



Local Government and Tourism

Position and recommendations paper

Contact:

Nina Hewson

Community Policy Officer

WALGA

ONE70, LV 1, 170 Railway Parade West Leederville

Phone: (08) 9213 2055

Fax: (08) 9213 2077

Email: nhewson@walga.asn.au

Website: www.walga.asn.au

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1.0 Background

In 2014, the President and Executive team visited regional Local Governments with many expressing a need to address Local Government's roles in tourism and tourism development.

In response, WALGA conducted research and analysis to identify the context of tourism in the economy, its key stakeholders and importantly invited each Local Government to complete a tourism survey. Contextual research together with Local Government's feedback contributed to the *Local Government and Tourism Discussion Paper*, released in September 2015.

The paper proposed the following recommendations, endorsed by State Council in September 2015:

1. WALGA to work with Tourism Western Australia specifically to:
 - a. develop a Local Government Tourism Strategy to deliver local tourism outcomes
 - b. investigate the development of resources including a destination marketing management toolkit
 - c. investigate tourism education and training options for Local Government
 - d. improve current Local Government tourism data collection including visitor numbers, visitor activities and marketing
 - e. Identify funding opportunities for metropolitan and urban growth corridors to deliver tourism outcomes.

2. WALGA to work with the nine Regional Development Commissions to:
 - a. Advocate to the Minister for Regional Development for funding to implement the Regional Development Commission Investment Blueprints
 - b. Undertake a desktop audit of tourism organisations within respective Development Commissions to facilitate better strategic planning between tourism organisations and Local Government.
 - c. Establish a centralised and coordinated network of tourism organisations

WALGA has been progressing these recommendations and a recent review has revealed that WALGA advocacy is required on a number of levels to support the future of local economies and communities through tourism development.

2.0 Economic context

Since the release of the 'Local Government and Tourism Discussion Paper', tourism has gained prominence as a key opportunity to diversify the economy, as conditions in the state have continued to weaken.

The past year has been particularly challenging for the WA economy, which recorded its slowest rate of growth in 13 years as the mining investment boom continues to unwind. Gross State Product expanded by just 1.9% in the 2015-16 financial year.

Tourism is seen to be a growth opportunity due to the growing number of middle class in the Asian region, who are demanding more 'luxury' goods and services as their incomes rise. Being in close geographical proximity to this area, and with unique natural assets and experiences, WA is well placed to leverage this opportunity as a new driver of economic growth.

While the opportunities afforded by tourism are being foreshadowed by key business leaders, the Government has also identified the important role the sector can play in the future WA economy. The need to diversify the economy and look for new sources of growth was a key theme of the 2016-17 budget, with tourism highlighted as a key opportunity for WA. As part of the "Securing our Economic Future" initiatives, the Government provided additional funding to assist Tourism WA in delivering on its strategy to increase the value of tourism to \$12 billion by 2020. Some of the key initiatives funded included:

- \$16.9 million over four years to 2019-20 to enable Tourism WA to increase its Destination Marketing activities;
- a further \$19 million to be spent over three years to 2018-19 to allow Tourism WA to secure major events; and
- \$10.7 million for the Perth Convention Bureau to continue securing national and international events by marketing Western Australia nationally and internationally as a preferred convention, exhibition and incentive travel destination.

The budget also funded a range of initiatives through the Royalties for Regions program with the aim to improve the visitor experience in regional Western Australia.

3.0 Current situation

Following endorsement of these recommendations in September 2015, WALGA has undertaken a number of initiatives to address these.

Recently WALGA has reviewed its recommendations and initiatives recognising that the initial activities have been undertaken to better understand the Western Australian tourism landscape and identify opportunities for WALGA to influence outcomes for the sector. Through this work it is evident the original recommendations and initiatives must be elevated to an advocacy strategy.

The information and data collected in the last 12 months has informed this decision and WALGA proposes the current recommendations are transformed into a revised set of recommendations, which are outlined in the section below (4.0 Current recommendations and WALGA initiatives). From this WALGA proposes, one of the current recommendations to be carried forward with an additional set of new and adapted recommendations developed from Local Government feedback and the current tourism context.

The purpose of this change is to deliver the best outcomes for Local Government members from a WALGA advocacy perspective, and to ultimately establish a path for sustainable Local Government tourism development.

4.0 Current recommendations and WALGA initiatives

WALGA initiated conversations and established relationships with key stakeholders in the tourism industry to progress the current recommendations. This included forming relationships with senior management at Tourism WA, Tourism Council WA, Regional Development Commissions, Visitor Centre Association WA, Australian Regional Tourism Network, tourism businesses and academics.

