

MACKAY REGION RV STRATEGY

FINAL REPORT
JULY 2023



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MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL

The Mackay Region RV Strategy represents Mackay Regional Council's bold vision to transform the Mackay region into a chosen destination for RV adventurers.

Our goal is to facilitate an array of enticing RV stay options, captivating tours and experiences, and strategic promotion of our key destinations, all aimed at capturing an even larger portion of the flourishing RV market.

To achieve this, we recognise the indispensable need for collaboration with industry stakeholders and investment in expanding RV sites across the region.

Our aspirations extend beyond merely attracting a greater share of the RV market.

We envision our strategy as a catalyst for economic development, a vehicle for encouraging investment, a force that fosters collaboration among diverse stakeholders, and a way to guide our efforts and actions.

As we embark on this journey, we are mindful of the significant economic impact of the RV industry, which contributed a staggering \$23.8 billion to the Australian economy in 2022.

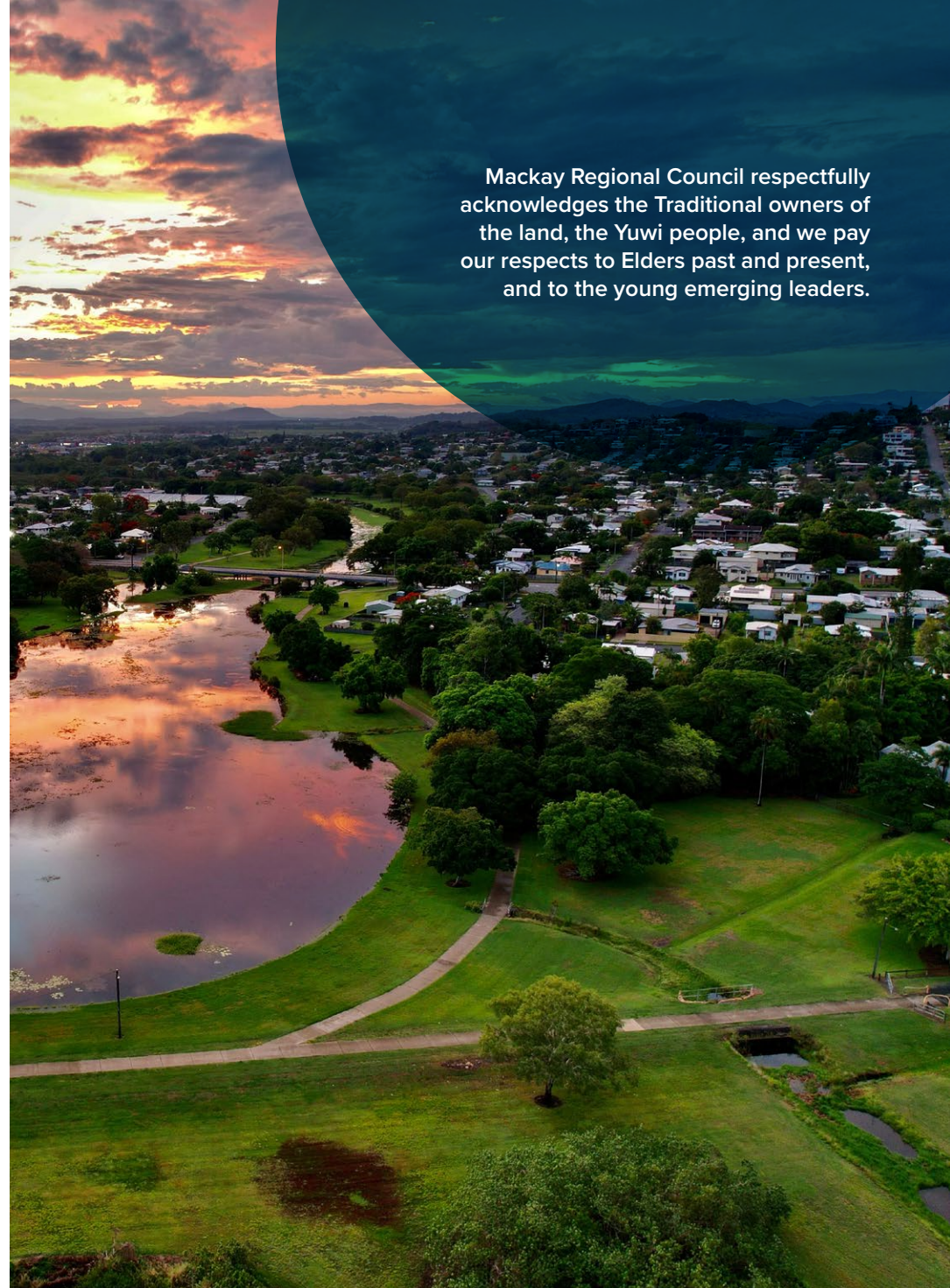
It is evident that regional areas, like the Mackay region, hold immense potential, as visitors increasingly seek destinations offering "nature-based" experiences. With 89 per cent of domestic caravan and camping trips taking place in regional areas, we are well positioned to tap into the substantial \$7.4 billion visitor expenditure, stimulating local economic growth and driving sustainable prosperity.

Our strategy revolves around positioning the Mackay region as the premier choice for RV travellers, forged through strong collaboration, strategic investments, and targeted marketing efforts.

The RV Strategy also plays a key role in supporting other economic initiatives led by council including the Mountain Bike and Fishing Tourism strategies.

Mayor Greg Williamson
Mackay Regional Council

Mackay Regional Council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional owners of the land, the Yuwi people, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present, and to the young emerging leaders.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. WHAT IS AN RV STRATEGY?

The Mackay Region RV Strategy sets out the vision, objectives and actions that will enable the Mackay region to attract a greater share of the recreational vehicle market.

The strategy aims to work with industry and tourism stakeholders to increase overnight stays in the region from the diverse range of self-drive travellers who are travelling with either a caravan, camper trailer or a motorhome/ campervan.

While the strategy considers the traditional caravan holiday makers who prefer the commercial “holiday park” experience, it has a stronger focus on increasing the capture of those “self-contained” RV travellers who have on board water, power, toilets and showers. These travellers are able to stay “off-grid” and look for appealing locations that are low or no cost, for a larger proportion of their stays.

