Infrastructure Upgrade
- Legal Fees
- Loose furniture or Speciality
- Equipment
- Contamination
- Escalation beyond October 2023
- Solar PV System

Further to these the following exclusions are important as they reflect the preliminary nature of the project at this stage. Some of these exclusions could include:

1. **Final Surveys Pending:** Some Design documents are based on preliminary surveys or other less-accurate plans and measurements. Final designs are subject to detailed site surveys. This means that the current designs could change based on more precise topographical, geological, or environmental data.
2. **Regulatory Approvals:** At the design phase, necessary regulatory approvals, such as environmental impact assessments, heritage site permissions and zoning approvals, may apply. The designs might be subject to change based on these approvals.
3. **Final Budget/funding Constraints:** The current designs are conceptual and subject to budget/funding constraints.
4. **Council approval:** Designs might change based on feedback from the Council stakeholders.
5. **Technical Feasibility:** Some design aspects will require a technical review. This includes the feasibility of certain architectural features, materials, or construction methods.

6. **Market Dynamics:** Depending upon the timing of the commencement of the project(s) The designs/strategy might be subject to adjustments based on evolving market dynamics, tourist trends, and economic factors that could influence the viability and focus of the project.
7. **Infrastructure Integration:** If the project depends on other infrastructure developments (like roads, utilities, etc.), the design might change based on the progress and specifics of these related projects.
8. **Risk Assessment:** Risks associated with construction, funding, and operation might lead to design alterations. This includes considerations for environmental risks, economic volatility, and project delays.
9. **Technology and Innovation:** Also depending on timing, as the project progresses, new technologies or innovative methods might emerge, influencing the final design.

These issues assist in risk management and ensures that stakeholders are aware of the potential changes that could occur as the project progresses.

3.4.4 RELATED PROJECTS

The Real Country projects are designed and planned to be stand alone for funding and implementation and are not reliant on any other projects for commencement or completion.

There are however other projects within the region which compliment the Real Country Strategy

Artesian Bathing Precinct - Coonamble

Identified in the Strategy as Focus Area 4 - This precinct is within the Real Country project program. However, it is highlighted here as a relevant strategic project for Coonamble's local economy and tourism offering for the wider region.

The "Town Beach" Precinct - Coonamble

Part of the Strategy in Focus Area 2 – The strategy proposes creating physical and cultural links across the river, into the town centre and integrating heritage and natural beauty into the visitor experience.

This project centres around several infrastructure project opportunities Council is already actively pursuing, including catalyst projects to revitalise the main street and upgrades to public recreation facilities in MacDonald Park and the aquatic centre.

The Real Country project management team and individual Council Delivery teams of these and other related projects recognise the further economies of scale which can be enjoyed by procurement of the various components and services of all of the projects, pending approval and other timing issues.

3.5. PROJECTED COSTS

3.5.1. PROJECTED CAPITAL COSTS

Following is the projected capital cost plans of the proposal broken into each Council's Stage One project(s). In the event there is more than one project per Council area (i.e. Gilgandra has two - Cultural Heritage Precinct and CBD Town Centre Precinct) all projects are combined in one table per LGA.

The comprehensive cost plan for the Business Case has been developed by the registered Quantity Surveying firm T-Cubed. This plan has been tailored to provide insights into the financial dimensions of the project from various perspectives.

In order to ensure a thorough financial evaluation, costs have been reported in two formats: escalated costs, which are crucial for assessing funding requirements and overall project affordability, and unescalated costs, which serve as the basis for a rigorous cost-benefit analysis. This dual approach facilitates a more nuanced understanding of the project's financial implications.

As can be seen in detail in the cost plan - cost estimates include:

- Preliminaries at 15% of Net Construction Cost
- Margin at 5% of Net Construction Cost & Preliminaries
- Professional fees at 10% of Gross Construction Cost
- Authority fees at 2% of Gross Construction Cost, and Professional fees
- Contingency at 20% of Gross Construction Cost

In this Section 3.5 capital costs are reported with an escalation factor to inform funding and affordability assessment. In Section 3.6 costs are not reported on an escalated basis to inform the cost benefit assessment.

The assumed inflation rate is 3.5% based on forecasts provide by the Quantity Surveyor. Costs below are separately shown with the annual escalation amount.

All cost estimates are exclusive of GST and the cost plan is annexed at Appendix B.

The costs should be considered as indicative and are based on current concept designs. We recommend that more detailed costings be prepared from further developed design documents to verify the cost allowances made. The total, that does not include escalated cost of the projects is \$15.82 million.

The individual Council proposals are shown in the tables below. As it is not yet known when projects will commence, no year has been nominated for commencement/completion. The assumption is the project is funded but subject to any planning approval.

Table 3.5.1: Coonamble Business Case Projected capital costs (\$000s)

Year	1	2	3	4
ESTIMATED NET CONSTRUCTION COST	753	2,258	0	0
PRELIMINARIES	339	113	0	0
MARGIN	130	43	0	0
ESTIMATED GROSS CONSTRUCTION COST	1,221	2,414	0	0
PROFESSIONAL FEES	273	91	0	0
AUTHORITY FEES	60	20	0	0
CONTINGENCY	200	600	0	0
TOTAL INDICATIVE DEVELOPMENT COST	1,754	3,125	0	0
Escalation	61	109	0	0
Nominal Cost	1,815	3,234	0	0

NOTE: Stage 1 Commence Year 1 with 25% of construction and completes 2025/26 with 75%. Additional costs (preliminaries, professional fees etc) are cash flowed 75% in the first year of the stage and 25% second year.

