



Destination Management Plan

2015-18

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Executive Summary

ABOUT GLOUCESTER

Gloucester is a scenic self-drive destination located just an hour off the Pacific Coast touring route in the mid north coast hinterland. Gloucester's biggest tourism drawcard is the World Heritage listed Barrington Tops wilderness, which draws visitors to the area for nature-based experiences for wellbeing and adventures. Gloucester's location is also often described as being in the Northern Hunter and so also benefits from the consumer perceptions of the Hunter regarding short breaks.

Situated at the centre of the second-oldest official Tourist Drive in the state, Gloucester makes the most of the through-traffic heading to and from regional NSW and the Queensland border. It's an easy drive from key markets of Newcastle, Central Coast and Sydney, making it popular for short breaks, daytrippers and school holidays. The scenic roads radiating from Gloucester are also regarded as amongst the best motorbike touring roads in the state and so each weekend gleaming motoring machines grace Gloucester's main street next to busy cafes.

Gloucester is blessed with a stunning location at the foot of the remarkable Bucketts Mountains and the main street retains a 'small country town' appeal, with boutique-style shopping experiences, quality eating options and no traffic lights. Locals and daytrippers enjoy impressive sporting facilities located in a large and beautiful riverside park, and for overnight visitors there are plenty of quality accommodation options for every budget.

OUR VISITOR ECONOMY

Most recent data available from Tourism Research Australia (published on the Destination NSW website) shows the Gloucester LGA benefits from **\$51 million annually** from 180,000 visitors.

Domestic overnight visitors provide \$43million from 96,000 visitors across 262,000 visitor nights. Of the 6,000 accommodation beds available each night, over 80% are for camping and caravanning. The top activities also tend to be outdoors focused: Visiting national parks 21% (= double the NSW state average of 9%); Bushwalks/rainforest walks 31% (= 3 times the NSW state average of 10%); and general sightseeing 28% (higher than NSW state average of 25%). So the issue facing Gloucester Tourism for visitor spending is the skew to **low cost nature-based holidays** in the region. This provides challenges as well as opportunities.

Gloucester has broad appeal to travelling families as well as child-free travelling couples and groups. Luxury or deluxe experiences are limited. Visitor demographics point to the following target markets that make up 63% of visitors to the Hunter Region, therefore these segments should be targeted to achieve the NSW Government's plan to double Overnight Visitor expenditure by 2020.

- Compatriots (mostly family groups)
- Peer group travellers (seeking a fun experience with friends)
- Wanderers & True Travellers (taking time to explore and discover)

For the first time, the statistics for Daytrip visitors and International visitors have been published by Destination NSW. As predicted in the previous Destination Management Plan, daytrippers are a significant contributor to the Gloucester economy, providing \$8million from 82,000 visitors. Together

with the \$1million from International visitors, this makes the total Visitor Economy for Gloucester to be \$51million annually.

OUR VISION

That the Gloucester region maximises the benefits of sustainable tourism growth, whilst retaining its distinct rural character and appeal. It does this through harnessing the strength of the Visitor Economy to sustainably grow all small business in Gloucester.

OUR DIRECTION

The Gloucester Shire Council Community Strategic Plan 2012-2022 identifies tourism as a key component in Direction 3: Creating a strong economy. The key outcome stated is an improved quality and number of tourism facilities, products and operators. This Destination Management Plan works in conjunction with the Community Strategic Plan, with the overall aim of Gloucester Tourism being:

To drive greater numbers of the targeted market segments to visit Gloucester and to encourage longer stays and higher spend with greater dispersal.

OUR NEEDS

1. Our **short term objectives** focus on a continuing the improvements to our communication and product development tasks: refreshing and updating collateral; encourage more social media conversations; developing a program of special events (sporting, cultural, food and unique fun events); leverage marketing activities of key partners such as the Legendary Pacific Coast; develop an experiential trails strategy; identifying and assisting with improvements to product offerings; strengthening the industry voice to champion Gloucester's visitor economy; and evolving the Visitor Information Centre.

To achieve these objectives, Gloucester Tourism needs to engage a copywriter to compile and develop the experiential trails; and work closely with industry groups such as Tourism Advancing Gloucester and the Chamber of Commerce.

2. Our **medium term objectives**: targeting special interest markets; developing regional partnerships and building professionalism within the local industry.

To achieve these objectives, Gloucester Tourism needs to allocate sufficient resources for discussions with stakeholders on developing industry skills, growing partnerships and ensuring tourism infrastructure is adequate for the future.

3. Our **long term objectives** focus on increasing the depth and diversity of experiences in Gloucester and ensuring the visitor economy is self-sustaining.

To achieve these objectives, Gloucester Tourism needs to assist operators with the continued development of product offerings and ensure the sustainable marketing of unique consumer experiences; and work with Gloucester Shire Council towards additional grants funding where appropriate.

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1. Destination Analysis

1.1. Key Destination Footprint

The destination footprint for the Gloucester region has its boundaries where travellers notice a change from coastal hinterland or rugged mountains to pretty rural scenery. It's "where the beauty starts" and already has a long established name: the Vale of Gloucester.

