Mount Augustus
BASE CAMP
FEASIBILITY STUDY

Prepared for:
The Shire of Upper Gascoyne; and
The Gascoyne Development Commission
November 2009
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mount Augustus has the potential to be an iconic, world-class natural attraction on a par with Uluru, the Pinnacles, Kakadu and the Tasmanian Wilderness in terms of nature-based experiences. Complementing the rock climbing experience, the abundance of wild flowers, numerous varieties of birds and wildlife, interesting rock formations, caves and the sharing of Aboriginal culture and art all make this a must see destination.

The aim of this feasibility study is to determine the viability of a proposed new eco tourism facility at Mount Augustus to replace the existing Mount Augustus Station accommodation facility, which is showing signs of age. The proposed tourism venture is to be located on the site adjacent to the old facility and is proposed to stimulate the regional economy and take employment and enterprise opportunities to the Upper Gascoyne and Burringurrah Aboriginal Community. It will also improve the marketability of one of Australia’s most significant, yet relatively unknown, geological landmarks, Mount Augustus – the world’s largest rock (monocline).

As with many remote natural attractions, Mount Augustus presents challenges with regard to economic sustainability, access, environmental protection, and cultural sensitivities. A conclusion of the study is that the project must be predicated on sourcing grant funding for infrastructure development and the support of all stakeholders is needed to ensure the project is given every chance of success. Once developed, the facility would generate sufficient return to be sustainable and grow in line with visitor expectations.

The study takes a necessarily conservative approach to the occupancy and yield estimates in the financial projections. The proposed product mix includes a variety of appropriate accommodation types in order to appeal to a wider market demographic and thereby mitigate some of the development risk.

Visitation statistics were sourced from Tourism WA, the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), Australia’s Golden Outback, the Gascoyne Development Commission and the existing accommodation facility to ascertain seasonality and capacity requirements. Tourism Western Australia estimated an annual average of 48,500 visitor nights is spent the Shire of Upper Gascoyne, DEC estimates 6,000 – 7,000 unique guests visited the Mt Augustus National Park. Stakeholder input indicates this figure would be significantly higher if there were better facilities, improved road access and more information on activities on offer at the destination.

The destination is relatively unknown and will require time and marketing to grow demand, particularly with the higher yield visitors. Accessibility is an important issue and a critical factor is the provision of an accommodation facility that caters to a wider range of market segments. There is a requirement for product development to identify the location as a desirable destination and make it accessible to a greater number of visitors.
The current controversy surrounding the potential ban on climbing Uluru highlights the need to ensure any strategy aimed at increasing visitation to a natural asset such as Mount Augustus considers the protection of the flora and fauna, development of opportunity for the Indigenous community, education and most importantly ensures sustainable tourism growth. The Burringurrah community and the custodians for the proposed tourism site have been consulted, and must continue to have significant input into the development of the proposed facility.

The concepts proposed in this document are designed to target a variety of markets. They are low impact developments on a relatively small scale, reducing risk in financial terms and in recognition of the fragile environment. The development of the premium accommodation product segment can be achieved once the market awareness of Mount Augustus has been firmly established, and the transport linkages are better developed. In the interim, the proposed deluxe Safari Tents will take the accommodation facilities on offer in the region to the next level and satisfy the expectations of the much coveted high yield experience seekers.

Alternative models offering higher yielding accommodation have been trialled in other remote locations, with varying degrees of success. The relatively low occupancies and high development costs can result in low returns. The recommended product mix is based on satisfying current visitation, which has demonstrated a high level of price sensitivity and provides for growth of higher yielding visitors to achieving a return on investment, which justifies the initial investment. The nature of the accommodation allows for a staged development to grow with the business. The accommodation mix proposed initially is:

- 10 x Deluxe Safari Tents priced at $210 per night (peak)
- 15 x Air-conditioned cabins priced at $160 per night (peak)
- 20 x Budget Rooms (share campground facilities) priced at $90 per night (peak)
- 35 x Powered Caravan or Camp Sites priced at $38.00 per night (peak)

Other required infrastructure, facilities and amenities include:

- Restaurant and bar
- Office, Shop and Managers Residence
- Staff Accommodation
- Solar pump, desalination plant and water tanks
- Ablutions and Laundry
- Campers kitchen
- Workshop
- Hybrid Power System
The total development cost has been estimated at $4.5 million. Revenue in the first full year of operations is estimated at $1.5m, expenses are estimated at $1.0m, which provides EBITDA of $0.5m.

The proposed property forms part of a pastoral lease and is identified as Lot 350 Cobra-Mt Augustus Road. The lessee, Mr Don Hammarquist is supportive of the project.

The stakeholders have agreed to explore an ownership structure which would provide the greatest potential for the attraction of capital. The Shire of Upper Gascoyne and the Burringurrah Community have the opportunity to seek grant funds from a variety of sources and may be the logical lease holders for the proposed development.

The financial projections are based on a single entity owning and operating the facility. However, the ownership and operations could be split with an experienced hospitality operator being granted the management rights. The preliminary project group includes Mr Chris Pye, Director Hospitality Inns and operator of Karijini Eco Retreat who has indicated that he may be interested in acquiring the management rights of the proposed facility.

Under the separate ownership and management model, the owning entity could achieve revenue of around $250,000 per annum, whilst the management entity could achieve over $300,000 EBITDA by its third full year of operations. Overall the project forecast provides a 9 percent internal rate of return (combined operations). This is based on achieving an average annual occupancy of 41.5 percent with 25,000 nights in the first full year of operations, this is just over 50 percent of the annual average guest nights for the Shire of Upper Gascoyne currently.
OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

At the instigation of Jon Jessop, Chair of Australia’s Golden Outback a small, informal stakeholder group sought to explore an opportunity for a world class tourism development at Mount Augustus. In 2009 they produced a report titled the “Mount Augustus Outback Resort Proposal” to highlight tourism opportunities, regional economic growth potential and employment and training opportunities for the local Burringurrah Aboriginal Community.

The report identified that Mount Augustus visitation into the future, will be promoted through three major existing pathways, the Wool Wagon Pathway, the Kingsford Smith Mail Run and as an extension of the Warlu Way (Pingandy Track).

Visitation to Uluru is around 300,000 per annum, Karijini currently sits around 100,000 per annum and Mt Augustus at less than 8,000 per annum. The stakeholders identified that the proposed resort has the potential to divert a large number of Karijini visitors to include a stop at Mount Augustus.

VISION FOR MOUNT AUGUSTUS

Mount Augustus is the world’s biggest rock and one of Australia’s best kept tourism secrets. The location presents a significant opportunity to deliver best practice in sustainable tourism management by taking an innovative approach to the development the market for this iconic tourism attraction.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to investigate the feasibility of developing a new eco-tourism facility at Mount Augustus. The Shire of Upper Gascoyne, in conjunction with the Gascoyne Development Commission, has commissioned the study based on the premise that “a purpose built eco resort within the Outback environment will attract much needed visitation to the region.” (Mt Augustus Eco Resort Proposal, 2009). The study may also be used to provide information in support of grant applications for capital works.

METHOD

The approach to the development of this feasibility study has been to seek opportunities for beneficial, sustainable development of a unique natural attraction to provide desirable economic, social and environmental outcomes.

The methodology has been to identify markets and trends that influence the strategic direction of development of Mount Augustus. Information was obtained from a variety of...
sources and cross-referenced to verify accuracy. A site visit and meetings with the Shire, the local Aboriginal community and a range of tourism stakeholders was undertaken prior to the production of the report.

