

Winton Shire Council Tourism Strategy Advisory Committee Meeting held at the Waltzing Matilda Centre on Monday, 23 October 2023 at 5:30pm

1 COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING

Cr Anne Seymour welcomed all the meeting at the Waltzing Matilda Centre.

2 PRESENT

Joe Minehan (Winton Business & Tourism Association), Vicki Jones (Winton Business & Tourism Association), Gary Doak (Community Member), Lyn Fraser (Corfields & Fitzmaurice), Alison Summerville (Queensland Boulder Opal Association), Janice Evert (Winton Movies Inc), Lydia Evert (Winton Movies Inc), Robyn Stephens (Outback Festival), Bruce Collins (Historical Society and Australian Age of Dinosaurs)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Cr Anne Seymour (Chair), Cr Cathy White (Deputy Chair), Cr Frank Standfast, Mrs Jenny Elliott, (WSC WMC Coordinator), Krist Minehan (WSC Governance Coordinator / Secretariat)

3 APOLOGIES

Cr Gavin Baskett (Mayor), Mr Dirk Dowling (WSC CEO), Mr Kim Stoter (Australian Age of Dinosaurs), Hylton Ward (Outback Festival), Denise Brown (Guest)

4 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None declared

The meeting opened at 5:30 pm and closed at 7:08pm

Next meeting date – planning meeting – to be advised in February 2024.



5 GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Business arising from previous meeting (August 2023)

Correction to last report: incorrect spelling – should be Margaret Oxley, not Margaret Oxford.

Recommendations from last meeting:

All have been adopted, however the Caravan parking recommendation will require checking with Queensland Police before it can be progressed.

Closing in the main street discussion – some shops have food caravans directly in front of their shops.

Voted unanimously to keep the Gidgee sign where it currently located but it will be revamped.

Touch screen / info sign – Lydia happy to work to progress this. The people who placed the sign, not Council, have the rights and it needs upgrading. Lydia will find out costs and process around upgrading it. Required to pay a fee to have it upgraded. It was put up and old information was put up.

Recommendation:

When Lydia Evert finds out, a decision will need to go to Council.

2. Advisory Committee structure – 2024 / planning

Final meeting in the current structure this year – including beautification and cemetery from a tourism perspective.

Easy to read and understand. Discussion about the new structure. Committees have never been able to make decision, has always been recommendations only. Council will not have any input to how you run your businesses – this gives you a voice to Council. Some committees were edging into operational areas, this should be big picture / strategic thinking.

This has taken some time to work through and is a living document. If you would like changes, the recommendations will be taken back to Council. Trying to make it a holistic view. Not for profit entities only which is why the Film Festival is not included.

Corfield community member has never been involved before. Advertising for membership will occur early next year – advertised on Facebook. Includes tourism and beautification – a combined effort. All of the people in the room will be advised.

Discussion regarding representative from each of the organisations – a representative – doesn't have to be named. Can be named as a community member – can't be a commercial enterprise.

Discussion regarding attendees – guests can be invited who are not on the list.

A decision has been made that Councillors don't get a vote any more as they have to vote on the recommendations at Council meetings and could be seen as a conflict. The process seems very similar to what we had before.

Prefer control to inviting guests

WBTA is for the business people. Community groups suggest recommendation to Council. If one member can't come than another should be able to step up. We all understand the discussion.

Discussion regarding membership – current document . Can have only one representative. The number of representatives. When we asked the CEO – has invited them as a guest. Invited guests – some input to a particular area – needs to be controlled to some degree. If you want to put a recommendation up you still need to be able to vote.

Two representatives can come however one person only can vote. Needs to be clarified in the document.

Recommendation:

Innovation dot point to include the word 'residents' on page 5.

Reword the section in relation 'to clarify' restricted to only one representative to clarify the there may be two representatives are able to attend and only one to vote. Reword.

Show of hands -

3. 2023 recap – tour operator experience

2023 Recap – how did the year go? Are there any improvements we can implement for 2024.

Allison Summerville (Opal festival): This was the best ever, even though we were reduced to one festival this year due to limited volunteers. Major problems with paperwork this year and came close to the police shutting us down. We didn't realise that the grant application didn't include in kind donations and nearly cost the association another \$25,000 to close the road which was due to paperwork.

Don't think Council could do much more for us. Karen Stephens and the Art Gallery did a great job of advertising, We had limited advertising due to reduced Committee. Council could better promote opal – no active promotion as our national gem. There is support however there is not active promotion.

In relation to Opalton, we finally have the tower up. David Strang has now been able to take his Wi-Fi off (after 3 ½ years). Great coverage – late but very welcome. Distance markers are now in place for people travelling out to Opalton and there have been big changes with signage.

Learning: Better preparation this time with the paperwork.



Corfield & Fitzmaurice. Went very well this year, however totally dead now. Will reopen first week in March.

Vicki Jones (Red Dirt Tours): A little bit busier than 2019, but was slow to start with big hump in the middle and a quick downward curve.

Lydia Evert (Winton Movies Inc.): Definitely a quieter year. 104 films were shown with an average of 50 people, over 5,000 on seat and about 10,000 passed through, to a huge tourism stream. Lots of information goes out through the theatre about everything happening throughout the town. It's a good space that could be used more for public stuff.

Could communicate better with the Council. We didn't know about the 30 scooters coming through town, so was a missed opportunity to do a Legacy \$ donation. This is also the same with other groups coming through town. This is perhaps where Council could work better with advisory. It would help if we know what's coming ahead of time.