This region has been listed by the National Trust since 1975 as a declared 'significant heritage landscape' stretching from Booral in the south to Barrington in the north. The listing title has also been amended to *The Stroud Gloucester Valley, incorporating the Vale of Gloucester*.

In the south and east, the **Key Destination Footprint** extends beyond Gloucester's LGA boundary to include historic Stroud and Booral (60km south of Gloucester), Krumbach (40km east of Gloucester), and the escarpment at Barrington Tops in the west.

- Key destinations/villages within LGA: Gloucester township, Barrington, Copeland, Barrington Tops, Gloucester Tops, Carson's Lookout, Mountain Maid Gold Mine, Rocky Crossing.
- Key destinations/villages outside LGA: Stroud, Moonan Flat, Devil Ark (Tomalla), Krumbach.

The Gloucester region has four road approaches: Southern and eastern via the Bucketts Way (Tourist Drive 2), northern via Thunderbolts Way (Gloucester to Goondiwindi) and western via the Scone - Barrington Tops Forest Road.



1.2 Key Stakeholders

Organisation	Key Contact	Contribution to Plan
Gloucester Visitor Information Centre	Wendy Hughes	Attended DMP review workshop 1/12/15
Gloucester Farmers Market	Angela Hutchins	Attended DMP review workshop 1/12/15
Tourism Advancing Gloucester (TAG)	Thomas Davey	Attended DMP review workshop 1/12/15
TAG / A Room with a View B&B	Sue DeSilva	Attended DMP review workshop 1/12/15
TAG / Barrington River Hideaway	Sue Hedditch	Attended DMP review workshop 1/12/15
TAG / Barrington Outdoor Adventures	Naomi Kilby	Attended DMP review workshop 1/12/15
TAG/ Accommodation Mgt Services	Trudy Schultz	Attended DMP review workshop 1/12/15
TAG / Gloucester On Avon B&B	Lorraine Elliot	Attended DMP review workshop 1/12/15
TAG / Hillview Herb Farm	Karen O'Brien	Attended DMP review workshop 1/12/15
Chamber of Commerce	various	Attended previous stakeholder meetings
Councillors / Council staff	various	Some attended previous meetings
NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service	Anthony Signor	Attended previous stakeholder meetings
Gloucester tourism non-members	various	Some attended previous meetings
Local businesses	various	Some attended previous meetings
Devil Ark	various	
Forests NSW	various	
Department Roads and Maritime	various	

1.3 Key Data and Documents

Organisation	Strategies/Plans/Research
Gloucester Shire Council	Local Environment Plan (LEP) 2010; State of the Environment Report 2012; Development Strategy 2014-2017; Section 94 Development Contributions Plan 2015; Community Strategic Plan 2014-2024;
Gloucester Shire Council / Barrington Tops Tourism	Gloucester Destination Management Plan 2013-14
NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service	Plan of Management for Barrington Tops National Park 2010; NSW Taskforce on Tourism and National Parks (Final Report Nov 2008)
Regional Development Australia – Hunter	Hunter Regional Action Plan 2012 – 2022
NSW Government	Hunter Regional Action Plan NSW 2021
Tourism Research Australia	Travel Area Profile for Gloucester Local Government Area to Sep14
Destination NSW/Inside Story	Brand Health Tracking Update September Quarter 2012
Destination NSW/ Tourism Research Australia	Gloucester Local Government Area Tourist Accommodation Profile
Destination NSW/Data Insights	Consumer Perceptions of the Hunter 2003
State Tourism Data Warehouse	Operators Lists
Local community groups	Customer satisfaction surveys from Shakespeare Festival, Gloucester Triathlon and other local events

1.3.1 Perceived Road Blocks

1. Insufficient investment in new 4-star accommodation options and new attractions;
2. Restrictive zonings that prevent tourism product development;
3. Disbelief by some members in the Gloucester business community about the published independent statistics for the value of the Visitor Economy to Gloucester LGA, and their accompanying belief that tourism is therefore over-funded by Council;
4. Inadequate wayfinding signage for tourism operators and the difficulty in getting council approval for even the simplest of wayfinding signs;
5. Impact of mining and coal seam gas projects:
 - Existing coal mines operating in the valley have potential to dislocate the Gloucester brand and its values (noise, water, dust, health and visual impacts);
 - New coal mines being proposed have even greater potential impact, being open cut pits within 850m of residential areas and within areas currently zoned for Environmental and Scenic Protection. Community anger about this proposal is widespread and Gloucester Shire Council is also opposing this development¹.
 - AGL's controversially approved coal seam gas project will bring 110 coal seam gas wells to the Gloucester valley in Stage One alone, with up to 300 gas wells for the whole project. Community anxiety about these gas wells is high and the project has the same potential as for coal mines to dislocate the Gloucester brand and its values (air, water, health and visual impacts); There is a litany of problems recorded against the pilot gas well project
 - The cumulative impact of all three extractive operations listed above is unknown, adding to further community anxiety about "a perfect storm of the destructive industries."
 - The community division and mental health issues created by the extractive industries, particularly AGL's coal seam gas project, is sadly evident and widespread. If AGL follow the lead of fellow gas explorer Metgasco and withdraw from the region, the divisions will take some time to heal.