It also involved attending conferences both intrastate and interstate, meeting and presenting WALGA's work to various groups, including the Tourism research cluster at Curtin University which attracts university academics throughout Perth, State Government, associations and private businesses.

WALGA has engaged on a Commonwealth level with the Australian Regional Tourism Network and has shared concepts with other State Local Government Associations and has provided input to the ALGA tourism portfolio.

The current recommendations are stated below. These are followed by work undertaken by WALGA to progress each recommendation, a rationale for a change in focus and then finally a revised advocacy recommendation. A summary of this information is also tabled in *Appendix 1 – WALGA Tourism recommendations matrix*.

CURRENT RECOMMENDATION

1. WALGA to work with Tourism Western Australia specifically to:

- a. **develop a Local Government Tourism Strategy to deliver local tourism outcomes**

WALGA hosted a workshop with Tourism WA in August 2016 that convened WALGA staff, Tourism WA's senior management, Local Government elected members, CEOs and senior management to address this recommendation.

Local Government feedback is shown in *Appendix 2 – Tourism workshop feedback* and was compiled by WALGA and submitted to Tourism WA to in the 'State Government Strategy for Tourism 2020' review and its future implementation plans. Following Tourism WA's receipt of this feedback WALGA contacted Tourism WA on several occasions and met with senior management to discuss its progress in November 2016. Despite these endeavours, WALGA has yet to receive a response regarding its progress.

WALGA will continue to pursue this work, which is reflected in the following:

RECOMMENDATION CARRIED FORWARD

WALGA continue to advocate for a Local Government tourism strategy to deliver local tourism outcomes.

Local Government feedback from both the workshop as well as the previous survey suggest that State Government must be clear of its leadership in tourism, which determines the following recommendation:

NEW RECOMMENDATION

WALGA advocates that State Government articulates the lead agency and defines the roles of other agencies in tourism, to facilitate coordination and collaboration of tourism activities across the State and to enhance Local Governments understanding of tourism in WA.

CURRENT RECOMMENDATION

1b. investigate the development of resources including a destination management toolkit

WALGA has met with Tourism WA to discuss the development of a toolkit and has directed WALGA to the 'Australian Regional Tourism Network's Destination Management guidelines' for Local Government reference.

Following sector feedback from the workshop and the initial survey it is evident that Local Government requires support in destination marketing. The State needs to articulate how it can support Local Governments in this area beyond providing a toolkit of written resources.

NEW RECOMMENDATION

WALGA advocates that State Government defines and communicates how it provides destination marketing support to Local Governments and communicates how Local Governments can most effectively direct their resources.

CURRENT RECOMMENDATION

1c. investigate tourism education and training options for Local Government

Following conversations with tourism stakeholders, the Tourism Council WA provides courses for Local Government. Tourism WA has also suggested that Local Government specific training could be developed.

Tourism WA already provides statistics and would contribute to educating Local Governments on the current supply and demand aspects of tourism. They should be targeted, tailored and distributed to Local Governments.

CURRENT RECOMMENDATION

1d. improve current Local Government tourism data collection including visitor numbers, visitor activities and marketing

WALGA was invited to contribute to the research and development of the Tourism Council WA's 'Tourism Works Atlas', released in early November 2016 which provides important tourism employment data to the Local Government sector as well as to the majority of individual Local Governments to promote the value of tourism both within Local Governments and at a community level.

Access to existing data would allow the sector to make informed decisions and develop appropriate strategies to meet their needs. The provision of existing data and trends to Local Governments would empower localised strategies to be aligned to state government directions and provide a link between state and local needs.

NEW RECOMMENDATION (to address 1c &1d)

WALGA to advocate that State Government produces targeted communication and education for Local Government using existing Tourism WA data to demonstrate the value of tourism to local communities, elected members and Local Government officers.

CURRENT RECOMMENDATION

1e. identify funding opportunities for metropolitan and urban growth corridors to deliver tourism outcomes.

WALGA has discussed this matter with Tourism WA. There are currently no metropolitan grants available while the regions have access to Royalties for Regions funding. Both metropolitan and regional areas require sustainable funding models to secure future development. Once grants have been established the State should communicate and make all Commonwealth and State tourism related grant information easily accessible from one central point.