A desktop review of strategies and data relating to the Upper Gascoyne region and the wider tourism industry was undertaken. This included a review of research and data from:

- Mount Augustus & Gascoyne Outback Development Taskforce Report 2009 (Draft)
- A Comprehensive Analysis of Options for Economic Development in the Shire of Upper Gascoyne
- Development Commission Area Fact Sheet Gascoyne 2008
- The Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Australia’s Golden Outback Overnight Visitor Fact Sheet Years Ending December 2006/07/08
- IBIS World Tourism in Australia - Industry Report
- Inventory Of Tourism Assets On Department Of Environment And Conservation Rangeland Properties Gascoyne And Murchison Regions, Western Australia
- Gascoyne Geographic Perspective
- Nature Bank –Natural Tourism In Western Australia
- Mount Augustus 2004 Drilling Bore Completion Report for Department of Agriculture July, 2004
- Tourism Western Australia
- Gascoyne Roads 2050 Regional Road Development Strategy 2007

Consultation was undertaken with:

- Shire of Upper Gascoyne
- Gascoyne Development Commission
- Burrinjarrrah Aboriginal Community Council
- Burrinjarrrah Aboriginal Community
- Burrinjarrrah Community School
- Burrinjarrrah Community Store
- Derek Oxenham – Shire of Upper Gascoyne Councillor and Burrinjarrrah Community member
- Charlie Snowball Jr – Traditional Custodian of Mt Augustus region
- Australia’s Golden Outback
- Vince Catania, Member for Northwest
- Don Hammarquist, station owner and owner of existing resort
- Chris Pye, Director Hospitality Inns and operator of Karijini Eco Retreat.
MT AUGUSTUS NATIONAL PARK

According to the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) website, “Mount Augustus, or Burringurrah as it is known by the local Wadjari Aboriginal people, is about 850 kilometres from Perth and midway between the Great Northern and North West Coastal highways. One of the most spectacular solitary peaks in the world, it rises 717 metres above a stony, red sand plain of arid shrub land—dominated by wattles, cassias and eremophilas—and is clearly visible from the air for more than 160 kilometres.

The rock itself, which culminates in a small peak on a plateau, is about eight kilometres long and covers an area of 4,795 hectares. At about twice the size of Uluru [Ayers Rock] it is the biggest 'rock' in the world.”


The rock is popular with visitors due to its interesting caves, intriguing rock formations, and the Aboriginal rock art which has been untouched for thousands of years. The National Park also offers a wonderful springtime display of wildflowers, an abundance of bird and wildlife and a truly remote outback experience.

No camping is permitted within the National Park, the only accommodation, camping and facilities being at the nearby Mount Augustus Outback Tourist Resort (which is proposed to close to make way for the new resort).

DEC estimates that visitation to the park currently sits around 6,000 to 7,000 people per year, though they report some concerns with their counters being faulty, suggesting this data may not be totally reliable (understated).

There are currently no park entry fees charged for access to the park. The Minister has endorsed visitor fees being charged however this will reportedly not occur until such time as DEC have appropriate infrastructure and procedures in place to do so. Currently there is not a full time ranger stationed at the park.
LOCAL ATTRACTIONS

The DEC website offers the following range of nearby attractions:

“Burringurrah Drive is a 49 kilometre circuit providing views of the changing faces of the rock and gains access to all feature sites. Suitable for conventional two wheel drive vehicles.

Emu Hill Lookout is a good location from which to take photographs of the Mount, with sunset usually the most colourful.

Goolinee is a permanent pool on Lyons River. Please take note this is a day use area only and reeds in the pool can make swimming hazardous. From the pool you can walk along the Corella Trail. The trail beginning mid way along the pool is a two kilometre return taking one hour. The area is great for birdlife and fauna.

Goordgeela is a small recreational spot at the base of the rock. A trail runs to the cave where there are great views of the Lyons River. The Cave Hill Trail is a four kilometre return taking two hours. The trail is short and steep and runs up from Goordgeela to the cave entrance. Do not enter the cave as its ceiling is unstable and rock falls do occur.

Mundee is a rock wall with engravings of kangaroo, emu and bustard tracks in three cave like overhangs. From here you can take the Petroglyph Trail, an easy 300 metres return walk.

Taking a short walk along the creek bed of approximately 250 metres will bring you to Beedoboonda, a huge rock that lies across the stream bed. Crawl under the rock to observe Aboriginal engravings. After heavy rain, water cascades over the rocks forming several waterfalls. If you are fit and an experienced bushwalker you can walk along the Summit Trail, a 12 kilometre walk taking six hours return.

From the summit there are extensive views over the surrounding plain and drainage basin to distant ranges. An early start is recommended and wear sturdy footwear, protective clothing and carry at least two litres of water per person. Seek advice from the ranger or the Mount Augustus Outback Tourist Resort.

The Pound is a natural basin once used for holding cattle prior to moving them on the hoof to Meekatharra. You can walk the Saddle Trail from here, a two kilometre walk taking one hour return. It provides views south into The Pound and north over the Lyons River valley.

Ooramboo is a short stroll of approximately 150 metres to view Aboriginal engravings of animal tracks along an escarpment. Edney’s Trail, a six kilometres walk taking two and a half hours return is a well defined trail. It will lead you to Edney's Lookout. The peak is clearly seen from the Tourist Resort. The trail is suitable for those seeking elevated views but do not wish to tackle the more strenuous Summit trail.
Warrarla Gum Grove is a pleasant picnic site set among a grove of large river gums. The Kotke Gorge Trail is a two kilometre walk taking one hour return, and is a ramble and rock hop along the usually dry creek bed. There you can discover the variety of rock shapes and textures exposed in the creek bed. Please note there is no marked trail up the Kotke Gorge.”

Source: www.dec.wa.gov.au/component/option,com_hotproperty/task,view/id,58/

NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

The following regional attractions are within a five hour drive of Mount Augustus:

- Karijini
- Ningaloo Reef
- Cape Range National Park
- Wildflowers of the Gascoyne
- Kennedy Ranges
- Gascoyne River
- Cattle Pool
- Blow Holes at Carnarvon

ACCESS OPTIONS AND IMPACTS ON VISITATION

ROAD ACCESS

Mount Augustus is located approximately 1,100 kilometres north of Perth and midway between the Great Northern and North West Coastal highways. Mount Augustus is 490 kilometres from Carnarvon via Gascoyne Junction and 360 kilometres from Meekatharra.

Road access is particularly challenging and has been identified by both the Carnarvon Visitor Centre and the Tom Price Visitor Centre as a major inhibitor for visitor access to Mount Augustus. Currently the Shire of Upper Gascoyne receives 13,500 visitors per year on average (2002-2009), over half of which are Intrastate. (Source: Tourism WA). Analysis of visitor demographics for the Shire was unavailable due to the small sample size, though the visitor centres report the majority of visitors are Grey Nomads (retirees) towing caravans on their annual migration north (or returning). Many of these people find access to Mount Augustus very challenging, especially when towing caravans. This presents a challenge for the caravan park operations, and an opportunity for the bedded accommodation to present an alternative for budget conscious caravanners to stay overnight in accommodation whilst leaving their vans in storage in Carnarvon.

The majority of roads, including all access roads to Mount Augustus are unsealed and are thus affected by the heavy rains experienced during the cyclone season from December to
March. Flooding can cut off road access though this is less frequently an issue during the peak tourism season.

The Roads 2050 Regional Road Development Strategy 2007 – Gascoyne Region, recognised the seasonal issues with access and the impact this has on opening opportunity to the area. An upgrade to the road linking Gascoyne Junction to Mt Augustus via Kennedy Ranges is highlighted as the best serving route from the west with the development strategy recommending to construct a Type 3 gravel road and provide concrete floodways at major river crossings to reduce periods of road closure.