The market investigation undertaken for this strategy indicates that overall, the Caravan, Camper and RV market is growing and while there are contested views on the region’s reputation for the commercial “holiday park” product, it does not perform as well in the self-contained traveller market looking for low and no cost options in the region. These travellers will spend money on going out, buying supplies, tours and experiences, provided they have suitable stay options in the right locations and easy access to information.

The strategy aims to grow the market share for the region by attracting more RV travellers to stay one or more nights and encouraging more investment across the full range of stay options including no/low cost through to commercial holiday park sites.

This strategy is based on building new partnerships and strengthening collaboration with the industry to ensure the region becomes a “must stay” destination for RV travellers.

Throughout the strategy the term “RV” (Recreation Vehicle) is used to define the target market for the strategy. However, it should be read that this can include self-contained caravans, motorhomes, campervans and camping trailers. The Queensland Camping Options Toolkit describes an RV as...

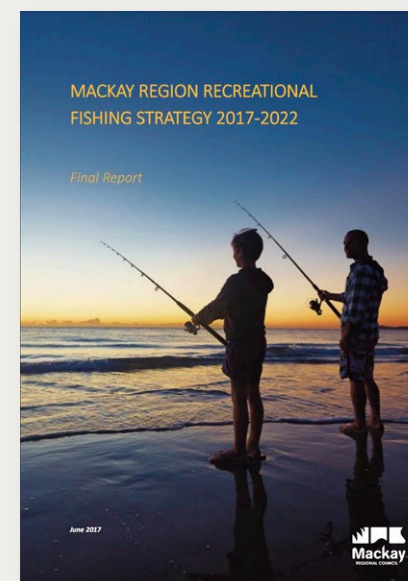
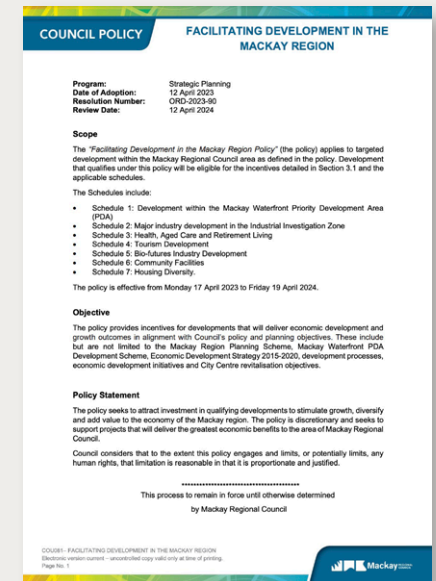
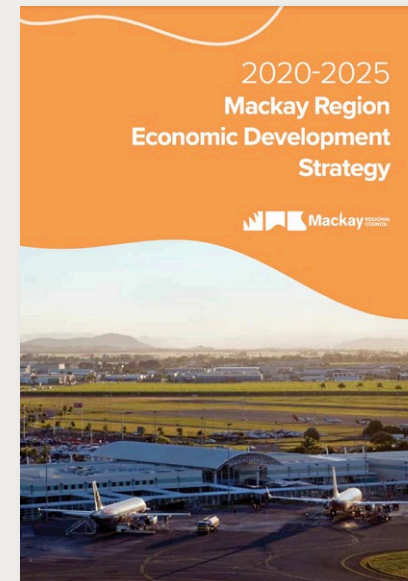
“a caravan, motorhome or campervan that has built in eating, sleeping, food storage and preparation facilities and also contains a toilet, shower and holding tanks for both grey and black water, clean water storage and hot water service”.



1.2. PREPARATION OF THE STRATEGY

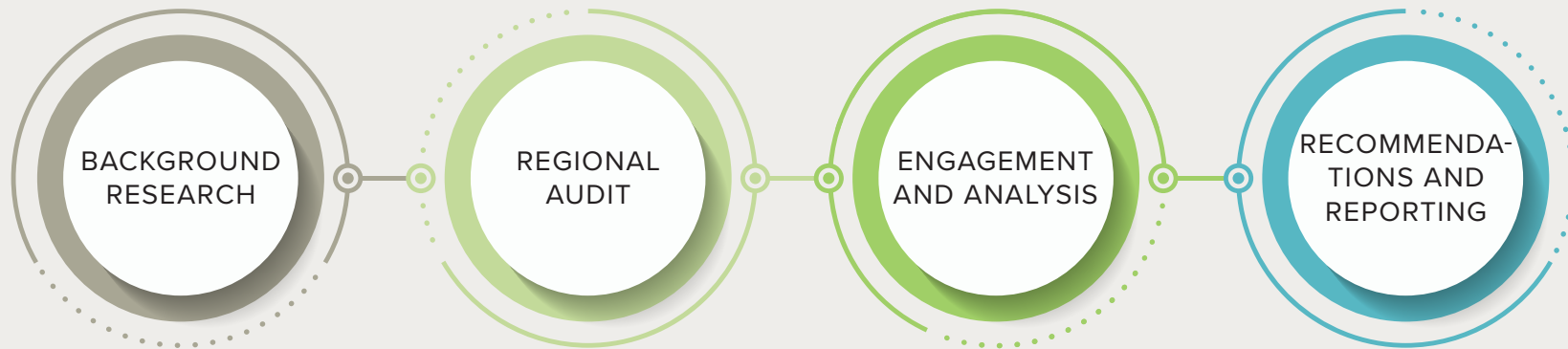
The Strategy has built on a number of previous reports and also integrates needs from other strategies. Key documents include:

- « Mackay Regional Council Corporate Plan 2022 – 2027
- « Facilitating Development in the Mackay Region Council Policy No 081 (Feb 2022)
- « Mackay Regional Camping Analysis Report (Earth Check Sept 2020)
- « Mackay Region Economic Development Strategy (2020-2025)
- « Mackay Region Events Strategy 2020 – 2025
- « Mackay Region Recreational Fishing Strategy 2017-2022
- « Mackay Region Mountain Bike Strategy and Eungella-Finch Hatton Mountain bike Destination Feasibility Study (2020)



The process of preparing the strategy is summarised below:

Figure 1 – Study Process



The preparation of the strategy includes four main components:



2. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

2.1. OVERVIEW OF ENGAGEMENT

The community and stakeholder engagement program included the following:

- « Council Staff
- « Councillors
- « Tourism Interests
- « Peak industry bodies
- « Commercial operators
- « Government Agencies
- « Sunwater
- « Community and user survey (240 responses)
- « Consultation Tent at Discovery Parks Mackay Harbour Open Day 19/2/23



2.2. KEY THEMES EMERGING FROM ENGAGEMENT



Improving diversity and availability of site options

Feedback from RV travellers, the industry and other stakeholders indicated that there is a need to expand the diversity of RV stay options in the region and to increase the number of sites available across the spectrum from the commercial holiday park/ resort product to the free short stay sites with no facilities. Key points were:



High occupancy of commercial parks in peak times and a market perception there is a lack of availability.