NEW RECOMMENDATION

WALGA advocates that State Government develops a sustainable State Government tourism funding mechanism for both regional and metropolitan Local Governments which are clearly communicated to Local Government.

CURRENT RECOMMENDATION

2. WALGA to work with the nine Regional Development Commissions to:

a. Advocate to the Minister for Regional Development for funding to implement the Regional Development Commission Investment Blueprints

WALGA has contacted each Regional Development Commission to establish how it can assist with advocacy for funding to implement projects derived from the Regional Investment Blue Prints. Development Commissions are at different stages in their development and in particular the Pilbara Development Commission, Great Southern Development Commission, South West

Development Commission and Peel Development Commissions have expressed interest in working with WALGA on implementation of the Blueprints. And potential advocacy.

In the meantime, working in the interest of Local Government, WALGA can advocate for implementation of the Regional Investment Blueprints and should suggest appropriate funding models to do so.

The following recommendation would enable this:

NEW RECOMMENDATION

WALGA advocates that State Government implements and invests in Regional Investment Blueprints and delivers through appropriate funding models such as Royalties for Regions and Federal funding opportunities which are clearly communicated to Local Government.

CURRENT RECOMMENDATION

- d. Undertake a desktop audit of tourism organisations within respective Development Commissions to facilitate better strategic planning between tourism organisations and Local Government.**
- e. Establish a centralised and coordinated network of tourism organisations**

WALGA and the Great Southern Development Commission have launched a pilot survey to tourism stakeholders with the purpose of enhancing collaboration and coordination of tourism activities in the region. The data collated from this can be used by the Tri Alliance (including the City of Albany, Shire of Denmark and the Shire of Plantagenet) to assist in developing a strategy and brand. The Great Southern Development Commission is currently completing the survey. Should the pilot be successful, the survey could be implemented by other Regional Development Commissions.

While this activity can benefit Local Governments, from an advocacy perspective WALGA can assist Local Governments through the following new recommendation (as already covered above)

NEW RECOMMENDATION

WALGA advocates that State Government articulates its leadership tourism agency and the roles of other agencies in tourism to enhance Local Government's understanding of tourism and to facilitate coordination and collaboration of tourism activities across the State.

Since the current recommendations were developed, feedback from the sector as well as the tourism context suggest the following are required to support ongoing Local Government in tourism development.

NEW RECOMMENDATION

WALGA advocates that State Government undertakes improvements to tourism-related infrastructure and improvements to technology including mobile signals and WIFI in regional areas.

Local Government workshop feedback provides evidence this is required and is particularly supported by the international Asian market trends that seek use of technology requiring infrastructure.

NEW RECOMMENDATION

WALGA advocates that State Government continues funding to support sustainability of visitor centres.

This recommendation is based on Regional Visitor Centre Sustainability Grant Program funding rounds in 2015/16 and 2016/17 and continued State Government support in funding rounds for visitor centres.

NEW RECOMMENDATION

WALGA advocates that State Government provides guidance on marketing small projects including events and attractions.

Local Governments indicated during the workshop that although Regional Tourism Organisations can provide support to Local Governments in a regional sense, Local Governments require support to develop small projects and events.

NEW RECOMMENDATION

WALGA advocates that State Government directs Regional Development Commissions to facilitate the coordination of tourism stakeholders to provide strategic support where required for Local Government.

While the majority of Development Commissions do not employ an officer specifically dedicated to tourism, they may assist by facilitating the coordination of tourism stakeholders and experts in the region to discuss relevant matters for a particular purpose.

5.0 Recommendations

The following recommendations were endorsed by WALGA State Council in March 2017 and are categorised below as short, medium, or long-term.

That WALGA:

1. Continues to advocate for a Local Government tourism strategy to deliver local tourism outcomes;

2. In the short-medium term, advocates that the State Government:

a. Produces targeted communication and education for Local Government using existing Tourism WA data to demonstrate the value of tourism to local communities, Elected Members and Local Government officers;

b. Provides guidance for Local Government on marketing small projects including events and attractions; and,

c. Directs Regional Development Commissions to facilitate the coordination of tourism stakeholders to provide strategic support where required for Local Government.

d. Provides funding to Local Government for tourist infrastructure.

