

Tourism

Pathways, strategies and actions for a future ready tourism sector for Mount Isa

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Future ready development considerations for the tourism sector

Future readiness dimension	Potential Actions
Strong and resilient economy	Update the Mount Isa Tourism Development Strategy for the next five year period, with a focus on aligning the sector strategy with the Mount Isa the Future Ready Economy Roadmap.
	Invest in the organisational capacity of industry coordinating bodies. For example, hiring dedicated Council staff or local tourism industry associations.
Decarbonisation	Support tourism operators to identify and assess available options to decarbonise their operations.
	Invest in shared infrastructure to enable more businesses to electrify and decarbonise over time.
Climate adaptation	Facilitate access to recent and reliable climate data and projections relevant to tourism facilities and operations in Mount Isa.
	Ensure approvals for new tourism developments and permits assess for resilience against anticipated climate conditions.
Circular design	Facilitate opportunities for local operators to explore and collaborate on circular design projects.
	Develop local facilities to improve resource recovery and create new value streams that can benefit the tourism and hospitality industries and the local community.
Environmental impact and regeneration	Provide planning and development support to make it easier for new tourism facilities to be serviced by locally-generated renewable energy and environmentally-responsible water and waste systems.
	Develop an industry-led environmental management plan that minimises environmental impact of the industry, and supports projects to regenerate degraded local environments.
Liveability and social wellbeing	Ensure that new tourism developments protect local access to, and enjoyment of, local environmental and cultural heritage.
	Prioritise public infrastructure upgrades and developments that improve community wellbeing and visitor experiences throughout the year.
	Encourage place-making through initiatives that co-create community spaces and public attractions. For example curbside flower and food gardens, a community "food forest" or mural projects in partnership with local schools.

Pathway 1: Strengthen the foundations of the local tourism industry

Strategies	Potential Actions
1. Invest in strategic planning and coordination	Convene local working groups to inform the next five-year iteration of the Mount Isa Tourism Development Strategy, with a focus on the key dimensions of a future ready tourism sector including local opportunities for decarbonisation, circular design, climate adaptation, environmental regeneration, and social wellbeing in the tourism industry.
2. Invest in shared infrastructure	<p>Identify and prioritise public infrastructure upgrades or developments that would improve both local and visitor access to experiences around Mount Isa. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upgrade or installing public amenities. - Develop shaded bike lanes and public EV charging stations. - Offer free or subsidised transport to connect Mount Isa to nearby recreational sites like Lake Moondarra. - Invest in more passive cooling infrastructure (for example, mature tree coverage or shade cloths) to ensure public spaces are accessible during hot days.
3. Support tourism operators to strengthen their business models	Run a series of participatory workshops for local tourism and hospitality businesses to better understand industry best practice, future ready trends, and emerging opportunities in Mount Isa (e.g. potential new products/experiences arising from circularity, savings from renewable energy or energy efficiency measures). These workshops should be tailored to different groups of businesses (e.g. hotels, tourism experiences).
	Invest in established destination events and initiatives that draw visitors to Mount Isa.
4. Support tourism operators to expand their offerings in alignment with the future ready framework	Regularly review visitor trends and conduct periodic experience gap analyses of tourism in the Mount Isa region and outback Queensland tourism landscape to identify opportunities for existing tourism operators to expand their offerings and/or market access. These ideas should align with Mount Isa's aspirations to be a future ready region that makes leading contributions to Australia's net zero transition.
	Share insights with local tourism businesses about visitor trends, industry best practice, and regional experience gaps. Offer business development support for new ideas that utilise these insights.

Pathway 2: Support the development of iconic experiences

Strategies	Potential Actions
1. Encourage new entrants in the Mount Isa tourism sector	Through consultation between Mount Isa City Council, local community and tourism operators, develop a Lake Moondarra Master Plan to guide coordinated and resilient developments at the lake. The scope of this Plan should include public benefits, cultural heritage, environmental protection and regeneration, and opportunities for new events and/or businesses that leverage the Lake as an iconic location.
	Test the market for educational products for universities, companies and professional associations that bring students and professionals in the mining, critical minerals and renewable energy sectors to Mount Isa for multi-day study tours / experiences. The program(s) could package multiple elements e.g. training, site visits and selected tourism activities. They will raise Mount Isa's profile as an employment destination and place of leading practice.
	Identify gaps in the Mount Isa tourism and hospitality market and catalyse new business opportunities to address them. For example boutique accommodation, homestead experiences, multi-day camping tours, safaris.
	Offer business case development support and seed funding for new local tourism operators with proposals that align with the future ready framework and help tell a unique story about Mount Isa.
2. Foster collaboration that delivers unique, multi-day visitor experiences	Offer networking events and workshops for tourism operators to identify and test ideas for collaborations that could expand or lead to new visitor experiences in Mount Isa. For example "farm to table" opportunities or cultural heritage and ecotourism partnerships.
	Explore opportunities to expand or initiate regional circuit events across central and north-west Queensland to promote more multi-day and off-peak visitors. For example a regional golf circuit or side-events to compliment Top End fishing competitions.
	Support access to investment and other support for events that leverage Mount Isa's unique attributes, culture, history and local business ecosystem, for example through the Queensland Destination Events Program.