From the east, the strategy recommends an upgrade of the Meekathara to Mt Augustus road via Mt Gould to a good gravel standard. Recognising the tourism link between Karijini and Mt Augustus the strategy seeks to identify a suitable route corridor linking Paraburdoo and Mt Augustus and develop a new road ultimately to Type 3 formed gravel standard. (Roads 2050 Regional Road Development Strategy 2007 – Gascoyne Region)

**AIR ACCESS**

Skywest operates regular scheduled flights between Perth and Carnarvon or Meekatharra. It is also possible to charter light aircraft through Skippers Aviation and Great Western Aviation.

Mount Augustus and Gascoyne Junction have airstrips. Access can be restricted due to issues with livestock and the length of both strips.

**MOUNT AUGUSTUS AIRSTRIP (UNSEALED)**

The airstrip at Mount Augustus Station is a graded loam surface, 1200 metres long and 20 metres wide. It is a registered Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) strip, but during wet weather passengers need to arrive and depart from Gascoyne Junction or Meekatharra airstrip. The Mount Augustus airstrip is the nearest access to the proposed facility.

**BURRINGURRAH ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY (UNSEALED)**

The airstrip at Burringurrah is a graded loam surface and on similar condition to Mt Augustus Station.

**GASCOYNE JUNCTION AIRSTRIP (SEALED)**

The Gascoyne Junction all-weather airstrip is the only sealed airstrip in the area. This airstrip is 1230 metres long and 20 metres wide and was sealed in 2000. It has since been resealed to enhance stability. Battery powered lanterns must be manually set out for night landings (emergencies only).
The Destination Development Strategy for Australia’s Golden Outback, prepared by Tourism Western Australia identified Mount Augustus as having high iconic significance with very poor market readiness as per the below chart: Destination Development Matrix.
The strategy lists the following priorities in terms of destination development for the region:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project / Strategies</th>
<th>Project / Strategy Description</th>
<th>Key Agency(s)</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
<th>Current Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACCESS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Seal Burringurrah/ Mt Augustus Airstrip</td>
<td>Explore the impact of heavy rains in this area that can severely restrict all forms of access. Currently all airstrips are unsealed.</td>
<td>DPI, DEC</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Requiring investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road upgrade</td>
<td>Investigate the upgrade and sealing of roads within the national park.</td>
<td>DEC</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Requiring investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seal roads from Carnarvon to Meekatharra via Mt Augustus</td>
<td>Provide a sealed road from North West Coastal Highway to Great Northern Highway. The work will be carried out in three stages.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 1: 172kms from Carnarvon to Gascoyne Junction – currently under construction.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 2: 288kms from Gascoyne Junction to Mt Augustus – currently in planning.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3: 347kms from Mt Augustus to Meekatharra – currently in planning.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Main Roads WA</td>
<td>$233 million ($20 million has been committed in Main Roads program toward Stage 1. The remainder is uncommitted)</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Planning and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACCOMMODATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mt Augustus accommodation</td>
<td>Develop new or improved accommodation at Mt Augustus.</td>
<td>Private Sector, DEC</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
<td>Requiring investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ATTRACTIONS/ ACTIVITIES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Project / Strategies</td>
<td>Project / Strategy Description</td>
<td>Key Agency(s)</td>
<td>Estimated Cost</td>
<td>Completion Date</td>
<td>Current Status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mt Augustus walk trails</td>
<td>Improve and expand walk trails at Mt Augustus.</td>
<td>DEC</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
<td>Requiring investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guides at Mt Augustus</td>
<td>Assess the feasibility of providing a guide during tourist season. Further activities need to be</td>
<td>DEC, Burringurrah Aboriginal Community</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Requiring investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>developed.</td>
<td></td>
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### AMENITIES

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<tr>
<th>Project / Strategies</th>
<th>Project / Strategy Description</th>
<th>Key Agency(s)</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
<th>Current Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mt Augustus summit structure</td>
<td>Construct a viewing facility on the summit of Mt Augustus.</td>
<td>DEC</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Augustus</td>
<td>Determine what additional visitor amenities are required.</td>
<td>DEC</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Requiring investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobra Station &amp; Bangemall Inn</td>
<td>Establish tourist facilities at Cobra Station and Bangemall Inn.</td>
<td>Fairwest Pty, DEC</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
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The DDS identified the following new attractions and activities under consideration:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project / Strategies</th>
<th>Project / Strategy Description</th>
<th>Key Agency(s)</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
<th>Current Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gascoyne Junction Sculpture Park</td>
<td>Investigate the establishment of an open area where travelling artists are able to create and display sculptures from local material.</td>
<td>Shire of Upper Gascoyne</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
<td>Requiring investigation Mt Augustus, Wild-flowers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HISTORICAL ASPECTS OF SITE

Mount Augustus is estimated to be 1,750 million years old. It is considered one of the most spectacular peaks in the world. However, it does not attract a significant visitation currently. It is located approximately 1,100 kilometres north of Perth and midway between the Great Northern and North West Coastal highways. It is widely acknowledged to have world-class tourism potential and is uniquely placed to capitalise on worldwide interest in cultural, geo and eco-tourism.

Current visitation to Mt Augustus is severely inhibited by the lack of appropriate visitor infrastructure, limited marketing and inadequate facilities. Currently the Department of Environment and Conservation estimates there are between 6,000 and 7,000 visitors per year, though it is expected this would grow following the development of adequate facilities and tourism infrastructure.

The current accommodation at Mount Augustus is operated on a periodic sublease from the owner of Mount Augustus Pastoral Station. The facility operated under management and in need of upgrading to reach potential. The Pastoral leaseholder is keen to relocate the tourism facility to a new location within his existing lease, and is a potential project partner in the proposed development. Alternative sites are also under consideration by other stakeholders including a potential NatureBank site within the National Park. It is expected that the release of a NatureBank site would take a significant amount of time to pass through the planning and approvals process and is thus not expected to occur within a suitable timeframe.

LOCATION AND LAND TENURE

MOUNT AUGUSTUS STATION

Mount Augustus & Gascoyne Outback Development Taskforce Report (2009) noted “A preferred location for a new tourist accommodation development near Mount Augustus has been identified adjacent to the present Mount Augustus Resort. The location capitalises on views of Mount Augustus. The current leaseholder of Mount Augustus Station has commenced proceedings with the Department for Planning and Infrastructure (DPI) for the excision of this land from the pastoral lease. Subsequently DPI has granted the proponent a Deed of Option. The Taskforce supports the site location provided the conditions of the Deed of Option can be met (Native Title, Environmental Protection Approval, etc)”.

The pastoral leaseholder, Don Hammarquist advised that the current lease expires in September 2010 and that State Land Services has lodged a notice of intention. It was advertised for comment in October 2009 and all relevant stakeholders have been notified including:
• Mt Augustus Station
• Land council
• Department of Indigenous Affairs
• Native Title Tribunal
• Department of Mines and Petroleum

The time period for comment is two months. If there are no significant adverse comments, then the application will proceed to negotiations with the Wajarri Yamatji Native Title Claimant Group. If all goes well, the outcome could be known in as little as six months.

There are various options for the structure of the lease. To maintain flexibility for capital works funding for the facility development (grant, investment and loan funding), it is recommended that the land be excised from the current pastoral lease and a new Crown Lease be provided at a peppercorn rental. Lease terms, security and the standing and financial capacity of the proponents are critical matters for successful capital fund raising.