1.4 Forced merger with Dungog

On the 18 December 2015 the NSW Government announced forced council amalgamations to cut the number of councils from 152 to 112. In Sydney, 43 councils will be reduced to 25, while 109 regional councils will become 87². The 22 lost regional councils include Gloucester who will be forced to merge with Dungog. It is still too early to report on the impact of the proposed merger but the tourism working group that met on 1 Dec 2015 to review the Gloucester Destination Management Plan listed the following areas that require assessment:

1. How do multi-location visitor information centres work in a large merged council? (The example given was the Great Lakes Council but this question is now relevant to a new Dungog-Gloucester council)
2. What are the synergies available?

¹ Gloucester Shire Council's website states: Council has resolved unanimously to oppose the GRL coal mining application:

- Proposed site is substantially within an area zoned for Environmental and Scenic Protection
- Proposed site is within 850 metres of residential housing in the Forbesdale Estate
- Proposed site adds to the cumulative impact of (all) mining activity surrounding Gloucester

² <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-12-18/sydney-councils-to-be-forced-to-merge-by-nsw-government/7039326>

3. What evidence shows the respective council's support for tourism?
4. Is there an active tourism operators group within each LGA that works with council?
5. What is the state of the respective websites and social media platforms of the tourism departments of the two councils?
6. What branding benefits are available? (Particularly from a potential new name of "Barrington Tops Council")

1.5 Key Assets

What	Description	Consumer Appeal?
1. Barrington Tops and surrounding national parks, forests, reserves and conservation areas; the Bucketts Mountains	World Heritage listed wilderness area, part of 'Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area'; Copeland Tops SCA; Mountain Maid; scenic mountains overlooking the Gloucester township.	The major attraction to the Gloucester region; a world-recognised destination for domestic plus international visitors; ideal for low cost nature-based tourism and 21 st century experiential travel; scenic beauty so close to the township.
2. Tourist Drive #2 (Bucketts Way) plus Thunderbolt's Way	Scenic loop off the Pacific Highway; plus scenic route from Newcastle to the Queensland border.	Additional scenic rural experience for road users of The Legendary Pacific Coast route; plus alternate scenic route to New England and Queensland. Scenic vistas at every turn making a beautiful entrance to the Gloucester region.
3. Camping, caravanning and RV destinations	Camp Cobark, Poley's Place, The Steps, Gloucester Holiday Park, campsites at Bretti, Woko and 10 camping areas within Barrington Tops and Gloucester Tops.	Low cost nature-based holidays
4. Outdoor adventure activities	Bushwalking, horse riding, kayaking, canoeing, mountain biking, abseiling, orienteering, fishing, gold mine heritage tours.	Guided and unguided outdoor adventures on the rivers or mountains
5. Impressive sporting facilities	Gloucester District Park including the Recreation Centre, Olympic Pool & Hydrotherapy Complex, Gymnasium, Tennis Club, Croquet Club, Bowling Club	Sporting activities for all tastes and skills: hockey, rugby union and touch football, cricket, athletics, netball, tennis, croquet, basketball, badminton, volleyball, gym, squash and bowls.

6. Café culture and boutique-style shopping on a relaxed main street	Award-winning Roadies Café, Perenti Café, The Fox Den Café and other businesses	Gourmet food, great coffee and country town ambience for visitor shopping.
7. Farm stays and farm tours	Trudgalong Farm Tours, Ashmar Farm Stays, Hillview Herb Farm, Essentially Barrington and others	Quintessential rural farm experiences with real farmers and food growers.
8. Gloucester Farmers Market	Monthly markets dedicated to locally grown fresh produce	Local meat, fruit, vegetables, eggs, honey, cheeses, breads, olive oils, wines, live poultry, plants, crafts, preserves etc.,
9. Gloucester Gallery	An active cultural scene for all the creative arts	A year full of events, festivals exhibitions, shows and performances.
10. Wildlife	Existing recognition of being platypus country; plus the Gloucester region has every iconic Australian animal living in their natural habitats; easy access to Devil Ark.	Koala, platypus, kangaroo, wallaby, echidna, perenti, wombat and birds of all kinds. Tasmanian Devils at Devil Ark is a unique experience on the mainland.

1.5.1 Market Positioning

- Gloucester is mostly a scenic self-drive destination (95% arrive by car), just one hour off the Legendary Pacific Coast touring route.
- It is approximately 2.5 hours from Sydney and just over 60 minutes from Newcastle, Port Stephens & Great Lakes.
- Quality options for every budget however a limited amount of high-end accommodation and almost no backpacker accommodation.
- Camping and caravanning are popular choices and there are plenty of free/good value outdoor activities to enjoy, especially for families, making Gloucester a popular low cost nature-based destination.
- Quality café/restaurant choices but no cuisine-specific choices (except traditional Australian Chinese in the RSL & Bowling Club).
- Continually boasts high TripAdvisor ratings for accommodation, attractions and restaurants/cafes.
- Barrington Tops is known world-wide for its World Heritage listing since 1985; it's the highest sub-alpine area outside of the Australian Alps and regularly gets a dusting of winter snow;
- Barrington River is the most reliable river in NSW for white water kayaking due to its source in the high- altitude sphagnum swamps of Barrington Tops; and it's one of only two rivers north of Sydney suitable for white water rafting in high water.

