




EYES ON EYRE

A WAYFINDING,
COASTAL ACCESS AND
CAMPING OPTIONS
PROJECT

REGIONAL FINDINGS JUNE 2018

#EYREPENINSULA



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.



**Regional
Development**
Australia

WHYALLA &
EYRE PENINSULA INC.



EYRE PENINSULA
Local Government Association

PRIMARY
INDUSTRIES
& REGIONS SA
PIRSA



Natural Resources
Eyre Peninsula



SOUTH
AUSTRALIA

EYES ON EYRE

WAYFINDING > COASTAL ACCESS > CAMPING



FINDINGS OF EYES ON EYRE

BY REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA WHYALLA AND EYRE PENINSULA

“The vast, straw-coloured triangle of Eyre Peninsula is Australia's big-sky country, and is the promised land for seafood fans. Meals out here rarely transpire without the option of trying the local oysters, tuna or whiting. Sublime national parks punctuate the coast along with world-class surf breaks and low-key holiday towns, thinning out as you head west towards the Great Australian Bight, the Nullarbor Plain and Western Australia.”
- Lonely Planet.

WHY DO WE NEED A WAYFINDING, COASTAL ACCESS AND CAMPING MASTER PLAN?

It is critical for Eyre Peninsula to generate adequate and ongoing revenue to reinvest into the protection, maintenance and improvement of our natural and built assets and the renewal of our foreshore, reserves and camping facilities.

While there is high seasonal demand for our accommodation, there is currently inadequate revenue to manage and improve the coastal and inland reserves and assets to expected community standards.

The region has not invested on the scale in which significant economic and environmental dividends can be returned since the late eighties and early nineties with the roll out of the “A Breath of Fresh Eyre” initiative.

EYES ON EYRE

WAYFINDING > COASTAL ACCESS > CAMPING

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN REGIONAL VISITOR STRATEGY 2020

Released in May 2018, the strategy now provides a clear direction through its strategic pillars.

The Eyre Peninsula is the only region with a declining visitor economy but with a growth potential second only to the Fleurieu Peninsula.

Another distinction for the Eyre Peninsula in the strategy is its local government partners. Most regions have half or less the number of local governments that govern the Eyre Peninsula - this presents challenges for collaboration, expediency, efficiency of resources and consistency in order to attract and deliver on investments.

As a collective, we need to move forward, embed the strategic pillars in each local government strategic plan and long term financial plan and then work annually on refining priority projects and actions in conjunction with other local governments, natural resource and regional development boards.

QUICK STATS

Regional tourism is a critical part of the South Australian visitor economy delivering:

- 87% of visitors in regions are self-drive
- \$2.6 billion in visitor expenditure
- \$1.3 billion of total visitor expenditure is derived from nature based tourism.
- 40% of all state visitor expenditure
- 13,000 tourism jobs in regions
- 36% of all state direct tourism-related jobs
- 44% of all state visitor expenditure by 2020 (\$3.55 billion).

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

Adequate and well-maintained infrastructure is critical for the sustainable growth of regions and a safe and enjoyable visitor experience. Improving and maintaining infrastructure can open up new possibilities and remove barriers to growth. Six regional infrastructure priorities have been identified in the SARVS 2020.

- 1 Roads
- 2 Air Access
- 3 Signage
- 4 Telecommunication black spots
- 5 Coastal and marine infrastructure
- 6 Trails

The work of Eyes on Eyre has only added to the weight of argument for improved infrastructure investment.

With a regional score of 2/10 for wayfinding and signage and coastal access and camping infrastructure that is over twenty years old and mostly beyond end-of life - there is significant work to be done.

The region must view its vulnerability as the birthplace of creativity, innovation and change. Already Eyes on Eyre is gaining traction in driving more strategic discussions with State and Federal governments and also private and corporate partnerships to lift the region to a market standard and afford sustainability protections to the natural assets that make it a world-class destination.

As a region we will be required to work together to demonstrate to the State and Australian Government how serious our collective local investment intends to be if we are to attract funding support and wrestle our way to the front of an ever increasing and competitive line of regional areas vying for economic recognition. Bemoaning Kangaroo Island's selection within Australia's top ten iconic destinations (and reflective subsequent government investment) will not move us forward.

Eyes on Eyre was the first step towards the development of a master plan to achieve long-term economic and environmental sustainability in the visitor economy.

The Eyre Peninsula tourism economy is currently valued at \$278 million with a potential growth (second only to Fleurieu Peninsula) of \$511 million by 2020. There are currently 1,500 direct jobs in the Eyre Peninsula visitor economy and a further 1,500 indirect jobs. Expenditure has decreased among the dominant intrastate market and also across all markets.



The Eyre Peninsula has the gamut of attractions that visitors would ordinarily need to travel numerous regions and States in Australia for. This we undersell.

Our unbroken connection and cultural heritage of traditional owners is virtually untapped and unexpressed outside of culture and should the Traditional Owners want to express their connection to Country, and the significance and meaning of particular sites, their language, places and events then this will ensure a richer and deeper experience for locals and visitors alike.

Similarly, our geological formations (some occurring in only one or two places on earth) have yet to be comprehensively mapped to form a touring route of their own.

Our ornithological vibrancy and history is another drawcard yet to be solidified through protective infrastructure and marketing.

Our artistic abilities and endeavours are also world class and burgeoning and could benefit from cohesive packaging.

Our seafood resources and marine adventure experiences whilst receiving the majority of our marketing attention need repolishing and reinvigoration with greater land-based connections through interactive museums, markets and a greater spread of quality dining and service experiences.

In this vein we also have a farming, mining, fishing, and manufacturing culture that we should work towards expanding and developing authentic, observational and hands-on interactions with.

The future of this unique region for tourism, local communities and the environment is at a point of reinvention and necessary change. To do nothing is not an option. Increased visitor pressure, evolving tourism trends and aging visitor infrastructure are issues requiring a new approach. In response, a master plan has to look to our coast, our hinterland and arid interior and seek to transform the region in a bold but clear strategic move.