A term of at least 21 years plus options would be required to attract investment and funding.

The lease terms could be reviewed periodically and after an agreed period, a rent, based on a percentage of revenue could be provided. As the business achieves critical financial outcomes the rent could be increased subject to due allowance for the capital improvements provided by the lessee.

The new lease area is proposed to be 47.69 hectares as per the following title diagram:
MOUNT AUGUSTUS REGION LAND TENURE

The following map details the land tenure arrangements for the region and its surrounds:
SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND HERITAGE SENSITIVITIES

The Indigenous Custodian, Charlie Snowball Junior advised of potential sacred sites within the proposed lease area, although he believed these took up a relatively small portion of the proposed location and should be able to be worked around.

In their report “A Comprehensive Analysis of Options for Economic Development in the Shire of Upper Gascoyne” Curtin University identified that there are three Aboriginal sites registered at Mt Augustus. A site at Goolinee (Cattle Pool) includes artefacts/scatter and is described as a site used as a birthplace, camp and water source (Dept of Indigenous Affairs 2005). The other two are at Mt Augustus and include ceremonial, mythological, painting, engravings and poundings (Dept of Indigenous Affairs 2005).

The Mount Augustus & Gascoyne Outback Development Taskforce Report 2009 identified that there are currently six registered native title claims and one determined native title within the study area. These are:

- Gnulli WC97-096
- Wadarri – Yamatji WC04-010
- Thudgari WC97-095
- Jurruru WC00-008
- Innawonga WC98-069
- Gobawarrah Minduarra Yinhawanga WC97-043
- Nharnuwangga WC 99-013 (Determined)

While the Gnulli Claim WC97-028 is the claim around Mount Augustus itself and is the primary claim impacted by development around Mt Augustus.

As the land is currently part of a pastoral lease; there are few currently defined environmental requirements, and those in place are significantly less than for tourism facilities within National Parks. Sustainability of tourism facilities in remote demands a planned approach to minimising energy consumption, water usage, waste production and sewerage treatment, although the primary drivers are economic rather than environmental.

In recognition of the eco-tourism values of the target market and the need for a sustainable development, there is a need to integrate best practice environmental management strategies and considerations into the overall development concept and the ongoing operations of the proposed facility.

This should be further investigated at the business planning stage, which could incorporate an Environmental Impact Assessment and compilation of an Environmental Management Plan.
DREAMING

There are a number of dreaming stories related to Mount Augustus and Burringurrah. These are of great cultural significance, and are also of great interest to visitors.

DISTANCES

The following distances are based on proximity to the proposed facility:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance to nearest:</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Distance in kms</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Burringurrah</td>
<td>50kms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel</td>
<td>Mt. Augustus Resort</td>
<td>Adjacent</td>
<td>Expected to close when new facility opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Burringurrah Community</td>
<td>49km</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gascoyne Junction</td>
<td>286km</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meekatharra</td>
<td>376km</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store</td>
<td>Mt. Augustus Resort</td>
<td>Adjacent</td>
<td>Expected to close when new facility opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Burringurrah Community</td>
<td>49km</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gascoyne Junction</td>
<td>286km</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meekatharra</td>
<td>376km</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airstrip</td>
<td>Mt. Augustus Station</td>
<td>1km</td>
<td>Dirt strip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Burringurrah Community</td>
<td>49km</td>
<td>Dirt strip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airport (Regional)</td>
<td>Meekatharra</td>
<td>376km</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carnarvon</td>
<td>460km</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airport (Major)</td>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hire car outlets</td>
<td>Carnarvon</td>
<td>460km</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital city</td>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>1,100 kms south</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>Mount Augustus Outback Resort</td>
<td>Adjacent</td>
<td>Expected to close when new facility opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meekatharra</td>
<td>376km</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carnarvon</td>
<td>460km</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SWOT ANALYSIS

The following basic SWOT analysis has been compiled based on stakeholder input and can be added to as the proposal is developed. It should be kept in consideration for the overall development planning.

STRENGTHS

- The world’s “biggest” rock
- Unique, world-class natural attraction.
- Rock art in region
- Reasonable proximity to surrounding natural attractions
- Wildflowers popular with existing visitor demographic acting as a further drawcard to region
- High quality natural experiences.
- Recognition by tourism stakeholders of the importance of Mount Augustus to regional and State tourism.
- Substantial strategic analysis already undertaken into opportunities
- High demand for nature-based tourism product.
- Clean pristine environment.
- Universal appeal across international, interstate and intrastate travellers and across all age and socio-economic demographics.
- Access to the cultural knowledge and traditions of the Indigenous community
- Historic interest in the region.
- Experiential and educative attraction.

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of recognition by the market of the presence of such a significant geological attraction
- Mount Augustus still in its infancy and requires development.
- Short prime tourist cycle: May - October
- Indigenous owners need tourism education and training to service tourists.
- Distance from towns/capital city/major airport.
- Poor access
- Limited accommodation infrastructure.
- Dependency on budget end of visitor market.
- Significantly dependent on the self-drive market.
- Current high charter air access costs.
- High vehicle fuel costs.
- Stand-alone product – complimentary tourism product not developed.
• No energy, water and waste infrastructure at new site
• Current resort has found it difficult to attract and retain quality staff to work in the area

OPPORTUNITIES

• Quality eco-tourism destination.
• Unique branding opportunity.
• Eco-cultural accommodation development potential.
• Caravan, camping and budget accommodation potential.
• Provision of meals – budget and restaurant.
• Availability of Indigenous arts and crafts.
• Products can be developed to cater for the numerous market segments.
• Create experiential and educative additions.
• Healthy lifestyle – wellbeing product opportunities.
• Indulgences – product to cater for high spending travellers seeking unique experiences.
• Escapism – getting away from routine existence. Exposure to unconventional activities.
• Indigenous cultural experiences.
• Potential for fly in packages and fly/overland tour packages
• Potential for linked and complementary tourism experiences with Indigenous community

THREATS

• Impact on cultural values of the local Indigenous community
• Fuel costs increase.
• High price of Public Liability Insurance.
• Lack of infrastructure development.
• Will require significant tourism marketing budget/staff.
• Insufficient funding for tourism development.
• Climatic extremes – heat/ floods
• Business ‘over-success’ where increased visitor number have an adverse impact on the environment resulting in deterioration of the natural assets
POTENTIAL OUTCOMES FOR BURRINGURRAH COMMUNITY

There are strong indications that there are potentially significant social benefits for the nearby Indigenous community at Burringurrah, as well as other Upper Gascoyne residents if a tourism attraction was fully developed at Mt Augustus.

It would provide opportunities for training, work experience and employment in the tourism and hospitality and encourage the development of other tourism businesses in the region.

A report titled “A Comprehensive Analysis of Options for Economic Development in the Shire of Upper Gascoyne” compiled by Curtin University identified that “A more developed and consistent tourist market provides opportunities for indigenous people to develop their craft activities and preserve their cultural activities for commercial benefit.”

ASPIRATIONS

Burringurrah Aboriginal Community Revitalisation Plan 2007-2011 identified the following goal for the community:

“To provide ‘wealth creation’ and ‘capacity building’ programmes to ensure a future and the sustainability for all members and stakeholders in the Burringurrah Aboriginal Community.”

Identified strategies for achieving this included:

- Fostering relations and partnerships with regional agencies and organisations to develop training and best practice programmes.
- Developing sustainable business.
- Developing the capacity of our leaders and the community.
- Seeking business partnerships and opportunities within our region.

