



2025 – 2030

# Charters Towers Region Destination Management Plan

# Acknowledgement of Country

We at Charters Towers Regional Council acknowledge the First Nations People of the land on which Charters Towers and its greater region are located, and where we conduct our business. We pay respect to their Elders past and present.

We are committed to a positive future for all.

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# Part 1: Executive summary



## 1.1. Overview

**The Charters Towers Region, located in North Queensland, is a vibrant and historically rich area celebrated for its unique heritage, stunning landscapes, and welcoming community.**

Known as "The World" during its gold rush heyday, Charters Towers boasts a rich legacy of historical architecture, fascinating stories, and a distinct identity that continues to attract visitors from many markets. The region's charm lies in its combination of heritage significance, scenic natural beauty, and a warm, friendly atmosphere that appeals to families, adventurers, and history enthusiasts alike.

The region is characterised by iconic landmarks such as the Venus Gold Battery and Towers Hill, alongside picturesque sites such as the Burdekin River. Its vast landscapes, which range from rugged outback terrain to lush riverbanks, provide a canvas for a variety of outdoor and adventure activities. These activities are complemented by the town's historic charm, offering a blend of heritage and modern amenities.

Charters Towers serves as a regional hub for education and agriculture, making it well-positioned to attract a diverse range of visitors. With its potential for outback adventures, family-friendly activities, and unique events, the area presents substantial opportunities for sustainable tourism growth.

## The Destination Management Plan

The Charters Towers Regional Council has engaged Stafford Strategy (Stafford) to develop a Destination Management Plan (DMP) that establishes a clear vision and strategic goals for the region's visitor economy. This plan aims to ensure long-term success, resilience, and sustainability by leveraging the region's strengths, addressing challenges, and unlocking its potential as a premier tourism destination in Queensland.

Based on independent research and extensive consultation with industry representatives, community groups, businesses, council members, and government stakeholders, the DMP outlines strategies to enhance visitor experiences, foster collaboration, and deliver economic, social, and cultural benefits. By focusing on innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability, it seeks to position Charters Towers as a vibrant and appealing destination.

In 2024, the Charters Towers Region attracted just over 350,000 visitors, contributing \$145 million to the local economy. Over half (59%) of these visitors were domestic day trippers.<sup>1</sup>

This document provides a condensed overview of the DMP, highlighting key findings

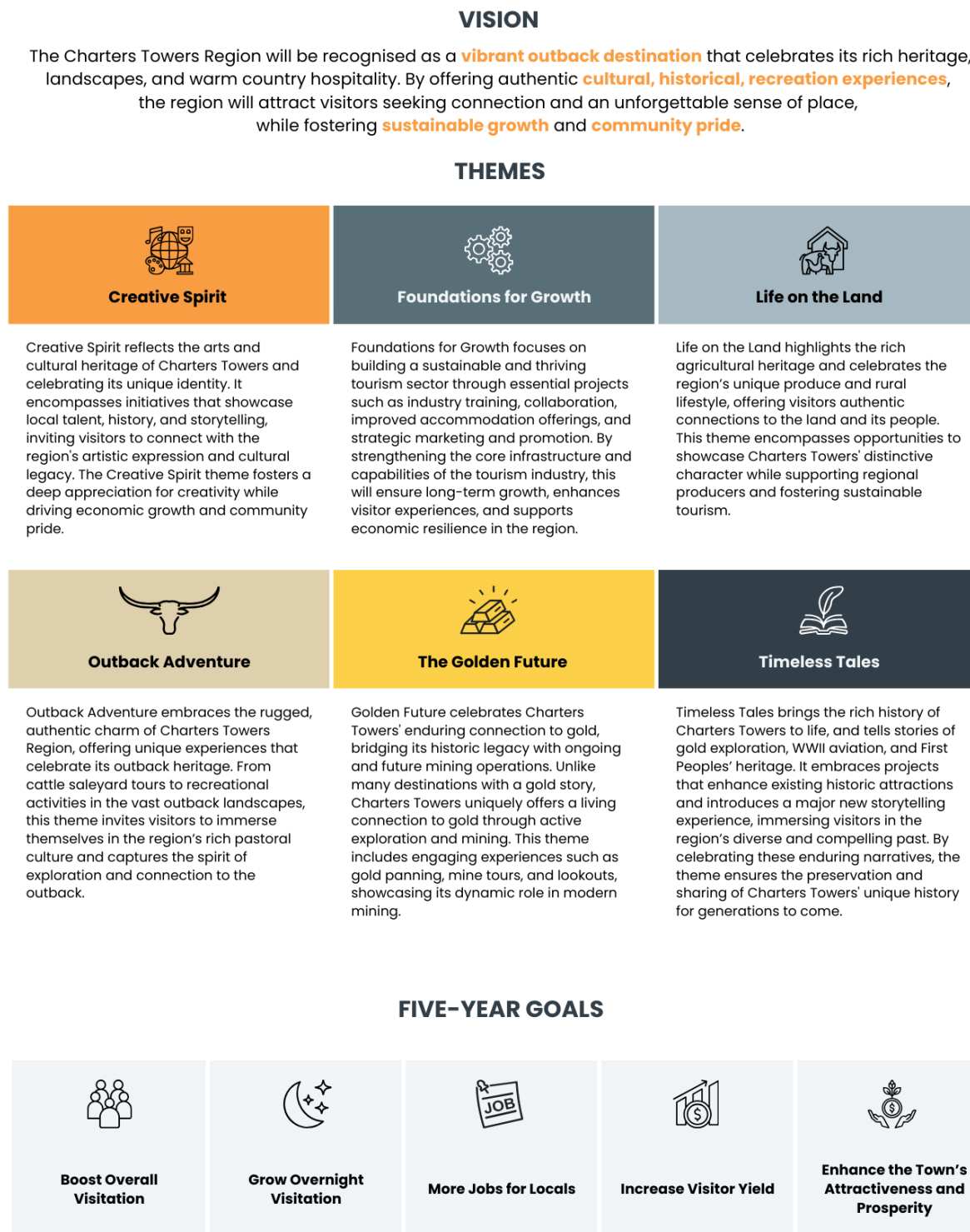
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<sup>1</sup> Tourism Research Australia National and International Visitor Survey

## 1.2. DMP strategic framework

The DMP's proposed projects, initiatives, and actions are structured within a framework that highlights key product themes to focus on (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Destination management plan framework



### 1.3. Target markets

The identified target markets include the following.

- Culture and History Buffs, who seek immersive experiences in the town's gold rush history and WWII significance.
- Grey Nomads, who value relaxed, extended stays in a welcoming environment.
- Habituals, repeat visitors who maintain strong connections to the area.
- Outback Explorers are drawn to the adventure and charm of the Australian outback.

- Memory Makers (Families) seek engaging activities that create lasting memories.
- Event Enthusiasts are attracted to Charters Towers' dynamic calendar of cultural, historical, and recreational events.

Together, these markets represent diverse opportunities to grow sustainable tourism and position Charters Towers as a must-visit destination.

Figure 2: Charters Towers Region target markets





|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|    |   |   |
| <p><b>Culture and History Buffs</b></p> <p>These are visitors interested in exploring the region's rich historical and cultural heritage. Charters Towers' gold rush history, heritage-listed buildings, and museums appeal to this group. They typically visit historic landmarks, attend cultural tours, and engage in educational experiences.</p> | <p><b>Grey Nomads</b></p> <p>Grey Nomads are typically retired travellers who explore Australia in caravans or motorhomes. They value scenic drives, outback experiences, and the opportunity to immerse themselves in peaceful rural settings. Charters Towers offers a relaxed, safe environment with caravan parks, local attractions, and opportunities to connect with nature. A survey conducted by the Council of Visitors using the overflow caravan park at the showground indicated that half (50%) of respondents had visited Charters Towers Region previously, while 11% had visited more than four times.</p> | <p><b>Habituals</b></p> <p>These are repeat visitors to Charters Towers who may have personal, family, or business ties to the region. They often return regularly and contribute to consistent tourism numbers. Their visits are less about exploring and more about maintaining connections or routines.</p>                                   |
|    |   |   |
| <p><b>Outback Explorers</b></p> <p>This group seeks adventure and authentic outback experiences. They are drawn to the rugged landscapes, wildlife, and remote charm of Charters Towers and surrounding areas. Activities like four-wheel driving, bushwalking, and stargazing align with their interests.</p>  | <p><b>Memory Makers (Families)</b></p> <p>Families travelling to Charters Towers are typically looking for experiences that cater to multiple age groups. They are drawn to family-friendly attractions such as parks, educational tours, and regional events that provide an enjoyable and safe environment for children and adults alike.</p>   | <p><b>Event Enthusiasts</b></p> <p>Event visitors come to the region specifically for festivals, fairs, school competitions or other local events. Charters Towers hosts a range of events that attract attendees from nearby and interstate, offering unique cultural and community-based experiences that boost the local tourism economy.</p> |

## 1.4. Game changer projects/initiatives

The DMP has identified a number of transformative projects and initiatives, each thoughtfully chosen to shape a vibrant future and visitor economy for the region. These, varying in size and scope, have been identified to meet the DMP's Strategic Framework targets.

Of these projects/initiatives, 12 have been prioritised as game changers (see Table 1). By leveraging the region's existing strengths and capitalising on emerging opportunities, these game changers seek to implement visitor economy building blocks, attract new visitor markets and enhance visitor engagement, stimulating economic growth and diversity for the region.

Table 1: Game changing initiatives/projects linked to the DMP themes

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  <p><b>Creative Spirit</b></p> <p>Charters Towers Illuminated<br/>(Main Street Light Show Event)</p> <p>Traditional Owner<br/>Visitor Experiences</p> |  <p><b>Foundations for Growth</b></p> <p>Commissionable Product<br/>Development</p> <p>Tourism Marketing Strategy</p>       |  <p><b>Life on the Land</b></p> <p>Distillery/Brewery<br/>(Gold Mining Theme)</p> <p>Farm Stays</p>   |
|  <p><b>Outback Adventure</b></p> <p>Charters Towers Lagoon</p> <p>Saleyards Group Tours</p>   |  <p><b>The Golden Future</b></p> <p>Gold Experience Centre</p> <p>Gold panning experience<br/>near Venus Gold Battery</p> |  <p><b>Timeless Tales</b></p> <p>Venus Gold Battery Experience<br/>Enhancement and Tech Upgrades</p> <p>WW2 Aviation and Gold<br/>Story Laser Show at Towers Hill</p> |



## 1.5. Summary

The DMP presents a strategic and forward-looking vision to position the region as a leading tourism destination while delivering significant benefits to the local community. By setting clear and achievable goals – boosting overall visitation, increasing overnight stays, creating more local jobs, enhancing visitor yield, and elevating the town's appeal and prosperity – the DMP lays the groundwork for sustainable and inclusive growth.

By encouraging extended stays and higher visitor spending, the plan aims to maximise economic benefits while fostering opportunities for local businesses and employment. Increased tourism activity will support the growth of Charters Towers as a thriving hub, creating a more dynamic and prosperous community for residents and visitors alike.

At the heart of the DMP is the commitment to enhancing the town's attractiveness and ensuring it remains a must-visit destination in North Queensland. This includes investments in innovative tourism products, revitalised infrastructure, and enriched storytelling to connect visitors more deeply with the town's history and character.

Charters Towers was at the forefront in offering technology focussed visitor attractions and experiences 20 years ago; those visitor attractions and experiences now require refreshment and enhancements to remain highly appealing to current and new visitor markets. And are needed to ensure that Charters Towers remains highly competitive with major quality attractions which have been developed and updated in many parts of outback Queensland.

Through collaboration between local stakeholders, government, and the tourism industry, the DMP will unlock Charters Towers' full potential, paving the way for a future defined by growth, resilience, and shared prosperity. By achieving these goals, Charters Towers will solidify its reputation as an iconic destination, offering compelling experiences that leave lasting impressions on all who visit.



## Part 2: Where are we now?

## 2.1. About the Charters Towers Region

**The Charters Towers Region offers an authentic outback experience steeped in history, natural beauty, and country charm. Known as "The World" during its gold rush heyday, the town of Charters Towers boasts stunning heritage architecture, vibrant events, and fascinating historical sites.**

The Charters Towers Region has a population of approximately 12,000 people, with the majority residing in the main township of Charters Towers. The region is characterised by its close-knit rural communities, with smaller towns such as Greenvale, Pentland, and Ravenswood contributing to its population base.

The demographic profile reflects a mix of families, retirees, and workers engaged in industries like agriculture, mining, and education. Charters Towers' reputation as a hub for boarding schools attracts a transient student population, adding vibrancy to the community.

The Charters Towers Region's economy is diverse, with key industries including the following.



**Agriculture:** The region is a significant cattle-grazing hub, contributing to Queensland's beef industry. Vast pastoral lands support large-scale livestock production, and agritourism is also emerging as an economic opportunity.



**Mining:** Gold mining has historically been a cornerstone of the local economy, and the legacy continues with ongoing mining operations in and around the region, particularly in Ravenswood.



**Education:** Charters Towers is renowned for its boarding schools, which attract students from across Queensland and beyond. This education sector plays a vital role in the local economy by creating jobs and fostering supporting services.

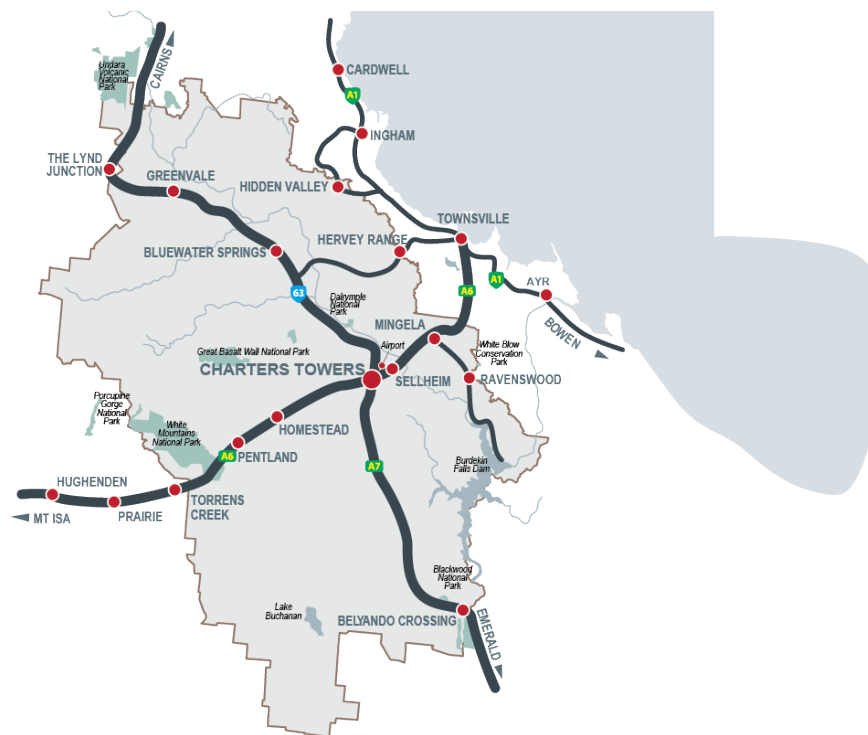


**Retail and Services:** As the main regional centre, Charters Towers supports a range of retail, health, and government services for the surrounding rural communities.