Price barriers can deter users and low cost options means less than \$30-35 a night (closer to \$10/night).



Pressure on existing caravan parks from residential shortages and high demand for long term accommodation.



Lack of capacity to meet demand from **seasonal workers** or surge workforces.



Lack of larger sites for bigger RVs and old park layouts constraining visits from larger vehicles. Size of vans are increasing (up to 10m) and there is a growing need to accommodate them.



Difficulties for commercial operators/ prospective operators **gaining approvals** and costs of compliance.



Lack of low cost/ no cost sites for self-contained travellers. One peak body advised that $\frac{2}{3}$ of their members have indicated that they won't stay in commercial caravan parks.



Need for more **pet friendly** sites.



Parks with **sensory play** and play spaces that consider children with different needs.



Unmet demand for desirable destinations or improved services

A number of locations were highlighted as lacking caravan park and RV stay sites.

These included:

- « Overnight sites close to the CBD and town beaches
- « Harbour Beach
- « Eimeo Beach
- « RV parking and overnight sites that are close to shops/ local business
- « Beaches around Sarina
- « Pioneer Valley in general
- « Places on the Pioneer River
- « Teemburra Dam and fishing strategy locations
- « Finch Hatton and Eungella (MTB destination)
- « More capacity at Seaforth
- « Ball Bay
- « Small townships (with shops) on or near beaches



Regional reputation and communication

The engagement results indicated that in general the region is not seen as RV friendly and that it is hard to find places to stay and to navigate in the CBD. Several comments mentioned bypassing Mackay because of this perception. Mirani was an exception and was recognised as RV friendly (but also having limited sites). Observations included:



While finding information on commercial parks is easy, there is **no one reliable information source** for finding other sites, especially low or no cost options.



Potential visitors would like **more information** on tours and experiences to help them plan a stay (and to encourage them to stay).



There is a **perception** that there **isn't "much to do"** in Mackay region (in terms of tours and activities).



Mackay needs to make it easier for people to **navigate** RVs to parking and stay sites.



Better use of **on-line** communications and marketing.



On highway **information points** and visitor (RV) information centres would help make it easier for travellers. The old visitor centre on Nebo Rd was mentioned in several responses.



A marketing challenge for Mackay is **competition** from Airlie Beach and Bowen.



More promotion and increased availability of sites appealing to those who **prioritise safety** is needed.



There is a growing demand for **pet-friendly** sites. Dogs not being welcome at some sites during school holidays is a major disincentive.



Poor mobile network coverage is an issue in the region and constrains potential locations such as Pioneer Valley and more remote beach areas. Improving telecommunications across the region and in desirable RV destinations is important for safety and should be prioritised in discussion with State and Federal government.



Opportunities for more partnerships and supporting providers

A number of opportunities to develop or strengthen partnerships or support existing or potential providers were identified. These included:



Opportunities for CMCA (Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia) to manage some **low-cost sites and provide more diversity**.



Partnering with **Industry groups** to communicate with users.



Making it easier for **community groups and clubs** to provide short-stay sites at low cost.



Partnering with **sporting clubs and showgrounds** to provide short stay sites in rural areas.



Assistance for venues such as country pubs providing short-stay sites.



Working with the **commercial holiday park industry** to encourage more investment in the region and expansion of existing parks and development of new ones.



Better integration of tourism product providers and RV accommodation providers (integrated marketing).



Development of **low cost/no cost sites** shouldn't disadvantage commercial providers.



Other market opportunities

A number of potential opportunities for growing the market were discussed. These included:

- « Improve the number of **low/no cost sites** and the promotion of these to better target this sector of the RV traveller market
- « **Pet friendly** sites
- « A focus on **safety** and service for the growing number of **solo travellers**
- « Building capacity to service **seasonal workers**
- « Catering more to **digital nomads**
- « Targeting **younger travellers** seeking experiences
- « Targeting the growing **35-54 age group**
- « Catering to travelling **families** doing homeschooling
- « Catering to **Electric Vehicles** and need for charging stations
- « Investment should have **returns for local economies**
- « Target **old towns/ villages** for new low-cost sites
- « **Heritage/ Art/ Culture** themed locations and itineraries
- « Proposed **hydro scheme** in the Pioneer Valley and potential for outflows to support **white water rafting**

3. CURRENT SITUATION

3.1. CARAVAN AND CAMPING SITES IN THE REGION

An audit of current sites was undertaken during early 2023. In total the audit found:



25

Caravan Parks, Holiday Parks and Formal Managed Camping Grounds



7

Bushcamps, QPWS sites and Remotes sites



22

Dump points (5 public)

In addition, there are a range of sites promoted online and on various platforms such as GeoWiki X, Hipcamp or Wikicamps. Many of these are operating temporarily and without appropriate approvals. A review undertaken for this study searched available sites for 1-3 nights in June and found the following:



8

Sites provided by a club or venue for short stay self-contained “stopover”