Table 3.5.2: Gilgandra Business Case Projected capital costs (\$000s)

Year	1	2	3	4
ESTIMATED NET CONSTRUCTION COST	774	774	1,548	0
PRELIMINARIES	116	116	232	0
MARGIN	45	45	89	0
ESTIMATED GROSS CONSTRUCTION COST	935	935	1,869	0
PROFESSIONAL FEES	93	93	187	0
AUTHORITY FEES	21	21	41	0
CONTINGENCY	206	206	411	0
TOTAL INDICATIVE DEVELOPMENT COST	1,254	1,254	2,508	0
Escalation	44	44	88	0
Nominal Cost	1,298	1,298	2,596	0

NOTE: Stage 1 Commence Year 1 with 25% of construction and completes 2025/26 with 75%. Additional costs (preliminaries, professional fees etc) are cash flowed 75% in the first year of the stage and 25% second year.

Table 3.5.3: Warrumbungle Business Case Projects (\$000s) T

Year	1	2	3	4
ESTIMATED NET CONSTRUCTION COST	760	2,279	0	0
PRELIMINARIES	342	114	0	0
MARGIN	131	44	0	0
ESTIMATED GROSS CONSTRUCTION COST	1,232	2,436	0	0
PROFESSIONAL FEES	275	92	0	0
AUTHORITY FEES	61	20	0	0
CONTINGENCY	605	202	0	0
TOTAL INDICATIVE DEVELOPMENT COST	2,173	2,750	0	0
Escalation	76	96	0	0
Nominal Cost	2,249	2,846	0	0

NOTE: Stage 1 Commence Year 1 with 25% of construction and completes 2025/26 with 75%. Additional costs (preliminaries, professional fees etc) are cash flowed 75% in the first year of the stage and 25% second year

3.5.2. PROJECTED ONGOING COSTS

Following is an outline the ongoing costs that are forecast to arise with the proposal projects. These costs include operating, maintenance, repair, renewal and replacement costs. These costs are *estimates* for 10 years from completion of construction of the project. The following explanations and assumptions have been utilised to determine the table below

Table 3.5.4 Coonamble Projected ongoing costs (\$000s)

COONAMBLE COUNCIL							
Year	Project Capital Costs	Other Capital Costs	Operating Costs	Maintenance Costs	Repair Costs	Renewal and Replacement Costs	Total by Year
1	\$993,164		\$0	\$0	Incl. in maintenance	\$0	\$993,164
2	\$1,299,373		\$0	\$0		\$0	\$1,299,373
3	\$2,750,233		\$0	\$0		\$0	\$2,750,233
4			\$80,900	\$108,226		\$0	\$189,126
5			\$83,000	\$110,558		\$0	\$193,558
6			\$85,000	\$113,314		\$0	\$198,314
7			\$87,100	\$116,176		\$0	\$203,276
8			\$89,400	\$119,144		\$0	\$208,544
9			\$91,500	\$121,900		\$16,700	\$230,100
10			\$93,900	\$124,762		\$148,800	\$367,462

Table 3.5.5 Gilgandra Projected ongoing costs (\$000s)

GILGANDRA COUNCIL							
Year	Project Capital Costs	Other Capital Costs	Operating Costs	Maintenance Costs	Repair Costs	Renewal and Replacement Costs	Total by Year
1	\$942,557		\$0	\$0	Incl. in maintenance	\$0	\$942,557
2	\$1,377,330		\$0	\$0		\$0	\$1,377,330
3	\$3,351,491		\$0	\$0		\$0	\$3,351,491
4			\$65,000	\$158,894		\$0	\$223,894
5			\$66,800	\$162,710		\$0	\$229,510
6			\$68,300	\$166,738		\$0	\$235,038
7			\$70,000	\$170,766		\$0	\$240,766
8			\$71,900	\$174,900		\$0	\$246,800
9			\$73,500	\$179,246		\$1,100	\$253,846
10			\$75,600	\$183,592		\$91,600	\$350,792

Table 3.5.6 Warrumbungle Projected ongoing costs (\$000s)

WARRUMBUNGLE COUNCIL							
Year	Project Capital Costs	Other Capital Costs	Operating Costs	Maintenance Costs	Repair Costs	Renewal and Replacement Costs	Total by Year
1	\$995,707		\$0	\$0	Incl. in maintenance	\$0	\$995,707
2	\$1,311,572		\$0	\$0		\$0	\$1,311,572
3	\$2,802,900		\$0	\$0		\$0	\$2,802,900
4			\$64,800	\$105,576		\$0	\$170,376
5			\$66,500	\$108,438		\$0	\$174,938
6			\$68,000	\$111,088		\$0	\$179,088
7			\$69,700	\$113,844		\$0	\$183,544
8			\$71,600	\$116,706		\$0	\$188,306
9			\$73,200	\$119,462		\$61,200	\$253,862
10			\$75,200	\$122,536		\$125,500	\$323,236

3.6. COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

With a total capital cost of \$15.82 million, the project offers numerous benefits to the communities of each Council as well as the Real Country region in which it is located, both intangible and tangible.

The benefits of the project as a whole, comprised of its various components, beneficiaries, and timelines, are shown in the tables below. They also include supporting data for the assumptions used to demonstrate the positive cost-benefit ratios.

Benefits of the Project	Beneficiaries of the Project	Estimated Timeframe for Receipt	Sources/Explanation
Enhancement of Visitor Experience	Local communities, tourists, Coonamble, Gilgandra, Warrumbungle Shire Councils	Upon project completion	Leveraging natural beauty and cultural heritage
Strategic Infrastructure Projects	Local communities, respective local councils	Upon project completion	Reflecting community aspirations, enhancing amenities
Economic Diversification Beyond Agriculture	Local businesses, regional economy	Upon project completion	Addressing economic challenges and promoting tourism
Improved Environmental Management	Environmental agencies, local communities	Upon project completion	Focus on river health and ecological balance
Cultural Engagement and Preservation	First Nations communities, cultural groups, historians	Upon project completion	Celebrating regional history and indigenous culture
Growth in Tourism and Accommodation Industries	Tourism operators, hospitality sector, retail businesses	Upon project completion	Increased visitation and spending, sustainable tourism development
Economic and Social Recovery Post-Disasters	Local businesses, community groups	Upon project completion	Recovery strategy post COVID-19 and natural disasters
Workforce Development in Tourism	Residents, potential employees in tourism, regional workforce	Upon project completion	Employment opportunities, regional living support
Increased Regional Profile as Holiday Destination	Regional NSW, local tourism businesses	Upon project completion	Connection with wider regional tourism initiatives
Infrastructure Improvements	Local residents, visitors, environmental groups	Upon project completion	Enhancing assets like the Castlereagh River, focusing on sustainability
Alignment with Real Country Destination Strategy Goals	Entire Real Country region	Upon project completion	Enhancing tourism, preserving culture, fostering development
Local Facility Enhancement	Visitors, local communities	Upon project completion	Quality improvements in local river experiences and amenities
Community Engagement in Projects	Local residents, community groups	Upon project completion	Reflecting local desires and aspirations in projects
Innovative and Sustainable Solutions	The broader region, future projects	Upon project completion	Supporting long-term, resilient regional development
Masterplan for Future Development	Future residents, businesses, tourists	Upon project completion	Foundation for sustainable and inclusive growth