3. In the long term, advocates that the State Government:

a. Articulates the lead agency and defines the roles of other agencies in tourism, to facilitate coordination and collaboration of tourism activities across the State and to enhance Local Government's understanding of tourism in WA;

b. Defines and communicates how it provides destination marketing support to Local Governments and communicates how Local Governments can most effectively direct their resources;

c. Develops a sustainable State Government tourism funding mechanism for both regional and metropolitan Local Governments which is clearly communicated to Local Governments;

d. Implements and invests in Regional Investment Blueprints and delivers through appropriate funding models such as Royalties for Regions and federal funding opportunities and other sources, which is clearly communicated to Local Governments.

e. Continues funding to support sustainability of visitor centres; and,

f. Undertakes improvements to tourism-related infrastructure and technology including mobile signals and WIFI in regional areas.

g. Undertakes measures to reduce the cost and improve the scheduling and routes of regional air services.

Appendix 1 – WALGA Tourism recommendations matrix

Recommendations	WALGA actions	Advocacy required
WALGA to work with Tourism WA specifically to:		
Develop a Local Government Tourism Strategy to deliver local tourism outcomes	WALGA conducted a workshop with Tourism WA, Local Government elected members and CEOs on 2 August 2016 to elicit Local Government feedback to raise the profile of Local Government in the State Government Strategy for Tourism 2020. WALGA collated workshop feedback which was submitted to Tourism WA. WALGA has since met with Tourism WA to discuss its progress.	WALGA continue to advocate for a Local Government tourism strategy to deliver local tourism outcomes. WALGA advocates that State Government articulates the lead agency and defines the roles of other agencies in tourism, to facilitate coordination and collaboration of tourism activities across the State and to enhance Local Governments understanding of tourism in WA.
investigate the development of resources including a destination marketing toolkit	WALGA has met with Tourism WA to discuss the development of a toolkit and the Tourism Council WA has directed WALGA to the ARTN's Destination Management guidelines for Local Government reference.	WALGA advocates that State Government defines and communicates how it provides destination marketing support to Local Governments and communicates how Local Governments can most effectively direct their resources.
investigate tourism education and training options or Local Government	Tourism Council WA provides courses for Local Government on tourism.	WALGA to advocate that State Government produces targeted communication and education for Local Government using existing Tourism WA data to demonstrate the value of tourism to local communities, elected members and Local Government officers.
Improve current Local Government tourism data collection including visitor numbers, visitor activities and marketing	WALGA was invited to contribute to the research and development of the Tourism Council WA's 'Tourism Works Atlas' released in early November which provides important tourism employment data to the Local Government sector as well as to the majority of individual Local Governments to promote the value of tourism both within Local Governments and at a community level.	WALGA to advocate that State Government produces targeted communication and education for Local Government using existing Tourism WA data to demonstrate the value of tourism to local communities, elected members and Local Government officers.
identify funding opportunities for metropolitan and urban growth corridors to deliver tourism outcomes	WALGA has discussed this matter with Tourism WA. While there are no direct grants available at present, WALGA will maintain a watching brief.	WALGA advocates that State Government develops a sustainable State Government tourism funding mechanism for both regional and metropolitan Local Governments which are clearly communicated to Local Government.

WALGA to work with the nine Regional Development Commissions to:		
advocate to the Minister for Regional Development for funding to implement the Regional Development Commission Investment Blueprints	WALGA has contacted each Regional Development Commission to establish how it can assist with advocacy for funding to implement projects derived from the Regional Investment Blue Prints.	WALGA advocates that State Government implements and invests in Regional Investment Blueprints and delivers through appropriate funding models such as Royalties for Regions and Federal funding opportunities which are clearly communicated to Local Government.
undertake a desktop audit of tourism organisations within respective Development Commissions to facilitate better strategic planning between tourism organisations and Local Government	WALGA and the Great Southern Development Commission have launched a pilot survey to tourism stakeholders with the purpose of enhancing collaboration and coordination of tourism activities in the region.	WALGA advocates that State Government articulates its leadership tourism agency and the roles of other agencies in tourism to enhance Local Government's understanding of tourism and to facilitate coordination and collaboration of tourism activities across the State.
establish a centralised and coordinated network of tourism organisations	WALGA and the Great Southern Development Commission have launched a pilot survey to tourism stakeholders with the purpose of enhancing collaboration and coordination of tourism activities in the region. Should the pilot be successful, the survey could be implemented by other Regional Development Commissions.	WALGA advocates that State Government articulates its leadership tourism agency and the roles of other agencies in tourism to enhance Local Government's understanding of tourism and to facilitate coordination and collaboration of tourism activities across the State.