10

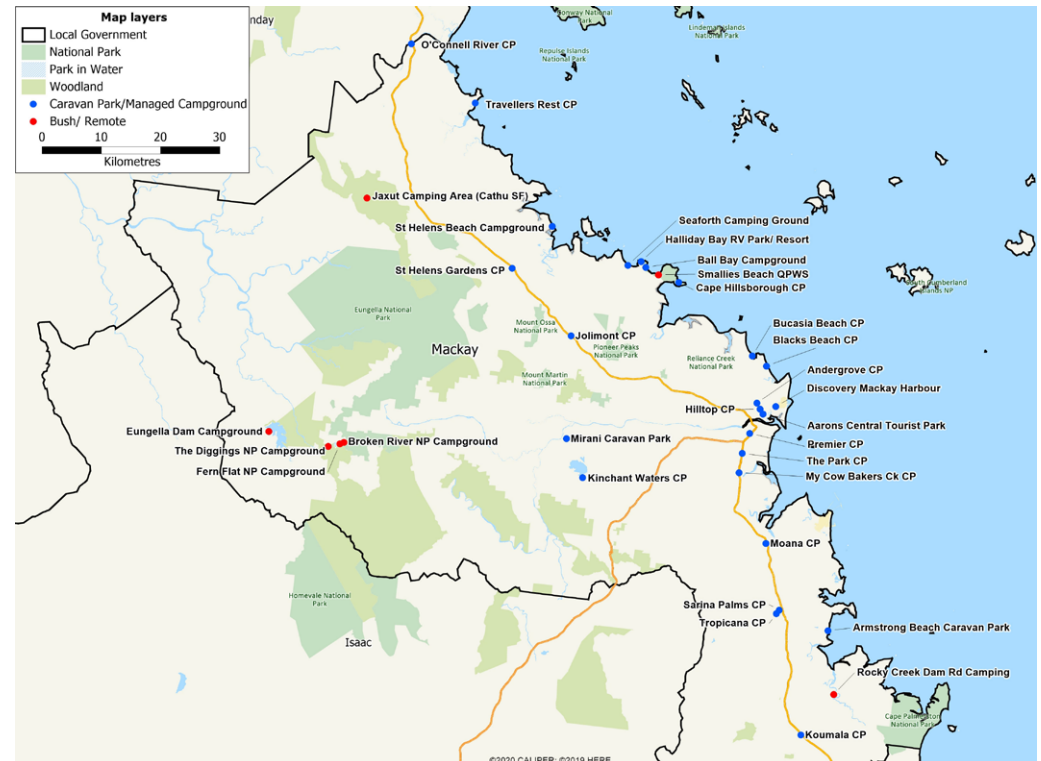
Farm stay sites



24

Hipcamp sites

Figure 2 - Map of Current Sites and Prospective locations for investigation (excludes Hipcamp)



3.2. KEY MARKET TRENDS

The caravan and camping market was already growing before Covid-19 and since 2019 has been expanding rapidly with high demand for caravans and RVs along with increased domestic self drive travel. Caravans are getting longer and increasingly self contained with solar power, shower and toilet. A detailed analysis of market trends is contained in the Part A (Background) Report

The key market trends are:



Registration

- « Total registrations of RVs, driven by local manufacturing and a greater number of imports, **grew by 4% on the previous year to a total of 772,598 in 2022**. Overall there are 30.1 RV registrations per 1000.
- « In 2022 the Caravan Industry Association **recorded nearly 50,000 new registrations**.
- « **Queensland** continues to have the most RV registrations with **more than 201,477 registered**, followed by Victoria (185,507 vehicles). On a per-capita basis, Tasmania has the highest rate of RV registrations with 39 RVs per 1000 people in the state. This figure is influenced by the high number of rental RVs in the state.
- « Comparing **Australia** to other countries around the world, Australia had **one of the highest rates of new RV registrations in 2018** on a per capita basis. This is ahead of all European countries, and trailing just the USA.
- « Caravan and Camping Industry registrations in the December 2020 quarter showed a 16.5% increase over the last 4 years which indicates continued **growth in the market**.



Demographic

- « The **30-54 year market** makes up **47%** of all trips, followed by the 55+ market (29%) and the 20-29 year market (18%). However there has been strong growth in the under 30's market driven by the desire for self managed travel, experience and nature based destinations.



Occupancy

- « Caravan Park occupancy rates in Queensland have been **increasing since 2020** and are now higher than 2018.

FACILITY TYPE	ASPECT	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Cabins	Occupancy Rate	71%	58%	48%	55%	54%
	Average Daily Rate	\$172	\$158	\$143	\$160	\$148
Powered Sites	Occupancy Rate	64%	57%	42%	52%	52%
	Average Daily Rate	\$53	\$50	\$49	\$47	\$46
Unpowered Sites	Occupancy Rate	22%	19%	16%	18%	19%
	Average Daily Rate	\$41	\$41	\$40	\$39	\$37

(Source: Caravan Industry of Australia Data – State of the Industry 2022)



Statistics

Across Australia the 2022 data shows¹



12.6 Million trips (up by 19%)



50.6 Million nights (up by 23%)



89% of domestic caravan and camping trips take place in **regional areas**



55+ age group accounts for **43%** of nights



30 – 54 year age group accounts for **47%** of trips



28,031 RV's manufactured in Australia in 2022 (up 17.1% from the previous year)



20,498 imported caravan trailers in 2022 (up 8.36% from the prior year)



\$7.4 Billion in visitor expenditure (up by 29%)



\$23.8 Billion in economic impact to the Australian economy annually

¹ As reported by the Caravan Industry Association of Australia



Nights

In 2022 5.2 million nights were spent by holiday makers in commercial caravan parks and camping grounds, while 3.8 million nights were spend in non-commercial sites (including National Park campgrounds).



Revenue

Caravan and Camping Industry revenue is forecast to increase at an annualised 10.1% over the five years from 2021 to 2025-26, to \$4.0 billion.



Demand

Increasing demand for powered sites at commercial parks and growing demand for both self-contained sites and sites with en-suite facilities.



Mix

Commercial sites are increasing the number of cabins as a proportion of the overall mix.