From a visitor's perspective, the Eyre Peninsula whilst clearly containing world-class attractions, currently over promises and under-delivers. There is a stark and widening gap between what people are looking for as a world-class experience and what is currently being offered by way of open space infrastructure, accommodation, access to local produce, the logistics of getting to the coast, navigating and interpreting it.



This leads to a low return for the local and regional economy and little benefit for the local communities. In the short-term, there is an immediate need to fund priority foundation visitor pod installations and install coastal access and campground infrastructure at priority locations for safety, environment and visitor economy sustainability.

Eyes on Eyre is the first step in devising a master plan for discussion that will present a bold, innovative and visionary plan for the future of this world-class landscape.

A strong link between conservation objectives, the towns and tourism is required to:

- Begin to repair and protect the natural landscape;
- Strengthen the character of the local townships and their relationship to open space and parks; and
- Increase the economic return and associated benefits to the region and the State of South Australia.



VISION

"ENHANCE THE EYRE PENINSULA AS A DISTINCTIVE, CULTURAL AND REMARKABLE WORLD-CLASS DESTINATION, UNDERPINNED BY THE CHARACTER OF ITS BIG SKY INLAND COUNTRY, LOCAL TOWNS COUPLED WITH THE CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF ITS NATIONAL, COASTAL AND MARINE PARKS."

OBJECTIVES

ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

A new approach to access and circulation is proposed to diversify choice and routes into and through the region. This includes inland Big Sky Touring Routes and the opportunity to capitalise on the Seafood Frontier Touring Route and introduce a Great Australian Bight Journey from Whaler's Way to the Nullarbor. Each of these will connect to minor touring routes related to art, culture, wildlife and geology in towns and key visitor precincts.

NATIONAL PARK TOWNS AS VISITOR HUBS

A suite of design initiatives could be developed to improve the interface of each town with adjacent parks. This seeks to reinforce each town's distinctive characteristics and enhance their role as hubs for visitors to experience the parks, coast and inland region.



NEW STRUCTURES FOR VISITOR EXPERIENCES

New structures for how visitors experience the area are proposed. Supporting each townships' role as a visitor hub in a decentralised and dispersed approach to information and interpretation services that provide choice and draw people along the touring routes rather than concentrating all visitors into one area. The plan recommends that development of the highest quality visitor facilities of a world-class standard are essential.

LINKS, LOOPS, HORSESHOES AND JOURNEYS

When combined, the concepts regarding access and circulation, town and visitor hubs and a decentralised approach to experience establish a framework of different loops, trails and journeys that are linked together. This provides locals and visitors with a variety of ways to experience the area by mixing and matching options .

ENVIRONMENTAL FRAMEWORK

By rethinking the way people access and move through the region and introducing a new environmental and landscape management framework spanning both public and private land. The plan proposes net biodiversity gains through the removal of redundant infrastructure and a regional-scale approach to revegetation to strengthen habitat and augment the national parks.

KEY INITIATIVES

VISITOR PODS AND EXPERIENCE CENTRES

Visitor pods and visitor experience centres are critically missing from the destination offerings on the Eyre Peninsula to clinch decision to travel, draw visitors along, provide shelter, refreshment, toilet amenities, interpretative information and public WiFi.

The Far West, Whyalla and Port Lincoln are the likely best locations and an Aboriginal Arts and Culture Centre, Marine Interpretative Centre and Maritime Interpretative Centre are the most stand-out themes for each regional centre respectively. The standards must be high and equal to centres like those found in Exmouth WA, Grampians VIC and Winton QLD.

ESTIMATED BUDGET \$90 million

Eyes on Eyre recommends two new gateway visitor pods are installed around the 'Tanks' prior to Whyalla and at Border Village. These should welcome visitors to the Eyre Peninsula (our best and most inclusive brand) and be WiFi activated, designed to activate bookings for attractions, campgrounds, national park passes and Aboriginal land entry permits. The promotion at these gateways is for product not local government areas or singular towns. Our goal should be the opposite of the dilapidated sign that is just after the 'Tanks' at present.

ESTIMATED BUDGET \$60,000



Eyes on Eyre recommends a possible 22 rest visitor pods spread throughout the region that ideally are WiFi activated and where practicable include shade, table seating, bins (solar activated compaction recommended), toilets, fresh water, rv dump point, tyre inflation/deflation (where suited). Proposed locales:

Whyalla Northern Coastline
Whyalla Wetlands
Eastern start of Birdseye Highway
Kimba Silos/Recreation Reserve
Darke Peak
Koongawa
Wirulla
Lock
Cleve turnoff at Arno
Tumby Bay Silos
Port Lincoln North
Port Lincoln South
Sleaford
Coffin Bay
Cummins
Cummings Monument
Colton
Port Kenny
Streaky Bay Eyre's Waterhole
Streaky Bay Perlubie
Ceduna 'Big Oyster'
Yalata
Head of Bight

ESTIMATED BUDGET \$1.5 million.

KEY INITIATIVES CONT.

PRECINCTS AND TOURING ROUTES

Eyes on Eyre does not recommend a new brand be developed for the Eyre Peninsula, rather we could simply use our region name 'Eyre Peninsula' and develop precincts and touring routes to give our defining character. We have developed suggestions to inspire and generate discussion. These are not the only possibilities and in fact may not be viable but let's start the conversation. Five precincts are put forward:

Shingle Coast

Big Sky Eyre

Seafood Frontier

Great Australian Bight Journey

Nullarbor

SHINGLE COAST

Whyalla's northern coastline encompassing Point Lowly, Fitzgerald Bay through to Douglas Point and ideally Cultana Defence land is worthy of precinct definition on its own and ideally should be home to a coastal drive, five star caravan park/resort, a redeveloped campground at Fitzgerald Bay to the highest standard, boutique accommodation at lighthouse cottages and a destination interpretative and cultural centre starring Cuttlefish and Shingle Geology.



BIG SKY EYRE

Our inland towns and assets are under sold and under developed and have been in the shadow of the Seafood Frontier marketing focus. We could consider wrapping these assets under the umbrella of Big Sky Eyre. Outback branding is already over utilised in our assessment.