**Tourism:** The region draws visitors with its gold rush heritage, historic architecture, and natural attractions like White Mountains National Park and Towers Hill. Events such as rodeos and festivals also boost tourism.

Figure 3: The Charters Towers Region



## 2.2. Strengths, barriers and opportunities

To realise the region's vision (see Section 1.2), the visitor economy stakeholders must identify their comparative strengths, inherent weaknesses, product gaps, opportunities for effective development, and potential threats. Opportunities and challenges are often intertwined in the growth of a thriving industry and region.

Based on Charters Towers Region's existing attractions and insights from research and consultation, the following opportunities and barriers/challenges (Table 2) have been identified for the region over the next decade.





Table 2: Charters Towers Region's strengths, barriers and opportunities

| Strengths   | Barriers to Growth  | Opportunities  |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>History and heritage (First Peoples, buildings, heritage sites)</li> <li>Strong agricultural sector and local produce (beef grazing)</li> <li>Access to major road transport routes</li> <li>Venus Gold Battery and WWII Bunkers</li> <li>Recreational fishing experiences</li> <li>Motorsports and motocross precinct</li> <li>Existing festivals and events</li> <li>Natural attractions (White Mountains National Park, Towers Hill Lookout, and the Burdekin River)</li> <li>Authentic outback experience (historic towns, friendly communities, and scenic outback landscapes provide a quintessential outback Australian experience)</li> <li>Proximity to Townsville and accessibility more generally</li> <li>Location along the Overlander's Way and the Great Inland Way.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workforce skill gaps and shortages in key roles</li> <li>Visitor accommodation does not meet demand, hampering the ability for growing overnight and longer stays</li> <li>Dated digital infrastructure at key visitor experiences</li> <li>Variable quality of accommodation stock</li> <li>Lack of robust statistical data and lack of market intelligence from the industry</li> <li>Limited new and/or refreshed tourism-based products</li> <li>Vandalism of key tourism assets</li> <li>Lack of commissionable product</li> <li>A declining and ageing population</li> <li>Directional and interpretative signage</li> <li>Public transport to and around the region</li> <li>Beautification of townships, urban design and placemaking</li> <li>Lack of adequate funding to maintain existing infrastructure on public lands leading to a desire to avoid introducing new facilities and new infrastructure</li> <li>Lack of sufficient food and drink products (cafes, restaurants, bars, etc.)</li> <li>Insufficient succession planning of tourism businesses</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commissionable agri-tourism products</li> <li>Consistent visitor experiences in terms of quality and service delivery</li> <li>Introduction of commissionable product to grow the marketability of the region</li> <li>Grow accommodation options, including typology and higher quality</li> <li>Tourism/visitor data database</li> <li>Grow awareness of tourism benefits in the general community</li> <li>Operator training and upskilling</li> <li>Tourism signage strategy and audit (directional and interpretive)</li> <li>Creation of trails to promote and link the region's arts, culture, adventure experiences</li> <li>Work with First Peoples to integrate their stories (where desired) across the region</li> <li>Offer night-time experiences for locals and visitors</li> <li>Leverage and expand on the gold story (past, current and future)</li> <li>Introduce guided gold panning experiences</li> <li>Upgrade technology at current visitor attraction sites</li> <li>Grow the variety of F&amp;B offer</li> <li>Introduced family-friendly experiences</li> <li>Training workshops to upskill industry in social media, digital platforms, marketing and product development</li> <li>Signage audit and strategy</li> <li>F&amp;B roster to grow availability of offering</li> <li>Self-guided trails to link art and experiences</li> </ul> |



### 2.3. Visitor snapshot (2024)

Table 3: Visitor economy snapshot (2024, June YE)<sup>2</sup>

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
|  <p><b>354K</b><br/>Visitors in 2024</p> |  <p><b>\$145.6M</b><br/>Spent in 2024</p> |  <p><b>\$114.4M</b><br/>Overnight spend in 2024</p> |  <p><b>\$31.3M</b><br/>Day trip spend in 2024</p> |
| 59% Domestic Day  | 21% Domestic Day   |  | \$150 average spend per trip per Domestic Day visitor  |
| 40% Domestic Overnight  | 77% Domestic Overnight   | \$790 average spend per trip per Domestic Overnight visitor  |  |
| 1% International  | 1% International   | \$730 average spend per trip per International Overnight visitor   |  |

<sup>2</sup> <https://dataau.com.au/profile/32310>. Data is June YE. For 2015 – 2019, data has been averaged over three-year periods to accommodate for small sample sizes. Due to COVID-19 impacts, data is presented as single year data for 2020 – 2023 while 2024 represents a two-year average.

### 2.3.1. Total visitation

Figure 4 provides yearly visitation data for the Charters Towers Region, broken down by visitor types from 2015 to 2024. The pandemic caused a noticeable drop in all categories, particularly international and interstate visitors. Domestic markets (especially intrastate) have driven recovery, supported by eased restrictions and a focus on regional travel.

The data demonstrates the following.

#### Total Visitors:

- Overall visitation rose steadily from 285,000 in 2015 to 376,000 in 2019.
- Sharp pandemic-induced decline (down to 242,000 in 2020).
- Recovery began in 2022, and visitation has reached near pre-pandemic levels by 2024 (354,000).

#### Domestic Day Visitors:

- Significant growth from 2015 (158,000) to a peak in 2017 (227,000).
- Sharp decline during the pandemic (96,000 in 2022) but rebounded in 2023 to 247,000.
- A dip in day trip visitation to 209,000 in 2024.

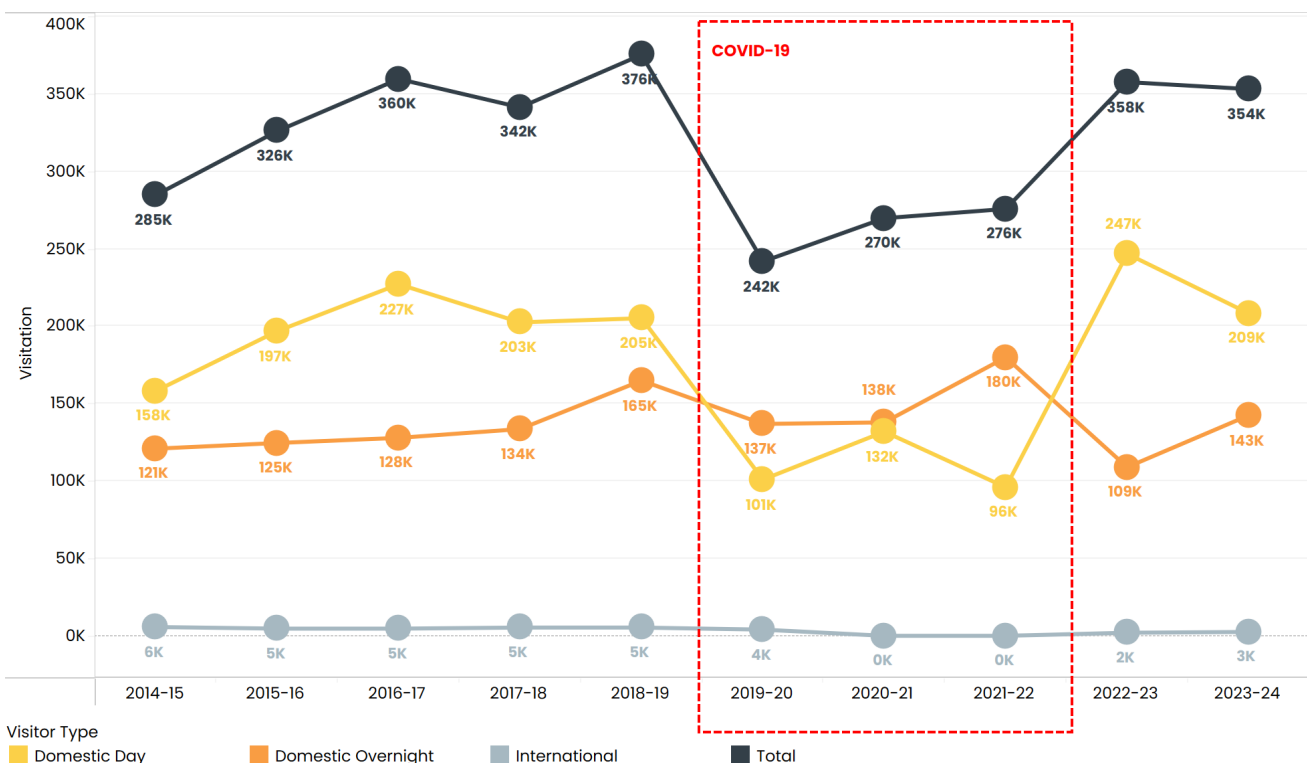
#### Domestic Overnight Visitors:

- Steady growth from 121,000 in 2015 to a high of 165,000 in 2019.
- Decline during the pandemic, but numbers recovered to 180,000 in 2022.
- A drop in 2023 (109,000), with modest recovery in 2024 (143,000).

#### International Visitors:

- Numbers were relatively low, peaking slightly in 2018 (5,000).
- Drastic decline to zero during the pandemic (2021 and 2022), reflecting border closures.
- Gradual recovery post-pandemic (2,000 in 2023, rising to just under 3,000 in 2024).

Figure 4: Total visitation to the Charters Towers Region, 2014 – 2023<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> <https://dataau.com.au/profile/32310>. Data is June YE. For 2015 – 2019, data has been averaged over three year periods to accommodate for small sample sizes. Due to COVID-19 impacts, data is presented as single year data for 2020 – 2023 while 2024 represents a two year average.

### 2.3.2. Visitor nights

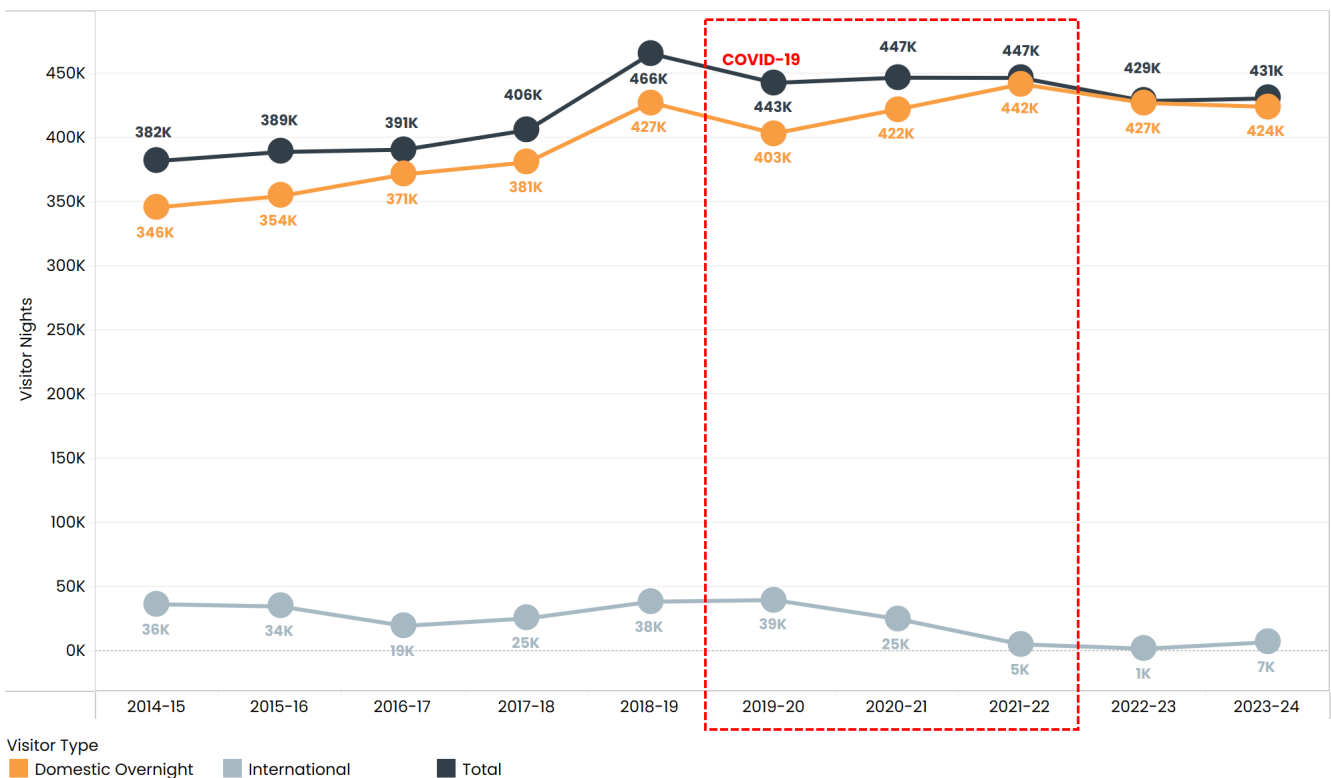
Figure 5 shows visitor nights in the Charters Towers Region, segmented by visitor type (domestic overnight, international, and total nights) over a ten-year period (2015 to 2024). It demonstrates the following.

- Domestic overnight visitor nights have shown consistent growth over the years, increasing from 346,000 in 2015 to a peak of 427,000 in 2019. Despite a slight decline to 403,000 during 2020 due to the pandemic, domestic overnight visitors remain the dominant source of visitor nights in the region, underscoring the importance of the market to the Charters Towers Region's economy.
- International visitor nights have consistently accounted for a very small share of visitation. Numbers declined gradually pre-COVID, from 36,000 in 2015 to a low of 19,000 in 2017. The pandemic caused a significant disruption, with visitor nights plummeting to just 1,000 in 2023. While international visitor numbers are beginning to recover, reaching 7,000 in 2024, they remain far below pre-pandemic levels, suggesting a longer recovery period.

- Total visitor nights reflect a combination of domestic and international trends. There was steady growth pre-pandemic, with total visitor nights increasing from 382,000 in 2015 to a high of 466,000 in 2019. However, the pandemic resulted in a decline, with totals falling to 443,000 in 2020. While recovery has been gradual, visitor nights reached 431,000 in 2024, demonstrating the strong performance of domestic markets but also highlighting the ongoing impact of reduced international visitation.

Overall, the data highlights the resilience of domestic tourism and its critical role in supporting the region's visitor economy.

Figure 5: Total visitor nights and average length of stay in the Charters Towers Region, 2015 – 2024<sup>4</sup>



<sup>4</sup> <https://dataau.com.au/profile/32310>. Data is June YE. For 2015 – 2019, data has been averaged over three year periods to accommodate for small sample sizes. Due to COVID-19 impacts, data is presented as single year data for 2020 – 2023 while 2024 represents a two year average.

### 2.3.3. Visitor spending

Visitor spending in the Charters Towers Region demonstrates the vital role tourism plays in driving the local economy. Over the past decade, total visitor expenditure has shown steady growth, with notable fluctuations reflecting external factors such as market conditions and global events.