Increased visitation

Many of the advantages are contingent on a greater number of visits. Visitation increases have a multiplier effect on all sectors of the economy.

In terms of regional economic development, the term "multiplier effect" for the purposes of this Business Case describes the process by which a one-time expenditure (such an investment in tourism infrastructure) triggers an upward cycle that generates more spending overtime within the local economy. In essence, it counts the number of times a dollar is spent locally before it is lost.

Within the project process Gap Analysis identified within the Real Country Issues Paper (pp. 40) and other previously cited statistics from REMPLAN and Tourism Research Australia are the foundations for the predicted increase in visitors generated by the Real Country Projects, as indicated in Table 3.5.7 below.

Table 3.5.7 Visitation Increases

Project Location	Additional Visitors p.a	Additional nights p.a.
Coonamble	5,110	748
Gilgandra	12,045	1,588
Warrumbungle	7,450	933
Total	24,605	3,269

The forecasts have been divided into three categories: domestic, overnight, and international.

The following total estimated expenditure is applicable when using the REMPLAN Tourism Analysis Model and the TRA 2022 Tourism Profile. Refer to Appendix A for the Orana RDA Tourism Impact Summary Report.

In the final analysis, the effect of drawing 15,846 more tourists to the area results in \$2,711,528 in total spending each year. The total output is predicted to increase by \$4.465 million in this scenario. 20 new jobs are expected to be added in response to this, along with \$1.117 million in pay and salaries and \$2.238 million in value-added.

The impact summary of drawing the anticipated visitor numbers is provided below.

Table 3.5.8 Impact Summary of Visitation

Impact Summary	Direct Effect	Supply-Chain Flow On Effect	Consumption Flow On Effect	Total	Type 1 Multiplier	Type 2 Multiplier
Output (\$M)	\$4.052	\$1.435	\$1.186	\$6.673	1.354	1.647
Long Term Employment (Jobs)	23	4	4	31	1.174	1.348
Wages and Salaries (\$M)	\$1.126	\$0.288	\$0.255	\$1.669	1.255	1.482
Value-Added (\$M)	\$2.074	\$0.589	\$0.681	\$3.344	1.284	1.612

Source: REMPLAN Economy

Utilising REMPLAN software, the project's impacts in the Orana region were evaluated. The \$15.82 million expenditure incurred when constructing the Stage 1 works was evaluated. The outcomes are shown below.

Table 3.5.9 Summary of Visitation Outcomes

Impact Summary	Direct Effect	Supply-Chain Effect	Consumption Effect	Total Effect	Type 1 Multiplier	Type 2 Multiplier
Output (\$M)	\$15.82	\$8.93	\$3.59	\$28.35	1.558	1.792
Employment (Jobs)	\$25.00	\$23.00	\$12.00	\$60.00	1.765	2.176
Wages and Salaries (\$M)	\$2.41	\$1.88	\$0.77	\$5.06	1.721	2.032
Value-added (\$M)	\$4.75	\$3.30	\$2.06	\$10.11	1.667	2.101

Source: REMPLAN Economy

NPV of Cashflow and Benefit Cost Ratio

The project's associated capital and recurring costs, together with the project's tangible and intangible advantages, are summarised in the table below. The full worksheet is found as Appendix D.

Table 3.5.10 Summary of Cashflow Benefit Cost Ratio

A. Cost: Cash outflow: \$ A1 Capital Cost	Total
Coonamble	5,042,770
Gilgandra	5,671,378
Warrumbungle	5,110,179
A2. Operating Costs	
Coonamble	
Operating	610,800
Maintenance	814,080
Renewal and Replacement	165,500
Gilgandra	
Operating	491,100
Maintenance	1,196,846
Renewal and Replacement	92,700
Warrumbungle	
Operating	489,000
Maintenance	797,650
Renewal and Replacement	186,700
A. Total Cash Outflow	20,668,703
A.3 NPV of NCF @5%	\$17,503,638
B. Benefit: Cash inflow: (\$)	
Direct Benefit	
Indirect Benefit	
Increased value added to the regional economy construction phase (REMPAN) Type 1 multiplier - value-add	10,110,000
Tourism expenditure - overnight stays impact to region (REMPAN) Type 1 multiplier value-add	23,408,000
D. NPV of NCF @ 5%	\$8,214,281.96
E. BCR	0.47

Summary of the results

Net Present Value (NPV)

The project's financial sustainability is demonstrated by the positive net present value (NPV) of \$8.2 million, which is contrasted with the project cost of \$15.82 million (before long-term repairs and maintenance). This is particularly important considering the project's ambitious scope and distant location.

Our calculations reflect the present value of future cash flows in accordance with regional economic evaluation guidelines, using a 5% discount rate as advised by NSW Treasury.

Notably, the research provides a cautious but realistic financial outlook by maintaining current cost and benefit valuations without escalation.

Analysis of benefit-cost ratios (BCRs)

Even with a BCR of 0.47, the project's overall feasibility warrants more investigation. A BCR of less than one usually points to possible issues, but the context of this project provides a different picture.

