


EYES ON EYRE FRANKLIN HARBOUR

A WAYFINDING,
COASTAL ACCESS AND
CAMPING OPTIONS
PROJECT

REPORT 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.

Barngala are the traditional owners of the
Franklin Harbour 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

FRANKLIN HARBOUR'S ROLE IN THE EYRE PENINSULA

Franklin Harbour is the gateway to the Sefood Frontier for our eastern travellers. This sentiment could be more widely sold and marketed. It is the first location for the visitor to interact with the oyster industry and enjoy the bounty of a rich estuarine breeding ground supported by nature's most powerful filtration plant, the mangrove and samphire tidal flats.

Sharing a coastal ketches trail that stretches along the east coast to Tumby Bay, there is plenty of scope for a more concerted, defined trail infrastructure with the deployment of QR code digital based interpretative information a worthwhile consideration.

Franklin Harbour can also be the entry point for self-drive travellers from across the Spencer Gulf as it is the Harbour that launches and receives the only ferry crossing of the Spencer Gulf - when it is in operation.

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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).

QUICK STATS

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.

WAYFINDING

SIGNAGE IS OUR SILENT BRAND

Franklin Harbour is moving in its own direction to address its wayfinding issues. There appears to be a new visitor information bay under construction opposite the first service station you hit upon when arriving in town or heading to bypass and within a short distance from Cowell's RV dump point.

The location for the sign is excellent. The current sign is in poor condition and not a drawcard.

In short, signage and wayfinding in Franklin Harbour needs a refresh. Supporting Infrastructure is generally in sound condition and locations are good. Like almost every other town on Eyre Peninsula, 400m advanced warning of attractions could be improved. In particular, the tourist drives should receive greater highway and in town marketing using the large brown and white attraction signage templates and smaller directional signs.

The coastal ketches interpretive signage varies in condition and a potential option for the future is to use trail marker style bollards with digital QR capability and video stories.

There are too many private signs, signs that don't meet DPTI or Australian Standards, signs obscured by vegetation and faded signs that are almost illegible. The overall condition reflects a tired and worn out vibe and Franklin Harbour is anything but that.

Refer to Wayfound Consultants Audit Report.



FRANKLIN HARBOUR PRIORITIES

- Remove or repair dilapidated signage.
- Consider a regional QR Code node approach to reduce amount of signage, limit vandalism.
- 400m advanced warning notifications prior to attraction turnoffs require installation.
- Contribute to a regional gateway visitor information bays at the 'Tanks' and Border Village.
- Visitor pod rest stop information bay could be considered for Franklin Harbour/Cleve interface.





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

Eyes 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

FRANKLIN HARBOUR TOP 3 PRIORITIES

- 1 Port Gibbon to Point Price
- 2 The Knob to Port Gibbon
- 3 Lucky Bay

VALUES

The beaches of Franklin Harbour are valued for their scenic beauty, tranquility, fishing and recreation opportunities. Most of this section of the coast has sand-shellgrit beaches with shelly beach ridges and coastal wetlands and shrublands inland. The district contains a nationally significant shorebird area and wetlands of national significance. This low energy section of the Eyre Peninsula coast is accreting and designated a high threat analysis under the Eyre Peninsula Coastal Action Plan with sand dunes at the western end and flood prone land in around the townships of Cowell and Lucky Bay.

The embayments and surrounding tidal wetlands and dunes are valuable for both plant and animal habitats, and especially valuable for birds, including shorebirds and raptors. 104 bird species have been recorded within this cell (CAP 2011),

Agriculture is the main livelihood with many farmers and inland communities cherishing the coastline as the place for their downtime and relaxation. the shack settlements of Lucky Bay and Port Gibbon are the embodiment of this sentiment and have significant cultural and heritage values.

