

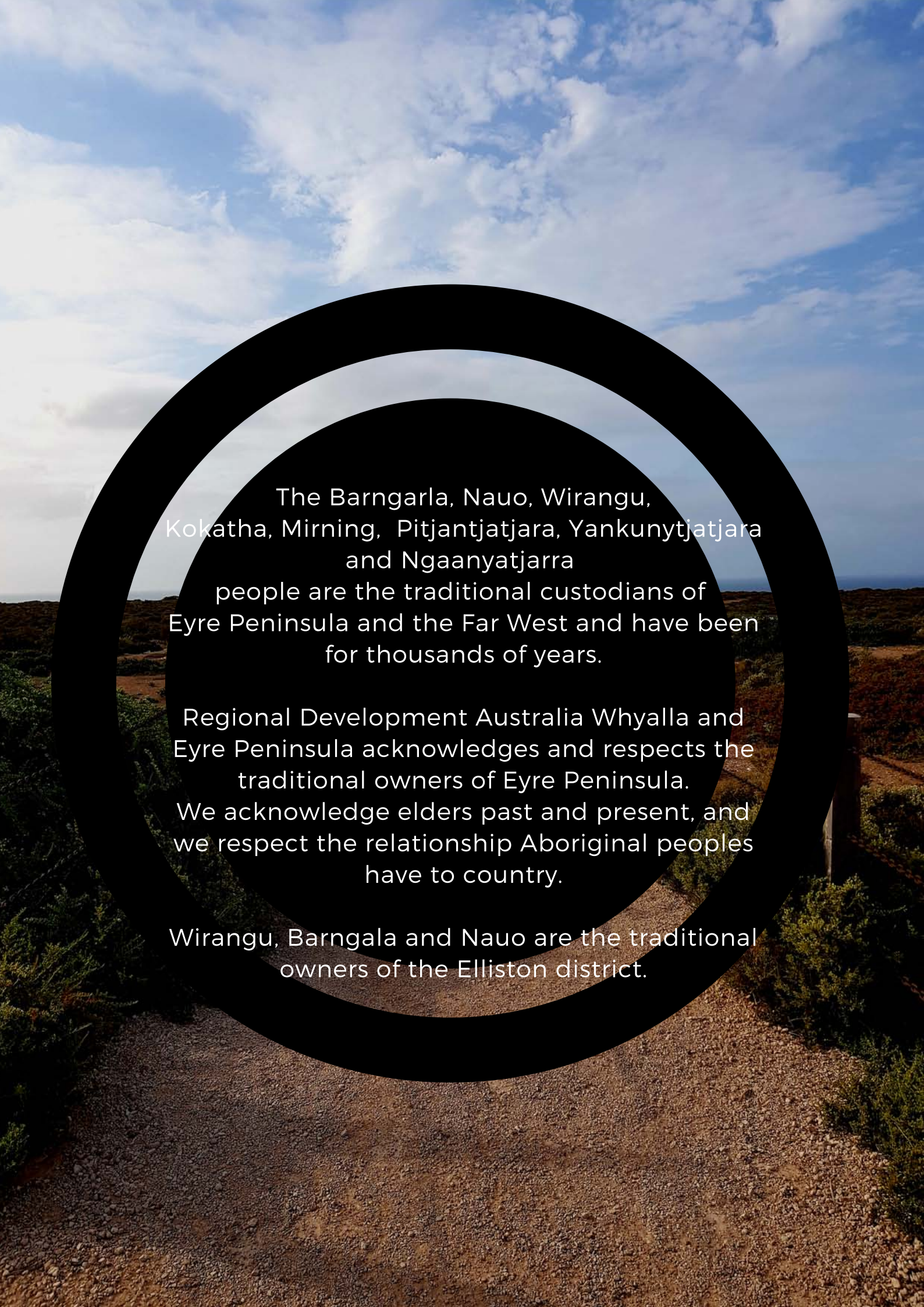


# EYES ON EYRE ELLISTON

A WAYFINDING,  
COASTAL ACCESS AND  
CAMPING OPTIONS  
PROJECT

REPORT JUNE 2018





The Barngarla, Nauo, Wirangu,  
Kokatha, Mirning, Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara  
and Ngaanyatjarra  
people are the traditional custodians of  
Eyre Peninsula and the Far West and have been  
for thousands of years.

Regional Development Australia Whyalla and  
Eyre Peninsula acknowledges and respects the  
traditional owners of Eyre Peninsula.  
We acknowledge elders past and present, and  
we respect the relationship Aboriginal peoples  
have to country.