3.3. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE RV STRATEGY

1. The caravan and camping market has **shown great resilience** to the impacts of the Covid pandemic. The market has continued to grow with increased demand from less traditional markets such as young couples and families who are on extended trips. Towable and **RV sales are very strong** and while there may be import disruptions, the resale market is highly motivated and increased visits can be anticipated.
2. **Queensland is one of the best performing RV markets** in Australia with high occupancy rates in commercial caravan parks and a growing domestic market.
3. **Visitor expectations are changing** and many are increasingly looking at the “**destination values**” of locations and seeking nature based experience along with opportunities for extended stays and more social opportunity. Value-add experience such as walks, bike hire, paddle craft hire, access to programs and other discretionary services will be needed to remain competitive.
4. **On-line and image marketing** is a growing trend and the contemporary facility will need to have a strong on-line presence as well as easy to use on-line booking and information systems.
5. There is a general trend for Caravans to become **self-contained** (with toilets, solar battery systems and showers), Included in this trend is more self-drive self-contained small and large vans /RVs and this is rapidly becoming the norm for new vehicles. These trends are likely to lead to increased demand for free camp or low cost RV camp sites which cater to self-contained vehicles only.
6. Along with prevalence of self-contained vehicles, the **length of vehicles are increasing**. This has implications for site and circulation designs.
7. The market will be **increasingly competitive** with a number of new players entering and increased marketing of holiday park “brands” and more investment in specific markets. Being able to define a specific market identity and destination product will be important for viability and competitiveness. Marketing the destination and the experiences available is critical. This may even extend to RV sites which have very little infrastructure, but are adjacent to “great” locations or key experiences (e.g. mountain bike trails and rail trails). These sites with “destination value” are likely to attract increased use even if there is a small charge for use.
8. In the short term, pent-up demand and growth in sector participation is **likely to keep bookings and latent demand** for sites high. As the market opens up and new destinations are developed there may be a decline in visits to some parks without updated product and marketing strategies.
9. The **natural values of destinations** and especially natural settings and views are drivers for visitation.
10. There is an emerging trend for **destination parks co-located with activity features** (e.g. surf park, golf course, mountain bike network, regional play attraction etc) to be developed by private sector interest. This is often a response to increased demand for outdoor recreation and adventure based tourism and the need for lower cost accommodation and accommodation “on-site” for the key attraction.
11. Growing demand for **accessible tourism and accommodation** means new approaches to caravan park design, the accommodation mix and facilities provided to support RV travellers with mobility and other challenges.

4. RV STRATEGY VISION AND OBJECTIVES

4.1. VISION

The Mackay region will become a well-known and popular destination for RV Travellers by offering a diverse range of RV stay options and a supportive environment. The growth of the RV industry will be supported by:

- « Attractive tours, experiences and destinations, targeting key markets
- « Collaboration with industry sectors
- « Appropriate and supportive infrastructure
- « Proactive policy framework facilitating sustainable development.



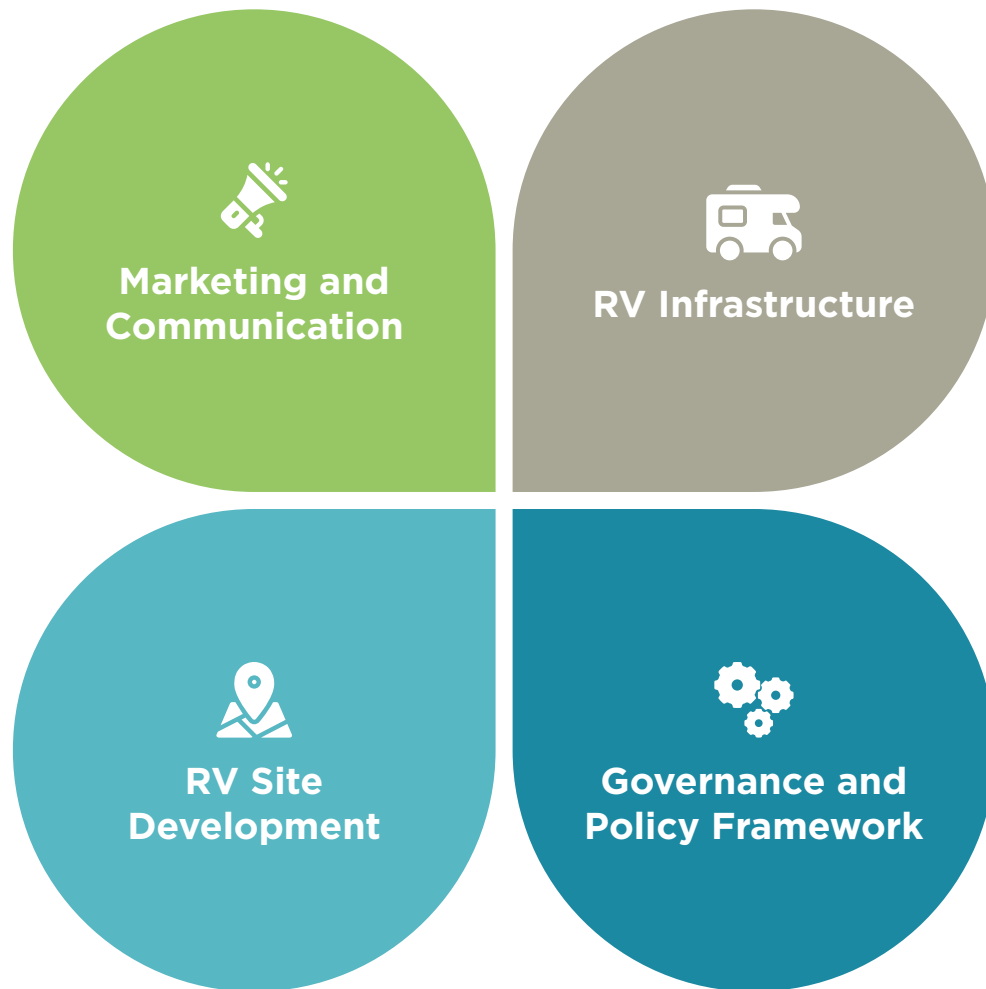
4.2. OBJECTIVES

The RV Strategy has the following objectives:

- 1 Attract a greater share of the RV market from both domestic and international travellers.
- 2 Ensure the RV strategy provides economic benefit to the region and supports other economic development strategies and tourism initiatives.
- 3 Encourage investment in the region to expand the range and number of RV sites in a sustainable way.
- 4 Develop the industry in collaboration with commercial and other operators.
- 5 Develop an action plan that clarifies council's role and recognises the different target markets.

4.3. STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS

The strategy recommends that action be planned under the following four Strategic Action Areas



4.3.1. Marketing and Communication

The development of a marketing campaign consistent with the overall tourism marketing strategy is recommended to address perceptions that there is “nowhere suitable to stay” and “nothing to do”. Marketing needs to be tailored to RV travellers with specific tactics for segments such as younger more adventurous travellers and international tourists.

To be effective the campaign needs to be developed in partnership with industry organisations and other tourism sectors. Key messages should include:

- « The range of low-cost options,
- « Unique experiences to be had at different sites
- « New/ emerging destinations
- « Self-drive itineraries with themes
- « Ease of accessing parking and stay sites

The campaign should consider developing a “Mackay RV” brand that is reflected on signage and marketing collateral. A Wayfinding Plan involving signage and other awareness strategies should build on the marketing and brand development. The plan needs to make it easy for visitors to navigate through urban areas and to locate RV stay sites, RV parking, and information on dump and water points.