A positive net present value (NPV) is a result of the significant early investments, which are included in the BCR and are essential for building the infrastructure that supports long-term benefits.

The BCR is significantly impacted by the implementation of the 5% discount rate that NSW Treasury recommends, especially in light of the project's high upfront expenditures.

QBL and Indirect Benefits

When seen through the lens of the Quadruple Bottom Line (QBL), the indirect benefits of the Real Country initiative significantly support the project's viability, offsetting the lower BCR.

- **Economic:** The initiative has the potential to boost business expansion, create jobs, and reinvigorate local economies in addition to providing immediate rewards. This includes possible rises in the area's service, hotel, and retail sectors, helped by an increase in tourists.
- **Social:** The projects aim to foster community cohesion and enhance local amenities, improving overall quality of life. This includes the development of recreational spaces and cultural hubs, which can become focal points for community events and social interactions.
- **Environmental:** The project is based on a commitment to sustainable practices, highlighting the protection of the environment and ecological balance. This includes initiatives such as the establishment of green infrastructure, the promotion of ecotourism, and habitat conservation.
- **Cultural:** The preservation and celebration of the region's cultural heritage is integral, with projects focused on showcasing local history, indigenous stories, and traditional practices. This could manifest in interactive cultural trails, heritage site restorations, and educational programs that deepen the understanding of the region's rich cultural tapestry.

In summary, the project goes beyond conventional financial measures when taking into account the significant positive NPV and the wide range of indirect benefits. The Real Country Tourism Experience, in spite of its BCR of 0.47, makes a strong case for investment by complementing broad economic, social, environmental, and cultural goals. This validates the project's overall feasibility and funding eligibility.

3.7. FINANCIAL APPRAISAL

The comprehensive 10 year cashflow of the proposal is found in Section A annexed at Appendix E. The budget impact of the proposal is spread as evenly over all Councils as design, scope and scale allowed.

The total annual liability ranges from \$583,000 to \$1,041,490 from years 4-10.

There is no revenue line currently shown in the financial appraisal or cost benefit analysis calculations.

The Real Country Project's other important documents have listed other initiatives that enhance the projects' place-making focus.

The following discusses possible sources of income that might be administered by councils or by private companies that could charge for the ability to operate, rent, or obtain a licence.

The Real Country Tourism Experience offers substantial potential for producing operational surplus revenue in the future, even if it does not currently have a measurable revenue stream in the financial analysis. The project has a significant potential for a variety of revenue streams, especially considering its early design stage and advantageous location close to the Castlereagh River. These opportunities can be defined and investigated in the following ways, in accordance with the nature and scope of the project:

Water-Based Activities

- **Canoe and Waterway Rental:** Making use of the Castlereagh River's close proximity, hiring out canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards has the potential to be a reliable source of income. This activity emphasises environmentally sustainable river exploration in addition to tourism.
- **Boat Accommodation:** Introducing distinctive boat stays or floating lodgings can draw travellers looking for innovative accommodation choices. Houseboats and particularly made floating cabins are examples of this.
- **Usage Fees for Water Activations:** Implementing a nominal fee for accessing designated areas or one-off activation events that allow for swimming, fishing, or boating activities can generate revenue while helping maintain and conserve these natural resources.

Retail and Culinary Experiences

- **Kiosk Rental:** Establishing kiosks along popular spots, such as near the Warrena Weir Recreation Precinct or the Town Beach Precinct, provides opportunities for local entrepreneurs to offer food, drinks, or souvenirs, thereby generating rental income.
- **Local Produce and Makers Markets:** Organising frequent markets that feature locally grown produce and handcrafted goods as the capacity to benefit the local economy and attracts both tourists and locals.

Accommodation and Eco-Tourism

- **Eco-Stay Cabins:** Developing eco-friendly cabins, especially in areas like the proposed Warrena Weir Recreation Precinct, can draw eco-conscious travellers. These stays can be marketed as tranquil retreats, offering immersive nature experiences.
- **Camping and RV Sites:** Utilising areas designated for RVs and camping, especially in scenic spots along the river, can attract both local and travelling campers, generating fees for site usage.

Cultural and Educational Experiences

- **Cultural Tours and Workshops:** Leveraging the region's rich cultural heritage, guided tours and workshops that highlight indigenous stories, local history, and traditional practices can be both educational and a source of revenue.
- **Event Spaces for Rent:** Utilising areas like the amphitheatre or community hubs for private events, workshops, or cultural performances can create another stream of income.

Adventure and Recreation

- **Adventure Trails and Equipment Rental:** Offering mountain biking, hiking, or treetop adventure circuits, along with equipment rental services, caters to adventure enthusiasts.
- **Nature-Based Learning Programs:** Conducting structured nature-based learning and exploration programs can appeal to schools, families, and nature enthusiasts.

Strategic Partnerships and Sponsorships

- **Collaborations with Local Businesses:** Partnering with local businesses for services like tour operations, catering, or event management can help generate revenue while supporting the local economy.
- **Sponsorship Opportunities:** Offering sponsorship opportunities for businesses to support various aspects of the project, such as infrastructure development or event hosting can also contribute to revenue.

In conclusion, the Real Country Tourism Experience has a lot of potential to expand and thrive given its unique approach and prime location. These opportunities, when combined with the Council's initiatives, have the potential to significantly increase the project's long-term financial viability and appeal to investors and the community.

3.8. PROPOSED FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

Please outline how the proposal’s capital costs are proposed to be funded.
 Provide a breakdown by financial year if these costs will span multiple financial years.
 Ensure that total funding covers total capital costs outlined in Section 3.5.1.

NOTE: Gilgandra has provided advice but still awaiting advice from other councils - this section requires completing once all information is supplied

Table 3.3: Proposed capital funding contributions (\$000s)

Stage	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	Remain- ing Years	Total
Proposal capital costs							
Funding sources							
Sub-total							

3.9. FINANCIAL HEALTH & SUPPORT

Consultants should summarise the lead organisation’s:
 - Financial performance i.e. profitability
 - Financial position i.e. level of assets and liabilities
 - Cash flow position i.e. level of cash inflows and outflows

Please attach financial statements for the lead organisation’s past three financial years.
 Where non-government capital funding sources are identified, consultants are recommended to demonstrate how secure these funding sources are (e.g. letters of support, MoUs) or how they have been calculated. Where this information is commercial in confidence, it may be provided as an attachment to the business case.