Competitors:

- Dungog is our neighbouring LGA which is both our ally and friendly competitor (for southern access to Barrington Tops) however Gloucester is closer to the Tops and has more assets and attractions. (See separate section above regarding forced merger with Dungog Shire Council announced by the NSW Government on 18 December 2015.)
- Blue Mountains: Offers a similar 'mountain adventure' feel but is closer to Sydney, has better transport options and more high end products.

Unique selling proposition:

Gloucester is the closest town to World Heritage listed Barrington Tops, which is an unbeatable position.

Tourism tag line:

The long-established tagline for the region is: *Gloucester - Basecamp for Barrington Tops.*

- The tagline is perfect for 21st century tourism - it conjures images of clean green adventure, discovery of places and self-discovery too;
- It offers the promise of experiences not offered elsewhere and so fits perfectly with the focus on experiential tourism promoted by Destination NSW and Tourism Australia;
- Its sentiment is supported by the presence in Gloucester of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Area Office, which is a key stakeholder in the region's visitor economy.

Brand Values for Gloucester:

(Compiled by members of Tourism Advancing Gloucester in 2011, amended in August 2015)

1. A remarkable setting at the foot of the Buccan Buccans (the Bucketts Mountains)
2. Easily accessed by road and by rail, in a location handy to major centres
3. Thriving rural heritage with a strong sense of community
4. A comprehensive range of shopping options on a relaxed main street
5. Cafes, wineries, pubs and clubs for all tastes and all seasons
6. Extensive accommodation choices for any budget
7. Impressive sporting facilities for all skills and abilities
8. World heritage nature nearby for adventure and wellbeing
9. Pristine rivers for swimming, paddling and platypus habitat
10. Beautiful and productive farmlands providing food for the state
11. Scenic drives that will change your outlook and maybe your life
12. An emerald-green network of national parks, forests and conservation areas
13. A year-long agenda of unique and entertaining events
14. A farmers market that inspires other markets
15. A wonderful place to live, work and play.

Key imagery and videography:

The previous photography library was very limited and somewhat dated but new additions have been made in 2014 and 2015. The photography competition 'Greetings From Glorious Gloucester' conducted February-July 2015 by the Visitor Information Centre provided over 140 new photographs to utilise in our destination marketing. It is recommended to run that same competition every 2 years to get regular access to fresh new photographs of the Gloucester region that are royalty-free.

A new video was also completed late 2015 and will be cut into a various versions (four minute, one minute and 30 second versions). The longer version will play on a loop on the new television in the window of the Visitor Information Centre while the shorter versions are for advertising on TV and online. It is recommended that additional footage be acquired each year to add to the library of video material, focusing on specific activities that show the depth of experiences available in Gloucester.

From February 2016 there are new minimum size requirements for all photos on the Destination NSW website at www.visitnsw.com.au (high quality landscape-format only, minimum of 2048 pixels wide x 1536 pixels high). All operators have been requested to take new photos at the minimum size over the peak summer period 2015-16. Staff at the Visitor Information Centre will upload the new sized photos for those listings that are managed by the Centre while self-managed listings will be updated by the relevant operator.

1.6 Key Source Markets and Consumer Segments

Source Market	Consumer Segment	Reason for Visit?
Sydney, regional NSW	Compatriots	Families and groups for scenic driving routes, camping, outdoor activities
NSW, QLD, VIC	True Travellers / Grey Nomads / Wanderers	Scenic driving routes, camping, outdoor activities
Sydney, regional NSW	Peer Group Travellers	Scenic driving routes, camping
Europe, North America	Free Independent Travellers	National Parks, scenic driving routes, outdoor activities
Sydney, regional NSW	Motorbike riders	Groups of motorbike enthusiasts for scenic driving routes
Hunter, Central Coast, Sydney	School Groups	National Parks, outdoor education activities
Newcastle, Mid north coast	Daytrippers	Seasonal sporting and cultural events, Gloucester Farmers Market, main street shopping

1.6.1 Visitors

Source markets:

- **Domestic overnight** visitors: Sydney 34%, Regional NSW 57%, Interstate 9%;
- **Domestic daytrip** visitors: for statistical purposes these are people who travel a round trip distance of at least 50km, on a trip of a least 4 hours and do not stay overnight, hence all Daytrippers are intrastate.
- **International** visitors: not available.