Touring routes can be developed interconnecting or remaining within the precincts. As a starting point, we considered that Big Sky Eyre could encompass one loop, one link and two (almost) horseshoe routes.

Gawler Ranges Loop: Whyalla, Iron Knob, Mt Ive, Wirulla, Wudinna, Kimba, Whyalla. Focus: Gawler Ranges Granite Geology

Eyre Link: Whyalla, Iron Knob, Kimba, Wudinna, Ceduna, Nullarbor to WA. Focus: Two night layovers.

BirdsEYE horseshoe: Cowell, Kimba, Darke Peak, Cleve, Arno Bay. Focus: Gemstones, Explorers, 4WDiving, Mountain Biking, Hiking, Mangroves.

EyreHEART horseshoe: Tumby Bay, Lipson, Ungarra, Yallunda Flat, Cummins, Edilillie, Koppio, Poonindie. Focus: Art, Agriculture, Pioneers, Aboriginal Culture.

KEY INITIATIVES CONT.

SEAFOOD FRONTIER

The Seafood Frontier Touring Route has been declared and marked by route markers by the South Australian Tourism Commission to begin at Whyalla, conclude at Border Village and cover the entire coastal reaches of the Eyre Peninsula.

Arguably, the commercial and retail reflection of this touring route begins at Cowell and is rounded off at Ceduna. Nonetheless, the infrastructure and branding juggernaut are in place and it is recommended that coastal towns and centres embrace the route branding and seek to capitalise on it with dedicated destinations and activities linked to brand.

There is significant potential for seafood producers to diversify into tourism interactive product (e.g mussel, oyster, abalone processing viewing, oyster hatchery tours, vongole raking, wharf loading/unloading) and for cafes and restaurants to harness ocean to plate menus. Fishing charters, jetties and beach fishing hotspots could also connect to the route branding.

As a starting point let's consider ordering more purple lollipops (or perhaps borrow a few from roadside!) and use them to direct to destination product. Let's share graphic logo and let tourism providers brand themselves (e.g business frontage, emails, social media, websites, vehicle decals to saturate and make connections for visitors).



GREAT AUSTRALIAN BIGHT JOURNEY

The Great Australian Bight journey commences on its eastern reaches at Whalers Way/Cape Giles and continues over to Western Australia.

This plan proposes to harness its geologic foundations and to formalise the start of the journey at its southern most point, encouraging visitors to interact with the full length of the Bight in South Australia and extend identification of its geology beyond Bunda Cliffs

Formalising this journey will depend upon a significant investment in coastal access infrastructure, including viewing platforms (cantilevered would be outstanding), ramps, stairs, fencing, bird hides, camping nodes and trail development.

There are critical coastal access, camping, trail development, visitor safety and environment protection issues surrounding this journey and these are discussed in more detail in the sections for the relevant council districts encompassing this western stretch of the Eyre Peninsula.

KEY INITIATIVES CONT.

NULLARBOR

The Nullarbor Touring Route is where our volume visitors lie, it is believed 400,000 visitors travel the plain per year. Many come into SA from WA to go out again. Many come in to sniff around, some are suitably impressed and stay, others have informed us we are a shock (not in a good way) to the system from the offerings of Western Australia.

Accommodation provision is top priority and is well below three stars. Border Village and Nullarbor Roadhouse are doing a tremendous job in terms of service standards (they were quite simply a cut above most) but their facilities were tired and worn. It was a disappointing juxtaposition.

Fowlers Bay and Penong should strongly consider caravan parks to an accredited family orientated standard - more unit accommodation and glamping options would make a significant difference.

Head of the Bight, Yalata, Maralinga, Scotdesco have the potential to play a critical role in harnessing visitors and underpinning the Far West Aboriginal Tourism Strategy implementation. Head of the Bight is half way there already but it needs a revamp. Night tours to hear whales moaning, merchandise to value add to the experience and higher standard of interpretation and interaction using digital technology would be worth considering.



Blow holes, bombs, caves, dinosaur footprints, fossils, trans Australian railway, Daisy Bates and the incredible Aboriginal landscape are bucket list wonders yet to be primed for visitor connections.

The Nullarbor has the brand and pulling power locked away, it is our most visited and downloaded visitor information guide. it now needs to slow the throughput and truly reveal its soul to the traveller.



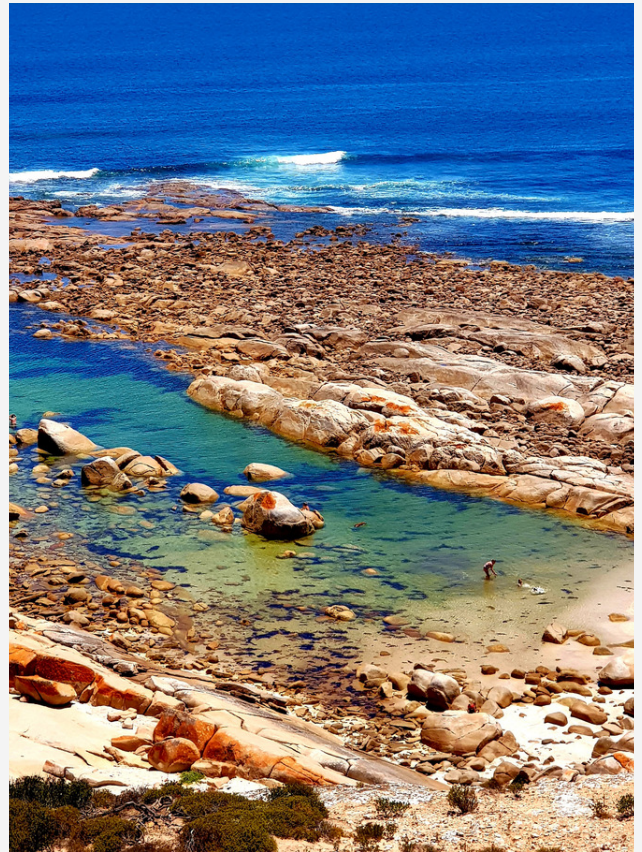
A REMINDER OF WHO AND WHERE WE ARE

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Our region is located 380 km or 4 hours' drive by inland routes from Adelaide and 1440 km or 15 hours' drive from Perth. Most enticingly it is a 40 minute flight from Adelaide to Port Lincoln, 50 minute flight from Adelaide to Whyalla and a one and a half hour flight from Adelaide to Ceduna.