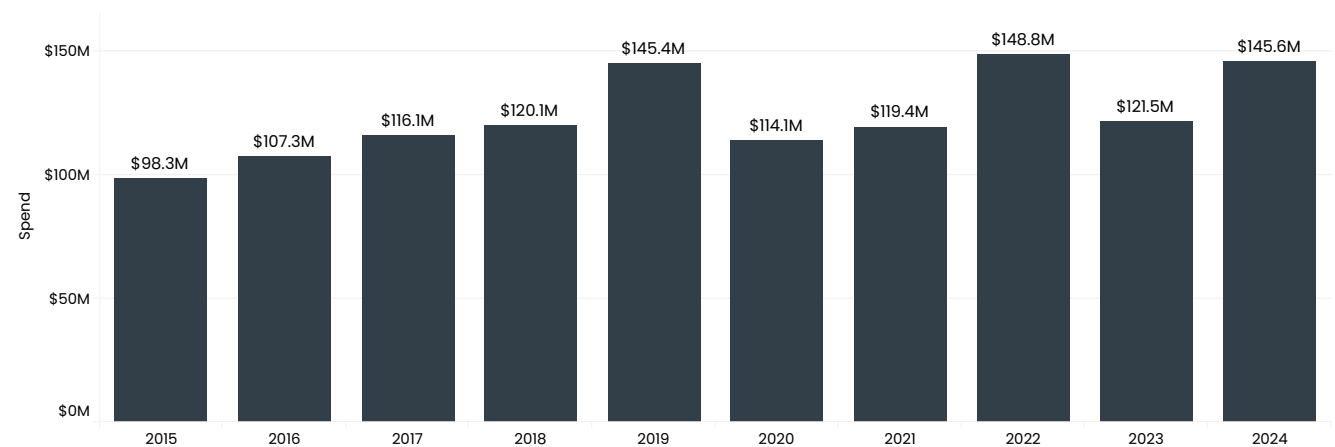
As highlighted in Figure 6, total visitor spending reached \$145.6 million in 2024, showcasing a strong recovery and growth trajectory compared to previous years. A significant contributor to this spending is the domestic overnight market, which, despite representing only 40% of total visitation, accounted for an impressive 77% of total expenditure in 2024. This highlights the importance of targeting and growing overnight visitation to maximise economic benefits for the region.

The spending breakdown by market further underscores the critical role of domestic visitors, particularly those staying overnight. Domestic day visitors also contribute meaningfully to the economy, while international visitors, though a small proportion of overall numbers, present an opportunity for growth and diversification.

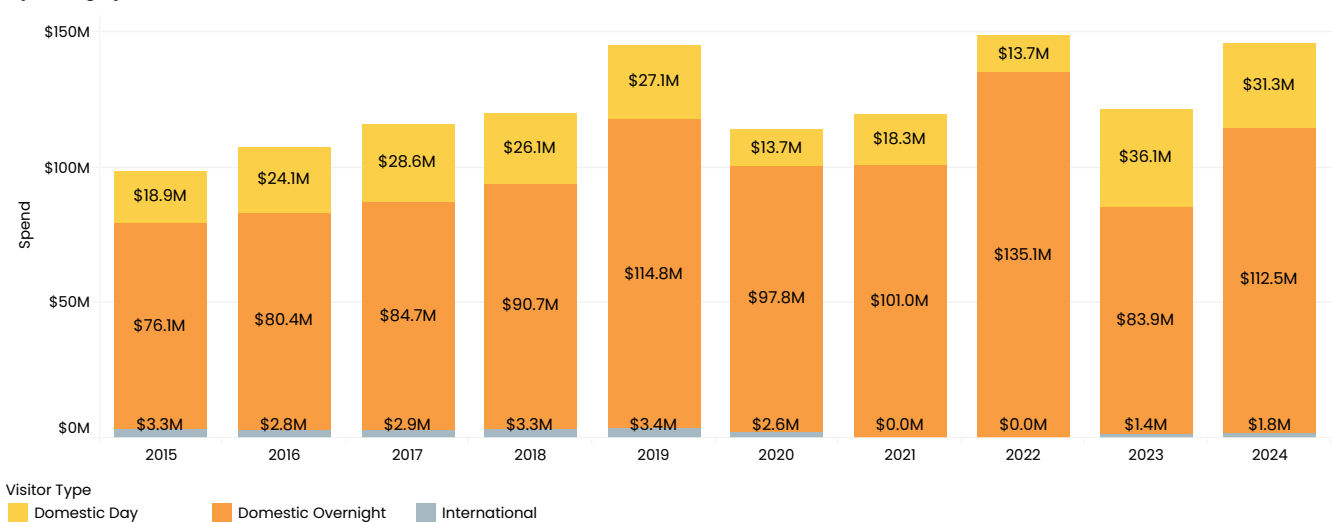
This data reinforces the need to focus on strategies that enhance the visitor experience, attract higher-yield markets, and extend length of stay. By doing so, the Charters Towers Region can continue to boost tourism's contribution to the local economy and foster long-term, sustainable growth.

Figure 6: Visitor spending in the Charters Towers Region, 2015 – 2024<sup>5</sup>

#### Total Visitor Spending



#### Spending by Market



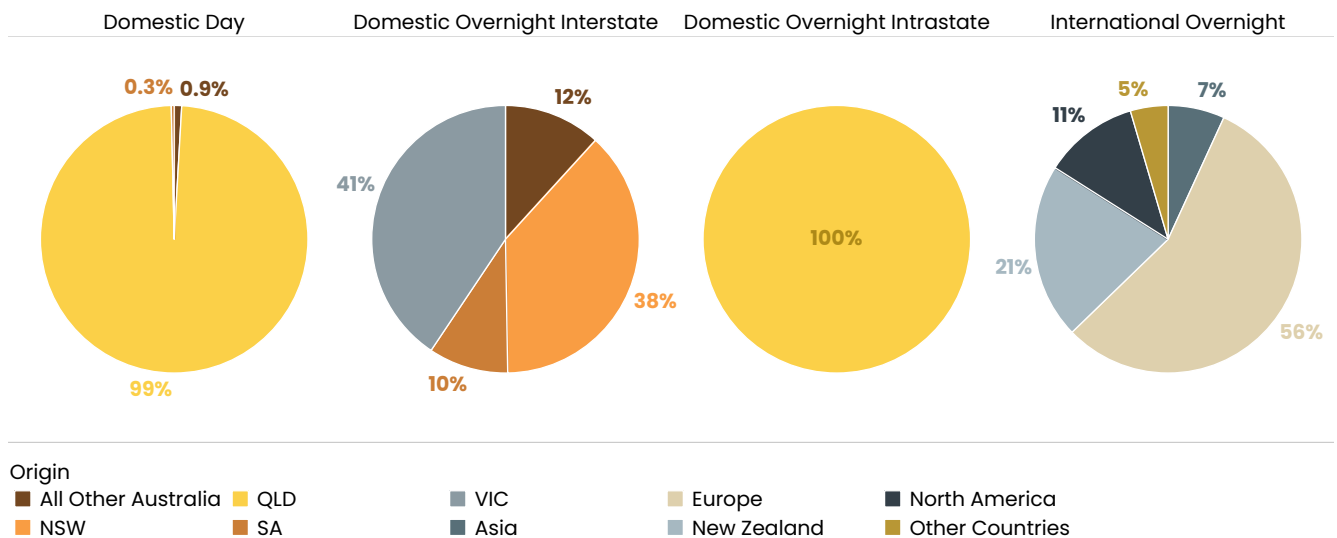
<sup>5</sup> NVS and IVS, TRA, December YE, compiled by Stafford

### 2.3.4. Visitor origin

Figure 7 provides insights into the geographic origins of visitors to the Charters Towers Region, segmented by visitor type. It shows the following.

- **Domestic Day Visitors:** The vast majority of day visitors (99%) are from Queensland, reflecting the regional or localised nature of day trips. Visitors from outside Queensland are negligible, at just 0.3% from New South Wales and 0.9% from Victoria. The region's proximity to Townsville Airport facilitates this small domestic interstate day trip market.
- **Domestic Overnight Interstate Visitors:** Interstate overnight visitors show a more diverse distribution. Queensland remains a significant source but accounts for only 38% of this segment. Other key contributors include Victoria (41%), New South Wales (10%), and smaller shares from South Australia (12%) and other Australian states and territories (All Other Australia, 10%).
- **Domestic Overnight Intrastate Visitors:** Being in intrastate market, all overnight intrastate visitors (100%) originate from within Queensland.
- **International Overnight Visitors:** The international market is small but diverse, led by visitors from Europe (56%), followed by New Zealand (21%). Smaller proportions include Asia (11%), North America (7%), and Other Countries (5%). The dominance of European visitors may be linked to the region's appeal to free independent travellers (FITs) rather than those on structured tours. European travellers are often associated with the FIT market, valuing flexibility and unique, self-guided experiences that align well with what Charters Towers has to offer.
- Ultimately, the data highlights Charters Towers Region's dependence on Queensland residents for both day and intrastate overnight visitation.

Figure 7: Origin of visitors to the Charters Towers Region, 10-year average 2015 – 2024<sup>6</sup>



<sup>6</sup> <https://dataau.com.au/profile/32310>. Data is June YE.



### 2.3.5. Target markets

The Charters Towers Region has six target market segments which are outlined in Table 4 and further explained in Table 5 on the following page. Some of these are existing markets, while others have been identified as opportunity markets to target because of their potential to drive visitation and yield. Going forward, it will be essential to target each market with offerings that align with their unique preferences and interests.

Table 4: Charters Towers Region target markets

|                           | Visitor Origin         |              |                          |                          |               |
|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
|                           | Brisbane and Surrounds | Regional QLD | Interstate (VIC and NSW) | Interstate (Rest of Aus) | International |
| <b>Target market</b>      |                        |              |                          |                          |               |
| Culture and History Buffs | ●                      |              | ●                        | ●                        | ●             |
| Grey Nomads               |                        |              | ●                        | ●                        |               |
| Habituals                 |                        | ●            |                          |                          |               |
| Outback Explorers         |                        | ●            | ●                        | ●                        | ●             |
| Memory Makers (Families)  | ●                      |              | ●                        | ●                        |               |
| Event Enthusiasts         | ●                      | ●            |                          |                          |               |

Table 5: Charters Towers Region's target markets explained and opportunities for growth

| Target Market                    | Description  | What They Are Seeking  |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Culture and History Buffs</b> | These are visitors interested in exploring the region's rich historical and cultural heritage. Charters Towers' gold rush history, heritage-listed buildings, and museums appeal to this group. They typically spend time visiting historic landmarks, attending cultural tours, and engaging in educational experiences.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experiences: Heritage trails, museums, historic sites, cultural tours, indigenous storytelling, and art galleries. They value immersive and informative experiences that connect them to the region's past.</li> <li>Tourism Infrastructure: Well-preserved historic buildings, signage for self-guided tours, interactive exhibits, and cultural centres.</li> <li>Accommodation: Boutique hotels, heritage stays, or unique accommodations with character and historical significance.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Grey Nomads</b>               | Grey Nomads are typically retired travellers who explore Australia in caravans or motorhomes. They value scenic drives, outback experiences, and the opportunity to immerse themselves in peaceful rural settings. Charters Towers offers a relaxed, safe environment with caravan parks, local attractions, and opportunities to connect with nature. A survey conducted by Council of visitors using the overflow caravan park at the showground indicated that half (50%) of respondents had visited Charters Towers Region previously, while 11% had visited more than four times. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experiences: Scenic drives, caravan-friendly routes, accessible nature trails, birdwatching, and opportunities to relax while engaging with local communities.</li> <li>Tourism Infrastructure: RV-friendly facilities, powered caravan sites, accessible amenities, picnic areas, accessible CBDs, and shaded rest stops.</li> <li>Accommodation: Caravan parks, self-contained cabins, and motels with easy access and comfortable facilities.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Habituals</b>                 | These are repeat visitors to Charters Towers who may have personal, family, or business ties to the region. They often return regularly and contribute to consistent tourism numbers. Their visits are less about exploring and more about maintaining connections or routines.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experiences: Familiar and repeatable activities like fishing, golf, or favourite dining spots. They seek consistency and comfort.</li> <li>Tourism Infrastructure: Regular events, locally owned cafés and shops, and well-maintained facilities that build loyalty.</li> <li>Accommodation: Comfortable motels or holiday homes they return to, with an emphasis on reliable service and convenience.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Outback Explorers</b>         | This group seeks adventure and authentic outback experiences. They are drawn to the rugged landscapes, wildlife, and remote charm of Charters Towers and surrounding areas. Activities like four-wheel driving, bushwalking, and stargazing align with their interests.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experiences: Off-road adventures, stargazing, camping under the stars, and exploring natural landscapes such as national parks or rivers.</li> <li>Tourism Infrastructure: 4WD tracks, campgrounds, lookout points, and guided tours for safety in remote areas.</li> <li>Accommodation: Camping grounds, eco-lodges, or rustic cabins offering proximity to natural attractions.</li> </ul>  |

| Target Market                   | Description  | What They Are Seeking  |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Memory Makers (Families)</b> | Families travelling to Charters Towers are typically looking for experiences that cater to multiple age groups. They are drawn to family-friendly attractions such as parks, educational tours, and regional events that provide an enjoyable and safe environment for children and adults alike.        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experiences: Interactive attractions such as zoos or water parks, kid-friendly museums, adventure parks, and outdoor activities like bushwalking.</li> <li>Tourism Infrastructure: Playgrounds, family picnic areas, accessible toilets, and attractions catering to children of various ages.</li> <li>Accommodation: Family-oriented stays such as cabins, holiday parks, or resorts with pools and activities for kids.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Event Enthusiasts</b>        | Event visitors come to the region specifically for festivals, fairs, school competitions or other local events. Charters Towers hosts a range of events that attract attendees from nearby and interstate, offering unique cultural and community-based experiences that boost the local tourism economy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experiences: Festivals, concerts, sports events, and local celebrations offering vibrant atmospheres and unique regional charm.</li> <li>Tourism Infrastructure: Event venues, ample parking, transport links, and hospitality facilities like food trucks and pop-up markets.</li> <li>Accommodation: Centrally located options like hotels or serviced apartments that provide convenience for attending events.</li> </ul>         |



## 2.4. Charters Towers Region's product offering

The Charters Towers Region embodies the quintessential Australian rural experience, with its primary appeal rooted in unique cultural heritage, rich history, and its distinctive natural and rural environment.

Emerging strengths include agritourism, commissionable tourism experiences, and tour-based products, all of which present opportunities for further development and promotion. While many current offerings remain raw and undeveloped, they hold significant potential for enhancement to meet market expectations and drive growth.

Key areas for improvement include town amenities, food and beverage options, transport, access, and accommodation. The region's accommodation supply, primarily consisting of caravan parks, standard motels, and pub-style lodgings, is limited and lacks alignment with the needs of contemporary visitor markets. Addressing the undersupply of quality accommodation will be essential to attract and cater to new visitor markets, with gradual improvements needed over time to support the region's tourism growth.

### 2.4.1. Attractions and experiences

Figure 8 on the following page product audit for the Charters Towers Regional LGA, highlighting the attractions and activities available in the region. It shows the following.

- The inset map of Charters Towers highlights a dense cluster of attractions within the town, positioning it as the central tourism hub of the region. This compact area offers diverse experiences, including museums, cultural sites, parks, and entertainment venues, enhancing visitor convenience and promoting multi-attraction visits.
- Outside the town, attractions are more dispersed, primarily located along major travel routes and within natural areas, presenting opportunities to develop drive trails or tour circuits to connect these sites.
- Parks and natural areas represent the largest category of attractions, accounting for 29% (33 sites), followed by museums and heritage at 23% (26 sites), recreation at 18%, and tours at 7%.
- Dominant product categories include the following:
  - Parks and natural areas (33 attractions, 29%): The largest category, these spaces play a key role in attracting visitors interested in nature, hiking, and outdoor activities. They include regional parks, conservation areas, and public green spaces.
  - Museums and heritage (26 attractions, 23%): This category features heritage buildings and museums that showcase Charters Towers' history.
  - Recreation (20 attractions, 18%): This category offers diverse leisure opportunities, including sports facilities, swimming pools, and other activity-focused locations, enhancing the overall visitor experience.