Research and engagement results highlighted the importance of specific strategies to communicate with the following market segments:

- « RV travellers seeking low and no cost sites.
- « International “vanpackers” and younger travellers looking for adventure and nature based experiences.
- « Single/ Independent Travellers prioritising safety and pet friendly sites
- « Families on extended road trips

The region could increase its appeal to RV travellers through developing a number of themed “Drive and Stay” itineraries. These should be developed in collaboration with tourism stakeholders, caravan park operators and low-cost site providers.

These could be based on themes such as:

- « Cultural or Historical tour itineraries with overnights at rural villages, pubs and clubs
- « Nature based itineraries
- « Food and agriculture
- « Fishing itineraries
- « Trail based recreation (mountain bikes, walking etc.)

Although there is a high reliance on “on-line” information, the presence of well signed and “Mackay RV” branded information points that are easy to pull in to, will attract RV Travellers and may encourage a change of plans.

These would have a mix of static and regularly updated information (such as for seasonal events). The information points could be complemented by RV Hubs which also provide other RV services (e.g.: dump points, water taps and rest areas) and could be located with short stay sites or staffed information centres.

Information points and RV Hubs could be established in partnership with other uses such as in existing rest areas, parks or as nodes in service stations.

Key information could include:

- « Location maps
- « Overview of the wayfinding system
- « Nearest dump and water points
- « Nearest RV parking to shop for supplies.
- « List of nearby Caravan Parks and RV sites and contact details
- « QR code to link to on-line information e.g. a “Mackay RV” web page

The existing visitor information centres and RV service points/ dump points should be enhanced as RV information points and additional sites should be established to capture:

- « Travellers heading south as they enter the region and before the Ring Road bypass
- « Travellers heading north as they enter the region and before the Ring Road bypass
- « Travellers coming in from the west and via the Pioneer Valley

Marketing and Communications Strategies:

1. Develop a **Mackay RV Brand and Marketing Campaign** with partners, targeting the key market segments, that promotes the region as a destination for RV travellers.
2. Partner with stakeholders to promote existing and explore new “**Drive and Stay**” itineraries.
3. Prepare and promote an integrated **RV Wayfinding Plan** for the region.
4. **Partner with industry bodies** (e.g. CMCA) to promote the region.
5. Investigate opportunities to establish **RV Information Points and RV Hubs**.

4.3.2. RV Infrastructure

A key suggestion emerging from the on-line survey of caravan and camping park users was to improve parking and short stay sites in the CBD and major shopping centres. Engagement outcomes highlighted the need to make it easy for RV travellers to visit local businesses, the CBD and other key locations. Providing RV parking close to or in walking distance of attractions or local business, allows travellers to “spend money in town” and can encourage longer stays. Many RV travellers now carry bicycles, E-bikes or scooters, and this expands the range of options for day parking locations providing there are safe connections such as bikeways. The Bluewater Trail and supporting bikeway networks are a key strength for the CBD.

Provision of RV service points such as dump and water points can be strategically located to encourage travellers to stop or visit specific locations. While the region has five public dump points, gaps were indicated in the far north of the region and west in the Pioneer Valley. Provision of dump points can be problematic in areas without sewage systems. Investigation is required to understand potential risks and costs of other options (such as use of septic or pump out tanks). Where septic systems are required, restricting use to travellers using septic safe toilet sanitisers would need to apply.

The region’s shopping centres and townships could improve accommodation of RVs with dedicated parking areas clearly signed and well located. The provision of signed parking bays providing access to local business and attractions will invite RV travellers to stop and spend time and money in the region.

Clear directional, location and advisory signage and markers will support wayfinding for RV travellers. It will help promote the region as well as make RV driving easier.

RV Infrastructure Strategies:

1. Prepare and implement a plan for **RV parking** (all day/ long stay) to provide walking and cycling access to Mackay CBD; Caneland Central; Bluewater Quay and Trail; River St Parklands and other key locations.
2. Plan for and implement RV parking in **regional townships** to allow access to local businesses and attractions.
3. Encourage owners/ operators of larger **shopping centres** to consider signed provision of RV parking.
4. Investigate options for new **public dump points** where gaps have been identified.
5. Identify suitable locations and install **signage** and other infrastructure to support the RV Wayfinding Plan and development of RV Information Points.

4.3.3. RV Site Development

Developing new RV sites, expanding existing caravan and RV sites in the region and increasing the diversity of stay options to include free and low-cost sites, has multiple challenges. It requires coordination of effort both within council and across stakeholders in the industry. There are planning challenges associated with limited land supply and natural hazards. Attracting investors to the region is difficult in a competitive market and with a mixed reputation for the region. Industry feedback and the survey results indicated that additional commercial or major destination park products are needed as well as more free and low-cost options catering to self-contained RV travellers.

Industry data indicates that 42% of the 9 million RV nights per year are spent in non-commercial locations, which suggests that there is a significant market for free and low-cost sites. One industry body representing caravan and RV users advised that ⅔ of their members have indicated that they won't stay in commercial caravan parks. Travellers will bypass Mackay and move on to Airlie Beach if no low-cost product is available.

Engagement results also indicated that there is insufficient commercial product and demand for more "destination" parks with activities and amenities offering holiday locations. This was supported by industry discussions which suggest that while occupancy is high the region could improve its commercial offerings with more "holiday" parks and additional capacity for longer stay accommodation (such as for seasonal workers).

Priority locations for new commercial or low-cost site development include those where:

- « Current gaps were identified by the market
- « Other tourism initiatives will drive growth in accommodation demand
- « Providing RV stay sites can be used as a strategy to increase the number of visitors to a location and boost spending in local economies

In Pioneer Valley, the Mackay Regional Recreational Fishing Strategy and the Finch Hatton Mountain Bike Trails will generate demand for camping and RV sites and commercial and low-cost opportunities will be needed. Coastal areas near Mackay CBD should be explored and a number of sites in the south coast beaches were identified by travellers as needing sites. The north coast beaches have a number of established sites but there is unmet demand for more low-cost opportunities as well as a desire to enhance existing locations such as Seaforth.

Council can encourage increased provision and diversity of "stay" options by building on their supportive policy framework and continuing to build the appeal of the region. A key role for council is to work with potential site operators to ensure that the location is safe, sustainable and appropriately scaled for the site.