(Source: Destination NSW: Travel to Gloucester Local Government Area, 4 year average annual to Sep 2014)

Travel party:	Gloucester LGA	NSW average
Travelling with children	31%	27%
Travelling as a couple	28%	26%
Wanderers without children	24%	15%
Travelling alone	n/a	26%
Business associates	n/a	4%

(Source: Destination NSW: Travel to Gloucester Local Government Area, 4 year average annual to Sep 2014)

Purpose of visit for Domestic Overnight Travel:

Purpose of visit (based on visitor numbers):	Gloucester LGA	NSW state average
Holiday	64%	42%
Visiting friends or relatives	28%	37%
Business	n/a	17%
Other	n/a	6%

(Source: Destination NSW: Travel to Gloucester Local Government Area, 4 year average annual to Sep 2014)

Top 5 activities for Domestic Overnight Travel:

Gloucester has a reputation for being the closest town to Barrington Tops when accessed by the major population centres of Sydney, Newcastle and other north coast regional cities. Top activities reflect this attachment to nature-based experiences: more than double the state average for visiting parks and three times the state average for bushwalks and rainforest walks.

	Gloucester LGA	NSW state average
Visit national or state parks	21%	9%
Bushwalks & rainforest walks	31%	10%
General sightseeing	28%	25%
Visit friends & relatives	31%	49%
Eating out	40%	58%

(Source: Destination NSW: Travel to Gloucester Local Government Area, 4 year average annual to Sep 2014)

Spend:

Neighbouring Dungog has a similar rural tourism profile to Gloucester and offers an alternative entry point to Barrington Tops National Park via its southern boundary. Dungog's festivals draw large numbers of Daytrippers and their visitation numbers reflect this.

Travel statistics:	Gloucester LGA	Dungog LGA
Domestic Overnight spend	\$43m. / \$445 per visitor	\$32m. / \$450 per visitor
Domestic Daytrip spend	\$8m. / \$100 per visitor	\$13m. / \$100 per visitor
International Overnight spend	<\$1m.	\$ 1m. / \$1,144 per visitor
(Sources: Destination NSW: Travel to Gloucester Local Government Area, and Travel to Dungog Local Government Area, 4 year average annual to Sep 2014)		

Feedback:

Customer feedback is obtained by individual operators and providers. Some event feedback is also obtained by groups such as Shakespeare in Gloucester Festival and Mountain Man Tri-Challenge. There is an information gap in the extent and completeness of customer feedback about their experience in Gloucester about the products, services and attractions.

Transport:

Gloucester is largely a self-drive destination (95% arrive by private vehicle). It is well located for visitors travelling by road Sydney to Brisbane: Tourist Drive 2 (The Bucketts Way) brings visitors off the Pacific Highway for a scenic loop back onto the highway at Taree; Thunderbolts Way offers a scenic alternate route to the Queensland border via the New England region; Scone Road brings visitors across Barrington Tops on mostly unsealed road from the Upper Hunter region. Rail travellers are also well serviced as Gloucester is also on the main northern railway line, just 6 stops from Sydney.

1.6.2 Demand

The statistics for Gloucester LGA are incorporated into the regional summary for the Hunter and Gloucester's share of domestic overnight visitors is just 3.3%.

	Gloucester LGA	The Hunter Region
Domestic Overnight Travel	96,000 visitors 262,000 nights 2.7 nights avg stay \$43m. spend \$445 per visitor \$164 per night	2.9m visitors 8.1m. nights \$1.3b. spend \$164 per night
Domestic Daytrip Travel	82,000 visitors \$8m. spend \$100 per visitor	5.7m visitors \$665m. spend \$117 per visitor
International Overnight Travel	1,000 visitors 5.5 nights avg stay <\$1m. spend \$364 per visitor \$67 per night	141,600 visitors \$164m. spend \$67 per night
(Sources: Destination NSW: Travel to Gloucester Local Government Area 4 year average annual to Sep 2014; Travel to The Hunter year ended Sep 2014)		

Accommodation demand:

Gloucester is skewed to low cost accommodation options at caravan parks and campgrounds scattered throughout the region. 96,000 visitors per year equates to 263 visitors per day whilst 262,000 visitor nights equates to just 13% occupancy rate (based on the total beds available as below). So there is plenty of capacity for increasing visitation, especially if the camping segment is targeted.

Type (source: Gloucester Visitor Information Centre at Dec 2015)	Total Beds	Beds within town confines
Self-contained / self-catering	532	143
Bed & Breakfast	61	21
Motel	235	235
Resort / retreat	261	0
Lodge	63	0
Caravan /camping	4821	2000
Total beds	5,973	2,399

Daytrip visitor demand:

Due to Gloucester's location on the boundary of the Mid North Coast region and the Hunter region, it is useful to look at the statistics of neighbouring LGAs for a comparison of Daytripper patterns:

(Sources: Destination NSW: Travel to Local Government Area, 4 year average annual to Sep 2011 for Gloucester, Dungog, Greater Taree & Great Lakes.)

Gloucester	Dungog	Greater Taree	Great Lakes
\$8m. spend	\$13m. spend	\$42m. spend	\$44m. spend
82,000 visitors	134,000 visitors	380,000 visitors	401,000 visitors
\$100 per visitor	\$100 per visitor	\$109 per visitor	\$109 per visitor

1.6.3 Growth Potential – Suggestions from Stakeholders

The future population growth of the Gloucester region is expected to be slow, so the potential to retain its appealing rural nature is high (subject to several mining issues and coal seam gas issues that are unresolved at time of compiling this Plan).