Wirangu, Barngala and Nauo are the traditional  
owners of the Elliston district.



# EYES ON EYRE

WAYFINDING > COASTAL ACCESS > CAMPING



## FINDINGS OF EYES ON EYRE

BY REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA WHYALLA AND EYRE PENINSULA

"Sometimes an awful lot of money is wasted in regional tourism. When every town tries to do their own thing they end up looking like every other town. A better use of budget would be to advertise the journey and multiple destinations. It is the sum of your parts that makes you unique. In remote regions, local councils could make better use of their marketing budgets by joining forces to deliver regional campaigns and actions."

- Tilma Consulting

### ELLISTON'S ROLE IN THE EYRE PENINSULA

Elliston is punching far above its weight when it comes to meeting the expectations of the visitor market. The effort into advanced warning attraction signage, interpretative signage and product development such as the coastal trail and community amenity facilities have set the district clearly apart from the rest of the Eyre Peninsula region.

This will bring rewards in visitor numbers and expenditure. The district is clearly shouting welcome and inviting people to enjoy its offerings.

Most importantly, these investments will also increase livability for the permanent population and increase the region's chances of being home to a broad spectrum of residents and economic diversification.

So what are the next moves for the district? Consolidation. Non-commercial campgrounds at Sheringa and Walker's Rocks could be masterplanned and developed to be of the standards delivered across the border in WA. This is discussed later in the interim report.

Further recreational and open space developments in town are worthy of investigation including water sensitive urban design landscapes (e.g. wetlands), a water fun park and learn-to-ride bike track. Activating the foreshore is important, creating energy centres and nodes of activity are crucial.

Elliston's artistic attributes are striking, stand-out and sophisticated. There is plenty of room for more.

# WAYFINDING

## SIGNAGE IS OUR SILENT BRAND

Advanced warning and brown attraction signage are delivered at one of the highest standards across Eyre Peninsula - when asset renewal rolls around, go larger on the highways.

Imagery from Elliston's lookouts and points of interest on the coastal loop drives need to form a signage marketing plan from the Lincoln and Eyre Highways, and even at regional entry points. The theory behind the nineties South Australian Tourism Commission signage (there is one on the Flinders Highway to promote Baird Bay sealions) is still relevant and could actually be embraced and expanded for Elliston and deployed through the critical stretches of highway leading to town and at the critical juncture of the Flinders and Eyre Highway.

RDAWEP could assist with DPTI negotiations. We are also proposing 2 regional gateway visitor bays and 22 rest stop visitor pods throughout the region to introduce greater marketing and cross-promotion for our attractions.

Refer to Wayfound Consultants Audit Report and implement.

## ELLISTON PRIORITIES

- List new attractions on brown attraction signage 400m outside of Elliston.
- Focus on wayfinding signage into and within the Little Bay coastal drive.
- Consider a regional QR Code node approach to reduce amount of signage, limit vandalism.
- Re-skinning of A Breath of Fresh Eyre signs (or replacement where condition warrants). Better yet, let's innovate with QR codes.



- Contribute to a regional gateway visitor information bays at the 'Tanks' and Border Village.
- Visitor pods rest stop information bays could be considered for Dry Stone Wall area and Colton.
- Install standard coastal access signage to be developed region wide with advisory notifications and expected user behaviour.









# COASTAL ACCESS

## STATE OF PLAY

The Eyre Peninsula is home to a precious way of life with a natural playground that locals rightly treasure and protect and will guard fiercely against change and intrusion. However, the scenic and recreational wonders of the Eyre Peninsula are now more accessible (more boats, more four-wheeled drives, more tour operators) and promoted more heavily than ever before (social media).

Patterns of internal visitation and demographic changes on the Eyre Peninsula have influenced coastal access as much as out of region visitation and tourism.

The Eyes on Eyre stocktake revealed a largely static investment into coastal access infrastructure with the last injection of catalyst investment in the late eighties and early nineties. As a consequence, the region has a majority of ageing infrastructure that is struggling to support the pressures applied by the local population let alone visitors from outside the region.

There are numerous examples of poorly signed, unconsolidated road and pedestrian tracks and mostly uncontrolled access from vehicles and off-road vehicles to most all beaches and sand-dunes.

It is widely understood that most of those wanting to interact with our coastal landscapes want to do so sustainably and will respond to engineered design infrastructure, advisory and even enforced regulations that set out behaviour expectations. Eyes on Eyre recommends that we prioritise those management actions over the coming five years across Eyre Peninsula, with regulation the third and least desired tier of action.