Strategy – more in sync with Council when groups are coming through. We need advance notice so we are able to get movies (costs \$500 per movie) and need to be ordered ahead of time. We need to grab everyone who comes into town.

For example, didn't get notice of the Sh##box Rally – not a Council event but we knew about it because they booked the Showgrounds.

Grant notification received that they had been knocked back because of "commercial". Definitely not for profit. Would like Council and all business people to do a viewing of what we actually do.

Amanda-Lyn Pearson (Crack Up Sisters): In 2023 we made the decision to tour again. We toured heavily – in front of 280,000 people across 2 states. Advertising, we made a decision for someone else to run the yard. In 2024 focusing more into Winton and focus on larger events. Want to enlarge the homestead and a beacon of signage. Verbally we promote Winton at all events, but would like to formalize it better. Over summer we'll update the website. Want to tag along and help each other.

Arts Qld has asked for cultural outreaches in the Arts sphere. There will be a lot more events the Crack Ups will do at home.

There was a calendar on the Winton Shire Council website that we could pop in our events / activities. Response from Council: No one uses it, it's still there.

Joe Minehan (WBTA): It has been a pretty good year all round. We believe we should try and look for gaps in scheduling for more events to provide more reasons to come to Winton instead of coming to another town. We are all mutually supportive, that is, we all cross promote each other. We need to find a way to make the shoulders longer. There is an opportunity in 2025 when celebrating the 150 years.

Echo other comments regarding a couple of events – we knew some groups were coming, but not others. Perhaps the new events person may be able to enhance the visitor experience.



2023 Outback Festival: Post debriefs with key stakeholders are still to be finalized. – data collation still happening to provide results in relation to economic outcomes.

Sales were up in the 2023 year with \$1.3m injected into town. The showgrounds were up 56%. Everything was up. Marketing was Australia wide and was about promoting Winton. All positive comments on line.

In the Council newsletter it was noted as being biennial, but is biannual – every two years not twice a year – our 27th festival.

Discussion regarding the Festival and the QBOA use of the old orange building in town which is a great venue for using as it is right in the main street and the infrastructure is great. Is there an avenue from Council to take on the building in town – perhaps those that come into town and need an office. It's prime position – for consulting offices. Council has chambers and others. When the street is closed down, that is where people go. The group considered making a recommendation – to purchase the orange building. QBOA put in a grant that fell through with change of Government. For events it's a face in the main street.

Bruce Collins (AAOD): Had a pretty good year – down about 10%. Apparently Qantas Founders was down 15% so we are holding our own. Have a new Manager of Operations on board. Patrice with a background in event management like the Big Red Bash and Birdsville Races. The organisation has not been standing still. A lot happens including a lot of prep work and new releases.

Bruce Collins (Historical Society): Membership is historical as well. It would be great to get a few more younger people in. The organization is at the stage where we do need a big improvement in our display buildings on a joint ticket with the Waltzing Matilda Centre. The Society has an MOU with Council, that is, Council is responsible for buildings, capital works and insurance. Historical Society obligation is to improve displays. There is no point in collecting fresh equipment that will be destroyed as is currently happening with some of the displays at present. We need more funds to get better traction to revamp some of the displays.

There is a budget for scope and plan to make sure it's shovel ready. Have spoken to the Director of Works and not sure if it's been started. Looking at a climate controlled room – we had a No 5 building upstairs which is the last shed that had been built. With old material to be maintained, there is a need to minimize variation in moisture, heat and dust. Changes and upgrades have been made. Note that the cleaners.

Gary Doak (Winton Dates): There has been significant growth in agri tourism. Winton Dates now being sold in Mt Isa, Townsville and Atherton. Mt Isa has been in contact regarding the possibility of a food trail for people looking at a different experience and another element of interest. Another layer.

General discussion

Welcome to Winton to pack. Nothing provided to new people. We aren't capitalizing on them. A welcome pack to welcome then to our community – this is what we have to offer and what are they interested in. New residents. In other places they had "greeters" and just pull together a bag of goodies with all of the information including



information about committees. Give them to employers to give to new staff. Shortens the time for them to settle in.

Discussion regarding the underutilization of the Waltzing Matilda Centre – nothing much while people are waiting to be attended to – more information about other opportunities – bird watching, theatre – posters, signs, etc. Most people come to the Waltzing Matilda Centre.

Strategy: New events and promotions that can be run in the shoulder seasons, for example, 10% discount across the town.

Winton Shire Council Newsletter – great initiative – all about Council. Never intended to recreate the Winton Herald. Digital, but too expensive to print. Some are printed out for 60s and better, etc. Can go to the library and copy it.

Recommendation:

1. Monthly / Council calendar – any events that are known are included and much more ahead of time.
2. Correspondence that comes through to the Council come to this committee.
3. An event check list
Smaller committees could benefit from an event check list; for example, how to work with Council, how to close a road, how to get a liquor licence to run events, etc.
4. Notification of events well in advance – rallies, etc. That is, a centralised database on large groups coming through.
5. A list of things that large groups can do in Winton. As well as local things like opening the art gallery, expressions of Interest for catering, etc.
6. Winton Welcome Pack

4. **150 year celebration in 2025**

Will be huge for the town and the reason the Events Coordinator is being employed.

5. **Guest – Denise Brown, CEO Outback Queensland Tourism Association**

Moved to next meeting