To address the fundamentals of the project brief, the strategic positioning of the study area and its relationship to intrastate, interstate and international markets must be questioned and explored for new opportunities. These relationships are considered to influence the region in several ways:

- It affects the type, timing and routes of visitation, especially with peak periods during summer;
- 96% of Eyre Peninsula visitors are domestic and 4% are international. Domestically, 70% are from within the state compared to 30% from interstate. 40% of visitors are here for a holiday, 24% are visiting friends and relatives and 25% are visiting for business purposes.



- The Eyre Peninsula is recognised as having the highest growth potential of any South Australian region for the visitor economy but without the basics in foundation infrastructure to access natural assets sustainably and be supported with quality accommodation and services this growth will not be realised.

- The Eyre Peninsula has not invested region wide in catalyst visitor economy infrastructure since the late eighties and early nineties.

- The divide between visitor expectations and realities in supporting foundation infrastructure is growing and expenditure is downward trending on the Eyre Peninsula.

- Australia, along with Canada, has three cities in the top ten world's most liveable cities index – Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth. The rankings are a result of performance in the following areas:

- o Stability
- o Healthcare
- o Culture & Environment
- o Education and
- o Infrastructure

The region therefore needs to work extra hard to be attractive to its closest city centres when they themselves have such high levels of world ranked liveability and natural attractions.



A REMINDER OF WHO AND WHERE WE ARE

CONT.

- There is growing demand for Australia's distinctive and authentic experiences, many of which are located in regional and remote areas. In the year ending June 2017, Australia has seen increased international visitation to Aboriginal sites and communities (up 16 per cent), heritage buildings and sites (up 10 per cent), guided tours (up 12 per cent), national parks (up 11 per cent), the beach (up 8 per cent) and botanical gardens (up 10 per cent). Regional Australia is benefiting from this demand, with 63 per cent of domestic overnight visitors and 36 per cent of international visitors dispersing beyond capital cities in the year ending June 2017.

- State Governments around Australia have initially selected ten iconic tourism regions where the visitor economy is showing signs of growth, but has witnessed lower levels of investment (i.e. evidence of market failure) and in collaboration with the Australian Government Austrade and Tourism Australia have developed a strategy for investment into these regions. In South Australia, Kangaroo Island is the target.



- The Eyre Peninsula region must prove itself worthy of being next in line for equal levels of investment in South Australia. To do this we need to demonstrably reveal our own commitment to investment in visitability, that is: a sense of welcome, inclusivity, communication, technology and transport.

Currently in the Eyre Peninsula, there is a lack of 'man made' attractions and products. Activities such as agritourism, cultural interpretation and interaction are key opportunities to retain visitors in the region and improve expenditure yield.

Products that make use of local produce, such as food (bush food included), wine, brewing, roasting and seafood could complement the natural attractions of the region, which will continue to act as the main drawcard for tourists. Cummins, Wudinna, Kimba, Cleve and the hinterland of Port Lincoln would make perfect locations for this kind of positioning.

The short length of visitor stays in the region can be attributed to a lack of activities or tourism product within the area that would invite people to stay longer and spend more. Development of products relating to artisan produce could supplement the current drawcard of coastal scenery and the natural environment, and entice visitors into staying within the region longer. Some excellent interstate examples of this include Beechworth, Margaret River, King Island, Daylesford and the Yarra Valley, among others.



WAYFINDING

SIGNAGE IS OUR SILENT BRAND

The Eyes on Eyre stocktake revealed we are 3/10 when it comes to wayfinding and signage. Our last investment of significance was seemingly in the nineties. Wayfinding is primarily a shared responsibility between Local Government, the Department of Planning Transport and Infrastructure and the Department for Environment and Water. RDAWEP will work in conjunction with the EPLGA Works Committee to define priorities and guide the resourcing of improvements over the coming three to five years.

We could also innovate using QR coding and other digital technologies to reduce signage numbers and avoid ongoing maintenance.

Wayfound Consultants Audit Report should be read in conjunction with the interim Eyes on Eyre findings report and individual local government statements.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES

- Remove or repair dilapidated signage.
- 400m advanced warning notifications prior to attraction turnoffs require installation almost across the region.
- Re-skinning of tourism commission signage installed in nineties (Whyalla, Wudinna, Baird Bay and Coffin Bay x4)
- Consider regional digital strategies to supplement hard infrastructure (e.g QR Codes, Apps) to reduce amount of signage, limit vandalism.
- Re-skinning of A Breath of Fresh Eyre signs (or replacement where condition warrants) or better yet see above dotpoint.
- Regional gateway visitor information bays (x2)
- Visitor pods rest stop information bays (x22)
- Welcome to Town Entry Signage (potential for joint procurement of a regionally applied structure design or Council's can source individually).
- Standard coastal access designs (1xClimb, 1xBeach/Drive, 1xBeach/Walk, 1xBoat Ramp, 1xCampground) with advisory notifications and expected user behaviour outline.
- Standard campground use design with advisory notifications and expected user behaviour.



SUSTAINABLE COASTAL ACCESS FOR ALL

NATURAL ASSETS

Eyre Peninsula's coastal landforms reviewed as part of the sustainable coastal access for all component of the Eyes on Eyre Project included cliffs, rocky outcrops and shore platforms, mangrove woodlands, mudflats, estuaries, extensive sandy beaches, coastal dunes and coastal barrier systems.

The eastern, sheltered Spencer Gulf Coast of Eyre Peninsula has a subdued coastal morphology in comparison with the exposed rugged, open ocean Bight Coast due to restrictions on oceanic swell, a much calmer wind and wave regime, and greater tidal influences. This has resulted in less development of modern sand dunes and lithified sand dunes, which on the Bight Coast are widespread and have been eroded into spectacular high cliffs.