The current status of coastal access infrastructure is leaving the Eyre Peninsula environment and community vulnerable, particularly economically. Outdated and dilapidated infrastructure places coastal communities, in particular, at risk from the increasingly frequent and intense coastal storm events and rising sea levels. Therefore, investments in coastal infrastructure are urgently needed to ensure community safety and prosperity; however, these investments should not jeopardise the ecosystems and natural resources that underlie economic wealth and human well-being.



# COASTAL ACCESS

## WHAT DO WE KNOW?

The Eyre Peninsula Coastal Action Plan is a detailed conservation study and action plan from Two Hummocks Point north of Whyalla to the eastern boundary of the Wahgunyah Conservation Park in the Far West. It provides baseline information for the protection and management of the coast and outlines the actions required.

The plan divides the coast into 85 coastal cells, each around 25 km in length. It provides detailed information on 56 of the cells, including a description of the geology, type of coastline, land uses, flora and fauna lists. Threats are identified for each of these 56 cells, such as potential climate change impacts, pest plants and animals, marine debris and the impact of off-road vehicles on beaches, samphire areas and beach nesting birds.

A Coastal Vehicle Access Decision Making Framework was also developed for local councils with clear recommendations, a suite of management options and consistent guidelines for the protection and use of coastal natural resource assets.

The current LiDAR Climate Change Modelling project will also be critical for future Eyre Peninsula coastal zone management and its subsequent integration into articulating a regional vision for coastal access, supporting the assessment of development and other proposals, including camping nodes will be crucial.

These scientific assessments and technical processes are of the highest standards but further work on the social and economic parameters influencing stakeholder engagement and decision making was required. The reports and framework delivered to date also depend on local government having the resources and capacity to interpret and embed into their governance systems and planning frameworks - resources which for many councils are simply not available.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT

yes on Eyre set about engaging local government in coastal access management through social and economic lenses (to sit alongside and balance the scientific assessments) with a view to enhancing the visitor economy whilst simultaneously layering environment protection through master planning and



landscape architecture of camping nodes and high priority day-use locations. This approach has resulted in a list of coastal sites that stand-out for environmental, economic and social reasons as being of priority for action.

Eyre Peninsula local governments have thrown their support behind Eyes on Eyre and have worked cooperatively to understand the project's intent to advocate for external resources to boost visitor infrastructure which will sustain coastal access rather than prohibit.

## NEXT STEPS FOR COASTAL ACCESS

As a result of Eyes on Eyre, a number of local governments have allocated resources to master planning for coastal camping nodes, township foreshore zones and day-use coastal visitation sites in 18/19 with most others looking to do the same in 19/20 and beyond. Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management are also seeking to match local government allocations and Regional Development Australia Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula will work to leverage these commitments for contributions from State, Federal and Private partnerships.

Three coastal access centered master planned sites are anticipated for 18/19 with learnings to be shared throughout the region over the coming years.

# COASTAL ACCESS

## ELLISTON'S TOP 5 PRIORITIES

- 1 Sheringa
- 2 Walker's Rocks
- 3 Anxious Bay Boat Ramp
- 4 Milligan's Beach
- 5 Venus Bay

## VALUES

The Elliston coast is enjoyed by locals and visitors for its beautiful landscapes, open space and clean environment. Many local residents particularly value the solitude, remoteness and scenic beauty of places including Sheringa Beach, Talia Caves, Pearson Island, Walkers Rocks and Elliston. Surfing, camping, diving and fishing are popular in the clean waters.

The Elliston township is valued for its character, history, tranquillity and amenity. The town has a strong arts culture with numerous murals and the sculptures along the spectacular Great Ocean Tourist Drive. It is also home to the first reconciliation monument on the Eyre Peninsula, established with the Wirangu people.

Grazing is the main agricultural land use in the subregion, with sheep and cattle feeding on areas of both natural and modified pastures. Commercial wild fisheries in the subregion include the Western Zone Abalone Fishery, the Northern Rock Lobster Fishery and the Marine Scale fish Fishery. Large numbers of fishing vessels use the islands and bays around Elliston for overnight anchorage. Farming of abalone occurs near Elliston. However, with farming seeing a 23% reduction in employment over the last decade, tourism is becoming an important lifeline for many Eyre Peninsula communities.

There are numerous coastal and inland salt lakes including Lake Hamilton, Round Lake, Sheringa Lagoon and Lake Newland. Lake Hamilton and Lake Newland are listed in the Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia and provide habitat for numerous water and shore birds including migratory waders protected under national treaties.