Please attach financial statements for the lead organisation’s past three financial years. As well as Annual Reports from each Council??

This proposal does not include any funding sources other than in-kind from non-government parties.

Please find attached in **APPENDIX *** the includes the three Councils financial statements from the previous three financial years.

4. IMPLEMENTATION CASE

4.1. PROGRAM & MILESTONES

As these projects are not yet the subject to a funding grant no start date has been considered. However in the process of design, costing and business case development the team has considered the development period for each project which is reported below. Start date is year 0, Finish is in 3 years.

Table 4.1: Key events

Event	Start	Finish
Warrena Weir Reserve Stage 1	0	3
Cultural Heritage Precinct Stage 1	0	3
CBD Town Centre Precinct	0	2
Coonabarabran River Precinct	0	3
Town Centre, Villages & Surrounds	0	2
Masterplan Consultancy River Precinct, Town Centre, Villages	0	1

4.2. GOVERNANCE

In the context of regional NSW local government joint venture projects such as Real Country, an effective governance structure is paramount. The proposed Real Country structure incorporates a holistic approach, encompassing shared responsibilities, collaborative decision-making, and rigorous compliance with regulatory frameworks. For the Real Country project, this entails a governance framework that not only facilitates efficient project management but also ensures that the diverse needs and visions of the Coonamble, Gilgandra, and Warrumbungle Shire Councils are harmoniously integrated.

It should be noted as no funding is currently in place for the Projects the actual management roles have not been nominated. What follows is a structure and commentary which can be implemented upon commencement of the next stage of funding.

Governance of the Real Country Project

Management of Projects by Councils

The management of the Real Country project, a collaboration among the three Councils, will be executed through a central Project Management Office (PMO). This approach ensures a cohesive and coordinated execution across various facets of the project. Below is an outline of how this PMO will function in key areas:

i. Review (Project Control Group - PCG)

A Project Control Group (PCG) will be established, comprising representatives from each Council. This group will be responsible for periodic review of project progress, addressing risks, and ensuring alignment with the strategic objectives. The PCG will play a crucial role in maintaining oversight and making pivotal decisions throughout the project lifecycle.

ii. Planning and Design

The PMO will coordinate planning and design efforts, ensuring a unified vision while respecting the unique characteristics and needs of each Council's jurisdiction. This process will involve regular consultations with local stakeholders and experts to maintain a balance between innovation and regional authenticity.

iii. Approvals (Regional Planning Panel?)

For approvals, the PMO will liaise with a Regional Planning Panel or equivalent authority. This ensures that all statutory and regulatory requirements are met, particularly those pertaining to environmental, cultural, and community impacts. The PMO will facilitate a streamlined process for securing necessary approvals from local to state levels.

iv. Procurement

Adhering to the Local Government Act, the procurement process will be transparent and competitive, with a focus on engaging local contractors. The PMO will oversee this process, ensuring compliance with local purchasing policies and striving for optimal value and quality in procurement decisions.

v. Construction

During the construction phase, the PMO will oversee and coordinate activities across all sites. This involves regular monitoring of progress, budget management, quality control, and safety compliance. The PMO will ensure that construction activities align with the overall timeline and project objectives.

vi. Commissioning

The PMO will manage the commissioning of the infrastructure, ensuring that all components are operational and meet the project specifications. This phase will also include training for local staff who will be involved in the operation and maintenance of the facilities.

vii. On-going Management – Measurement of Success

For ongoing management and success measurement, the PMO will establish key performance indicators (KPIs) aligned with the project's strategic objectives. These KPIs will focus on economic impact, job creation, visitor numbers, and community benefits. Regular reporting and evaluation will be conducted to assess performance against these KPIs.