Between the headlands of the Eyre Peninsula, coastal erosion and sea level rise has developed a crenulated coast with sequences of broad open sandy bays backed by dune systems. Coastal samphire marshes fronted by mangroves and extensive sandflats occur on shores such as those of Franklin Harbour. Elsewhere, disconnected saline lagoons and samphire swamps are isolated from the sea by dune barriers.

This remarkable diversity of coastal landscapes, many of which are of national and global significance also attracts people to live, work and recreate on the Eyre Peninsula. This attraction is understandable but needs purposeful engineering and design to ensure interactions are sustainably managed into the future with a balance between environmental, economic and social values. This is never a simple task and for over seven years, the community and various government agencies have grappled with the balancing act.

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 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.

COASTAL ACCESS & CAMPING

COASTAL ACCESS

The Eyre Peninsula has a vast amount (2,500km) of coastline that provides iconic landscapes, a diverse range of natural and cultural values, and substantial economic and recreational opportunities for the local community. The Eyre Peninsula community uses beaches and bays for recreation and enjoyment, the coast also supports a large number of our local industries including tourism, mining, aquaculture, and agriculture. Although many of our towns are situated on the coast, we are fortunate to have large tracts of coast that are minimally developed or protected as reserves.

Damage to the natural resources used by recreationalists and the tourism industry has been recognised as an increasing management problem on the Eyre Peninsula. Unmanaged outdoor recreation and/or tourism is recognised as being a pervasive and cumulative contributor that puts at risk the environment and Aboriginal culture as well as impacts on the social and economic fabric of a region and its people. As a result there have been examples of private lease or landholders restricting public access through properties due to environmental damage, and littering in particular. Traditional Owners have also raised concerns about access through sacred or important heritage sites.

There is a high level of community expectations regarding the use of the coast, particularly in regards to open public access for recreational purposes. The coast is shaped by dynamic coastal processes and pressures, and in particular, from climate change effects, including sea level rise and increasing storm intensity and frequency which will cause permanent and temporary inundation and erosion. As a result, coastal processes and coastal forces will have major implications on how we access and use these areas. It is beneficial to current and future generations to ensure that this sustainable coastal access is maintained.

Coastal access is valued for a variety of reasons by different people, including government, councils, communities, developers, individuals and special interest groups. The planning and management of the coast must therefore balance environment, economic and social outcomes,



and take into consideration the range of issues or values that stakeholders consider important.

The current LiDAR Climate Change Modelling project will be critical for the completion of an Eyre Peninsula Coastal Access Strategy and its subsequent integration into articulating a regional vision for coastal access, supporting the assessment of development and other proposals with a non-urban focus. It will also provide local government authorities with strategic direction for the protection, planning and management of the Eyre Peninsula's coastal public access routes.

The Eyes on Eyre project saw evidence of common coastal management problems all around the region, however coastal visitor safety around coastal cliff landscapes, uncontrolled camping and uncontrolled pedestrian and vehicle use were the perceived priorities (in specific locations) after finishing the coastal assessments.

The Eyre Peninsula is yet to develop one regional centre with a population of 50,000 or more or receive the number of visitors that have proven in Western Australia and Queensland to warrant significant large scale investment in coastal access infrastructure and management controls.

That is not to say there isn't evidence of particular sites under obvious stress and trends of population/visitation growth that should not be ignored.

COASTAL ACCESS & CAMPING

COASTAL ACCESS

The Eyes on Eyre coastal access and camping stocktake demonstrated that vehicular access is available at almost every beach on our vast coastline - including within Conservation Parks and National Parks. There are very few restrictions and there are a number of sites with a maze of track options leading to the beach - particularly in the upper west and far west of the Eyre Peninsula.

Vehicular access must be viewed as a privilege not a right. The Natural Resources Management Boards have done a very thorough job of installing signage at almost every point to alert users to vulnerable wildlife such as threatened bird species and advise of responsible user behaviour when accessing the nearshore environment. The signs were one of the most consistently applied forms of signage in the Eyre Peninsula. Eyes on Eyre survey/interview respondents were able to recall and nominate the signage advisory information more often than not when asked to do so. Visitors to the region were especially aware.

Driving or riding on beaches is thrilling and adds to a level of convenience (when lugging equipment) for accessing fishing, surfing and picnic locations that most all humans sincerely appreciate and desire. It is a much valued experience for locals and tourists alike. The privilege however comes with direct and indirect environmental impacts.

The Coastal Access and Camping component of Eyes on Eyre has arguably generated the most suspicion, hesitation and vigorous interest of the project. Some stakeholders expressed strong concern regarding the delivery of this component of Eyes on Eyre.

There was fear that the stocktake would lead to a list of coastal access points or campgrounds that would be recommended for 'closure' or that unrealistic demands for immediate expenditure on all sites would eventuate. It is important that these concerns and fears are addressed in the coming stages of Eyes on Eyre and that the primary goal of securing a regional vision for sustainable development opportunities that will attract and secure external and internal investment is clearly articulated.



Local Government staff were wary of their involvement and undoubtedly the breadth of coastline requiring asset (including risk) management is daunting and intimidating when under review.

Coastal access decision making has polarised Eyre Peninsula communities, government and regulatory bodies and is fundamental to the visitor economy. As stakeholders we can bury our heads in the sand (pardon the pun) or lift our heads up to the horizon and look for the opportunities, not the challenges in the first instance.

By focusing on opportunities in the first instance, we can build the much needed (and currently missing) trust between Eyre Peninsula communities and between government agencies. Trust creates safe spaces for competing view points and a willingness among members to be open to new – sometimes difficult – ideas.

Coastal Access, Climate Change Adaptation along with Emergency Management Planning are arguably critical aspects for Eyre Peninsula's survival as a place to live, work and play. The notion of joint planning has never been more necessary than for these aspects.

COASTAL ACCESS & CAMPING

COASTAL ACCESS CONT.