While it is preferable that private operators provide most of the opportunities, free or low-cost sites for self-contained RV travellers can also be provided by community clubs, small rural venues (such as pubs) and when needed, the public sector.

Where additional public provision (such as camping grounds or short stay overnight sites) on council or reserve land is being investigated, the following considerations are important:

- « Potential Native Title and cultural heritage implications
- « Site suitability regarding flooding, fire, conservation issues or other constraints
- « Issues arising on crown lands/ reserves regarding leasing and use consistent with reserve purpose
- « Site accessibility
- « Land use zoning.
- « Adjacent land uses

RV Site Development Strategies:

1. Continue discussions with **Sunwater** regarding the upgrades at Kinchant and Eungella Dams and investigating the potential for a new RV site at **Teemburra Dam**.
2. Support an increase in the **number and diversity of sites** overall, including low-cost options, through encouraging private, community and club provision in areas where gaps have been identified including:
 - A. Pioneer Valley
 - B. South coast beaches
 - C. Mackay central
 - D. North coast beaches.

4.3.4. Governance and Policy Framework

Market feedback has indicated there is significant unmet demand (lack of available sites) in both Holiday Park destinations and low-cost options. This shortage will be compounded as the strategy is implemented and more travellers look to stay in the region. Action is needed to expand supply from low-cost through to commercial holiday destinations. Housing shortages and demand from seasonal workforces adds further demand for longer stay self-contained cabin or on-site van options which are provided by commercial parks.

Council has already undertaken a number of policy initiatives to encourage more private sector provision of RV sites. This includes Council's "Policy No 081 Facilitating Development in the Mackay Region", which offers financial incentives for private investment in tourism related businesses.

Further, a planning scheme amendment was introduced by council in 2020 to support provision of small-scale self-contained RV parks as secondary businesses on rural properties or as expansions of existing Caravan Parks. A limiting factor in the uptake of small-scale RV grounds has been the requirement to address risks posed by natural hazards. Many sites with high amenity tend to be located in areas with hazards such as flood hazards, bushfire hazards or coastal hazards. While addressing risks is necessary, undertaking risk assessments and formulating management strategies to mitigate risks comes with costs that can deter operators.

Feedback from commercial operators has also highlighted that the capital and compliance costs of establishing additional formal sites can be significant compared to basic RV sites on rural properties. It is important that commercial parks are not unfairly disadvantaged, and that investment is not diluted by allowing competing sites to be provided outside of the approvals framework that commercial operators must adhere to.

Reviewing the policy framework around RV sites should consider the current scheme provisions, the Facilitating Development Policy and relevant local laws. Potential enhancements include:

- « Better promotion of the supportive environment, guidelines and information available, as well education around the natural hazards which may need to be considered.
- « Ensuring that the focus on increasing low and no cost sites does not allow small site operators to expand into more commercial provision without being subject to the same levels of compliance as commercial operators.
- « Developing further guidelines which can help sites manage natural hazard risk (using a range of strategies such as seasonal use only) to simplify approval processes.
- « Reducing barriers and costs for existing operators looking to add in new low cost/ self-contained sites.
- « Encourage farm stay / rural site operators to seek suitable approvals or licences for the scale of their operation.

Governance and Policy Framework Strategies

1. Ensure Council Policies support existing and new operators.
2. Investigate preparation of an RV Guideline for Natural Hazard Risk Assessment and Management Measures.
3. Conduct an Education Campaign with unlicensed sites and develop strategies to encourage them to become licensed/ approved.
4. Promote Council incentives to encourage commercial park development in high need locations.
5. Support the completion of planning studies (e.g.: flooding) to simplify approvals.
6. Promote Council Policies and identify other incentives to support more low-cost RV site development in target locations.

5. ACTION PLAN

The following Action Plan is proposed for implementation of the strategy. The action plan is separated into the four Strategic Action Areas and provides the following guidance:

Strategy Number	Unique number for the proposed strategy
Description	Provides detail on the actions needed to implement the strategy
Lead Agency	Indicates the primary responsibility for implementation
Partners	Indicates the potential partners for collaboration in implementation of the strategy
Priority	Provides Guidance for relative priorities and timeframes for implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none">« S - 1-2 years« M - 3-5 years« L - 5 + years« O - Ongoing



5.1. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

STRATEGY NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	LEAD AGENCIES	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
M1	<p>Develop a Mackay RV Brand and Marketing Campaign with partners, targeting the key market segments, that promotes the region as a destination for RV travellers .</p> <p>Target Markets include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> « RV travellers seeking low and no cost sites. « International “vanpackers” and younger travellers looking for adventure and nature-based experiences. « Single/ Independent Travellers prioritising safety and pet friendly sites. « Families on extended road trips <p>The campaign should consider a number of strategies over the short - medium term as new stay opportunities are developed. This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> « Developing a “Mackay RV” brand identity to signal an RV friendly region « Changing perceptions of the region via on-line campaigns and use of industry news channels « Encouraging the market to see the Mackay Region as a “destination” rather than a stopover on the way north or south. « Planning new promotions when the RV Wayfinding Plan and additional RV infrastructure are developed. « Medium term campaigns around new destinations 	Mackay Isaac Tourism	<p>Local Operators</p> <p>Industry Bodies such as Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA), Australian Caravan Club (ACC), Caravanning Queensland(CQ), and Caravan Industry Association of Australia(CIAA).</p>	S-M
M2	<p>Partner with stakeholders to promote existing and explore new “Drive and Stay” itineraries. These could focus on history and culture; nature-based activity; food and agriculture or trails.</p>	Mackay Isaac Tourism	Site Operators, tourism interests and other agencies	M-L
M3	<p>Prepare and promote an integrated RV Wayfinding Plan for the region.</p> <p>The RV Wayfinding Plan should investigate a range of enhancements to make the region more RV friendly including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> « Distinctive road signage to guide RV travellers and promote parking areas, local attractions, information points and stay sites. « Integration with on-line channels and promoting the benefits of the RV Wayfinding Plan in on-line marketing « Providing wayfinding information at stay locations and information centres 	Council	DTMR ² , Local Businesses, Tour Operators, Caravan Park Operators Mackay Isaac Tourism	S-M