Governance Structure for the Real Country Project

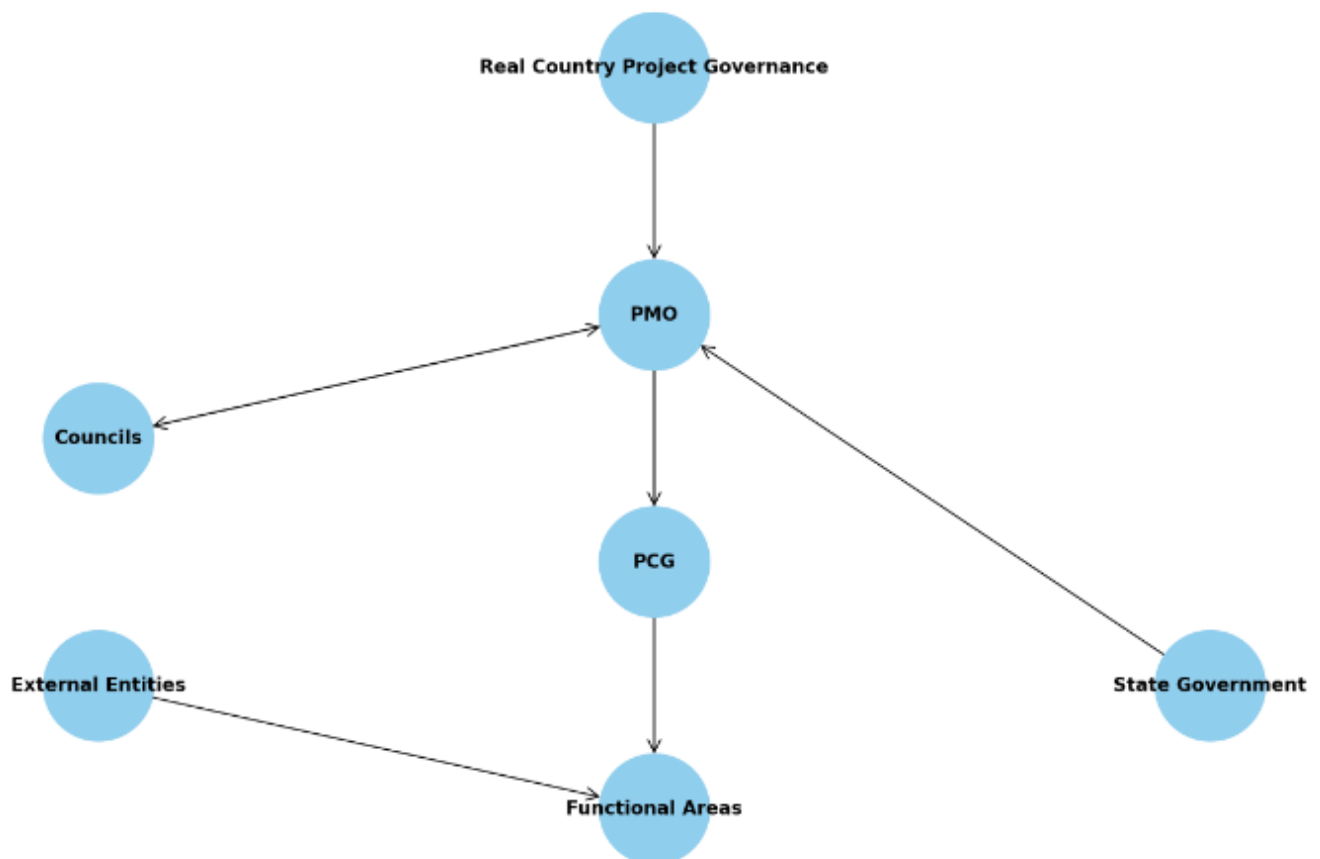


Figure 4.2.1 Proposed Governance Structure

While the condensed diagram offers a streamlined view of the governance structure, it's important to understand the activities and responsibilities associated with each node, especially the "Functional Areas" node which encapsulates several key aspects of the project. Here's a detailed explanation of the activities and roles for each node:

- **Real Country Project Governance:** This is the overarching body responsible for the strategic direction and high-level oversight of the project. It sets the vision, objectives, and ensures the project aligns with the broader goals of the involved Councils and stakeholders.
- **Project Management Office (PMO):** The PMO is the central coordination point for the project. It is responsible for the day-to-day management, ensuring that project timelines, budgets, and quality standards are met. The PMO also serves as the communication hub, disseminating information to and from various stakeholders.
- **Project Control Group (PCG):** Comprising representatives from each Council, the PCG plays a critical role in reviewing project progress, managing risks, and making key decisions. It ensures the project remains aligned with its strategic objectives and provides a platform for collaborative decision-making.

Functional Areas: This node represents several key operational areas of the project:

- **Planning and Design:** Involves detailed planning and architectural design, taking into account the unique characteristics of each Council's jurisdiction. This phase includes consultations with stakeholders and experts to ensure regional authenticity and innovation.
- **Approvals:** Manages the process of obtaining necessary statutory and regulatory approvals, working closely with relevant authorities to ensure compliance with environmental, cultural, and community standards.
- **Procurement:** Oversees the procurement process, ensuring transparency and adherence to the Local Government Act. It focuses on engaging local contractors and suppliers to promote local economic development.
- **Construction:** Coordinates the construction activities across different sites, focusing on budget management, quality control, safety compliance, and adherence to timelines.
- **Commissioning:** Manages the commissioning of the infrastructure, ensuring all components are operational as per the project specifications. Includes training of local staff for operation and maintenance.
- **Management & Measurement:** Establishes key performance indicators (KPIs) for ongoing management and success measurement. This includes tracking economic impact, job creation, visitor numbers, and community benefits, with regular reporting and evaluation.
- **Councils (Coonamble, Gilgandra, Warrumbungle):** These entities provide local insights and requirements, ensuring that the project serves the needs of each jurisdiction. They are involved in decision-making processes and contribute to the overall direction of the project.
- **External Entities:** This includes stakeholders such as local contractors, Destination NSW, and other organisations that might interact with specific aspects of the project, like Procurement or Planning.
- **State Government:** As a funding body and key stakeholder, the State Government plays a crucial role in providing oversight and resources for the project. Their involvement ensures that the project aligns with state-level objectives and regulations.

The governance structure for the Real Country project is designed to ensure effective collaboration among the Coonamble, Gilgandra, and Warrumbungle Shire Councils. With a central PMO guiding the project through its various phases, from planning and design to commissioning and ongoing management, this framework aims to deliver a successful and sustainable tourism infrastructure project that benefits the entire region.

4.3. KEY RISKS

In the contemporary landscape of regional NSW local government joint venture projects, a modern governance structure should ideally embody collaborative leadership, transparent decision-making processes, and robust accountability mechanisms. This governance model should enable effective stakeholder engagement, ensuring alignment of project objectives with community aspirations and legislative requirements. It should also foster agile management practices to navigate complex intergovernmental and multi-sector partnerships, while maintaining a strong focus on sustainable development and cultural sensitivity.

Table 4.3.1 Summary of Key Risks

Risk	Proposed mitigation	Risk rating after mitigation		
		Consequence	Likelihood	Rating
Scope Risk	Continual engagement with community and stakeholders.	Moderate	Likely	Low
Construction Risk	Implementing a Risk Management plan, ensuring contractor compliance.	High	Possible	Moderate
Financing and Procurement Risk	Seeking diverse funding sources, engaging consultants.	High	Likely	Moderate
Planning and Approvals Risk	Early engagement with regulatory bodies, proactive management.	High	Possible	Low
Legal Risk	Engaging legal expertise, robust contract management.	Moderate	Possible	Low
Property Acquisition and Utility Relocation Risk	Early stakeholder engagement, fair negotiation practices.	Moderate	Possible	Low
Change Management Risk	Effective communication strategies, phased implementation.	Moderate	Likely	Low
Sustainability Risk	Regular sustainability audits, compliance with regulations.	High	Possible	Low
Community Engagement Risk	Implementing transparent and inclusive engagement processes.	Moderate	Likely	Low
Cultural Heritage Risk	Engaging with local indigenous groups and cultural experts.	High	Possible	Low
Environmental Compliance Risk	Regular impact assessments, sustainable practices.	High	Likely	Moderate
Technology and Innovation Risk	Partnering with technology experts, staff training.	Moderate	Possible	Low
Economic Viability Risk	Conducting market analyses, engaging economic development experts.	High	Possible	Moderate
Stakeholder Alignment Risk	Clear communication channels, stakeholder management plan.	Moderate	Likely	Low
Regulatory and Compliance Risk	Updating on regulatory changes, compliance training program.	High	Likely	Moderate
Infrastructure Maintenance Risk	Developing maintenance plan, budget allocation for upkeep.	Moderate	Likely	Low