Eyes on Eyre did reveal a region wide build it, release it and forget it undercurrent. This is not through apathy however but rather as a consequence of scale versus available resource (both human and financial). For comparison, the 44 km hinterland and coast road along Victoria's Shipwreck Coast (Great Ocean Road) has an almost identical visitor economy potential as Eyre Peninsula's 2,500 km coast at just over \$500 million. Those 44 km are recommended to have an investment of \$178 million to stimulate and achieve economic potential and environment protection. How would the Eyre Peninsula spend the same amount?

The masterplan that results from the stocktake, if nothing else, will lay out our goals and desires cohesively, something the Australian and State Governments openly advise us we are poor at. We won't get everything we want but perhaps we will have at least set ourselves up with clear destination goals.

The coast is a complex socio-ecological system, the management community must expand current monitoring efforts. Tracking ecological data only tells half the story; collecting social data sheds light on how people engage coastal ecosystems and highlights values crucial for affecting behavior change.

RECOMMENDED PRINCIPLES FOR ACCESS LOCATIONS

- Consider recreational attributes that attract people to the coast such as safe swimming beaches, surfing spots and interesting landscape or seascape features.
- Provide a level of public access and facilities consistent with the function of the coastal location and level of demand.
- Minimise public access over eroding or steep dunes, rocky areas or other difficult terrain.
- Control access to protect significant conservation or heritage areas.
- Manage access to the coast to
 - promote safety for coastal users.
- Provide obvious and logical public access to the coast.
- Ensure connectivity with adjacent uses such as public open space, public transport access, and urban areas and amenities.



RECOMMENDED PRINCIPLES FOR ACCESS PATHS AND ROUTES

- Incorporate natural topography and vegetation, access to sheltered or popular locations into design and location of paths and routes.
- Design paths and routes to minimise erosion, wind tunnelling and maintenance.
- Locate paths and access routes to encourage regeneration and/ or rehabilitation of degraded areas.
- Provide a range of universal, access options to the coast.
- Respect historical patterns of access such as existing tracks (if sustainable).
- Provide access routes to encourage visitors taking in areas of cultural, indigenous and natural attractions.
- Access paths and routes should be justified in terms of a coastal public access purpose (usually through a foreshore management plan).
- Provide access routes and paths to direct people away from sensitive or unsafe areas and toward recreational opportunities such as safe swimming beaches.

COASTAL ACCESS & CAMPING

COASTAL ACCESS CONT.

EYRE PENINSULA COASTAL LANDSCAPES OVERVIEW

Eyre Peninsula coastal landforms include cliffs, rocky outcrops and shore platforms, mangrove woodlands, mudflats, estuaries, extensive sandy beaches, coastal dunes and coastal barrier systems, as well as numerous near shore reefs and islands. These coastal landforms have developed under the influence of a range of tidal conditions and wave regimes, varying from high energy on exposed open ocean coasts (for example, the west coast of Eyre Peninsula) to low energy in protected shorelines with high tidal ranges (such as Whyalla and Franklin Harbour). The oldest known rocks in South Australia are at Cape Carnot, Whaler's Way, Port Lincoln.

The east coast of Eyre Peninsula is subdued in character in comparison with the rugged west coast, mainly because of the absence of aeolianite (former sand dunes turned into rock), which have been eroded into spectacular high cliffs on the west coast, and the much quieter wave climate in the sheltered Spencer Gulf. The modern coastline was broadly established some 7,000 years ago after a relatively geologically rapid rise in sea level, thus many coastal sectors are still establishing a new equilibrium (for example, North Shields). Some parts of the Eyre Peninsula coastal areas are relatively stable where the shoreline intersects resistant rocks, which form cliffs. Other cliff lines may be eroding rapidly, such as those of the Nullarbor, where cliff falls are frequent.

Ongoing global sea level rise will influence the future behaviour of the Eyre Peninsula coastline. We will see enhanced coastal erosion and landward migration of the shoreline along some more vulnerable sectors. The mangrove woodlands of the upper Spencer Gulf (Whyalla to Arno Bay), for example, will migrate landward; cliffs in unconsolidated alluvium and dune limestone will experience new phases of erosion, but many of the resistant, bedrock-cliffed coastlines should experience less dramatic change. Thus the east coast of Eyre Peninsula will be particularly vulnerable to change and coastal access management will need to consider these factors.



RECOMMENDED REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Coastal cliff access points should be prioritised over the next ten years for definition of access and infrastructure controls primarily due to human safety risks. This includes, signage, access delineation, lookouts and steps/ramps.

The localities list below was generated from an assessment of current accessibility, movement and volume of (current and projected) visitation, position adjacent to campgrounds, physical opportunities and constraints and connectivity to high visitation nodes or proposed precincts. They are well-used areas that need links established and are adjacent to significant population centres and/or receive high visitation or could maximise benefits by capitalising on other Council projects.

Opportunities for progress in master planning include:

- Point Douglas to Backy Point (implement existing northern coastline masterplan)
- Point Gibbon to Point Price
- Redbanks
- Parnkalla or Barngala Extension Trail (Fig trees to Axel Stenross)
- Sleaford
- Whalers Way
- Frenchman's to Greenly Beach
- Cummings Monument
- Head of Bight
- Bunda Cliffs

COASTAL ACCESS & CAMPING

COASTAL ACCESS CONT.

RECOMMENDED REGIONAL PRIORITIES

- Every major coastal town should strive for disability access to coast (permanent or seasonal). Acknowledgement to Whyalla and Tumby Bay for their existing efforts in this regard.
- Standard coastal access designs for signage with advisory notifications (Location reference, safety, risk and environment protection, reporting and emergency contact) deployed across the region. Language choice and tone is critical. Identify shorebird breeding vulnerable locations and add extra definition to expectation of user behaviour where appropriate.
- Introduction of new coastal access infrastructure or refinement of existing infrastructure should be prioritised around designated camping node precincts to facilitate a revegetation target of 30% to 40% from pre-development condition..

The east coast of Eyre Peninsula contains large sections of significant and vulnerable saltmarsh and mangrove habitat as well as coastal landscapes that are degraded through vegetation clearance, weed infestations and dune instability.