Along the coast, in dune areas and around Lake Newland and the coastal lakes, the most common vegetation communities include Samphire and shrublands dominated by Coast daisy and Grey saltbush.

Just over 10% of the subregion's land area is within National Parks and Wildlife Reserves. Off shore conservation areas include the Waldegrave Islands Conservation Park and Investigator Group Wilderness Area. Much of the coast south of Elliston and around the islands is protected within the Investigator Marine Park.

Coastal landscapes are dominated by sandy beaches along the coast north of Cape Finniss along Anxious Bay, and cliffs up to 80 m high south of Elliston. Behind the sandy Anxious Bay beach, a wide dune system extends to Lake Newland within the Lake Newland Conservation Park.

Nearly 60% of the subregion's land area contains remnant native vegetation. This is a very high proportion compared to other agricultural areas of South Australia and can be attributed to the shallow, calcareous soils that limit agricultural productivity. Only about 20% of this native vegetation is protected within formal conservation reserves, with about 15% included in Heritage Agreement mostly adjoining conservation parks. The area contains some of the largest intact areas of bushland in South Australia.

Selected fauna, flora and vegetation communities of conservation or vulnerable significance include:

Australian Pied Oyster Catcher  
Hooded Plover  
White Bellied Sea Eagle  
Metallic Sun-Orchid  
Drooping Sheoak Grassy Low Woodland  
Cutting Grass Sedgeland

## EYES ON EYRE ASSESSMENT

The Elliston Council and its community are acutely aware of the importance of the visitor economy and facilitating sustainable access to its extraordinarily spectacular coastline. The infrastructure in place at Lock's well, Talia Caves and the award winning coastal trail and Great Ocean Drive are testament to this.

Council has identified that infrastructure plays a crucial role in supporting nature based tourism and has already commenced a program of works of which Eyes on Eyre seeks to assist with driving and expanding wherever possible. Campgrounds at Sheringa and Walker's Rocks have been prioritised for master planning along with the Anxious Bay Boat Ramp (and consolidation of coastal access in and around the vicinity as a result).



# COASTAL ACCESS

## EYES ON EYRE ASSESSMENT CONT.

Milligan's Beach and Venus Bay and the enhanced protection of shorebirds will commence like the rest of the Eyre Peninsula coastline with learnings from the master planned camping nodes and visitor pods (day-use), application of Australian Standard signage and community involvement which may including monitoring and marking nest sites and limiting the extent of vehicle travel on a beach.

Coastal access infrastructure is a significant one-off and ongoing cost for maintenance. However, we are doing it all around the Eyre Peninsula and doing it very well. But we have gaps in the sites outlined that we should seek to collaboratively rectify through the assistance of multiple funding sources and stakeholder partnerships.

Eyes on Eyre firmly believes that all sites can be sustainably managed to balance a number of values and permit sensitive interactions that will reassure the fear of 'closure' and permit varied interests to continue their current interactions.

## MASTER PLAN PROGRESS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Initiate engagement with Barngala, Nauo and Wirangu Native Title Groups.
- Discuss the varied land tenure issues (Council, Crown and Private) at various sites and options to overcome.
- Procure landscape architect for master planning and design.
- Camping node development (for large recreational vehicles to camper trailers/tents along with supporting Australian Standard signage and visitor facilities - such as toilets, showers, bird hide, shelter, picnic amenities, bins, wifi and all access principles). May involve some vegetation clearance;
- Controlled, defined and limited vehicular access (supported by designated parking, fencing, provision for 2WD drives and 4WD tracks,
- Controlled, defined and limited pedestrian movement through designated and potentially fenced paths/steps/trail access to beach and along cliff.
- Consider an engineered structure to consolidate boat launching.
- Revegetation for camp screening; and securing against beach recession.



- Develop access/traffic management plan – including review of existing access with a view to rationalise unnecessary tracks and car parks..
- Block access (eg. fencing/rocks) to tracks and car parks to be closed, rehabilitate (where appropriate) and maintain.
- Upgrade any tracks or car parks that are not well defined, or are causing water run-off erosion.
- Install directional /educational signage. Regional coastal access signage installation with standard environment, safety and behaviour expectations.

## CONSEQUENCES OF INACTION

- Informal camping is contributing to: soil compaction, vegetation damage – trampling and removal, fauna disturbance, soil erosion, dune instability,
- increased fire risk, fire wood collection and weed introduction.
- Potential impacts on Aboriginal Heritage Sites
- Uncontrolled ORV potential impact on geologic formations, meiofauna, shorebirds and intertidal species and/or habitat.