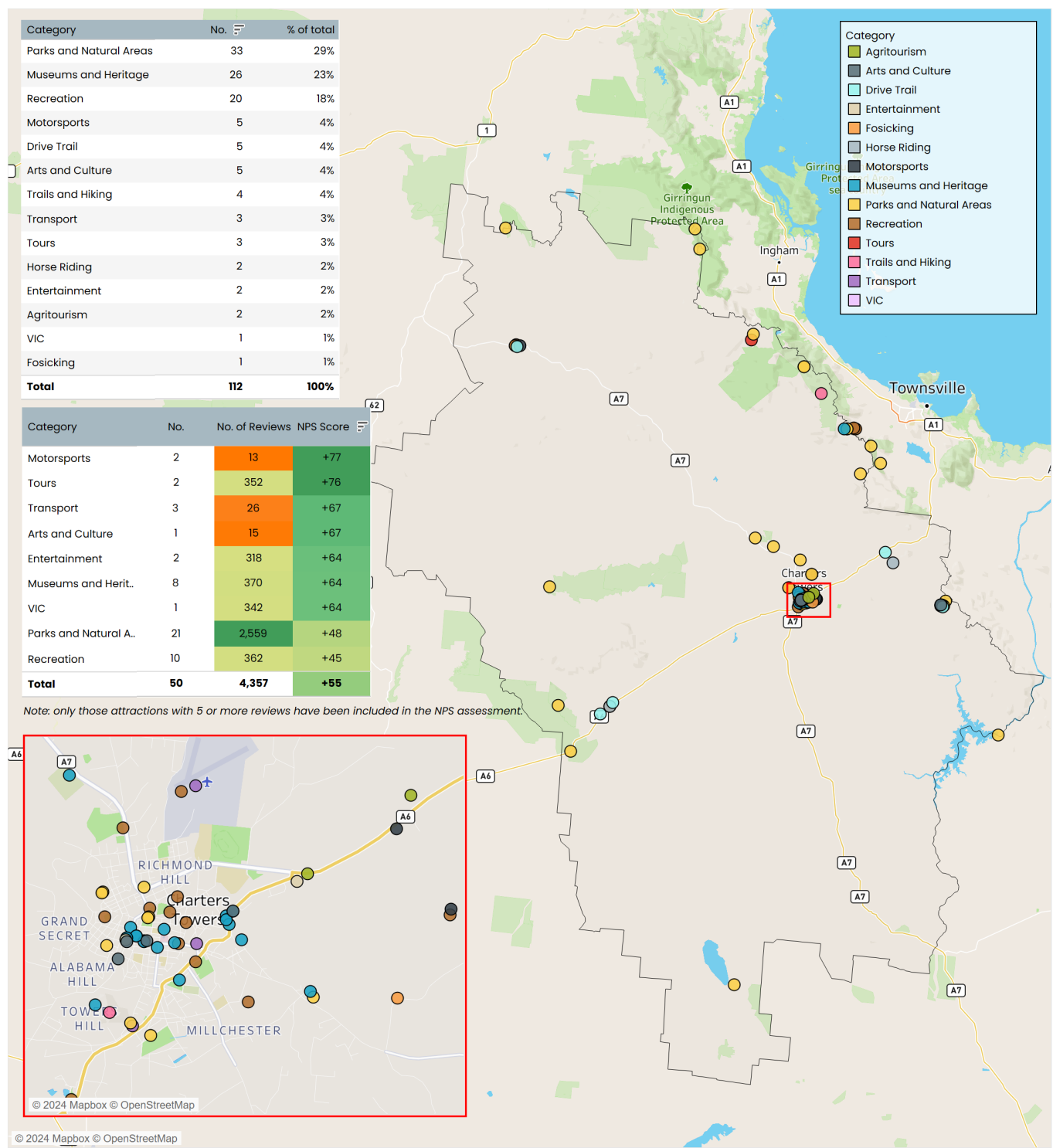
- Niche product categories include:
  - Motorsports (5 attractions): While fewer in number, motorsports attractions demonstrate strong visitor satisfaction (NPS +77) and have potential to attract niche markets through events and competitions.
  - Arts and Culture (3 attractions): This category shows potential for growth, supported by its high NPS score (+67), despite its limited presence.
  - Agritourism and Horse Riding (1–2 attractions): These emerging sectors align with the region's rural identity and could be developed further to appeal to adventure and rural tourism markets.
  - Drive Trails (2 attractions): With vast landscapes, drive trails can be expanded to connect key attractions, create themed itineraries, and improve accessibility to remote locations.
- Unique product offerings:
  - Fossicking (1 attraction): Closely tied to Charters Towers' gold mining heritage, the fossicking experiences could be expanded to reach a larger market and potentially tied in with a broader regional fossicking trail (e.g. tied in with Hughenden, renowned for its focus on fossils, and Emerald, celebrated for its gemstones).
- Bundling attractions into thematic experiences (e.g., heritage tours, nature and adventure packages, family-friendly itineraries) could encourage longer stays and higher spend.

The Net Promoter Score (NPS) assessment looks at visitor satisfaction for product with 5 or more reviews. Motorsports has the highest NPS (+77), followed by Tours (+67). Categories such as Museums and Heritage, Parks and Natural Areas, and Recreation also have above-average NPS ratings (+64 to +45).

- The region's attractions collectively achieve an NPS of +55, based on over 4,300 reviews, reflecting strong visitor satisfaction (with +30 considered average).
- Motorsports score the highest NPS (+77), though this is based on a small sample of 13 reviews, so caution is advised in interpretation. This suggests potential for growth by hosting larger motorsports events and leveraging existing infrastructure.
- Tours perform exceptionally well, with an NPS of +75 from 352 reviews, highlighting the quality of guided experiences. Texas Longhorn Tours stands out with an impressive NPS of +97 from 341 reviews, showcasing exceptionally high visitor satisfaction.

The audit demonstrates that Charters Towers has a well-rounded tourism offering, with strengths in heritage experiences and nature and outback experiences. Opportunities may exist to grow niche offerings like agritourism and fossicking.

Figure 8: Charters Towers Region Attractions and Experiences Audit





## 2.4.2. Accommodation

Figure 9 provides an overview of the accommodation options available in the Charters Towers Region and demonstrates the following.

- Charters Towers township serves as the hub for most accommodation types, with smaller, isolated offerings found in more rural parts of the LGA.
- There are 56 properties across all categories, offering 469 bookable units<sup>7</sup>.
- Airbnb (15) and Pub Accommodation (12) are the most common type of property.
- The distribution of bookable units varies, with Caravan Parks offering the most units (35% of total) (and noting this count excludes powered and unpowered sites so its real number is likely to be far greater), followed by Pub Accommodation (29%) and Motels (27%). Airbnb, despite having the most properties, contributes only 3% of total bookable units.

With respect to consumer sentiment, the NPS results demonstrate the following (note: only properties with five or more reviews have been included in the NPS assessment).

- The total NPS across all categories is +37, indicating a generally positive guest experience. A total of 7,452 reviews were captured, indicating substantial customer feedback. While the NPS scores indicate above-average performance, this may reflect the current accommodation base catering to a market segment with modest expectations. To attract higher-yielding and more diverse visitor markets, there is an opportunity to introduce higher-quality accommodation options and refresh existing offerings to meet evolving visitor preferences.

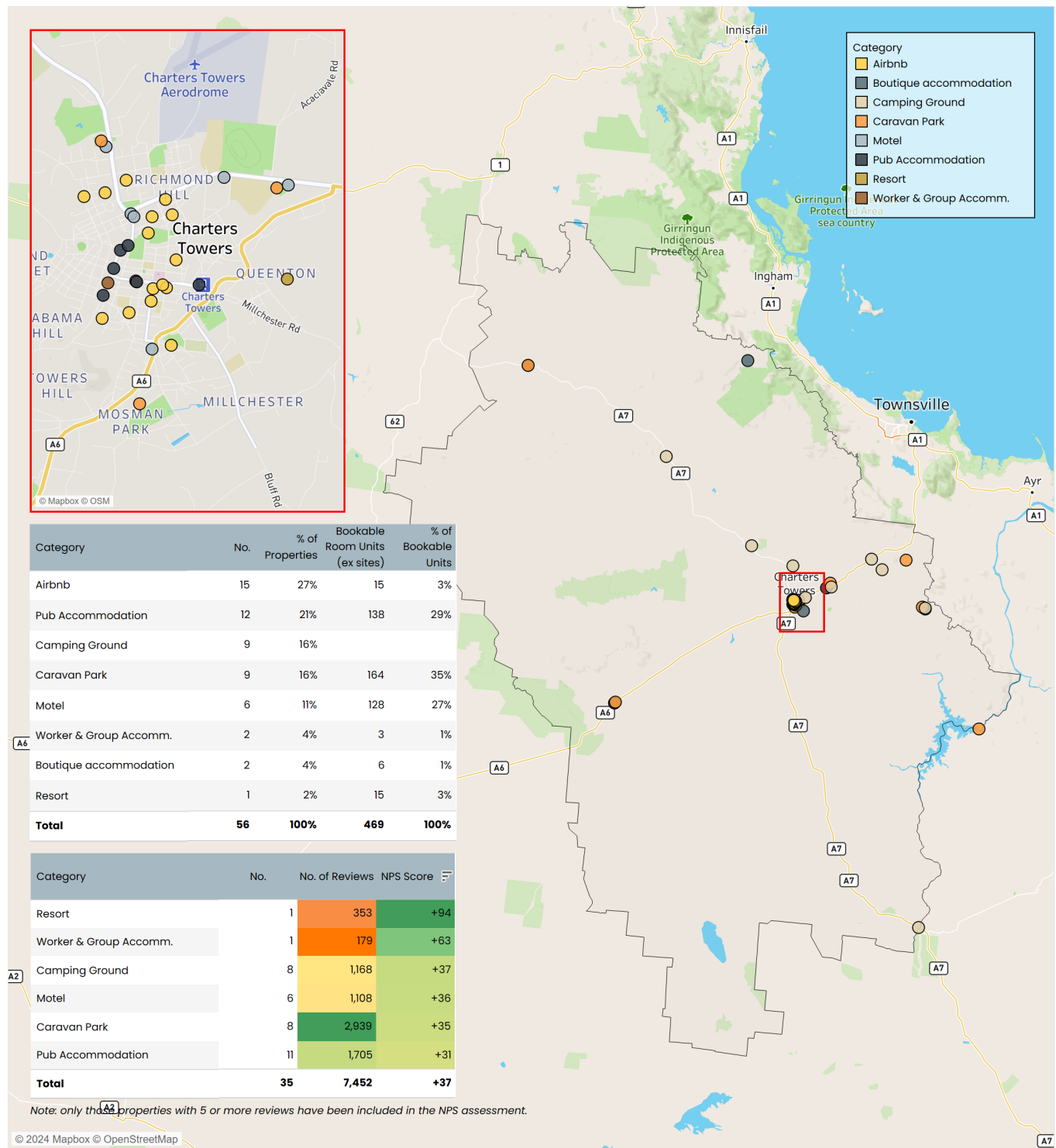
- The resort category receives a very strong NPS and the highest rating based on 353 reviews. There is only one property in this category indicating the opportunity to expand this typology of accommodation in the region.
- Worker and Group Accommodation also have a strong performance with an NPS of +83 (179 reviews).
- Caravan Parks generate a solid NPS of +45 from 2,939 reviews, reflecting their popularity as a form of accommodation.
- Pub Accommodation receives the Lowest NPS of +37 with 1,705 reviews, indicating room for improvement in guest satisfaction.
- Caravan Parks and Pub Accommodation collectively contribute the majority of room capacity (noting that this excludes site counts and only comprises rooms in cabins etc).
- Resorts and Worker/Group Accommodation perform well in terms of guest satisfaction, though this is based on a small sample size and only one property.

While the region appears to have adequate traditional forms of accommodation (such as motels and caravan parks), there is a need for more boutique and experiential accommodation to cater to growing demand for unique, high-quality visitor experiences. While the region offers a range of traditional accommodation options, there is an opportunity to diversify the offering by introducing boutique properties and experiential stays that highlight the area's rich history, natural beauty, and rural charm. This type of accommodation can attract higher-yield visitors, encourage longer stays, and enhance the overall visitor experience, contributing to increased tourism expenditure and broader economic benefits for the region.

<sup>7</sup> A bookable unit refers to a single accommodation option that can be booked by one group or party at a time, regardless of the number of rooms it contains.

For example, if an Airbnb has 5 rooms but only allows one group to book the entire property (not individual rooms), it counts as 1 bookable unit.

Figure 9: Charters Towers Region Accommodation Audit





### 2.4.3. Food and beverage

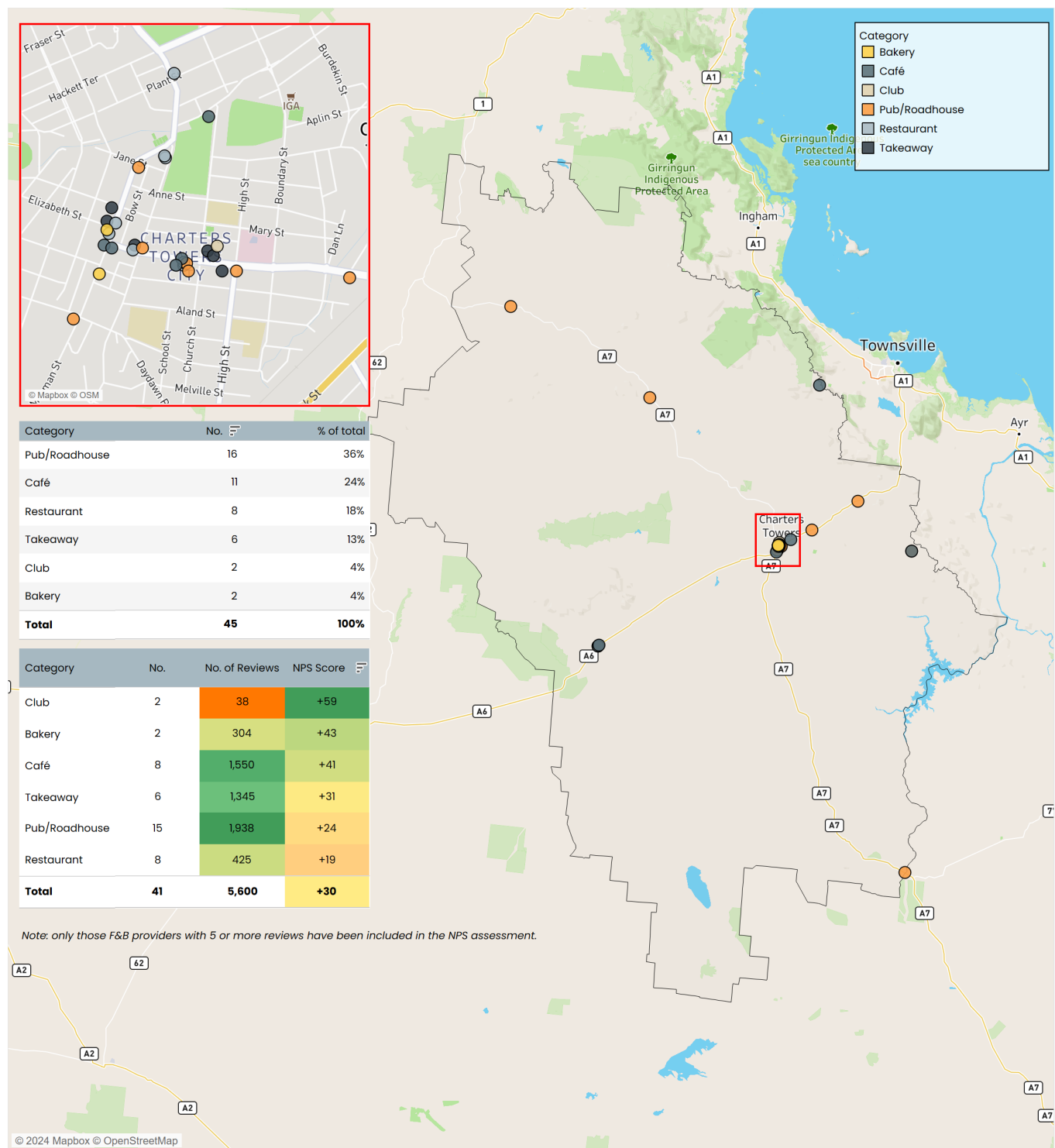
Figure 10 on the following page provides a food and beverage (F&B) audit for the Charters Towers Region. It shows the following.