Gloucester Shire Council is actively looking to enhance and protect the CBD with a draft plan (Gloucester Town Centre Study, June 2012) that identifies significant urban design principles suitable for the existing country town appeal. Other suggestions for growing the visitor economy include:

1. Improve river access for recreational river users (paddlers, fishers, swimmers) by provision of additional safe entry/ exit points;
2. Attract more of the camping market with upmarket camping/glamping opportunities;
3. Attract more of the events market (eg. for small conferences, meetings, teambuilding, weddings);
4. Ensure council zonings are appropriate for tourism operators and that recent rezonings are not restricting tourism product development, especially for new opportunities for accommodation, small events, weddings plus food & beverage outlets;

5. Attract new accommodation options with secure parking, especially 4-star motels with facilities suitable for events;
6. Attract businesses that cater for events market (venue hire, equipment hire, caterers);
7. Attract businesses that are prepared to open Saturday afternoons, Sundays and public holidays;
8. Develop an annual major food event to showcase local growers and their produce (eg. long table dinner down the main street, with paper lantern competition);
9. Attract more sporting events to make use of the impressive sporting facilities at Gloucester District Park (suggested partnership with Hunter Academy of Sport);
10. Strengthen existing cultural and community events (eg. Craven Creek Concerts, Bush Poetry at the Saleyards, Opera in the Church, Music in the Vines etc.,) and identify collaborative opportunities for new unique events;
11. Develop a combined food and wine trail experience and promote local food growers and wineries accordingly;
12. Develop stargazing experiences that necessitate overnight stays;
13. Develop opportunities to promote our indigenous heritage;
14. Investigate opportunities for a regional adventure event in partnership with Dungog, Port Stephens and Great Lakes (eg. cycling, paddling and running challenges)
15. Investigate opportunities to rebuilding visitation by coach tour operators for overnight stays (eg. Expanding Horizons) with new product development suitable for coach groups especially food & beverage opportunities;
16. Target the international market (especially English-speaking countries) for coach tours and FIT travellers;
17. Obtain grant funding for the adaptive reuse of the old dairy factory for a community centre, boutique food processing, railway carriage exhibits;
18. Strengthen use of existing Tourist Drive marketing (Bucketts Way Drive #2 & Thunderbolts Way);
19. Improvements to Thunderbolt's Way including interpretive/local history signposting;
20. Develop indoor adventure centre for all-weather adventure activities;
21. Develop the existing motorbike market and attract suitable events
22. Develop Village Link cycling routes around the town and to Barrington village;
23. Encourage more business suitable for country town appeal (antiques, craft shops, boutique brewery, boutique cheese factory etc.,)
24. Evolve the Visitor Information Centre to offer 21st century services (touring apps for smart phones)
25. Develop more mountain biking trails in state forests as existing trails are very limited;
26. Establish more parking and facilities for motorhomes and caravans near the CBD;
27. Improve the facilities at the council-owned holiday park located within the town;
28. Establish a food cluster of growers (eg. organic garlic) and develop suitable niche events throughout the year (eg. garlic symposium, garlic dinners, harvest festivals, value-added processing).
29. Establish a nature reserve and lookout for the Bucketts Mountains (currently all land is privately-held) with all-weather access.

1.7 Key Infrastructure

Product/Service	Description	Why is it key?
Visitor Information Centre	Shop front location next to Gloucester Library, just off the main street. Each year it services 25,000 enquiries by phone, email and walk-up.	A community asset that services the local community needs plus provides relevant information to visitors. Essential for Duty of Care for road/bridge/river/weather conditions for safety of visitors and locals. Needs to evolve to remain relevant.
Railway Station	NSWTrains rail service 3 times daily Sydney to Brisbane, northbound and southbound; supplemented by NSWTrains bus service.	Main northern line from Sydney to Brisbane;
Key Roads	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Official Tourist Drive #2 (The Bucketts Way from Twelve Mile Creek to Taree); 2. Thunderbolts Way from Gloucester to Goondiwindi); 3. Scone Road (Barrington to Scone) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Bucketts Way is the scenic loop off the Pacific Highway and provides 2 of the 3 access points to Gloucester); 2. Thunderbolts Way is the 3rd access point to Gloucester and provides a scenic inland route to Walcha, New England & Queensland border; 3. Scone Road provides access to the northern section of Barrington Tops National Park from the Upper Hunter.
Sporting facilities and infrastructure	Excellent sporting facilities covering a full range of sports in one location within Gloucester District Park.	Could possibly provide suitable venue for a sporting academy type situation.
Area Office for NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service	Full service office with shopfront on Gloucester's main street	Essential support for visitors to Barrington Tops; gives credibility to our claim to be basecamp for Barrington Tops.
Newcastle Airport	Provides over 170 domestic flights per week.	1.2m pax movements per year into Newcastle. Soon to become an international gateway.