We have also explored recent developments and issues in the regions of Gilgandra, Coonamble, and Warrumbungle and discuss, in light of the risk analysis for the Real Country projects offers a more current and targeted assessment. Here are some recent issues that can be referenced in the context of the identified risks:

- **Scope Risk:** Recent initiatives like the construction of the Gilgandra Aero Park Residential Subdivision and the activation of new mobile base stations by Inland Rail in the Coonamble region highlight the dynamic nature of local developments. These initiatives indicate a rapidly evolving landscape that the Real Country project must adapt to, ensuring that the project scope remains relevant and responsive to these changes.
- **Construction Risk:** The development of new infrastructure such as EV chargers in regional NSW and the upgrading of water and sewerage operations in the Warrumbungle Shire demonstrate ongoing construction activities in these regions. These developments underscore the need for robust construction risk management, considering the simultaneous infrastructure projects underway.
- **Financing and Procurement Risk:** The funding received for the Warrumbungle water and sewerage operations upgrade, with contributions from both the NSW Government and the Warrumbungle Shire Council, reflects the critical role of securing and managing funds for large-scale projects. This underscores the importance of effective financial management for the Real Country project.
- **Change Management Risk:** The introduction of new technologies and infrastructures, such as the upgraded telemetry network in Warrumbungle and the new mobile base stations, suggests ongoing changes in the technological and infrastructural landscape. These developments highlight the need for effective change management strategies to adapt to new technologies and infrastructure improvements.
- **Sustainability Risk:** The emphasis on environmental sustainability is evident in regional initiatives like the NPWS's hazard reductions in the Pilliga West Conservation Area. This focus aligns with the Real Country project's emphasis on sustainable practices and underscores the importance of maintaining high environmental standards.
- **Environmental Compliance Risk:** The recurring issues of flooding leading to road closures in the region highlight the environmental challenges that the project may encounter. This underscores the need for robust environmental risk management strategies, particularly in planning and executing infrastructure projects.

By considering these recent regional developments and challenges, the risk analysis for the Real Country projects can be more accurately tailored to current conditions, ensuring a comprehensive and relevant risk mitigation strategy.

4.4. LEGISLATIVE, REGULATORY ISSUES & APPROVALS

To address the legislative, regulatory issues, and approvals required for the Real Country tourism infrastructure project in NSW, Australia, it's essential to consider various aspects:

Legislative and Regulatory Framework:

- **Local Government Act:** Compliance with this act is crucial for council operations, land use, and community services.
- **Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979:** This act governs the assessment and approval of development applications, including those related to environmental impact, zoning, and land use.
- **Heritage Act 1977:** Important for protecting and managing heritage sites, especially given the cultural significance of locations like the Warrumbungle National Park and Pilliga Forest.
- **National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974:** This act is relevant for any activities within or adjacent to national parks and protected areas, ensuring the protection of natural and cultural heritage.
- **Water Management Act 2000:** For projects involving river restoration, water extraction, or usage, compliance with water licensing and management principles is necessary.
- **Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016:** Ensuring that projects comply with biodiversity and conservation requirements, particularly in sensitive ecological areas.

Approval Processes:

- **Local Activity Approvals:** Required for street trading, use of public land, and activities under the Local Government Act.

- **Development Applications (DAs):** Necessary for construction and infrastructure projects. The assessment process involves consideration of environmental impact, community consultation, and alignment with local planning policies.
- **Heritage Approvals:** If any project intersects with heritage-listed sites or areas of cultural significance, approvals from the Heritage Council of NSW may be required.
- **Environmentally Significant Projects:** For projects with substantial environmental impact, a referral to the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment or even the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment might be necessary.

Specific Approvals for Identified Projects:

- **Warrena Weir Recreation Precinct and River Projects:** Compliance with State Environment Planning Policy (SEPP) for river restoration and development activities, including water-based recreational infrastructure.
- **Public Art and Cultural Projects:** Engage with Aboriginal heritage authorities if projects are in areas of Indigenous cultural significance.
- **Infrastructure Developments:** For walking paths, cycling tracks, and RV camping sites, ensure alignment with local council development control plans and SEPPs.

Strategic Compliance:

- **Real Country Destination Strategy Goals Alignment:** Ensure that all projects are in sync with the strategic objectives of enhancing local tourism, preserving cultural heritage, and sustainable economic development.
- **Community Engagement and Cultural Preservation:** Projects should foster community involvement and respect cultural and historical assets, complying with relevant cultural heritage legislation.
- **Sustainability and Environmental Preservation:**
- **Eco-friendly Practices:** Adhere to principles of sustainable development, ensuring minimal environmental impact and promoting ecological balance.
- **Risk Management:** Identify and mitigate environmental risks, incorporating sustainable design principles in project execution.

Monitoring and Reporting:

Ongoing monitoring and compliance reporting with respective councils and state government bodies to ensure adherence to all legislative and regulatory requirements throughout the project lifecycle.

In summary, a comprehensive approach to managing legislative, regulatory issues, and approvals for the Real Country project requires meticulous planning, thorough understanding of the legal framework, and a continuation of the proactive engagement with all stakeholders, including local communities, councils, and state authorities which has been evident to date.