Other		
Stakeholder relationships	Initiated WALGA discussions and formed relationships with Tourism WA, Tourism Council WA, Regional Development Commissions, Visitor Centre Association WA, Australian Regional Tourism Network, WAITOC, tourism businesses, academics and tourism researchers.	WALGA ongoing
Presentations	WALGA presented at the Australian Wildlife Tourism Conference Geelong and WALGA was invited to present its work in tourism to the Tourism Research Cluster, Curtin University to scope future collaborative work in tourism.	WALGA ongoing
Local Government relationships	WALGA has established relationships with Local Governments Officers responsible for tourism, elected members and at a Commonwealth level, WALGA continues to contribute to ALGA's tourism advocacy and its Commonwealth project with the Australian Tourism Network on Local Governments' spend on tourism.	WALGA ongoing

Watching briefs	Tourism-related grants, airline regulation, Airbnb policy, indigenous tourism experiences.	WALGA ongoing
Paper	Journal of Ecotourism - Ningaloo Centre	Completed
New recommendations		
	Workshop feedback	WALGA to advocate for improvements to tourism-related infrastructure and improvements to technology including mobile signals and WIFI in regional areas.
	Tourism context	WALGA advocates that State Government continues funding to support sustainability of visitor centres.
	Workshop feedback and Local Government feedback	WALGA advocates that State Government provides guidance on marketing small projects including events and attractions.
	Workshop feedback and Local Government feedback	WALGA advocates that State Government directs Regional Development Commissions facilitate the coordination of tourism stakeholders to provide strategic support where required for Local Government.

Appendix 2 – Tourism workshop feedback

Theme	Local Government comments
Marketing strategy product/experience events	<p>Marketing to create desire</p> <p>Strong marketing for key markets and based on insights</p> <p>Regional collaboration in the marketing strategy and include understanding the community and what attracts tourists</p> <p>Destination management: establish specific target markets, requires a greater awareness of the value of tourism amongst businesses</p> <p>Develop walk trails, coastal areas and parks</p> <p>Iconic destinations - stay at home focus (intrastate)</p> <p>Aboriginal experiences that includes accessible and reliable product</p> <p>Drive tourism should improve the visitor experience (community education benefits on value of tourism)</p> <p>Sell the journey and point of difference to stop</p> <p>Develop WA Tourism App/map</p> <p>Events should have a long-term view and consider social drivers, not just economic, long-term view (not in and out) – instrumental in branding an area, focus on flow on tourism benefits of events</p> <p>Educate potential visitors on seasonal factors of tourism in particular destinations</p> <p>Certainty of events promotion</p>
Infrastructure and technology	<p>Improve visitor centres: use of technology, quality and experience of staff, link-in with WA visitor centre, education – new products</p> <p>Improve infrastructure - mobile signal, available WIFI (particularly for Asian Markets)</p> <p>Continued investment in natural landscapes/parks and iconic destinations</p> <p>Joint activity – digital links, TWA to inform</p>
Aviation	<p>Regulate airlines</p> <p>Aviation subsidies: tourism zones, hotels</p>

Planning	<p>Airbnb planning laws – how people stay rather than build accommodation, other agencies working together on these laws</p> <p>Partnering with major operators</p> <p>Reason to bring visitors here e.g. Chinese infrastructure/hotels</p>
Education	<p>Visitor experience - focus on smaller tourism areas, training and mentoring for existing operators and upskilling, TWA and WALGA facilitate this gap, breakdown barriers and include the importance of tourism</p> <p>Visitor centre education on new products</p> <p>Developing visitor service culture/quality which has a whole of community focus – not just tourism operators</p> <p>Develop a business model development for successful visitor centres</p>
Collaboration/support	<p>TWA support smaller volume areas: achieve scale (subsidise), recognition e.g. café – invest, pay premium, up and running turn profit</p> <p>Collaboration – LG tourism operators, visitor experience</p> <p>A more integrated approach to tourism planning/implementation: bottom up, a different approach is required</p> <p>Regional collaboration: play to strengths, itinerary planning: pre planning, assign responsibility within a visitor region, linkage across plans</p> <p>Role of LGA v RTO v Tourism WA defined</p> <p>Better facilitation required</p> <p>Expand ‘Just another day in WA’ campaign to LGA</p> <p>Regions working together</p> <p>RTOs have a stronger role collaborating with LGs</p> <p>Effective communication</p>
Barriers	<p>Stakeholder mapping</p> <p>Funding</p> <p>Politics</p> <p>Distance, access issues</p> <p>Lack of information</p> <p>Different focuses</p> <p>Competition rather than ‘coopertition’</p>