Transport issues affecting visitation

- Access from railway line: Gloucester station is located on the eastern outskirts of the town and the platform is located on the eastern side of the railway line (the 'wrong' side for direct pedestrian access to the town). There is no pedestrian overhead walkway or subway. The main street is a 1km walk up and over the hill to the CBD. Currently there is no bus shuttle and the taxi service has been discontinued (again).

- The disused siding at the old dairy factory (500m south) has been suggested as an alternate location for the railway station, which would resolve direct pedestrian access. This would make the redevelopment of the dairy factory more appealing too.
- Gloucester is not categorised as a Cityrail station, unlike the next rail stop down the line at Dungog. This makes train travel from Broadmeadow expensive (especially for pensioners who are regular rail users). If Gloucester was reclassified as a Cityrail access station, it would provide greater opportunities for pensioner travel using their CPE (\$2.50).
- Distances and road surface conditions are a potential barrier for accessing Barrington Tops, especially for hire vehicles which specifically exclude insurance cover for vehicles taken onto non-sealed roads.

1.8 Key Communication Channels

Channel type	Coverage of Assets <i>(est % of destination assets showcased through this channel)</i>	Medium Profile <i>(level of engagement)</i>	Advantages	Disadvantages
Television	5%	High	Audience reach	Expensive
Barrington Towns magazine	25%	Low	Coverage of attractions & operators; regional distribution	Tends to be a publication used after arrival.
Cartoscope touring maps	Up to 10 members /10% of membership	Medium	Cost effectiveness	Limited number of available spots
visitGloucester website	99%	Medium	24 hour publishing; world-wide audience reach; coverage of attractions & operators	Constant refreshing required for SEO
eNewsletters	50%	Medium	Frequency, relevance, cost-effectiveness	Reader boredom unless kept fresh
Social media	25%	High	Inexpensive	Slow organic process
Outdoor	Not used	Medium	Placement on touring routes	Expensive
Wholesaler	Not used	Medium	Audience reach;	Requires 25% commission
Trade Shows (Camping, Caravanning)	25%	Medium	Can reach specific demographic	Time-consuming; difficult to get operator assistance
The Legendary Pacific Coast	10% (only 2 operators featured in 2014-15 edition)	Medium	Audience reach, inexpensive co-op membership, cost-effectiveness	
Various external websites	Mostly for national parks only	Medium	Reach niche markets	Low exposure for Barrington Tops on visitNSW website

2. Destination Direction

2.1 Focus

Barrington Tops draws visitors to the region and Gloucester increases their stay by fully servicing their needs. The primary focus is the domestic overnight leisure market, with secondary markets being daytrippers, intrastate and interstate traffic, and small groups (events, schools, corporates).

2.2 Vision

The Gloucester region maximises the benefits of sustainable tourism growth, whilst retaining its distinct rural character and appeal.

2.3 Mission

Harnessing the strength of the visitor economy to sustainably grow all small business in Gloucester.

2.4 Goal and Objectives

The Gloucester Shire Council Community Strategic Plan 2014-2024 identifies tourism as a key component of its **Direction 3: Creating a strong economy**:

- Specific Objective (# 7): Gloucester seen as an attractive tourism destination

Additional goals and objectives identified by the industry include:

Goals – Short term	Objectives
Consumer presentation of the Gloucester brand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achieved: Launched new logo and branding; updated editorial; updated images and video footage; commenced revising brochures.• Current objectives: Revise and amend brochures produced in-house with new content and branding; assess printing costs for professional-looking versions.
Website review and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achieved: Launched three new websites: visitGloucester.com.au, GloucesterFarmersMarket.com.au and visitBarringtonTops.com.au• Current objectives: Maintain freshness by changing images regularly, posting weekly news items and identifying technical enhancements.
Strengthen social media presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achieved: Deleted separate Facebook page for the visitor information centre and launched a new Events Gloucester Facebook page; improved consumer engagement with Facebook pages for visit Barrington Tops and Gloucester Farmers Market;• Current objectives: Ensure local operators are optimising social media; Ensure positive consumer reviews on TripAdvisor.
Appoint an Events Liaison Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achieved: A new Events Liaison Officer was appointed August 2013 to assist