The east coast (and parts of the west coast) are particularly vulnerable to coastal erosion and storm surge impacts. Further direction and risk assessment will come from the LIDAR survey. This section of Eyre Peninsula will likely feel the greatest pressure for inland retreat and potentially the greatest conflict between public and private coastal accessibility.

This section of the region revealed hotspots of undefined pedestrian access through dunes (often attached to informal camping locations), unrestricted beach and sometimes dune vehicle access. This is not to say, there weren't also pockets of excellence (Port Neill, Pioneer Road Walking Track and Arno Bay Mangrove walk for example.)



The lower Eyre Peninsula's informal campgrounds and coastal access interface also requires definition and consolidation.

An increasingly popular stretch of coast for caravanners and campers which varies in coastal access definition and infrastructure to delineate and control access through dunes and proximity to cliff edges.

In a world where ecological habitats are disappearing, the unique natural assets of Eyre Peninsula will become a stronger drawcard. Campertrailers were the fastest growing recreational vehicle purchase in 2016,

Helping families to go camping and connect with nature in an affordable and environmentally sustainable way should be a key economic goal for the region.

Opportunities for progress in camping node, coastal access and trail master planning include:

- Fitzgerald Bay to Point Lowly
- Flat Rock to Point Gibbon
- Redbanks to Moonlight Bay
- Sleaford to Whaler's Way
- Frenchman's to Greenly
- Sheringa and Walker's Rock to Lake Newland
- Gibson Peninsula to Cape Bauer
- Point Brown and Davenport Creek
- Far West TBA

COASTAL ACCESS & CAMPING

COASTAL ACCESS CONT.

RECOMMENDED REGIONAL PRIORITIES

The following are nationally and internationally significant shorebird areas on Eyre Peninsula (Caton et al., 2011a):

Franklin Harbour
Sleaford Bay
Coffin Bay (Point Longnose and Gunyah Beach)
Lake Newland Conservation Park (including the ocean beach)
Venus Bay (including the islands within the bay)
Baird Bay
Sceale Bay (including Seagull Lake)
Streaky Bay (including Acraman Creek)
Tourville Bay
Murat Bay
Eyre Island
St Peter Island

As outlined, there are important opportunities to explore before focusing on restrictions. The first Eyre Peninsula district for example to invest in limiting vehicle access to a beach, enabling eco- tourism accommodation and embracing and facilitating shorebird tourism will have a very powerful product to take to market.

The very successful Camel Beach House experience on the west coast is a case in point. There is a substantial market of visitor (and local) who wants to experience highly controlled exposure to relatively intact, pristine environments. The Eyre Peninsula is behind in developing product for this market, yet undoubtedly has one of, if not the most significant potential to be the leader in South Australia (alongside Kangaroo Island).

There is evidence of this potential from the earliest European settlements and exploration of Eyre Peninsula. Dignitaries from around the world travelled to Eyre Peninsula for its ornithological uniqueness and vibrancy. The story is waiting to be told and a market tapped.

Local Government planning can be the most critical catalyst for creating both protection and development for eco-tourism using specific zoning and appropriate conditions.



- Consider the development of ornithological visitor hubs e.g Yanerbie, Baird Bay, Kellidie Bay, and Little Swamp. Hub meaning: ecotourism accommodation, interpretative information, bird hides and other bird observation supporting infrastructure.
- Define the locations for acceptable horse training, 4WD experiences and/or small bikes/orv's, improve infrastructure supporting their sustainable use.
- A comprehensive social media based awareness campaign with a carefully selected ambassador conducted across region for responsible vehicle use on coasts, along with a reporting mechanism for anti-social human behaviour and site determined actions for protecting shorebird nesting.
- Continue the outstanding use of public art to engage coastal users and residents in the story of the Eyre Peninsula's biodiversity and consider a defined tourism trail based on it.



COASTAL ACCESS & CAMPING

CAMPING

Camping visitors in Eyre Peninsula use a wide range of accommodation facilities at either commercial sites (caravan parks, camping grounds or cabins) or non-commercial sites (by the side of the road, on private property, on crown land or in a national park, often in a self-drive avn, motorhome or campervan).

In recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of people using camping accommodation yet a decline in the number of commercial sites available. This has been offset by the increased patronage on non-commercial sites, a trend expected to continue.

Around 12% of all visitor nights in Australia are spent camping. There is no one typical non-commercial camper. They:

- are not just those travelling long-haul and touring (a percentage of the point-to-point market also stays in non-commercial sites).
- are not all retirees (in fact, the largest segment is those still working and aged between 30-54).
- are not the same market as those that prefer to stay in commercial sites.

it is clear from most available research that many travellers mix and match their accommodation choices. Five years ago BDO Australia researched the difference between commercial and non-commercial campers.

Those surveyed in commercial camping sites tend to:

- spend the majority (85% of their nights in commercial accommodation or camping grounds.
- stay 4 nights or longer (49% of campers), with 34% staying 2-3 nights and only 17% staying 1 night.
- spend approximately \$576 at each location (excluding accommodation) or \$73 per day.
- still be in full time employment (33%).

Those in non-commercial camping sites tend to:



- spend most of their nights (71%) in non-commercial accommodation or camping grounds.
- also stay at commercial sites (30%) of the time, but an equal number (30%) try to avoid staying at commercial sites.
- stay 3 nights or less (74%) in each location, of which 34% are for 1 night.
- spend approximately \$213 at each location (excluding accommodation) or \$53 per day.
- be retired (only 12% still employed full-time). (Source: BDO 2013)

Therefore to be competitive nationally, Eyre Peninsula needs to meet the needs of both commercial and non-commercial campers. However, there are sub-regional profiles and trends they may see a swing more towards the provision of non-commercial campers.

The future of camping appears to have two main directions:

- a market looking for greater comfort and facilities that provide for their needs, including a growing family market
- a market looking to keep it simple and keep the cost down.

COASTAL ACCESS & CAMPING

CAMPING CONT.

The majority of consumers of the camping lifestyle are generally demanding better facilities and a higher standard of accommodation, whether in park cabins or in their own caravan or motor home. They also wish to be able to experience non-degraded natural and constructed landscapes, and are more environmentally conscious.