- Most F&B venues are concentrated around Charters Towers town.
- Pub/Roadhouse's make up the largest proportion of F&B offering, accounting for 36% (16 locations) of all those identified likely due to their role in serving both locals and travellers in this rural region.
- Cafés make up 24% (11 locations), followed by Restaurants (18%) and Takeaway (13%). Smaller categories include Bakery (4%) and Club (4%).
- There is an opportunity to encourage more diverse F&B options, such as specialty dining or unique culinary experiences, could enhance the destination's appeal, particularly for visitors seeking distinctive food experience.

The bottom table in the figure highlights the Net Promoter Score (NPS), a measure of customer satisfaction based on reviews.

- Clubs have the highest NPS at +59, indicating very positive experiences, likely generated by community engagement. Importantly, however, this NPS is based on a relatively small sample size of 38 reviews.
- Bakeries also score well, with an NPS of +43, suggesting high satisfaction with their products.
- Cafés (+33) and Takeaways (+31) have an average feedback rating (with the threshold for a good NPS score being over +30).
- Pubs/Roadhouses (+24) and Restaurants (+25), fall below the +30 threshold, suggesting opportunities to enhance service or offerings for greater customer satisfaction. While pubs and roadhouses dominate in number, their lower NPS indicates potential for improvement.
- Overall, the F&B offering in Charters Towers Region receives an NPS of +30, based on 5,600 reviews. This indicates a generally positive perception of F&B options in the region, though there is room for improvement in certain categories.

Figure 10: Charters Towers Region F&B Audit



## 2.5. Product gap analysis

### 2.5.1. Summary

Consultation, desktop research, and site visits identified several major gaps (Figure 11) in the tourism offerings, visitor economy performance, and overall experiences in the Charters Towers Region. These gaps highlight opportunities to enhance the region's appeal and competitiveness as a destination. Addressing these areas will require a combination of strategic investment, stronger collaboration among stakeholders, and innovative approaches to product and experience development.

Key gaps include the need for boutique accommodation options, such as farmstays, refreshed motels, and revitalised caravan parks, which cater to a diverse range of visitor preferences. Collaboration and cooperative marketing efforts are essential to unify and amplify the region's tourism brand, while developing commissionable experiences will ensure the Charters Towers Region is integrated into the broader tourism supply chain.






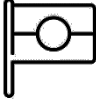





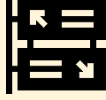
The research also revealed opportunities to diversify and expand food and beverage offerings, with a focus on aligning opening hours with visitor needs and enhancing

family-friendly products and activities. Emphasis on authentic storytelling and experiences led by First Peoples is critical to enriching cultural tourism. Similarly, enhancing guided and self-guided experiences, including fossicking and gold panning, could leverage the region's unique heritage.

The analysis also underscores the importance of improving public transport and connectivity, fostering a vibrant night-time economy, and facilitating connections between primary producers and visitors. Addressing gaps in signage, both interpretive and directional, is another key priority to improve wayfinding and overall visitor experience.

By tackling these gaps, Charters Towers has the potential to position itself as a more compelling and competitive destination for a broad range of visitor markets. These insights have informed the development of targeted projects and initiatives outlined in the Destination Management Plan, ensuring alignment with visitor needs and market trends.

Figure 11: Product Gap analysis

|   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
|  <p>Boutique accommodation (cabins, B&amp;Bs, farmstays, refreshed/new motels and revitalised caravan parks with cabins)</p> |  <p>Collaboration and cooperative marketing</p>                       |  <p>Commissionable experiences</p>                 |  <p>F&amp;B diversity and availability (opening hours of businesses to suit visitors and locals)</p> |
|  <p>Family-friendly products and activities</p>  |  <p>First Peoples' stories and experiences (led by First Peoples)</p> |  <p>Guided products/experiences</p>                |  <p>Guided and self-guided fossicking and gold panning experiences</p>                               |
|  <p>Public transport services and connectivity</p>   |  <p>Night-time economy</p>  |  <p>Primary producers connecting with visitors</p> |  <p>Signage (interpretive and directional)</p>   |

## 2.6. Resident and industry survey

A survey was conducted with residents and businesses in the Charters Towers Region over a period of three weeks. A total of 56 responses was received which is a relatively high number of responses based on past surveys completed. The following provides a summary of the responses aligned to key themes.

### 2.6.1. Tourism assets and opportunities

- Heritage focus: 36–37% prioritise heritage as a key tourism experience. There is a need to better utilise historical buildings and enhance storytelling with plaques, signage, and interactive exhibits.
- Nature & outdoors: Strong interest in cycling trails, kayaking, stargazing, and family-friendly walks. The Burdekin River, Towers Hill, and the Weir are underutilised.
- Diversified attractions: Suggestions include glamping, mountain biking, escape challenges, pub tours, and enhanced nightlife.

### 2.6.2. Challenges and gaps

- Limited trading hours: Few cafés, shops, and restaurants open on weekends and evenings, hindering tourism.
- Seasonal gaps: Off-peak struggles (Nov–Apr) and attraction closures during school holidays reduce local visitation.
- Town presentation: Vacant buildings, dusty streets, and poor signage need improvement to enhance appeal.

### 2.6.3. Infrastructure needs

- Key improvements: Accommodation (27%) and dining (26%) are critical needs.
- Facilities: Better signage, shaded RV parking, and pet-friendly options highlighted.
- Visitor Centre: Upgrades needed, including modern tech and expanded services.

### 2.6.4. Marketing and collaboration

- Marketing needs: Social media/digital ads (35%), regional campaigns (23%), and local collaborations (19%).
- Experience marketing: Promote Charters Towers as a family-friendly, fun, and unique destination alongside its heritage.

### 2.6.5. Training and development

Key training areas for businesses include the following:

- Marketing and social media (33%) and sustainable business practices (29%) were prioritised to support tourism growth.
- Customer service and collaboration training were also seen as beneficial.

### 2.6.6. Inclusivity and community engagement

- Traditional Owners: More representation through language signage, cultural tourism, and community forums.
- Collaboration: Stronger business, resident, and council partnerships needed.

### 2.6.7. Tourism seasonality

- Winter peak: Businesses report winter as the busiest season (64%), with minimal activity during summer and off-peak periods.
- Event-based tourism: Seasonal events and activities targeting families and younger audiences were suggested to address low visitation in quieter months.

### 2.6.8. Visitor feedback

- Positives: Tourists value the town's friendliness and heritage charm.
- Improvements: More food, arts, and crafts (especially weekends), better pet-friendly facilities, and enhanced recreation.

### 2.6.9. Insights for the DMP

Based on the survey findings, the following key insights should be focused on as part of the DMP.

- Focus on preserving and promoting heritage while diversifying attractions to include outdoor, adventure, and family-friendly activities.
- Address infrastructure gaps by improving accommodation, dining options, and VIC services.
- Invest in marketing strategies that leverage social media, regional campaigns, and collaboration with local businesses.
- Develop training programs for sustainable tourism practices and marketing.
- Re-engage the community and Traditional Owners to ensure inclusivity and maximise impact.
- Enhance town presentation, with attention to maintenance, signage, and beautification efforts.
- Explore opportunities to promote off-peak tourism through events, seasonal offers, and collaborative packages.

By addressing these insights, Charters Towers can strengthen its position as a vibrant and diverse tourism destination.



## Part 3: Where do we want to be?








### 3.1. Measuring success

Table 6 outlines the goals and success metrics for the DMP over the next five years, focusing on key outcomes to support the region's tourism development. Below is an explanation of each goal.

- **Boost Overall Visitation:** This goal seeks to grow the total number of visitors, both day-trippers and overnight guests, by enhancing the region's attractiveness and accessibility, ultimately increasing tourism activity.
- **Grow Overnight Visitation:** Overnight visitors typically contribute more to the local economy compared to day-trippers. The goal focuses on increasing accommodation stays through new and improved offerings, extended itineraries, and targeted marketing.
- **More Jobs for Locals:** By growing visitation and tourism spending, this goal aims to support additional employment opportunities for the local community, boosting economic resilience and regional prosperity.
- **Increase Visitor Yield:** Visitor yield refers to the average spend per visitor. The focus here is on increasing spending through higher-value tourism experiences, such as premium accommodations, tours, and dining, as well as retail opportunities.
- **Enhance the Town's Attractiveness and Prosperity:** This metric measures the economic prosperity of Charters Towers by increasing tourism's contribution to the region's GRP. It focuses on improving the town's appeal as a destination, which benefits both visitors and residents.

Table 6: Metrics of success<sup>8</sup>

| Goal  | 2024                        | Growth Target (%) | 2030                        |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
|  <b>Boost Overall Visitation</b>                         | 354k                        | +15%              | 407k                        |
|  <b>Grow Overnight Visitation</b>                        | 143k                        | +15%              | 164k                        |
|  <b>More Jobs for Locals</b>                             | 276                         | +15%              | 318                         |
|  <b>Increase Visitor Yield</b>                           | \$146m<br>(\$412 p/visitor) | +38%              | \$201m<br>(\$496 p/visitor) |
|  <b>Enhance the Town's Attractiveness and Prosperity</b> | \$92k<br>(grp p/capita)     | +10%              | \$101k<br>(grp p/capita)    |

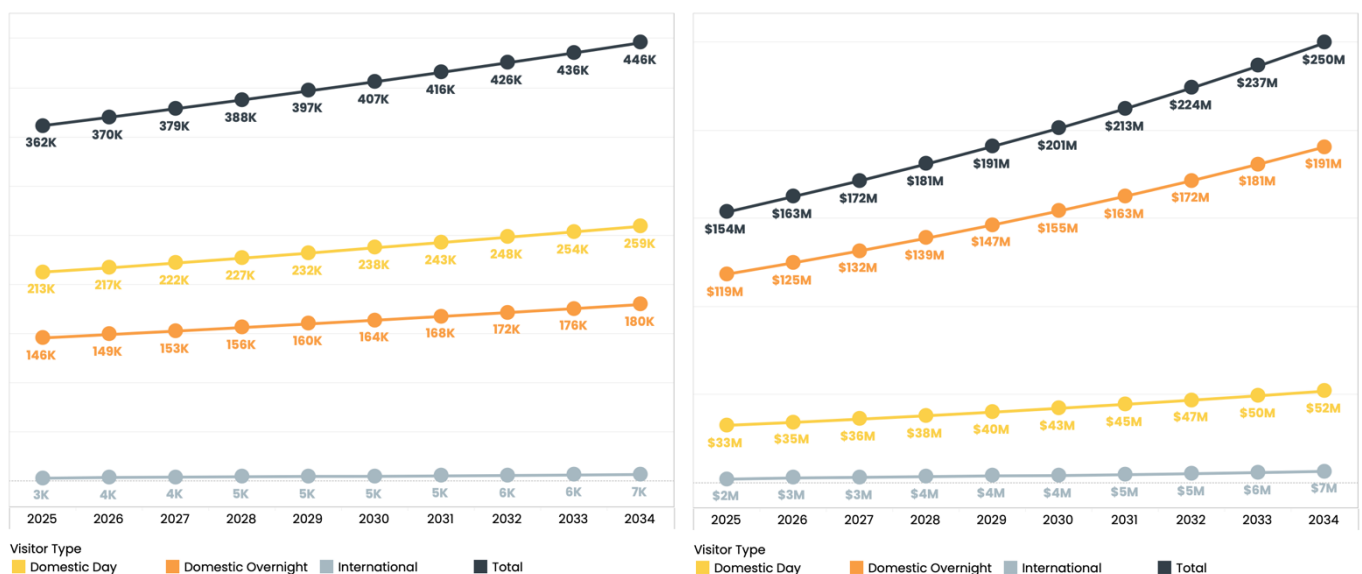
<sup>8</sup> June YE

### 3.2. Visitor forecasts

**The Charters Towers Region is set for significant growth over the next decade, with projections indicating visitor numbers will reach 407,000 by 2030 and 446,000 by 2034. Correspondingly, tourism spending is expected to climb to \$201 million and \$250 million, respectively. These figures highlight the region's increasing appeal as a destination and its expanding economic potential.**

Forecasts are based on compound annual growth rates, factoring in COVID-19 impacts but excluding macroeconomic factors like recession or cost-of-living pressures, which may affect travel in the next two years. New visitor economy products, experiences, and promotions, as well as increased and improved accommodation stock (as recommended in this DMP), could positively impact overnight visitor demand and overall growth projections for the Charters Towers Region.

Figure 12: Visitor and spending forecasts



**Total visitation to Charters Towers Region is projected to grow from 362,000 visitors in 2025 to 446,000 in 2034, reflecting 23% growth<sup>9</sup>**

Growth in the region is projected across all visitor markets.

Both domestic day and overnight segments dominate the market and will continue to underpin the region's visitor economy.

The increasing number of overnight visitors is expected to be driven by growth in availability of accommodation, dining, and multi-day experiences to meet demand.

**Total visitor spending in Charters Towers Region is forecast to increase from \$154 million in 2025 to \$250 million by 2033: 62% growth over the 10-year period.<sup>10</sup>**

Domestic overnight visitors remain the largest contributor to overall visitor spending, emphasising the importance of continuing to develop commissionable product, enhanced dining experiences and refreshed/new accommodation that encourages higher visitor spending.

<sup>9</sup> <https://dataau.com.au/profile/32310>. Data is June YE. Forecasts have been based on historic compound annual growth rates, with COVID-19 recovery trends factored in.

<sup>10</sup> Forecasts have been based on visitor forecasts along with current spending per visitor levels inflated by 3.5% per annum.