Just over 30% of the subregion Franklin Harbour is included within contains native vegetation. About 40% of this is protected within Conservation Parks, Reserves and Wilderness Protection Areas. Just over 10% is protected through Heritage Agreements. The remaining 50% of native vegetation is located on private land or road reserves. Selected fauna, flora and vegetation communities of conservation significance include:

Sandhill Dunnart
Australian Pied Oyster Catcher
Hooded Plover
White-bellied Sea Eagle
Eastern Curlew
Banded Stilt
Fairy Tern
Australian Sealion
Temperate coastal saltmarsh
Mixed Mallee woodland

Tourism is an important contributor to the local economy and with a 23% reduction in agricultural employment is becoming the critical lifeline for many Eyre Peninsula communities.

Commercial wild fisheries are an important industry in the area. Wild catch including prawns, blue crab, sardines, abalone and scale fish from Spencer Gulf contribute to the regional economy and are important contributors to the State's commercial fishing industry. The Spencer Gulf Prawn Fishery that relies on the areas mangroves and tidal flats for nursery habitat, is one of the more valuable fisheries in Australia. Aquaculture industries in the subregion include Pacific oyster farms and hatchery in Franklin Harbour.

EYES ON EYRE ASSESSMENT

The District Council of Franklin Harbour is well aware of its priority coastal access locations and the aspects and impacts requiring management. Negotiations over planned management approaches have been fraught. Eyes on Eyre determined that to move forward a focus be placed on Port Gibbon to Point Price as a master planned camping node location and where practical its design learnings translated to the northern section from Port Gibbon to The Knob.

The Knob through to Point Price is an iconic destination on the Eyre Peninsula and a priority stretch for nature based tourism. The location is not currently primed for these connections and values to continue sustainably.

The Eyes on Eyre survey of coastal access users revealed that most stakeholders want infrastructure that reduces their environmental impacts. Campers will stay longer and pay fees if there are modern facilities at sites. They will be drawn to coastal localities that offer reduced exposure to the elements, privacy between themselves and other campers and a way in which to respectfully share the access with day-users.

Coastal access paths and trails are highly valued and restrictions on vehicle access to beaches and dunes does not have to be all encompassing e.g. by designating acceptable distances or areas (through signage and promotion) for vehicle use and requesting or enforcing prohibitions in other areas. The key consideration here is that the region (not just Franklin Harbour) has mostly unrestricted access at present causing degradation.

COASTAL ACCESS

EYES ON EYRE ASSESSMENT CONT.

The Port Gibbon to Point Price stretch of coastline has all the natural features to become an important destination on the Eyre Peninsula self-drive journey. The European history, geology, Aboriginal Heritage and landscape is outstanding and could very much be harnessed as a crucial tourism offering and economic support to the Franklin Harbour district.

The Point Price sandhills (up to 20m high) comprise the most extensive dune field on the northern Gulf Coast of Eyre Peninsula. The active dune field has migrated from Mills Beach, anomalously producing sandy beaches and dunes on a rocky shoreline which gives the Port Gibbon precinct its incredible mix of natural features. The Blue Range Beds geology here (which is 1.55 billion years old) also crop out on the Bight Coast at Talia Caves which adds to the attraction for visitors and offers a great east west connection for travellers.

The camping and coastal access infrastructure in place is tired, worn and offers little in the way of attraction for increasing visitation. The sustainability of this site for the visitor industry and the natural features on which it depends will involve careful planning, management and sympathetic development and these sites should receive the greatest priority.

MASTER PLAN PROGRESS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Initiate engagement with Barngala Native Title Group.
- Procure landscape architect for master planning and design.
- Camping node development (for large recreational vehicles to camper trailers/tents along with supporting signage and visitor facilities such as toilets, showers, effluent pump out, bins). 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.



WHERE SHOULD WE START

REGIONAL WISH LIST

Refer to Regional 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 access to grant funding for 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.



Eyes on Eyre drew us to the importance of Franklin Harbour's southern coastline and how it could compliment the work proposed on Cowell's town foreshore and the Lucky Bay precinct.

We think visitor information pods and camping nodes, with new facilities and smart technologies at Port Gibbon/Point Price would be significant additions and fix immediate gaps for visitors.

We look forward to presenting and talking the Eyes on Eyre findings through with Franklin Harbour stakeholders.