Pathway 3: Expand First Nations-led visitor experiences

Strategies	Potential Actions
1. Support the voice of Kalkadoon people in tourism development	Ascertain the overall aspirations for Kalkadoon and Traditional Owners in the area to develop and grow Kalkadoon led, owned and operated cultural and tourism experiences, and strengthen understanding of pathways to back these aspirations.
	Ensure Traditional Owners are key stakeholders in the evolution of the governance structure and decision-making processes for tourism in Mount Isa, including through future updates to the Mount Isa Tourism Development Strategy.
	Include Kalkadoon, Traditional Owners and First Nations tourism operators in the development of a comprehensive strategic plan for tourism in Mount Isa, and in the development of strategic tourism initiatives. For example the development and implementation of the Lake Moondarra Master Plan presents opportunities for Kalkadoon owned and operated experiences on and around the Lake.
	Strengthen relationships and collaborations between all tourism stakeholders as the basis for coordinated and strategic support.
2. Support the aspirations of Kalkadoon people to develop a Cultural Centre	Support Kalkadoon community members to lead planning and decision-making processes for the cultural centre, to ensure the centre meets their needs and respects their cultural values.
	Support the inclusion of the cultural centre concept in strategic planning for Mount Isa tourism including campaigns, funding and investment plans and collaborations.
3. Strengthen capacity for First Nations-led visitor experiences	Promote and support participation in the existing tourism training and support initiatives delivered in Mount Isa and the region.
	Support and strengthen the existing and complementary role undertaken by Outback at Isa Centre - providing an unofficial business incubation hub for local Kalkadoon people wanting to develop tourism product.
	Deliver an expanded range of skills development workshops and events in Mount Isa and neighbouring communities that support First Nations business leaders to strengthen their business models and expand their offerings in alignment with the future ready framework.
	Strengthen connections and participation opportunities for First Nations business leaders in regional and national business programs. For example accelerators, pitch events and networking opportunities to access expertise, mentoring, resources and peer support.
	Create and support new opportunities for collaboration and partnerships between First Nations tourism operators and local and regional organisations across tourism, education, training and government agencies, to enable the development of new experiences, strengthen organisational capacity and improve access to resources.
	Support people working in First Nations tourism to access business resources and support to address key considerations for a future ready economy for example climate resilient design and operation of facilities.
4. Encourage and	Support First Nations people and organisations to create and realise new experiences showcasing the region's unique history and culture. Where appropriate, this could include sharing artefacts, art, food and stories.

support increased First Nations participation in the Mount Isa tourism sector	Support access to and retention in tourism employment opportunities through tailoring tourism workforce training, recruitment and retention initiatives for the specific needs and opportunities of First Nations people and businesses.
	Support First Nations businesses to address common challenges facing tourism in Mount Isa such as seasonal fluctuations in visitor numbers, business governance and leadership, product visibility and market access.
5. Improve access to funding, finance and investment for First Nations-led tourism initiatives	Increase access to seed funding to develop and test new visitor experiences, undertake feasibility studies and business case development, and resource the start-up phase of new organisations.
	Strengthen access to finance and investment to growth new tourism opportunities from demonstration phase to established / mature organisation, supporting access to funding and finance for capacity building, organisation facilities and infrastructure, governance development and product/experience development.

Pathway 4: Develop and share a compelling narrative about Mount Isa's unique attractions and offerings

Strategies	Potential Actions
1. Commit to a distinctive and attractive campaign to drive awareness about Mount Isa’s unique attractions	In consultation with local community and tourism operators, develop a communications campaign that tells a compelling story about the Mount Isa community and region, leveraging existing communications collateral including 'Meet Mount Isa' and 'celebrate the other side of Queensland' and integrating new aspects of Mount Isa's future ready aspirations over time.
	Invest in the delivery of advertising and public relations campaigns to attract international, interstate and intra-state visitors
	Offer communications support to local tourism operators to help tell a unified story about Mount Isa's strengths and attractions to different visitor audiences, for example through supporting local tourism operators to explore a range of traditional and social media options to increase audience engagement and awareness of Mount Isa’s unique attractions.
	Periodically review local tourism marketing campaigns to ensure they capture and leverage new developments, including visitor attractions created by business developments, such as the Kalkadoon Cultural Centre, and multi-day experiences associated with new industries, such as study or work tours of critical minerals mining and processing operations.
	Collaborate with other regional, state and national tourism bodies to improve the market reach and impact of Mount Isa marketing campaigns.