## Part 4: How will we get there?

## 4.1. Projects and Initiatives

The DMP identifies a number of projects aligned with its strategic framework. These projects vary in scale but are interconnected, requiring coordinated implementation. A key example is accommodation development, which relies on supporting initiatives like new attractions and workforce development to meet growing visitor demand.

Figure 13 provides a summary of the DMP projects/initiatives categorised by project theme. Half (50%) of the projects fall under "Foundations for Growth," highlighting the importance of industry training, collaboration, accommodation development, and marketing. These foundational initiatives are critical to building a sustainable visitor economy, ensuring Charters Towers can attract, accommodate, and engage visitors while supporting long-term tourism growth.

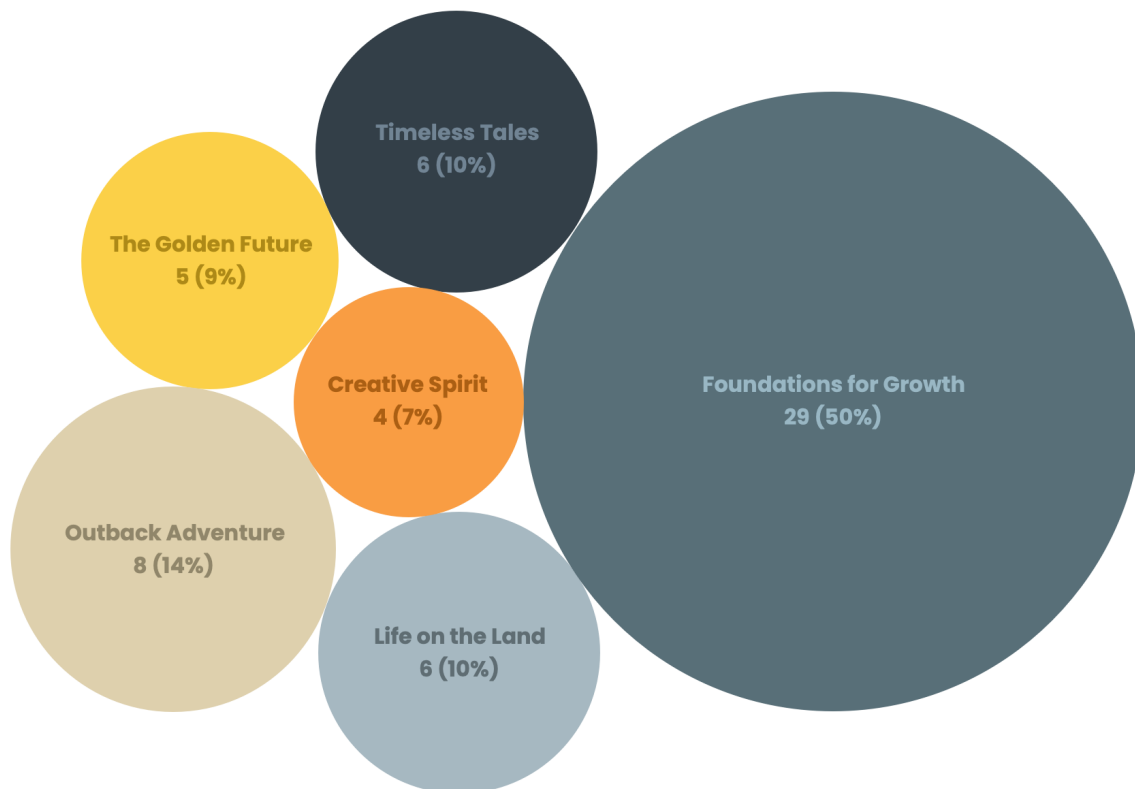
### 4.1.1. The game changers

Projects identified in this DMP have been prioritised using a ranking matrix assessing their ability to:

- Increase visitation (total visitor growth)
- Boost overnight stays (convert day-trippers, increase spending)
- Grow visitor yield (higher spending on tourism products)
- Create local jobs
- Enhance prosperity & attractiveness
- Support the visitor economy

The top two projects per theme have been identified as game changers.

Figure 13: The DMP recommendations (categorised by theme)



## 4.1.2. All projects and action plans

### 4.1.2.1. Creative Spirit

**Creative Spirit reflects the arts and cultural heritage of Charters Towers and celebrating its unique identity. It encompasses initiatives that showcase local talent, history, and storytelling, inviting visitors to connect with the region's artistic expression and cultural legacy. The Creative Spirit theme fosters a deep appreciation for creativity while driving economic growth and community pride.**

- Charters Towers Illuminated (Main Street Light Show) – A vibrant light and projection art festival transforming the main street into a glowing spectacle of creativity.
- Self-Guided Arts and History Trail – A digital or printed trail map guiding visitors through key art installations and historic sites across the region.
- Shared Curatorial Expertise – Collaboration between museums and cultural institutions to share resources, expertise, and exhibitions.
- Traditional Owner Visitor Experiences – Authentic Indigenous-led experiences highlighting the region's rich cultural heritage and traditional practices.

#### 4.1.2.1.1. Action plan

Table 7 provides the action plan for projects/initiatives within the Creative Spirit theme. Those marked with a gold star (★) have been identified as a Game Changer project.

Table 7: Action plan – Creative Spirit

★ = Game Changer

| Recommendation   | Action  | Budget | Council Role |         |          | Partners   | Timing |
|--|---|--------|--------------|---------|----------|--|--------|
|  |   |        | Deliver      | Partner | Advocate |  |        |
| Charters Towers Illuminated (Main Street Light Show) ★ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a signature annual event showcasing local art and history through light projections on heritage buildings throughout the CBD.</li> <li>Identify grant fund streams that could support the event and technology procurement.</li> <li>Collaborate with local artists and technology providers to design immersive experiences.</li> <li>Promote the event as a flagship attraction for night-time tourism.</li> </ul> | \$100k | ✓            |         |          | Arts and culture providers, lighting specialists, projection mapping companies, and local business associations. | M-L    |
| Self-Guided Arts and History Trail                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a user-friendly app or map guiding visitors through key art and history landmarks.</li> <li>Integrate QR codes for interactive storytelling and augmented reality experiences.</li> <li>Partner with local businesses to provide discounts or offers along the trail.</li> </ul>  | \$45k  | ✓            |         |          | App developers, graphic designers, local historians, and artists.  | S      |
| Shared Curatorial Expertise                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a network for sharing curatorial knowledge across local museums and galleries.</li> <li>Host workshops and training programs for local curators and volunteers.</li> <li>Develop collaborative exhibitions showcasing regional stories.</li> </ul>   | \$30k  |              |         | ✓        | Museums, galleries, and Arts Queensland.   | S      |
| Traditional Owner Visitor Experiences ★                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner with Traditional Owners to co-develop authentic cultural experiences.</li> <li>Investigate the potential for guided tours, storytelling, and workshops highlighting Indigenous heritage.</li> <li>Ensure these experiences are led and approved by Traditional Owners.</li> </ul>  | \$30k  |              | ✓       |          | Traditional Owner groups, cultural heritage consultants, and tourism operators.                                  | L      |

#### 4.1.2.2. Foundations for Growth

**Foundations for Growth focuses on building a sustainable and thriving tourism sector through essential projects such as industry training, collaboration, improved accommodation offerings, and strategic marketing and promotion. By strengthening the core infrastructure and capabilities of the tourism industry, this will ensure long-term growth, enhances visitor experiences, and supports economic resilience in the region.**

- Asset Cleaning and Maintenance – Regular upkeep of tourism assets, ensuring they remain attractive and accessible.
- ATDW Linkage – Integration of attractions into the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse to boost visibility.
- Boarding School Event Collaborations – Strengthen partnerships with boarding schools to enhance existing events, fostering greater student and family engagement while integrating local tourism experiences.
- Caravan Park to CBD Bike Trail – A dedicated bike trail connecting caravan parks to the CBD for recreational and transport use.
- CBD Caravan Parking – Dedicated parking facilities for caravans in the Charters Towers CBD to improve visitor convenience.
- CBD Master Planning Strategy – A comprehensive plan to guide development and revitalisation of the Charters Towers CBD.
- Commissionable Product Development – Creation of bookable experiences for tour operators to sell directly or through distribution channels.
- Cruise Ship Product Positioning – Development of shore excursion packages to attract cruise ship passengers to the region.
- Curriculum-Linked Education Packages – Educational programs aligned with school curricula, focusing on the region's history, culture, and environment.
- Diversified F&B Advocacy – Support for expanding food and beverage options, including diverse cuisines and dining formats.
- Events Calendar Profiling – Promotion of a centralised calendar to showcase local events and boost attendance.
- F&B Roster Coordination – Coordination of food and beverage offerings to align with major events and visitor demand.
- Famil Program for Operators and Councillors – Familiarisation tours for tourism operators and local councillors to enhance their knowledge of local attractions.
- Fly-In/Fly-Out Tour Promotion – Marketing campaigns targeting fly-in/fly-out visitors and small charter flight companies with curated regional experiences.
- Industry Collaboration Facilitation – Forums and initiatives to foster collaboration among tourism operators, businesses, and stakeholders.
- Industry Development Training – Training programs aimed at improving skills and knowledge within the tourism sector.
- Mobile Coverage Advocacy – Efforts to improve mobile network coverage in key tourism areas.
- Motel Retrofitting Advocacy – Support for upgrading motels to meet modern visitor expectations and sustainability standards.
- New Website Development – Creation of a modern, user-friendly regional tourism website to attract and inform visitors.
- Racetrack Remediation Advocacy – Advocacy for upgrades to local racetracks to support motorsports and other events.
- Ravenswood Showgrounds Upgrade – Infrastructure improvements to the Ravenswood Showgrounds to host larger events and festivals.
- Signage Audit and Register – A comprehensive review of tourism signage to ensure consistency and effectiveness.
- TEL Membership Benefit Assessment – Evaluation of benefits provided to members of Tourism and Events Queensland (TEL).
- Tour Guide Training Program – Professional development for tour guides to enhance storytelling and visitor engagement.
- Tourism Marketing Strategy – Development of a strategy aligned with Charters Towers' DMP including goals and target markets.
- VIC Site Location Assessment – Evaluation of the best site for a Visitor Information Centre (VIC) based on accessibility and visitor needs.
- Visitor Data Collection – Implementation of systems and tools to collect and analyse data on visitor demographics and behaviours.
- Visitor Economy Awareness Program – Initiatives to educate the community and stakeholders on the value of the visitor economy.
- Working Groups for Individual Projects – A group formed on a project-by-project basis to drive DMP projects.

#### 4.1.2.2.1. Action plan

Table 8 provides the action plan for projects/initiatives within the Foundations for Growth theme. Those marked with a gold star (★) have been identified as a Game Changer project.

Table 8: Action plan – Foundations for Growth

★ = Game Changer

| Recommendation                          | Action   | Budget | Council Role |         |          | Partners   | Timing |
|---|--|--------|--------------|---------|----------|--|--------|
|   |  |        | Deliver      | Partner | Advocate |  |        |
| Tourism asset Cleaning and Maintenance  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a regular cleaning schedule for key assets such as heritage buildings, public spaces, and tourist hotspots.</li> <li>Conduct quarterly inspections to identify and address maintenance issues promptly.</li> </ul>  | \$100k | ✓            |         |          | Site operators, community groups.                  | M-L    |
| ATDW Linkage                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train local operators on the benefits and process of registering on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW).</li> <li>Provide workshops and support to help operators optimise their listings and maximise visibility.</li> </ul>  | \$13k  | ✓            |         |          | TEQ, TEL   | S-M    |
| Boarding School Event Collaborations    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with schools to enhance existing events, incorporating elements like cultural showcases, sports carnivals, and parent visitation weekends to strengthen engagement.</li> <li>Position these events within the broader tourism landscape to attract families and regional visitors, maximising their impact on local tourism.</li> </ul>   | \$45k  | ✓            |         |          | Boarding Schools, event coordinators.              | S      |
| Caravan Park to CBD Bike Trail          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design a bike-friendly trail with clear signage, rest stops, and safety measures connecting caravan parks to the CBD.</li> <li>investigate the potential to integrate the project as part of the CBD master plan.</li> <li>Introduce bike rental schemes to encourage visitor participation.</li> </ul>   | \$40k  | ✓            |         |          | Caravan Park operators                             | M      |
| CBD Caravan Parking                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and develop caravan parking areas with essential amenities near the CBD.</li> <li>Promote these facilities through maps, signage, and visitor information centres.</li> </ul>  | \$45k  | ✓            |         |          | Retailers, tour operators, Dept Main Roads         | L      |
| CBD Master Planning Strategy            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a master plan to enhance streetscaping, introduce green spaces, and promote mixed-use developments.</li> <li>Incorporate public art and lighting to improve the aesthetic and safety of the CBD.</li> </ul>  | \$120k | ✓            |         |          | Retailers, building owners, tour operators         | M-L    |
| Commissionable Product Development<br>★ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake an audit of the 'bookability' of existing attractions including their readiness for broader distribution.</li> <li>Work with operators to develop bookable experiences like guided tours, farm stays, and adventure activities that attract travel agents and wholesalers.</li> <li>Host workshops to demonstrate to operators the importance of offering commissionable and bookable product.</li> <li>Collaborate with domestic and international travel operators to ensure Charters Towers products are included in their itineraries.</li> <li>Package multiple experiences for extended stays and higher visitor spending.</li> </ul> | \$65k  |              |         | ✓        | Tourism operators, wholesalers, OTAs, TEL and TEQ. | S-M    |

★ = Game Changer

| Recommendation                              | Action  | Budget                  | Council Role |         |          | Partners  | Timing |
|---|---|-------------------------|--------------|---------|----------|---|--------|
|   |   |                         | Deliver      | Partner | Advocate |   |        |
| Cruise Ship Product Positioning             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify key attractions and experiences that cater to cruise passengers, such as short, guided tours and cultural showcases.</li> <li>Collaborate with cruise operators to include Charters Towers as an excursion option.</li> </ul>                                 | \$10k                   | ✓            |         |          | Cruise operators, TEL, TEQ and transport providers.   | M      |
| Curriculum-Linked Education Packages        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design hands-on programs such as mining tours, geology workshops, and Indigenous cultural experiences for school groups.</li> <li>Align with Queensland and national curriculum requirements to appeal to education planners.</li> </ul>                               | \$50k                   |              |         | ✓        | Schools, education consultants, Queensland Department of Education and Traditional Owner groups for cultural content. | M      |
| Diversified F&B Advocacy                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage operators to expand offerings, such as farm-to-table dining and international cuisines.</li> <li>Develop incentives (via potential matching funding arrangements) for pop-up food events and seasonal menus to attract locals and visitors alike.</li> </ul> | \$15k (inc. staff time) |              |         | ✓        | F&B providers and TEL.  | M      |
| Events Calendar Profiling                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Profile the Charters Towers events calendar to tourism, events and hospitality operators to grow awareness and utilisation.</li> </ul>   | \$5k                    |              | ✓       |          | Event organisers.   | O      |
| F&B Roster Coordination                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with F&amp;B operators to ensure availability during peak seasons and events.</li> <li>Develop a coordinated roster to stagger operating hours and avoid closures during key tourism periods.</li> </ul>  | \$1k                    |              | ✓       |          | F&B providers.  | S      |
| Famil Program for Operators and Councillors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organise guided familiarisation tours to showcase existing and new tourism products.</li> <li>Encourage participation from local leaders to increase advocacy for tourism development.</li> </ul>  | \$10k                   | ✓            |         |          | Councillors, tourism operators, investors, developers and TEL.  | O      |
| Fly-In/Fly-Out Tour Promotion               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Target fly-in tour operators with tailored packages highlighting weekend activities and short-stay options.</li> </ul>   | \$40k                   |              | ✓       |          | Tour operators, Charters Towers Airport manager, and attraction providers.  | O      |
| Industry Collaboration Facilitation         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host networking events and workshops to foster partnerships between operators.</li> <li>Develop a shared marketing plan to promote multi-operator tourism packages.</li> </ul>   | \$30k                   |              | ✓       |          | Tourism operators, business community, investors, developers, community groups and relevant government departments.   | O      |
| Industry Development Training               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer training programs covering customer service, digital marketing, and sustainable practices.</li> <li>Provide mentoring opportunities for new operators through experienced industry leaders.</li> </ul>   | \$25k                   |              | ✓       |          | TEL, TEQ and tourism & hospitality providers.   | O      |