# CAMPING OPTIONS

## CAMPING NODE(S) DEVELOPMENT

Elliston along with Streaky Bay have some of the best non-commercial campgrounds in the Eyre Peninsula and the efforts both district Councils have gone to develop them is very commendable contributing both to the visitor economy and affording environmental protection through active infrastructure control and servicing.

During the Eyes on Eyre survey (December-January) most all of these campgrounds were full with a 70% to 30% split of locals to intra or interstate visitors. More spaces would be beneficial and master planning with design and camping architecture expertise is recommended.

If there is a desire to further develop non-commercial campgrounds in Elliston, the camping node model outlined in the regional Eyes on Eyre overview would be worthwhile applying.

Western Australia has proven that providing affordable and diverse caravan and camping experiences is one of the singular most powerful injections to boost visitor economy expenditure and control visitor impacts on natural resources. Their goal to make themselves the nation's most attractive caravan and camping holiday destination by improving the supply, delivery and promotion of the sector has worked (perhaps too well).

As Eyre Peninsula is WA's immediate southern neighbour we run the risk of eastern travellers bypassing us to get to them and our western travellers being so use to higher standards of product that disappointment soon overwhelms them.



Yes WA has Royalty for Regions funding that we can only dream about but is that an excuse for complete inaction or can we start to chip away at building our own collateral and attraction of outside investment and grant funding.

One possibility is to jointly contract landscape architects and contractors to develop a camping node model template for use throughout the region, bulk purchase the necessary infrastructure and deliver efficiencies through that means.

Telecommunications entities, utility suppliers and developers looking for social license to operate within our communities are often looking for just such initiatives to get involved with.





# CAMPING OPTIONS

## CAMPING NODE(S) DEVELOPMENT

RDAWEP is also interested to determine whether our region would benefit from the application of a regional permit at a fixed cost to permit campers to stay in any of our non-commercial campground locations with this fee replacing all honesty box and individual Council policies currently in application. It is certainly worth a discussion. After all, nothing is really 'free', and \$10.00 per night rarely equates to cost recovery when managing safe and responsible camping sites.

Whilst there is little competition on the Eyre Peninsula from accredited caravan parks with the full gamut of resort style amenities (as is now common place right across Australia), caravan parks will continue to survive (but not thrive). Elliston is home to two popular caravan parks on the Eyre Peninsula. However, as we have seen in Whyalla and Streaky Bay, when a four to five star park establishes, the market is irrevocably altered and the visitors vote with their feet (or wheels).

The installation of a water park open to the public as well as caravan park users in Moonta Bay is believed to be behind the areas significant leap in visitor number and nights. The Renmark Big 4 Caravan Park story is similar. The Port Germain community are also progressing towards such an installation to boost their attractiveness and local economy.

There are also numerous examples of caravan parks investing in large adventure indoor play cafe's that again cater for the general public whilst serving their park residents.



Bendigo's Parky's Fun Park is an excellent example. Public attendees pay their entry fee, receive a colour wrist tag whilst park guests are presented with tags upon arrival at registration.

These endeavours feed not only the park's business but that of the town, especially where open space developments are limited or need a collaborative efficiency to get off the ground. Caravan Parks are great ways to install facilities missing in small regional towns and centres with shared benefits.

[Discuss Lock \(here\)](#)









# WHERE SHOULD WE START?

## REGIONAL WISH LIST

Refer to Regional Interim Findings Report for further reasoning of actions below.

- Define and label sub-regional precincts, identify trails (driving/hiking/walking/biking)
- Two new regional gateway visitor information bays at the 'Tanks' and Border Village.
- Twenty two possible visitor information pods spread throughout Eyre Peninsula.
- Removal of dilapidated signage.
- Reskinning of regional priority signs
- A digital project to work with or in place of existing interpretative signage in region.
- Design Coastal Access sign templates for relevant coastal geoforms (e.g cliff, estuary, shingles, rocks, beach).
- Install new coastal access infrastructure via a competitive application process to source Natural Resource Management funds allocated for 18/19 coastal access improvements.
- Commission camping node, visitor pod concept plans, with a focus on smart technologies, all access principles and contractor selection for priority sites and budget estimates.



Elliston is the perfect candidate to demonstrate the potential of camping node and associated coastal access developments for the rest of the Eyre Peninsula because there is already advanced visitor foundation infrastructure in place and a developing community spirit for diversifying the economy, improving open space developments and striving for modern and vibrant livability.

We look forward to presenting and talking the Eyes on Eyre findings with Elliston stakeholders.