	in development and delivery of new and improved special events.
Reinvigorate use of Tourist Drive 2 and Thunderbolts Way in marketing collateral.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved: Issued new brochure of Tourist Drive #2 to ensure retention of the TASAC classification. • Current objectives: Assess signposting to ensure clear and consistent wayfinding; include Tourist Drive icons in all collateral to prevent TASAC de-classifying Drive #2; ensure promotion of Tourist Drive #2 in adjoining regions VICs.
Strengthen industry voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved: Instigated regular paid advertisements “Everyone’s Business” in local paper; held regular TAG meetings; initiated motion for Council’s support of the paddling industry following river access issues. • Current objectives: Set up a yearly schedule of TAG meetings with guest speakers &/or featured discussions on topical issues; to assist compilation of a strategic plan for paddling in Gloucester.
Leverage activities of Legendary Pacific Coast Touring Route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved: Obtained exposure for the Gloucester region within marketing collateral for TLPC touring route by encouraging membership of tourism operators. • Current objectives: Ensure a minimum of 6 local operators take TLPC membership for 2016-17 plus the VIC; Gain stronger presence for Barrington Tops on TLPC website, in printed guide, maps, signage, posters and smart phone apps.
Develop and strengthen regional partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved: Cross-promotional presence on websites for neighbouring LGAs under the ‘Adventures’ section • Current objectives: Focus on joint promotions with Port Stephens and Great Lakes and expand the Adventure Trail concept with these neighbouring LGAs; work more effectively with Dungog LGA (being the southern approach to Barrington Tops from the Lower Hunter and Central Coast); strengthen partnerships with State Forests and NPWS to better promote their unique experiences (eg. Mountain Maid Gold Mine Tour, Copeland Education Centre, Cara Mia).
Assist strategy development for Visitor Information Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved: Premises reconfigured to improve traffic flow and display; redesigned A4 poster template for window displays of tourism operators; installed TV screen for permanent visual display of new video and new photographs. • Current objectives: Source and install new display fittings for windows/floor/walls that are better suited to current needs; assess current trends for digital provision of information and assess options for evolution of VIC.
Develop an experiential trails strategy for Gloucester,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current objectives : Develop 6 new trails for the Gloucester region: Heritage & culture

Bucketts Way & Thunderbolt's Way	trail; Bushranger trail; Food & wine trail; Adventure trail; Nature trail; Indigenous trail. Investigate smart phone apps and electronic provision of these trails to consumers to reduce print costs.
Reach further audiences within Mid-North Coast, Newcastle, North Coast and Central Coast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current objectives: Assess cost-effective marketing to coastal markets, especially for events.
Continual improvement to product offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current objectives: Assist operators with development of product offerings: feedback about visitor needs, supporting letters for grant applications, etc.,
Goals – Medium term	Objectives
Develop special interest markets	Identify potential within existing target markets (eg. nature-based such as bird watching); Develop improved working relationship with Devil Ark to enable easier access from Gloucester side of Barrington Tops (ie. tour commencement from Honeysuckle instead of Moonan Flat)
Develop new regional partnerships	Stroud, Dungog, Walcha, Great Lakes, Port Stephens.
Build professionalism within the visitor economy	Training, workshops and product familiarisations for main street businesses, operators, VIC staff and volunteers); publish a standard risk management policy (including bush fire survival plan); adopt a Code of Conduct for tourism members; issue best-practice House Rules for accommodation providers.
Ensure infrastructure is adequate	Assist in identifying suitable infrastructure needs and potential grant funding for construction.
Goals – Long term	Objectives
Increase depth and diversity of experiences in Gloucester	Assist in sourcing grant funding for infrastructure development; assist in continued development of local arts, crafts and produce.
Ensure visitor economy is sustainable and self-funding	Ensure various income streams provide sufficient funding for marketing activities, events and staff costs.

3. Destination Requirements

3.1 Human Resources

- Tourism Manager (existing part-time paid position x1)
- Tourism Promotion Officer (existing part-time paid position x1)
- Events Liaison Officer (existing part-time paid position x1)
- Volunteers to staff the Visitor Information Centre (existing volunteer positions x23)
- Chair & Secretary, Tourism Advancing Gloucester (existing volunteer positions x2)

3.2 Financial Resources

Visitor Information Centre Budget 2015-16	Income	Expenses	Net
Operator memberships and destination marketing	14,000	14,000	0
Running expenses offset by business unit income from commission etc.,	20,000	33,000	(13,000)
Gloucester Shire Council direct funding of salaries		128,000	(128,000)
Net expenses (funded by Council) = \$			(141,000)

3.3 Key Risks

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Strategy
Uglification of the valley from expanded open cut coal mines and CSG wells	Highly likely	High negative impact on brand values, negative visitor experiences & consumer perception; plummeting visitation.	Ensure visual impact mitigation is undertaken by extractive industries.
Shooting in national parks & reserves	Highly likely	High negative impact on brand values, negative visitor experiences & consumer perception; plummeting visitation.	Liaise with NPWS for managing consumer fears, expectations & response.
Limited trading hours on weekends by main street shops.	Unlikely to expand hours	Reduced customer satisfaction, increased negative word-of-mouth, reduced Daytripper visitation.	Utilise customer feedback in a campaign to encourage longer opening times by main street businesses; continue support for those businesses now opting to open longer.
Closure of the VIC	Unlikely	25,000 customers per year would be left without any support.	Continue promoting the economic benefits of a council-funded VIC.
Decreasing road surface quality (including within Barrington Tops); & increasing fuel costs	Highly Likely	Gloucester is a self-drive destination so negative impact widespread.	Council lobbying for adequate road funding.
Road & bridge closures by land slips & floods	Highly Likely	Gloucester is a low income council with high cost infrastructure needs so non-essential repairs may be delayed, with widespread negative impact on town businesses.	Council rates variation commenced July 2015 for 3 years.

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