★ = Game Changer

| Recommendation                    | Action  | Budget | Council Role |         |          | Partners   | Timing |
|-----------------------------------|---|--------|--------------|---------|----------|--|--------|
|                                   |   |        | Deliver      | Partner | Advocate |  |        |
| Mobile Coverage Advocacy          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with telecom providers to address coverage gaps in tourist areas.</li> <li>Prioritise mobile and internet upgrades for high-traffic zones like the CBD and caravan parks.</li> </ul>  | \$5k   |              |         | ✓        | Telecommunications companies, TEL, and TEQ.      | O      |
| Motel Retrofitting Advocacy       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate for funding programs to assist motel owners in upgrading their facilities.</li> <li>Encourage eco-friendly retrofitting to align with sustainability goals.</li> </ul>  | \$15k  |              |         | ✓        | Accommodation providers, and TEL.                | O      |
| New Website Development           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch a modern, interactive tourism website that is easily updatable without having to rely on an external provider to perform updates.</li> <li>Incorporate user-generated content like reviews and photos to enhance engagement.</li> </ul>   | \$100k | ✓            |         |          | TEL and tourism businesses.                      | S      |
| Racetrack Remediation Advocacy    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to lobby for the remediation of the track.</li> <li>Promote the racetrack as a venue for racing events and community activities.</li> </ul>   | \$1.0m |              |         | ✓        | Racing QLD and Charters Towers Amateur Race Club | O      |
| Ravenswood Showgrounds Upgrade    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in upgraded facilities, including power, water, and amenities for campers and event attendees as per the Ravenswood Town Centre Concept Masterplan.</li> <li>Promote the showgrounds as a versatile venue for agricultural and cultural events.</li> </ul>  | \$400k | ✓            |         |          | Ravenswood community.                            | M-L    |
| Signage Audit and Register        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a complete inventory of tourism signage to identify outdated or missing signs.</li> <li>Develop a register to track ongoing maintenance and new installation projects.</li> </ul>  | \$50k  | ✓            |         |          | Wayfinding/signage consultants.                  | M-L    |
| TEL Membership Benefit Assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the value and outcomes of Townsville Enterprise Limited (TEL) membership for tourism.</li> <li>Identify additional opportunities for collaboration with TEL to support regional tourism.</li> </ul>   | \$25k  | ✓            |         |          | Regional economic bodies, tourism organisations. | S      |
| Tour Guide Training Program       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with TEL to provide training on storytelling techniques, historical accuracy, and customer engagement.</li> <li>Develop certification programs to ensure consistent quality among local tour guides.</li> </ul>   | \$15k  |              |         | ✓        | TEL and tourism businesses.                      | S-M    |
| Tourism Marketing Strategy ★      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission tourism marketing experts to develop a strategy aligned with Charters Towers' DMP including goals and target markets.</li> <li>Analyse visitor data, competitor destinations, and tourism trends to inform strategic marketing decisions.</li> <li>Focus on a clear destination identity, key themes, and promotional messaging to guide marketing efforts.</li> <li>Outline key marketing activities, timelines, and budget allocation to ensure effective execution.</li> </ul> | \$45k  | ✓            |         |          | Council and tourism marketing specialists        | S      |
| VIC Site Location Assessment      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate current and potential locations for the Visitor Information Centre to maximise accessibility and visitor flow.</li> <li>Conduct visitor surveys to gather feedback on preferred locations.</li> </ul>   | \$40k  | ✓            |         |          | Urban planners, VIC staff, and tourism industry. | S-M    |

★ = Game Changer

| Recommendation                         | Action   | Budget | Council Role |         |          | Partners   | Timing |
|--|--|--------|--------------|---------|----------|--|--------|
|  |  |        | Deliver      | Partner | Advocate |  |        |
| Visitor Data Collection                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate visitor data collection at key visitor attractions and provide quarterly update on visitor numbers.</li> <li>Use data to inform future planning and marketing efforts.</li> </ul> | \$20k  | ✓            |         |          | Attraction operators.  | O      |
| Visitor Economy Awareness Program      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Run a campaign to highlight the economic benefits of tourism for the local community.</li> <li>Host workshops for local businesses on how to tap into the visitor economy.</li> </ul>       | \$25k  | ✓            |         |          | TEL  | O      |
| Working Groups for Individual Projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Form individual working groups to work with Council to oversee the implementation of specific projects in the DMP.</li> </ul>   | \$15k  |              | ✓       |          | Tourism operators, investors, developers and community groups. | O      |



#### 4.1.2.3. Life on the Land

**Life on the Land highlights the rich agricultural heritage and celebrates the region's unique produce and rural lifestyle, offering visitors authentic connections to the land and its people. This theme encompasses opportunities to showcase Charters Towers' distinctive character while supporting regional producers and fostering sustainable tourism.**

- Caravan Park Grocery/Butcher Service – Engage with local produce and meat providers to offer a service to caravan park visitors to grow spending.
- Distillery/Brewery (Gold Mining Theme) – A themed distillery or brewery celebrating the region's gold mining history through immersive décor, storytelling, and locally crafted beverages.
- Family-Friendly F&B Experience – Encourage the development of venues offering kid-friendly menus, play areas, and entertainment.
- Farm Stays – Accommodation on working farms, providing guests with a rural escape and insight into daily agricultural practices.
- Goldfields Beef Festival – A culinary and cultural event showcasing the region's premium beef products through tastings, cooking demonstrations, and entertainment.
- On-Farm Experiences – Interactive farm-based activities such as cattle handling, horse riding, and petting farms, offering visitors an authentic connection to rural life.

##### 4.1.2.3.1. Action plan

Table 9 provides the action plan for projects/initiatives within the Life of the Land theme. Those marked with a gold star (★) have been identified as a Game Changer project.

Table 9: Action plan – Life on the Land

★ = Game Changer

| Recommendation                           | Action   | Budget | Council Role |         |          | Partners  | Timing |
|--|--|--------|--------------|---------|----------|---|--------|
|  |  |        | Deliver      | Partner | Advocate |   |        |
| Caravan Park Grocery/Butcher Service     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner with local butchers and grocers to offer delivery services to caravan parks.</li> <li>Establish pop-up stalls or mobile vendors at caravan parks during peak periods.</li> <li>Promote this service through caravan park offices, visitor centres, and local marketing channels.</li> </ul>                       | \$1.0k |              |         | ✓        | Local butchers, grocery suppliers, caravan park operators, and regional food suppliers. | S-M    |
| Distillery/Brewery (Gold Mining Theme) ★ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with potential investors/developers to identify potential sites for a distillery or brewery with a gold mining heritage theme.</li> <li>Identify funding mechanisms that could support an investor/developer of the experience.</li> </ul>   | \$200k |              |         | ✓        | F&B providers, community and tourism operators.   | M-L    |
| Family-Friendly F&B Experience           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage F&amp;B operators to create kid-friendly menus and dedicated play areas.</li> <li>Develop partnerships with local producers to introduce interactive food experiences like pizza-making or dessert bars.</li> <li>Host family-focused dining events, such as outdoor movie nights with themed menus.</li> </ul> | \$50k  |              |         | ✓        | Local cafes, restaurants, family-oriented dining businesses, developers and investors.  | L      |

★ = Game Changer

| Recommendation           | Action  | Budget | Council Role |         |          | Partners  | Timing |
|--------------------------|---|--------|--------------|---------|----------|---|--------|
|                          |   |        | Deliver      | Partner | Advocate |   |        |
| Farm Stays ★             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and support local farmers interested in diversifying into tourism by hosting farm stays.</li> <li>Produce a prospectus to showcase the opportunity as well as highlight successful models elsewhere.</li> <li>Promote farm stays through regional tourism platforms and niche marketing channels.</li> <li>Investigate potential incentives that could be offered to encourage farm stays including grants and subsidies and zoning flexibility and fast tracking.</li> </ul> | \$65k  |              | ✓       |          | Property owners and farm operators.               | O      |
| Goldfields Beef Festival | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate opportunities via a feasibility study for an annual festival celebrating local beef, featuring cooking demonstrations, tastings, and competitions.</li> <li>Include live music, heritage storytelling, and family-friendly activities to broaden appeal.</li> <li>Partner with local butchers, chefs, and producers to showcase regional beef products.</li> </ul>   | \$65k  | ✓            |         |          | Accommodation providers, and TEL.                 | M-L    |
| On-Farm Experiences      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop unique activities such as cattle mustering, horse riding, and farm-to-table dining experiences.</li> <li>Offer workshops on sustainable farming, local produce, and traditional farming techniques.</li> <li>Promote these experiences as part of multi-day itineraries to encourage longer stays.</li> </ul>  | \$30k  |              |         | ✓        | Local farmers and tourism & recreation operators. | M      |

#### 4.1.2.4. Outback Adventure

**Outback Adventure embraces the rugged, authentic charm of Charters Towers Region, offering unique experiences that celebrate its outback heritage. From cattle saleyard tours to recreational activities in the vast outback landscapes, this theme invites visitors to immerse themselves in the region’s rich pastoral culture and captures the spirit of exploration and connection to the outback.**

- 4WD Facility Corporate Training – A specialised facility for corporate and recreational 4WD training, with trails and practical scenarios.
- Charters Towers Lagoon – The Charters Towers Lagoon will feature a 13,950 sqm tropical lagoon, spas, dining, and accommodation, creating a hub for leisure and wellness.
- Charters Towers Rodeo Expansion – Enhancements to rodeo facilities and event offerings to attract more competitors and spectators.
- Drive Circuit Experience Trails – Themed driving circuits connecting key attractions and offering curated itineraries for road-tripping visitors.
- Family-Friendly Experience Packages – Bundled activities and accommodations designed to appeal to families with children.
- Motorsports Precinct Expansion – Upgrades and expansions to motorsports facilities to accommodate larger events and diverse vehicle classes.
- Saleyards Group Tours – Guided tours of the local saleyards, offering insight into the cattle industry and auction process.
- Towers Hill Mountain Biking – Development of mountain biking trails at Towers Hill, catering to various skill levels and adventure seekers.

##### 4.1.2.4.1. Action plan

Table 10 provides the action plan for projects/initiatives within the Outback Adventure theme. Those marked with a gold star (★) have been identified as a Game Changer project.

Table 10: Action plan – Outback Adventure

★ = Game Changer

| Recommendation                  | Action   | Budget | Council Role |         |          | Partners  | Timing |
|---------------------------------|--|--------|--------------|---------|----------|---|--------|
|                                 |  |        | Deliver      | Partner | Advocate |   |        |
| 4WD Facility Corporate Training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner with 4WD manufacturers to deliver training sessions at local facilities.</li> <li>Promote Charters Towers as a 4WD training hub through regional and national marketing campaigns.</li> <li>Include adventure tourism experiences alongside training to extend visitor stays.</li> </ul>  | \$50k  |              |         | ✓        | Off-road associations, 4WD manufacturers, and adventure tourism businesses.           | S-M    |
| Charters Towers Lagoon ★        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support operator in navigating planning and environmental approval processes, ensuring compliance with local and state regulations.</li> <li>Assist in identifying and applying for grants or funding programs to support project development.</li> <li>Collaborate on marketing strategies to position the lagoon as a key attraction, integrating it into Charters Towers’ broader tourism offering.</li> </ul> | \$35k  |              |         | ✓        | Operator/developer, TEQ, TEL  | M-L    |
| Charters Towers Rodeo Expansion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgrade rodeo facilities to accommodate larger crowds and events.</li> <li>Introduce side attractions like live music, food markets, and kids’ activities to enhance the visitor experience.</li> <li>Collaborate with rodeo associations to host state-level or national rodeo events.</li> </ul>  | \$45k  |              |         | ✓        | Charters Towers Rodeo Association, livestock producers, event managers, and sponsors. | S-M    |

★ = Game Changer

| Recommendation                      | Action   | Budget | Council Role |         |          | Partners  | Timing |
|-------------------------------------|--|--------|--------------|---------|----------|---|--------|
|                                     |  |        | Deliver      | Partner | Advocate |   |        |
| Drive Circuit Experience Trails     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Map out and promote scenic drive circuits featuring historic sites, natural attractions, and local businesses.</li> <li>Install interpretive signage and provide downloadable itineraries via a tourism website or app.</li> <li>Partner with local operators to create packages combining accommodation, dining, and experiences along the routes.</li> </ul>  | \$50k  | ✓            |         |          | Automotive clubs, historical societies, and signage companies.                                  | S-M    |
| Family-Friendly Experience Packages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bundle activities such as guided heritage tours, hands-on gold panning, and farm visits into family-friendly packages.</li> <li>Include discounts for kids and meal vouchers for participating F&amp;B establishments.</li> <li>Market these packages through school holiday promotions and family travel platforms.</li> </ul>   | \$40k  | ✓            |         |          | Recreation attraction providers.  | S      |
| Motorsports Precinct Expansion      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate for upgrades to the motorsport's precinct, including new tracks, spectator areas, and amenities.</li> <li>Encourage hosting larger-scale motorsport events, such as regional championships or car shows, to attract enthusiasts.</li> <li>Integrate motorsports-related tourism packages, including accommodation and local attractions.</li> </ul>  | \$250k |              |         | ✓        | Motorsport Australia and Motorcycling Queensland.   | L      |
| Saleyards Group Tours ★             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify best practice features of other saleyards and similar experiences (e.g. tours of fish markets and auction floors).</li> <li>Develop guided tours showcasing the operations of the saleyards, including live auctions and behind-the-scenes access.</li> <li>Partner with local producers to offer tastings or demonstrations linked to the tours.</li> <li>Market the tours to schools, agribusiness groups, and visitors interested in rural industries.</li> </ul> | \$25k  | ✓            |         |          | Livestock producers, TEL, and farm operators.   | S      |
| Towers Hill Mountain Biking         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the Towers Hill Master Plan to create multiple mountain biking trails for different skill levels.</li> <li>Include amenities like bike hire, repair stations, and shaded rest areas to enhance the visitor experience.</li> <li>Host mountain biking events or competitions to promote the trails and attract enthusiasts.</li> </ul>   | \$1.2m | ✓            |         |          | Mountain Bike Queensland, trail developers, adventure tourism operators, and cycling retailers. | M-L    |

#### 4.1.2.5. The Golden Future

**Golden Future celebrates Charters Towers' enduring connection to gold, bridging its historic legacy with ongoing and future mining operations. Unlike many destinations with a gold story, Charters Towers uniquely offers a living connection to gold through active exploration and mining. This theme includes engaging experiences such as gold panning, mine tours, and lookouts, showcasing its dynamic role in modern mining.**

- Gold Experience Centre – An interactive centre combining historical storytelling with modern displays to showcase Charters Towers' gold rush history.
- Gold panning experience at Ravenswood – An interactive gold panning experience in Ravenswood, offering visitors the chance to try their luck and connect with the region's rich gold rush history as well as understanding current and future gold mining activity.
- Gold panning experience near Venus Gold Battery – A hands-on gold panning activity near the Venus Gold Battery, offering visitors a taste of the gold rush era.
- Mine Tours or Lookouts – showcase current gold mining activity, not heritage focussed
- Prospecting Gear Hire and Fossicking Tours – Equipment hire and guided fossicking tours for visitors keen to try their hand at gold panning and prospecting.