Source: Burringurrah Aboriginal Community Revitalisation Plan 2007-2011

POPULATION

The community CEO advise that currently the community population comprises of approximately 200 people, though this fluctuates quite significantly.

There are 54 Aboriginal Corporation Members registered.

The school provides for approximately 60 students ranging from pre-primary to high school level.
FACILITIES

Burringurrah has a community store which offers a range of basic goods as well as locally produced art and crafts for the passing tourists. The community has recently opened a Tyre Sales and Repairs business servicing both community residents and tourists and they also sell fuel. Other facilities include a Telecentre and a community swimming pool.

The local community, Shire residents and imported workforce have few facilities and amenities resulting in a difficulty attracting and retaining people in the region. The new proposed facilities including unique accommodation and a quality restaurant would provide important facilities for the region and its residents. It would also provide outings for the students from the local community school where they could hold school camps, excursions and practice their language and literacy.

PRIDE AND PURPOSE

The Burringurrah Aboriginal Community Revitalisation Plan 2007-2011 identified that “Many of the training programmes introduced into the community failed to provide any long term opportunities to transfer acquired skills into business and employment opportunities.” This highlights the need for a real employment pathway for the residents and particularly the school leavers to enter into.

The Kooljaman case study in the appendix shows clearly what can be accomplished in terms of community outcomes with the development of a community owned enterprise. A key factor is the sense of pride which can emerge, which in turn can assist dramatically in solving many of the problems facing people in the community who have become welfare-dependent and bored by having relatively few options to occupy their time.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND OUTCOMES FOR THE REGION

To provide training opportunities and employment outcomes for the local community, there needs to be a large scale employer supplying the opportunities suited to the local community’s employment preferences and commercial aspirations. There also needs to be a viable commercial base to cover the training and development costs.

The report titled ‘A Comprehensive Analysis of Options for Economic Development in the Shire of Upper Gascoyne’ by Dr Fiona Haslan et al. identified that “There is no business service sector supporting business development currently located in the Upper Gascoyne. These services are provided externally by the Gascoyne Development Commission and other private business providers. Generally, the area has low skills base and commensurate low incomes. A survey conducted in the Gascoyne region in 1999 showed that 80% of the respondents either “generally agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the Gascoyne region needed new development to provide more jobs and a wider range of job opportunities.
(Patterson Market Research, Focused Management, & Sharley, 1999, p. 15). A similar number of survey respondents considered there to be too few career opportunities for people with higher education in the region. It is therefore prescient to investigate industry diversification opportunities in the area that have the potential to complement or exist alongside the pastoral industry that will also meet the identified needs of this earlier research.” (Date unknown, p.6).

EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Aside from the staff working in community administration and the store, the majority of community residents are totally reliant on the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) or other income support. With the current phasing out of CDEP, there is a need for employment opportunities to be generated in remote areas. Also, the need for community members to seek gainful employment will result in a valuable source of labour for the facility.

Training is an important step in the development of opportunities for the Indigenous people. However, without sustainable full-time positions created for trainees to go in to, little is actually achieved by the training other than having highly skilled yet unemployed workers. Therefore, the overall focus for the tourism development needs to be the creation of a project, which achieves financial stability that can support training and employment in the longer term.

EMPLOYMENT

With an annual wages budget of $460,000 by year four for the restaurant and accommodation operations combined, it is estimated that up to twelve full time equivalent (FTE) staff or four FTE and sixteen seasonal casuals/ labour pool contractors) will be directly employed at the resort, with training opportunities for Indigenous staff in the areas of cultural advisory, management, administration, operations, hospitality and tour guiding. There would also be a need for cultural advisory positions, mentors and directors on the Board.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The revitalisation plan identified the following training sought by community members:

- Certificate 1 in Hospitality
- Certificate 1,11,111,1V in Business
- Certificate 1V in Business Management
- Certificate 111 in Financial Services

These qualifications would all be beneficial in making community residents work ready and able to contribute to the effective running of the proposed new tourism facility.
Gascoyne Regional TAFE Centre (Carnarvon) is the logical stakeholder in determining the most appropriate access to formal training. However, the provision of skills is not always successful with just external formal training alone. Ideally, training should be via four key sources:

- Interaction with existing tour operators (by subsidising trainee wages, so the trainees gain work experience at no cost to the operators in return for skills transference and on-the-job experience. This process worked well on the Tiwi Islands where over a 2-3 year period, trainees went from “silent” observers to “full time unassisted guides”. A similar experience has occurred with CALM at Geikie Gorge and other locations in Western Australia.
- Carrying out on the job tasks under the guidance of a mentor
- Secondment to other Indigenous owned operations to learn other aspects of indigenous tourism, for example Karijini, or encouraging operators to take on roles as part time mentors coming out to Mount Augustus to assist with training initiatives.
- Create a work based certificate training program in conjunction with the local TAFE, such as the Certificate 2 in Tourism Operations, Tourism Administration or Cultural Guiding.

In addition, a dedicated training support person/mentor needs to be allocated to the program to ensure its success. Programs would need to work in with the school to provide a ready supply of trainees, and once work ready and trained; the graduates could be part of the core operational team. It is envisaged that transportation would be provided to and from the Burringurrah Community for staff. The community advised onsite accommodation should be provided for community staff, with encouragement for a minimum of two trainees to start simultaneously, to provide support for each other.

**FUNDING**

Funding for training will initially need to be sourced from appropriate State and Federal bodies for both the trainees and for mentoring. In the longer term, the facility would generate sufficient income to cover its own training programs without reliance on government support. DEEWR could be approached in the first instance to provide a dedicated mentor through its new Indigenous Employment Program.

**SMALL BUSINESS INCUBATION**

In addition to employment and training, a facility such as the proposed could also work with government agencies to provide small business incubation services to enable the development and growth of community owned small businesses. Opportunities for local community members to set up small businesses could include:

- Bush food harvesting/ bush tucker garden
- Native nursery, Market Garden and landscaping supplies
- Canoe hire at Cattle Pool
- Laundry
- Guided Walks
- Development of self guided walks (Ipod Tours with interpretive signage)
- Art and artefacts creation and retail
- Overland tours/ Tag-a-long
- Sublease of restaurant
- Adventure tours (Quad Bike, Horse Riding, Rock Climbing, Abseiling, Muster ing)
- Wildflower drying and retail
- Mechanical workshop/ tyres
- An evening with the elders - traditional food and storytelling under the stars
- Sunset and astrology tours (with dinner)
- Community stay
- SWAG Camps Hosts (staying on the rock overnight)
- Transportation for fly in guests (including private tours and guided walks)
- Construction team – the erection of the decking platforms can be a great training opportunity for unskilled workers interested in working in the construction industry to work under a qualified builder.

Occasionally, community members provide ad-hoc services as Indigenous tour guides around Mount Augustus, though this does not currently provide any regular work.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

A site visit out to Burringurrah Community was conducted in early November to engage with the community and further explore their tourism aspirations and interest in owning part of the proposed tourism project. They were provided with a full explanation of the goals and direction of this study and expressed their unanimous agreement for a desire to be involved in this project in an ownership capacity. They advised they were supportive overall of the project and would like to see the custodians consulted on the proposed development layout to ensure that it does not encroach on any significant sites.

The visit also identified the local community aspirations and key individuals who desire to be involved in the project planning and delivery. It was also used as a vehicle to identify the priorities for the community, and uncover any concerns or suggestions they have for the development of the proposal. Minutes from the meeting are provided in the attachments.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AND VISITOR SERVICING

There is currently no full time ranger presence at the Mount Augustus National Park, and many visitors are receiving insufficient information currently about the safety aspects of climbing the rock. There are reportedly a number of complaints about the current quality of
accommodation and restaurant facilities, as well as the lack of available information disseminated to visitors to Mount Augustus.