Eyes on Eyre found our commercial and non-commercial camping offerings to be below par - with some excellent exceptions dotted throughout the region. There is a growing divide between Eyre Peninsula's offerings however and that of neighbouring Western Australia and other SA regions that will leave our visitor economy flagging. We need resort standard commercial caravan parks and our informal campgrounds are a little too rustic in most cases.

Eyes on Eyre considered there to be an adequate supply of informal camping locations but in general these were undersized, haphazard, lacking in planned fit-for-purpose design and standards of amenities/service provision were highly variable and mostly below three stars. The application of by-laws was also variable in terms of length of stay, cost or no cost, obtaining of permit or supply of honesty box.

The Eyes on Eyre survey/interviews with campers generally revealed an overwhelming desire to have campgrounds that facilitated a reduced environmental impact, permitted a sense of escapism but were backed up with amenities of a basic but quality standard. Anecdotally, around 40% of campers used the supplied honesty box system with visitors from outside the region, the most likely to abide.

It was also evident that campers will flock in greater numbers to campgrounds with amenities and are not at all put off by nominal fees. Wikicamps/Tripadvisor and other online apps analysis across the Eyre Peninsula provides a terrific insight for any government or management agency interested in better understanding their target market.

Western Australia is home to camping node developments that have delivered dual visitor economy and environment protection outcomes.



WA's camp host model is also highly transferable and adaptable to the Eyre Peninsula.

RDAWEP strongly advocates for camping node developments within the region and we offer a list of nominated localities based on our Eyes on Eyre assessment and analysis - again this is a starting point for discussion and is not intended to limit or exclude other locations (Tod River Reservoir for example or Koppio Hills have excellent potential).

Camping node developments involve landscape architecture, amenity infrastructure (toilets, showers, shelter, bbq, tables/seating, fire pits, WiFi) and planned fit-for-purpose designs (all weather access, vehicle turnarounds, large RV's through to tent sites) with a strong revegetation component that not only enhances biodiversity but delivers that highly sought after sense of privacy. The nodes are best placed to launch or connect trail developments. Camping node developments could be used to trial a region wide camping permit system using smart technology.

REGIONAL CAMPING NODE POSSIBILITIES

Fitzgerald Bay to Point Lowly

Lake Gilles

Flat Rock to Point Gibbon

Darke Peak/Carapee Hill

Pildappa Rock

Redbanks to Moonlight Bay

Sleaford to Whaler's Way

Frenchman's to Greenly

Sheringa and Walker's Rock to Lake Newland

Streaky Bay Loops (TBA)

Point Brown and Davenport Creek

Head of Bight

*list is not exhaustive and land ownership is not considered purposefully to drive opportunity not challenge mentality.



UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED WE FALL

OUR BOUNDARIES ARE ARTIFICIAL

To perform the Eyes on Eyre stocktake, the region was viewed through visitor eyes and those eyes take in natural assets, attractions and navigation aids and not Council or Natural Resource Management boundaries.

It is hoped that before each stakeholder reaches for their individual report card for Eyes on Eyre (and tries to determine how they compare or whether they have received the same attention) that the wider perspective is acknowledged and we collectively spend a proportion of time mapping opportunities without burrowing in to the all too common themes of 'we can't afford it', 'we've already tried it', 'who owns what', 'why that can't be done' and 'it's not my responsibility'. These are circular discussions and why we are trapped in a rut. We need to move forward, even if it is just one project at a time.

The visitor economy hinges on high quality sustainable environmental conditions. Our natural resources require considered human stewardship. Modern infrastructure and technology makes our region a contender in the livability stakes and therefore visitation stakes. Livability means Doctors, Nurses, Teachers, Scientists, Engineers and Podiatrists might return home or leave the leafy eastern suburbs of the City with their families to feel a sense of community and interact with the bounty of natural riches that only a regional lifestyle can deliver.



There is a big task ahead of us but plenty of precedence and guidance to refer to and adapt to our own needs. It is not about rushing in or going big to catch up, but it is about forward collective movement.

Just one experience centre or camping node development would potentially benefit the entire region by bringing those extra few thousand visitors and making their stay longer.

If those projects are years off then let's start with a foreshore redevelopment, a consolidated coastal access path or one mountain biking trail and let's lift the standard of outcome to world-class.



PROJECT APPROACH

NEXT STEPS: FIVE STAGES

The Eyes on Eyre Wayfinding, Coastal Access and Camping Options stocktake should be considered Stage 1 for developing an Eyre Peninsula Visitor Economy Master Plan.

Stage 1 - Issues and Opportunities Analysis DECEMBER 2017 - MARCH 2018

The purpose of Stage 1 was to identify and analyse issues and opportunities in conjunction with stakeholders and the community.

Stage 2 - Project Vision and Place Principles APRIL 2018 - JUNE 2018

The project vision, place principles and key directions will be developed in Stage 2. Stage 1 and 2 will provide the foundation for the Master Plan moving forward.

Stage 3 - Draft Concepts JULY 2018 - SEPTEMBER 2018

Draft concepts will be prepared to capture all the key moves proposed for the Eyre Peninsula. The concepts will reposition the coast and inland areas and develop precincts in a high-level illustrative plan with specific and tangible outcomes.

Stage 4 - Preliminary Master Plan OCT 2018 - DECEMBER 2018

The conclusions from Stage 3 are refined and developed into a preliminary master plan. Recommendations for how each township can be better connected and interfaced with the informal campgrounds, conservation and national parks and the draft site plans for the priority visitor sites are prepared.



Stage 5 - DRAFT Master Plan JAN 2019 - MARCH 2019

Recommendations tested in Stage 04 were further refined ahead of master plan exhibition and consultation through Local Government corporate planning and community engagement methods. A cost plan and implementation strategies are devised, with a view to submitting a Building Better Regions Fund application.

The project will require a Project Control Group and a Project Working Group comprising senior and executive officers from Local Government, Regional Development Australia Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula, Department for Environment and Water, Regions SA and the South Australian Tourism Commission.