##### 4.1.2.5.1. Action plan

Table 11 provides the action plan for projects/initiatives within The Gold Future theme. Those marked with a gold star (★) have been identified as a Game Changer project.

Table 11: Action plan – The Golden Future

★ = Game Changer

| Recommendation                                    | Action   | Budget | Council Role |         |          | Partners   | Timing |
|---|--|--------|--------------|---------|----------|--|--------|
|   |  |        | Deliver      | Partner | Advocate |  |        |
| Gold Experience Centre ★                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a business case investigating the potential for the facility, its offerings and the most suitable location.</li> <li>Identify funding streams that could be applied for to support the business case and the development of the product.</li> <li>Collaborate with local mining companies to feature real equipment and processes.</li> </ul>   | \$1m   | ✓            |         |          | Historical societies, mining companies, multimedia developers, TEQ, TEL, and educational institutions. | M-L    |
| Gold panning experience at Ravenswood             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a designated panning area with historical interpretive signage.</li> <li>Provide guided gold panning sessions with experienced local operators.</li> <li>Offer souvenir bags of gold concentrate for visitors to take home.</li> </ul>  | \$10k  |              | ✓       |          | Tourism operators and local outdoor retailers.   | S-M    |
| Gold panning experience near Venus Gold Battery ★ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a panning area as part of the Venus Gold Battery tour to integrate history with hands-on activity.</li> <li>Add shaded seating and facilities for families to enjoy the experience comfortably.</li> <li>Seek interest from mobile food operators to offer services during peak periods.</li> <li>Promote as a must-try activity through tourism packages and local promotions.</li> </ul> | \$40k  | ✓            |         |          | Current Venus Gold Battery tour operator and TEQ.  | S-M    |
| Mine Tours or Lookouts                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with mining companies to see if guided tours can possibly be offered providing insight into gold mining practices.</li> <li>Work with mining companies to develop lookout points at key locations for scenic views and photography opportunities.</li> </ul>   | \$20k  |              |         | ✓        | Mining companies and safety consultants.   | S-M    |

★ = Game Changer

| Recommendation                             | Action   | Budget | Council Role |         |          | Partners  | Timing |
|--|--|--------|--------------|---------|----------|---|--------|
|  |  |        | Deliver      | Partner | Advocate |   |        |
| Prospecting Gear Hire and Fossicking Tours | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner with local businesses to offer prospecting equipment hire, including detectors and panning tools.</li> <li>Develop guided fossicking tours to help visitors uncover small gold finds and learn prospecting techniques.</li> <li>Provide permits and maps for self-guided fossicking to encourage longer stays.</li> </ul> | \$40k  |              |         | ✓        | Tourism operators, and local outdoor retailers. | S      |



#### 4.1.2.6. Timeless Tales

**Timeless Tales brings the rich history of Charters Towers to life, and tells stories of gold exploration, WWII aviation, and First Peoples' heritage. It embraces projects that enhance existing historic attractions and introduces a major new storytelling experience, immersing visitors in the region's diverse and compelling past. By celebrating these enduring narratives, the theme ensures the preservation and sharing of Charters Towers' unique history for generations to come.**

- Ongoing Development of Cemetery Tours- Marketing efforts to highlight guided tours of historic cemeteries, sharing stories of early settlers and pioneers.
- Ghost Trail linked to Ravenswood Halloween Ball - A spooky trail exploring local legends and haunted sites, culminating in a Halloween-themed ball in Ravenswood. CTTC and the local Ghost Tour operator in Charters Towers have been unable to find a local to give the tours. Most of the population not already employed are elderly and unable to commit to giving regular walking tours. Raven Tours (based in Townsville) has successfully started running tours to Ravenswood including overnight stays in a 'haunted' hotel. RG supports Raven Tours through promotion and sharing of their services and advertising where possible.
- Inland Reef Story Development - Interpretation and storytelling projects focusing on the unique Inland Reef landscape and its geological significance.
- Position Ravenswood as Gold Rush Town - A destination branding initiative to showcase Ravenswood as an iconic gold rush town with rich history and charm.
- Venus Gold Battery Experience Enhancement and Tech Upgrades - Modernise the Venus Gold Battery experience with improved displays, interactive technology, and guided tours.
- WW2 Aviation and Gold Story Laser Show at Towers Hill - A high-tech laser show blending WW2 aviation history and gold mining tales with dramatic visuals and sound. Includes fixes to bunker technology.

##### 4.1.2.6.1. Action plan

Table 12 provides the action plan for projects/initiatives within the Timeless Tales theme. Those marked with a gold star (★) have been identified as a Game Changer project.

Table 12: Action plan – Timeless Tales

★ = Game Changer

| Recommendation                                  | Action   | Budget | Council Role |         |          | Partners   | Timing |
|---|--|--------|--------------|---------|----------|--|--------|
|   |  |        | Deliver      | Partner | Advocate |  |        |
| Ongoing Development of Cemetery Tours           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to enhance guided storytelling tours highlighting notable historical figures buried in the region's cemeteries.</li> <li>Create digital brochures, videos, and social media campaigns to increase awareness and participation.</li> <li>Add interpretive signage and QR codes for self-guided tours.</li> </ul>  | \$30k  |              |         | ✓        | Current tour operator, local historians, cultural tourism operators, and historical societies.   | S      |
| Ghost Trail linked to Ravenswood Halloween Ball | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a ghost-themed trail with stops at haunted or historically eerie sites leading to Ravenswood. These could be in neighbouring LGAs.</li> <li>Incorporate interactive elements like costumed guides, storytelling, and themed lighting.</li> <li>Partner with accommodation providers to offer Halloween packages that include the trail and ball.</li> </ul> | \$45k  |              | ✓       |          | Current ghost tour operator, Ravenswood State School, event planners, storytelling specialists, historians, and local businesses, TEL and TEQ. | S-M    |

★ = Game Changer

| Recommendation  | Action   | Budget | Council Role |         |          | Partners   | Timing |
|---|--|--------|--------------|---------|----------|--|--------|
|   |  |        | Deliver      | Partner | Advocate |  |        |
| Inland Reef Story Development                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create interpretive displays and interactive exhibits explaining the unique Inland Reef story.</li> <li>Integrate the story into local tours, brochures, and educational programs for visitors.</li> <li>Develop marketing materials highlighting the Inland Reef as a unique regional attraction.</li> <li>Partner with the Great Barrier Reef Aquarium when developed to create a coastal to inland reef itinerary.</li> </ul>  | \$40k  |              |         | ✓        | TEL, TEQ, Reef HQ, historical societies, and tourism operators.              | O      |
| Position Ravenswood as Gold Rush Town                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote Ravenswood as a living history destination with restored buildings, gold panning experiences, and heritage tours.</li> <li>Host gold rush-themed festivals and events to celebrate its history.</li> <li>Enhance signage and storytelling throughout the town to deepen visitor engagement.</li> </ul>  | \$20k  |              | ✓       |          | Historical societies, tourism operators, and branding agencies.              | O      |
| Venus Gold Battery Experience Enhancement and Tech Upgrades ★ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate grant funding streams that could be applied for to support upgrades.</li> <li>Undertake audit of technology and cost upgrades.</li> <li>Enhance the experience with the introduction of a mini battery model.</li> </ul>  | \$600k | ✓            |         |          | Tech developers, historians, museum curators, TEQ, TEL and mining companies. | M-L    |
| WW2 Aviation and Gold Story Laser Show at Towers Hill ★       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate grant funding streams that could be applied for to support upgrades to introduce the laser show experience.</li> <li>Work with experienced laser/light show providers to develop an immersive laser show combining WW2 aviation stories and the region's gold rush history.</li> <li>Collaborate with aviation museums and enthusiasts to showcase vintage aircraft and memorabilia.</li> <li>Integrate soundscapes, projections, and narration for a unique storytelling experience.</li> <li>Promote the laser show as a signature night-time attraction for Charters Towers Region.</li> </ul> | \$750k | ✓            |         |          | Historical groups, TEQ, TEL, projection experts and RSL chapters.            | M      |

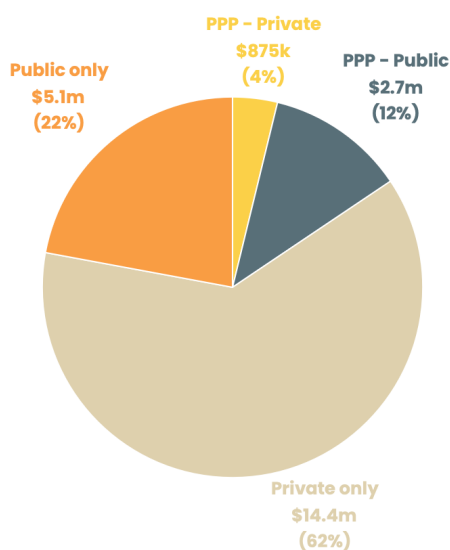
### 4.1.3. CAPEX required to implement the projects/initiatives

Figure 14 illustrates the capital expenditure (CAPEX) required to implement the projects identified as part of this DMP, categorised by investment type and DMP themes. It also breaks down the CAPEX needed for 12 "game changer" initiatives. Key points to note are as follows.

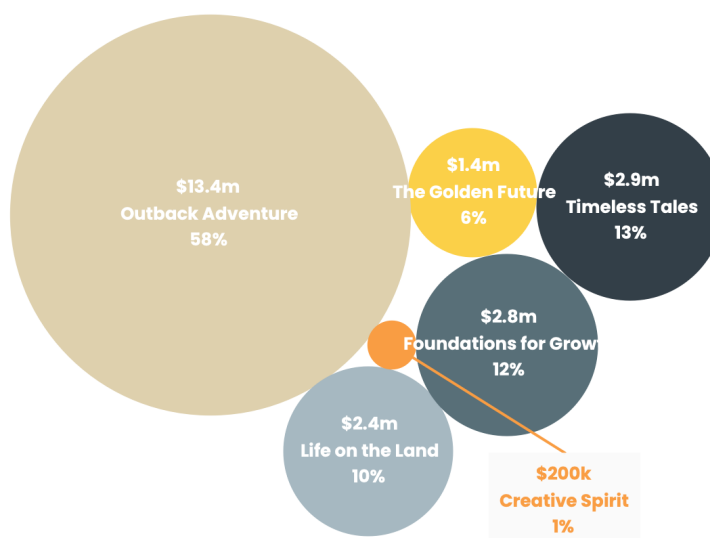
- All Projects:
  - Total estimated CAPEX: \$23 million.
  - Majority funded privately (62%).
- Most expenditure is allocated to the "Outback Adventure" theme (58%).
- Game Changers:
  - Total CAPEX: \$17.9 million.
  - Predominantly private funding (76%), with 13% from PPP (public) and 8% public funding.
  - Key projects include the Charters Towers Lagoon, requiring an estimated \$12 million, followed by other projects such as WW2 Aviation and Gold Story tours (\$1.6 million).

Figure 14: CAPEX summary

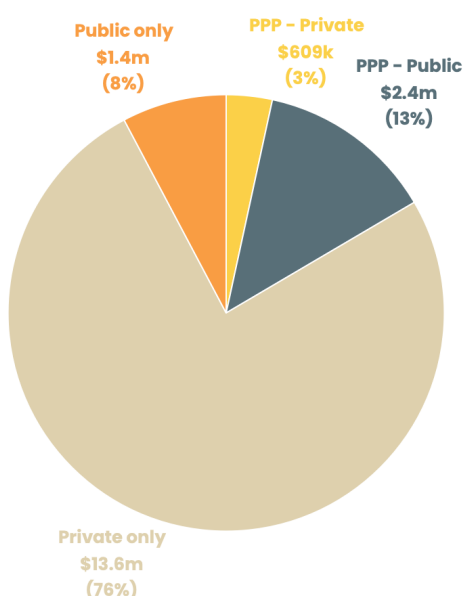
#### CAPEX required by investment type (all projects)



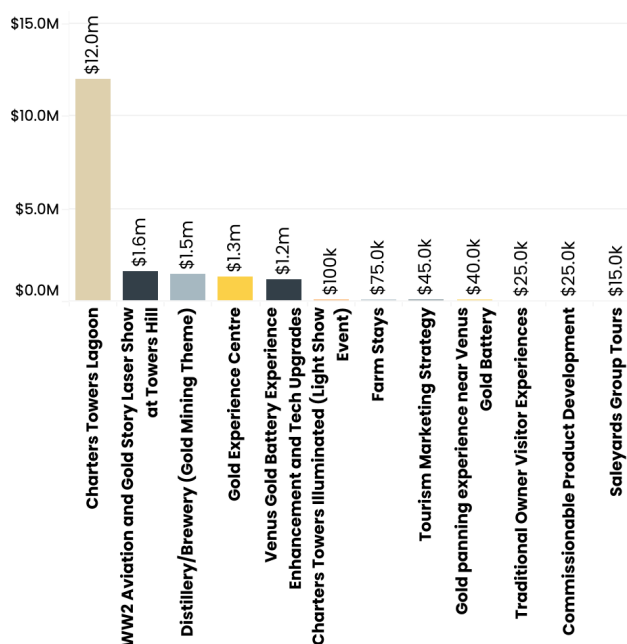
#### CAPEX required by DMP theme (all projects)



#### CAPEX required by investment type (game changers only)



#### CAPEX required by game changer project



## 4.2. Summary and next steps

The Charters Towers DMP provides a strategic framework to drive sustainable growth of the region's visitor economy. By leveraging its rich heritage, natural assets, and unique outback charm, the plan sets out clear priorities to enhance tourism offerings, attract higher-yield visitor markets, and deliver long-term economic, social, and environmental benefits. The DMP aligns with local, regional, state, and national strategies, ensuring coordinated efforts to position Charters Towers as a compelling destination.

Next steps to be considered include the following.

- Implementation Planning: Follow the action plans which include timelines, responsibilities, and funding to bring the DMP's recommendations to life.
- Stakeholder Engagement: Foster collaboration between stakeholders to ensure shared ownership and commitment to the DMP.
- Investment and Funding: Pursue investment opportunities and secure funding from government grants, private investors, and partnerships to support priority projects. Consider the development of an investment prospectus to showcase investment opportunities to the sector and broader industry.
- Marketing and Promotion: Strengthen branding and promotional campaigns to highlight Charters Towers' unique tourism experiences and target markets as identified in this DMP.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Establish a robust framework to track progress against key performance indicators, ensuring accountability and enabling adjustments as needed.





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