There is currently no camping allowed within the Mount Augustus National Park, and entry is currently free. The fee policy is currently under review although DEC advised entry fees will not be charged until visitor servicing was considered adequate.

The existing attraction, together with the proposed facility and the nearby Indigenous community, could provide a strong base for further development of a range of tourist products, including accommodation, tours, cultural interaction, wildflowers, wildlife, rock art tours, and even astronomical observation of the night sky.

The Mount Augustus & Gascoyne Outback Development Taskforce Report identified that:

“The development of new tourism accommodation at Mount Augustus is supported and regarded as essential as Mount Augustus is the focal point for inland tourism development in the region.

A self drive trail extension (Pathway) linking Mount Augustus and the Karijini National Parks will facilitate visitation to the inland Gascoyne.

Fly-in visitor opportunities should be explored.

Geotourism, Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural tourism can be developed. Indigenous participation in these experiences is essential.

Visitor Centers and a broad range of ‘tourism’ operators require enhanced information/training to promote the area and safety requirements for remote travel.

The Taskforce supports the need for a road route selection study to be undertaken between Mount Augustus and Karijini National Parks.”

Mining and gas is booming in the Upper Gascoyne region at present and this brings with it many opportunities to provide work ready labour, fuel, transportation, mechanical services and food supplies to these companies. There is also an opportunity to provide accommodation for visiting family and friends coming out to see mine-workers on their rest breaks. Austal Mining is commencing operations approximately 100 kilometres from Mt Augustus station, and it is expected that they will be utilising the station’s Airstrip and other facilities.

**CONSTRAINTS TO DEVELOPMENT**

**REMOTE LOCATION**

It is well established that developments in remote areas experience higher than usual costs in development and operations. Some costs particularly contract labour, staffing, equipment hire and services provision can be reduced by ensure adequate participation
from the community and Mount Augustus station. Mount Augustus station has a trencher, grader and bobcat, which could be hired by the new facility. Burringurrah community also has a Backhoe and a Tipper. The station has some infrastructure from the existing tourism accommodation, which they would look to sell to the new facility. This could be relocated and utilised for inexpensive staff accommodation. Access to support networks for Indigenous businesses including subsidised mentor support, funded tourism marketing, inexpensive loan finance and training subsidies can further reduce costs. In addition to this, organisations such as Indigenous Community Volunteers may be able to assist with the provision of skilled tradespeople such as builders to supervise community teams to work on building projects for the new facility.

**FREIGHT**

There are two freight options currently; One provider frights goods in from Meekatharra, which although offering less purchase choices will bring goods to the facility. The other provider from Carnarvon will only bring large loads to facility and small loads are dropped off at Cobra station. The limited options add a significant cost and negatively impacts on freshness of goods delivered.

**LABOUR**

Attraction and retention of good staff is a major issue for any remote or regional employer. The up skill and active workforce participation of the Burringurrah community residents will play an extremely important role in the long term success and sustainability of the tourism venture.

**MARKET POTENTIAL**

**VISITORS TO MOUNT AUGUSTUS**

Currently the Department of Environment and Conservation estimates there are between 6,000 and 7,000 visitors per year, though it is expected this would grow following the development of adequate facilities and tourism infrastructure and better marketing of the areas other attractions.

In summary the current market for the Upper Gascoyne is predominantly road-based Australians within the 45 year plus age demographic. Generally, the visitors have generous time availability and are both dedicated and general nature-based tourist categories.

An opportunity exists to increase the visitation and duration of stay, particularly of international and interstate visitors, through a focus on awareness of the attraction and putting it on the must-do list of travellers to Australia. Secondary marketing focus can generate awareness of the unique world-class accommodation and the wealth of other
exciting nature based and cultural experiences complimenting the rock (once developed). Outside the April to October tourism season, the climate inhibits the attractiveness of the destination. Extreme heat and uncertain road conditions, which are affected by wet season rains and cyclones will likely limit this to highly a seasonal destination.

The Mount Augustus & Gascoyne Outback Development Taskforce Report 2009 identified that “Geotourism promotes areas of scientific, geological, archaeological and cultural significance and is growing in popularity among enthusiasts. The Kennedy Range and Mount Augustus National Parks are striking natural features in an area with diverse mineral deposits. Intrastate lapidary hobbyists are known to visit particular areas where they camp and fossick on pastoral leases. There are opportunities to promote the unique gems found here to a broader market.”

VISITORS TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REGION

ANNUAL AVERAGE OVERNIGHT VISITORS 2002-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shire of Upper Gascoyne LGA</th>
<th>Domestic</th>
<th>International</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All purpose visitors</td>
<td>11,800</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>13,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All purpose nights</td>
<td>44,700</td>
<td>3,800</td>
<td>48,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday and leisure visitors</td>
<td>5,200</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday and leisure nights</td>
<td>15,200</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>17,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: Small sample size – please use this estimate with caution. Source: Tourism WA

VISITORS TO THE GASCOYNE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION AREA

Please note: data below relates to multi response questions. Totals may not add up to 100%.

MAIN PURPOSE OF VISIT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domestic Visitors</th>
<th>Annual Average Visitors 06/07/08</th>
<th>YE Dec 06/07/08 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holiday / Leisure</td>
<td>139,300</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>23,300</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting friends and relatives</td>
<td>11,700*</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15,700*</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| International Visitors                     |                                  |                   |
| Holiday / Pleasure                         | 50,200                          | 95%               |
| Business                                   | 1,400*                          | 3%                |
| Visiting friends and relatives             | 900*                            | 2%                |
| Other                                      | 1,000*                          | 2%                |

* Small Sample Size: Caution should be used when reporting these estimates due to lower levels of reliability. Source: Gascoyne Regional Development Commission Area Overnight Visitor Fact Sheet Years ending December 2006/07/08, Tourism Western Australia.
## TOP THREE VISITOR ACCOMMODATION

### Domestic Visitors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>Annual Average Visitors 06/07/08</th>
<th>YE Dec 06/07/08 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caravan park / camping ground</td>
<td>67,300</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel, resort, motel or motor inn</td>
<td>49,000</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caravan / camping near road</td>
<td>30,300</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### International Visitors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>Annual Average Visitors 06/07/08</th>
<th>YE Dec 06/07/08 %</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caravan</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backpacker / hostel</td>
<td>16,600</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel, resort, motel, motor inn</td>
<td>16,100</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gascoyne Regional Development Commission Area Overnight Visitor Fact Sheet Years ending December 2006/07/08, Tourism Western Australia.

## GENDER

### Domestic Visitors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Annual Average Visitors 06/07/08</th>
<th>YE Dec 06/07/08 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>112,300</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>76,300</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>188,700</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### International Visitors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Annual Average Visitors 06/07/08</th>
<th>YE Dec 06/07/08 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27,200</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25,700</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52,900</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gascoyne Regional Development Commission Area Overnight Visitor Fact Sheet Years ending December 2006/07/08, Tourism Western Australia.