4.5. PROPOSED MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

4.5.1. RISK MANAGEMENT

The Real Country Tourism Experience project, encompassing Coonamble, Gilgandra, and Warrumbungle Shire Councils, requires an intricate and comprehensive risk management approach. This integrated plan combines the overarching strategic risk management activities outlined initially with the detailed operational measures provided by one of the council members.

Overarching Strategic Risk Management

Effective risk management is integral to the success of the Real Country Project, encompassing a wide range of initiatives focused on tourism development, environmental sustainability, and community engagement. The table below outlines the overarching strategic risk management strategies employed to identify, assess, and mitigate potential challenges across the project's various facets. From stakeholder engagement to environmental impact assessments and operational risk management, these strategies are

designed to ensure the project's resilience and alignment with best practices, safeguarding its long-term objectives and overall success.

Table 4.5.1 Strategic Risk Management

Area of Focus	Key Actions and Strategies
In-depth Stakeholder Engagement	Engaging local communities, businesses, environmental groups, and indigenous representatives throughout the project lifecycle.
	Addressing concerns and expectations to minimise resistance and enhance community buy-in.
Scheduled Project Reviews and Adjustments	Regular monitoring of progress, budgets, and timelines to identify and address risks early.
	Adjusting strategies and plans in response to identified risks or environmental changes.
Expert Consultations and Specialist Advisories	Collaborating with experts in tourism, environmental sustainability, cultural heritage, and infrastructure design.
	Ensuring that all projects align with best practices and minimise specific risks in these areas.
Environmental and Cultural Impact Assessments	Performing comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) to understand and mitigate ecological risks.
	Conducting Cultural Heritage Surveys to respect and preserve the area's historical and cultural significance.
Infrastructure Resilience and Adaptability	Designing infrastructure to be durable and adaptable to environmental changes and future needs.
	Reducing long-term maintenance risks and ensuring sustainability.
Operational Risk Management Measures (GSC Approach)	Risk Register and Continuous Update: Maintaining a dynamic risk register, regularly updated with new assessments and controls. Ensuring all identified risks from the project are cataloged and managed systematically.
	Comprehensive Risk Assessment Using HAZPAK Matrix: Utilising the HAZPAK Risk Rating Matrix to categorise potential hazards and safety controls. Regularly reviewing and updating the Risk Assessment to reflect current data and environmental changes.
	Stage-specific Risk Assessments: Conducting separate risk assessments for each major stage of the project, ensuring detailed focus. Integrating these assessments into an overarching risk management plan.
	Implementation of Daily Control Measures: Enforcing daily control measures including Risk Assessment forms and Pre-start checks for plant operations. Adhering to safety processes like 'Dial before you Dig' and managing overhead powerlines.
	Addressing a Wide Range of Risks: Mitigation controls for diverse risks including contractor management, public access and safety, emergency response, plant and equipment safety, hazardous chemicals, noise, and excavation works. Ensuring all staff and contractors follow these protocols strictly.

Integration and Coordination:

Integrating these strategic and operational measures creates a robust framework for risk management in the Real Country Tourism Experience project. This comprehensive approach ensures that risks are not only identified and monitored at a macro level but are also managed meticulously at the operational level. The collaboration between strategic planning and day-to-day operational management enhances the project's resilience, facilitating successful implementation and long-term sustainability. This dual-level approach aligns closely with the project's objectives of enhancing local tourism, preserving cultural heritage, and

fostering sustainable economic development, thereby ensuring the holistic success of the Real Country Tourism Experience.

Asset Management and Operational Responsibility

Each Council involved in the Real Country project has developed a comprehensive Asset Management Strategy. This strategy serves as the cornerstone for decisions impacting different asset classes under their jurisdiction.

Key elements of these strategies include:

1. **Framework for Asset Decisions:** Providing guidelines for managing diverse assets related to tourism, cultural heritage, or environmental conservation.
2. **Alignment with Long-Term Planning:** Each Council's Asset Management Plan aligns with their respective Long-Term Financial Plan, ensuring a holistic approach to asset management and strategic planning.
3. **Responsibility and Oversight:** The Strategies clearly delineate roles and responsibilities within each Council for managing these assets, including dedicated personnel or departments.
4. **Specific Plans for Each Asset Class:** Tailored Asset Management Plans for each asset category, encompassing operational, maintenance, and renewal strategies.
5. **Public Accessibility and Engagement:** Ensuring assets remain beneficial and accessible to both locals and tourists, aligning with the overarching goals of the Real Country project.

Reference to Councils' Long-Term Financial Plans

For transparency and public engagement, each Council has provided detailed information about their Asset Management Strategy and Long-Term Financial Plan on their official websites:

- **Coonamble Shire Council:** The Long-Term Financial Plan can be accessed [here](#).
- **Gilgandra Shire Council:** The Long-Term Financial Plan is available [here](#).
- **Warrumbungle Shire Council:** The Long-Term Financial Plan can be found [here](#).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the responsibility for the maintenance, operation, and ownership of the new assets proposed under the Real Country project rests with the respective Shire Councils – Coonamble, Gilgandra, and Warrumbungle. Through their Asset Management Strategies, aligned with their Long-Term Financial Plans, these Councils are committed to effectively managing these assets in a sustainable manner that maximises their benefit to the community and visitors.

5. APPENDIX

The following Appendix Document accompany the preparation of this Business Case

- Appendix A - Travel to Outback NSW Regional Tourism
- Appendix B - Cost Plan (November 2023)
- Appendix C - Tourism Impact Report (November 2023)
- Appendix D - NPV and BCR Worksheet (November 2023)
- Appendix E - 10 year cashflow (November 2023)

The following Attachments accompany the preparation of this Business Case

- Attachment A - Real Country Issues Paper (June 2023)
- Attachment B - Real Country Review of NSW Strategic Documents (June 2023)
- Attachment C - Real Country Destination Strategic Plan (November 2023)
- Attachment D - Real Country Engagement Reports (November 2023)