² Department of Transport and Main Roads

STRATEGY NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	LEAD AGENCIES	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
M4	<p>Partner with industry bodies (e.g. Caravan and Motorhome Club of Australia and Australian Caravan Club) to promote the region.</p> <p>Collaboration with industry bodies in the implementation of this strategy will be important as they are trusted information sources. The messages that need to be propagated in the short term include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> « Implementation of simple measures to make it easier for RV travellers such as dedicated parking and RV wayfinding « The increasing diversity of options for overnight stays « New locations to discover and unique opportunities to explore « Supportive environment for investing in caravan/ holiday park development 	Mackay Isaac Tourism and Council	Industry Bodies such as CMCA, CQ and CIAA	S
M5	<p>Investigate opportunities to establish RV Information Points and RV Hubs.</p> <p>While a strong online presence and information resource is essential, this should be complemented with physical information points in the region.</p> <p>These will encourage travellers to visit the region and make it easier for them to choose destinations in the region or get to points of interest.</p> <p>The information points should include static information as well as promotion of on-line information that is updated continually (such as promotion of events and new destinations). This can be achieved with QR codes or similar, linking to web sites.</p> <p>Information points can take several forms including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> « Updated information in visitor centres « Roadside signage in existing rest areas and stopping bays « Hosted information panels in roadside business such as service stations and at caravan parks and camping grounds <p>The information points could be complemented by RV Hubs which also provide other RV services (e.g.: dump points, water taps and rest areas) and could be located with short stay overnight sites or staffed information centres.</p> <p>The key locations for information points are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> « Travellers heading south as they enter the region and before the Ring Road bypass. « Travellers heading north as they enter the region and before the Ring Road bypass. « Travellers coming in from the west and via the Pioneer Valley. 	Mackay Isaac Tourism and Council	DTMR, local tourism interests.	S-ONGOING

5.2. RV INFRASTRUCTURE

STRATEGY NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	LEAD AGENCIES	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
I 1	<p>Prepare and implement a plan for RV parking (all day/ long stay) to provide walking and cycling access to Mackay CBD; Caneland Central; Bluewater Quay and Trail; River St Parklands and other key locations.</p> <p>A number of potential locations can be explored including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> « Limited dual use of Bus Bays that are frequently empty « Use of roadside bays outside of peak times « Discussions with the Showgrounds to explore potential day parking « Reconfiguring some parking areas to accommodate RVs « Sites which could provide bikeway access/ connection with Bluewater trail <p>It will be important that use of sites for day parking are monitored to minimise vehicles overstaying.</p>	Council	DTMR Mackay Isaac Tourism	S-M
I 2	<p>Plan for and implement RV parking in regional townships to allow access to local businesses and attractions.</p> <p>These should be clearly signed RV bays, easy to access and located close to local business and attractions. RV bays could be located in a central parking area; in a park or a reserve; or on the roadside.</p> <p>Where road side parking adjacent to the shops is not possible, parking should be provided nearby and adjacent to a pathway or bikeway providing easy walking access to the destination.</p>	Council	DTMR Local businesses	S-M
I 3	<p>Encourage owners/ operators of larger shopping centres to consider signed provision of RV parking.</p> <p>The provision of RV friendly parking should consider both size of bays and the manoeuvring needs of campervans and caravans.</p>	Council	Shopping Centres	Ongoing
I 4	<p>Investigate options for new public dump points where gaps have been identified.</p> <p>The initial analysis has identified gaps around Finch Hatton and Calen. However, new locations may emerge as visitation increases, priorities shift, and new stay facilities are developed.</p>	Council	Tourism Industry RV Industry bodies representing travellers.	S-M
I 5	<p>Identify suitable locations and install signage and other infrastructure to support the RV Wayfinding Plan and development of RV Information Points.</p>	Council	DTMR	Ongoing

5.3. RV SITE DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGY NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	LEAD AGENCIES	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
S 1	Continue discussions with Sunwater regarding the upgrades at Kinchant and Eungella Dams and investigating the potential for a new RV site at Teemburra Dam .	Council	Sunwater	Ongoing
S 2	<p>Support an increase in the number and diversity of sites overall, including low-cost options, through encouraging private, community and club provision in areas where gaps have been identified.</p> <p>The current gaps to be investigated are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> « Pioneer Valley « South Coast Beaches « Mackay Central « North Coast Beaches. 	Council	Tourism Industry Commercial Operators Caravan and Camping Industry Rural Properties Clubs and Venues	S-M

5.4. GOVERNANCE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

STRATEGY NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	LEAD AGENCIES	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
G 1	Ensure Council Policies support existing and new operators. Regular liaison with the industry and with proponents/ applicants will help inform periodic reviews of the policy and approvals/ licencing framework. The aim being to encourage provision of new sites in a sustainable and safe manner while simplifying processes and costs.	Council	Caravan and Camping Industry RV site Operators and proponents	Ongoing
G 2	Investigate preparation of an RV Guideline for Natural Hazard Risk Assessment and Management Measures. The guideline should help potential site operators undertake initial viability assessment and understand if there are suitable mitigation measures that can apply to their proposed site.	Council	Caravan and Camping Industry SDILGP ³	M
G 3	Conduct an Education Campaign with unlicensed sites and develop strategies to encourage them to become licensed/ approved. This may include development of incentives for “registered” sites and information campaigns via industry channels.	Council	Caravan and Camping Industry Tourism Industry	S-M
G 4	Promote Council incentives to encourage commercial park development in high need locations. Council already has a supportive environment and priority destinations such as Finch Hatton should be promoted so the industry is aware of the opportunities.	Council	Caravan and Camping Industry Tourism Industry	S-M
G 5	Support the completion of planning studies (e.g.: flooding) to simplify approvals. Areas of projected demand growth, such as Pioneer Valley, could be supported through planning studies that provide more detail regarding potential natural hazards. The planning studies would then refine the scale of risk, additional mitigation strategies and clarify the suitability of different areas for RV site development.	Council	Caravan and Camping Industry Tourism Industry	Ongoing
G 6	Promote Council Policies and identify other incentives to support more low-cost RV site development in target locations. Council’s information sheets and other guides for the provision of low cost/short stay sites could be improved and promoted to encourage greater diversity in the market. Opportunities for new operators to be included in marketing campaigns (such as around the “Drive and Stay” itineraries) may encourage them to consider provision of sites.	Council	Caravan and Camping Industry Tourism Industry	S-M

³ Queensland Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning



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