## AGE

### Domestic Visitors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Annual Average Visitors 06/07/08</th>
<th>YE Dec 06/07/08 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 - 24 years</td>
<td>20,700*</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-44 years</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64 years</td>
<td>74,300</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+ years</td>
<td>33,300</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>188,700</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### International Visitors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Annual Average Visitors 06/07/08</th>
<th>YE Dec 06/07/08 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 - 24 years</td>
<td>10,800</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-44 years</td>
<td>23,700</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64 years</td>
<td>14,600</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+ years</td>
<td>3,900</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52,900</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Small Sample Size: Caution should be used due to lower levels of reliability

Source: Gascoyne Regional Development Commission Area Overnight Visitor Fact Sheet Years ending December 2006/07/08, Tourism Western Australia.
## TRAVEL PARTY

### Domestic Visitors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Travel Party</th>
<th>Annual Average Visitors 06/07/08</th>
<th>YE Dec 06/07/08 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult couple (in a relationship sense)</td>
<td>68,000</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends / relatives</td>
<td>44,300</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family group – parents and children</td>
<td>43,300</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelling alone</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12,000*</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>188,700</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### International Visitors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Travel Party</th>
<th>Annual Average Visitors 06/07/08</th>
<th>YE Dec 06/07/08 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unaccompanied traveller</td>
<td>25,900</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult couple</td>
<td>19,100</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends / relatives</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family group – parents and children</td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>300*</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52,900</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gascoyne Regional Development Commission Area Overnight Visitor Fact Sheet
Years ending December 2006/07/08, Tourism Western Australia.

## STATE OF ORIGIN OF VISITORS TO AUSTRALIA’S GOLDEN OUTBACK

Please note: Base for % is from total estimated Interstate visitor numbers to AGO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Annual Average Visitors 06/07/08</th>
<th>YE Dec 06/07/08 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>37,700</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>29,000</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>26,300</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>15,700</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other States / Territories</td>
<td>5,700</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gascoyne Regional Development Commission Area Overnight Visitor Fact Sheet
Years ending December 2006/07/08, Tourism Western Australia.

## TOP FIVE INTERNATIONAL MARKETS TO AGO - VISITOR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Annual Average Visitors 06/07/08</th>
<th>YE Dec 06/07/08 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>9,400</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>7,100</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note: May not add up to 100% due to visitation from multiple countries.
Base for % is from total estimated International visitor numbers to AGO
Source: Gascoyne Regional Development Commission Area Overnight Visitor Fact Sheet
Years ending December 2006/07/08, Tourism Western Australia.
### VISITORS TO AUSTRALIA’S GOLDEN OUTBACK TOURISM REGION

#### CARAVAN PARKS IN AUSTRALIA’S GOLDEN OUTBACK (TR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jul-08</th>
<th>Aug-08</th>
<th>Sep-08</th>
<th>Oct-08</th>
<th>Nov-08</th>
<th>Dec-08</th>
<th>Jan-09</th>
<th>Feb-09</th>
<th>Mar-09</th>
<th>Apr-09</th>
<th>May-09</th>
<th>Jun-09</th>
<th>Total/ Av</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupancy</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takings av per site night occupied</td>
<td>$27</td>
<td>$28</td>
<td>$27</td>
<td>$27</td>
<td>$26</td>
<td>$29</td>
<td>$29</td>
<td>$27</td>
<td>$24</td>
<td>$21</td>
<td>$20</td>
<td>$26</td>
<td>$26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site nights occupied</td>
<td>31,900</td>
<td>30,700</td>
<td>33,000</td>
<td>31,800</td>
<td>26,900</td>
<td>26,900</td>
<td>30,400</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>27,700</td>
<td>32,900</td>
<td>31,000</td>
<td>27,000</td>
<td>355,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### HOTELS, MOTELS AND SERVICED APARTMENTS WITH 5 OR MORE ROOMS IN AUSTRALIA’S GOLDEN OUTBACK (TR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jul-08</th>
<th>Aug-08</th>
<th>Sep-08</th>
<th>Oct-08</th>
<th>Nov-08</th>
<th>Dec-08</th>
<th>Jan-09</th>
<th>Feb-09</th>
<th>Mar-09</th>
<th>Apr-09</th>
<th>May-09</th>
<th>Jun-09</th>
<th>Total/ Av</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Room nights occupied</td>
<td>43,321</td>
<td>44,012</td>
<td>44,000</td>
<td>41,042</td>
<td>33,778</td>
<td>29,174</td>
<td>29,690</td>
<td>30,474</td>
<td>35,017</td>
<td>32,048</td>
<td>36,425</td>
<td>30,429</td>
<td>429,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room occupancy rate %</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest arrivals</td>
<td>26,587</td>
<td>27,397</td>
<td>33,088</td>
<td>32,508</td>
<td>26,008</td>
<td>22,502</td>
<td>23,969</td>
<td>19,405</td>
<td>22,762</td>
<td>23,437</td>
<td>23,599</td>
<td>19,624</td>
<td>300,886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest nights occupied</td>
<td>57,418</td>
<td>60,986</td>
<td>64,014</td>
<td>60,893</td>
<td>48,361</td>
<td>44,568</td>
<td>50,240</td>
<td>41,463</td>
<td>46,732</td>
<td>48,199</td>
<td>50,576</td>
<td>39,539</td>
<td>612,989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed occupancy rate</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average length of stay</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average takings per room night occupied</td>
<td>$113</td>
<td>$114</td>
<td>$109</td>
<td>$117</td>
<td>$112</td>
<td>$109</td>
<td>$112</td>
<td>$111</td>
<td>$108</td>
<td>$109</td>
<td>$106</td>
<td>$102</td>
<td>$110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average takings per room night available</td>
<td>$72</td>
<td>$73</td>
<td>$72</td>
<td>$71</td>
<td>$58</td>
<td>$47</td>
<td>$49</td>
<td>$55</td>
<td>$55</td>
<td>$53</td>
<td>$57</td>
<td>$47</td>
<td>$59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics
CARAVAN PARKS IN AUSTRALIA’S GOLDEN OUTBACK TOURISM REGION

June Quarter 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establishments</th>
<th>23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-site vans</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other powered sites</td>
<td>1,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpowered sites</td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabins, flats, units and villas</td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total capacity</td>
<td>2,041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons employed</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sites occupied by long-term guests</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sites permanently reserved</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

TARGET MARKETS

HIGH YIELD TOURISTS

High-yield tourists demand safe, relaxed experiences with quality facilities to support the visitor experience (food and beverage, touring activities). As for many successful eco-tourism destinations, the provision of quality accommodation is a necessity. Without local accommodation there is often no safe access due to the remoteness and harsh environment.

Compounding its remoteness, Mount Augustus has a lack of quality accommodation and services within reasonable travelling distance. The travel time to and from the nearest major town is over four hours. The lack of quality on site accommodation results in unfulfilled experiences for travellers and lost opportunity for the stakeholders. It relegates the attraction to day-visiting status, which limits opportunity to attract high yield tourists.

Travel time is an issue for a significant proportion of high yield tourists. The availability of air services to Mount Augustus with transfers to the proposed tourism accommodation and tours out to the rock needs to be encouraged.

Examples of successful high-yielding eco-tourism accommodation facilities based around natural attractions in Australia include El Questro, Daintree Eco Lodge, Longitude 31°, Faraway Bay, Seven Spirit Wilderness Lodge and Kooljaman at Cape Leveque.

Additional direct benefits and income streams resulting from the provision of quality accommodation is likely to be food, beverage, Indigenous art and souvenir sales.
An indirect effect is business incubation, especially for the Indigenous community members, by way of assistance in starting up businesses offering tours, cultural experiences, art and craft and transport for example. Employment opportunities would be related to guest services, provision of food, tour guiding and repairs and maintenance.

The environmental and infrastructure constraints dictate that any accommodation facility constructed is small scale and low impact. The occupancy and yield at similar developments is higher than the average for tourist accommodation in Australia.

**FAMILY AND BUDGET TRAVELLERS**

Family and budget travellers are generally less destination driven than high yield tourists, however, their duration of stay is often the longest of all tourists. This market segment includes seniors who are often very cost conscious. Caravanners and campers make up a large proportion of the segment.

Family and Budget travellers may be encouraged to stay in accommodation at or near the attraction if it enables them to enjoy the views, experience, wildflowers and unique location for longer, is presentable, affordable and offers clean facilities. They will purchase food and beverage and other products if it is perceived to be value for money.

**BUSINESS TRAVEL**

The Burringurrah Five Year Plan identified the following groups as business travellers to the region:

- Health Department
- Education Department
- Police
- ICC
- Shire of Upper Gascoyne
- Horizon Power
- TAFE
- Job Network Agencies
- Department of Sport and Recreation
- Ministry of Justice
- Aboriginal Lands Trust
- Department of Environment and Conservation
- Department of Child Protection
GETTING THE MIX RIGHT

There are some industry operators who assert that budget and high yield travellers cannot be accommodated in one facility. This is clearly not the case as is proven by other highly successful remote tourism facilities such as El Questro and Kooljaman at Cape Leveque. Both of these examples have clear separation between their bedded accommodation precincts and their campgrounds, though are able to maximise revenue and exposure by targeting both market segments.

Many caravanners will return to a facility and treat themselves to bedded accommodation, and many of them will dine in the restaurant and purchase souvenirs as long as value for money is demonstrated. Due to the relatively low visitation currently, it is recommended that both high yield and budget travellers should be targeted and facilities appropriate to each segment be provided, though split into distinct zones.

AUSTRALIAN TOURISM INDUSTRY - INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

IBIS World provides the following analysis in its October 2009 release of its Industry Report ‘Tourism in Australia’:

RECENT INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE

IBISWorld estimates that the tourism industry grew by 0.3% over the five years to 2009-10. This marginal growth is the result of unfavourable exchange rates, high fuel prices and interest rates creating a challenging operating environment. A lack of new industry vision, leadership and new investment have also impeded this industry's revenue over the performance period. Slower economic growth, associated with the global financial crisis, is leading to a shortening of the length of stay away and trip expenditure by travellers. This has led to significant discounting of tariffs and fares. A marginal increase in international visitors is expected through these five years, relating to the significant devaluation of the Australian dollar against many currencies.

HISTORICAL PERFORMANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Revenue AUD million</th>
<th>Growth %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>80,756.0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>77,903.0</td>
<td>-3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>77,034.0</td>
<td>-1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>79,426.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>79,267.0</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REVENUE GROWTH
Revenue (constant prices)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Revenue $ million</th>
<th>Growth %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>80,998.00</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>82,456.00</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>83,528.00</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>84,614.00</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>85,799.00</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>87,086.00</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MARKET SIZE

The Tourism industry operates in a globally competitive market and is currently experiencing tight conditions as the global recession lingers. However, operators that concentrate on factors in their direct control such as new product investment, product positioning, pricing and making use of internet travel websites for client bookings and information, will experience a performance turnaround in the medium-term.

For 2009-10, IBISWorld forecasts that domestic tourism nights will decline by 2.8% to 262.4 million, while international arrivals will decline by 1.2% to 5.6 million due in large part to the global financial crisis.

Domestic tourism accounts for 75% of total industry revenue. While tourism trips will be down, expenditure will fall to a greater extent due to increasing deep discounting by operators to maintain cash flow. The recent global scare associated with Swine Flu is not having any significant effect on global travel to and from Australia as yet.

IBISWorld estimates that the Australian Tourism industry will generate $79.2 billion in revenue during 2009-10, which represents real growth of 1.1% (constant 2010 prices). However, the industry continues to lose its competitive edge, focus and over share of the international travellers market. Both domestic tourism and international arrivals may display some growth as the global economic downturn gradually recedes, but the domestic tourism market will still remain in limbo.

A significant portion of industry revenue will come from the air and water transport industries (16.3%), accommodation industries (12.6%) and the Cafes, Restaurants and Food Outlets industry (13.0%). Travel agencies will also contribute 3.1% to overall tourism revenue and the Motor Vehicle Hire industry will contribute 1.9%. Industries that are not entirely tourism-specific also benefit from travellers' expenditure including; retail, food and beverage manufacturing, cultural and entertainment industries, and road and rail transport operators.
For 2009-10, the industry is expected to comprise about 55,325 enterprises, which represents a fall of 0.7% compared with 2008-09, due to continuing industry consolidation. These enterprises are expected to operate at 61,412 establishments or locations around Australia, which represents a fall of 1.0% on the previous year.

The industry is expected to employ 480,986 people in 2009-10 with much of this number representing casual employees. Wages are expected to reach about $20.3 billion as the industry recovers gradually from the downturn and becomes stronger as the year progresses.

**LIFE CYCLE**

The life cycle stage is reported by IBIS World to be in a growth cycle, this is due to continuing growth in domestic day trips. Domestic visitor nights will, however, remain in a low growth pattern. Continuing growth in international visitor arrivals, but with a growing emphasis on China, Korea, India and other nearby countries as key growth markets.

IBISWorld contends that industry overall is still in a long term growth phase, despite slow or declining growth recently, due largely to special circumstances only, particularly increased geopolitical tension, terrorist attacks and fears associated with the outbreak of SARS, and more recently Swine Flu.

Over the period from fiscal 2010 to 2015, the average annual growth in domestic tourism visitor nights is forecast by IBISWorld at 1.5% per annum, (well below the population growth rate, to reach 283.0 million. The growth is expected to be slower in the earlier part of the forecast period despite the return of high fuel prices, due to recovery from the economic slowdown to 2009-10, but then quickly return to its sluggish growth path to 2015. However, higher real growth in average overnight and day trip expenditure is expected. This will result from increasing airline travel, away from other travel modes, and accommodation costs due to increasing product depth at a variety of price points and from increasing demand.

Also, inbound visitors to grow at an average annual rate over the same period to 7.24 million by 2015, although departures by Australians will still outnumber arrivals, at about 8.5 million, at that time.

**KEY SUCCESS FACTORS**

The key success factors in the Tourism industry are:

- **Ability to quickly adopt new technology:** Ensures cost efficiencies and better linking to guests through internet linked information, bookings, reservations and payment systems.
- **Proximity to key markets:** Ensuring that the tourism product is linked to key markets and their needs will lead to many satisfied guests and repeat visits.
• **Access to multiskilled and flexible workforce:** For most operators there is a necessity to have access to skilled workers - many employed on a casual and permanent part-time basis - to ensure quality service can be provided to guest at peak times. This will maximise revenue and satisfaction levels.

• **Receiving the benefit of word of mouth recommendations:** Satisfied guests ensures many good word of mouth recommendations and repeat visits, therefore future revenue growth and bookings.

Source: IBIS World ‘Tourism Industry Report’

This presents many challenges for Mount Augustus, which does not have good proximity to key markets, nor does it have access to a multiskilled workforce.

Significant investment by all stakeholders in improving access (air and road) as well as significant training and work ready preparation for the local Burringurrah community will significantly underpin potential for success. Word of mouth recommendations are becoming ever important, especially with the emergence of user generated content on internet sites such as [www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com). The existing poor reputation of the existing accommodation facilities at Mount Augustus will necessitate some effort being invested to make the market place aware of the new offerings.

**COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT**

There is very little competition within a three to four hour drive of Mount Augustus. Once the Mount Augustus Outback Resort closes down, there will be only Cobra Station offering any significant competition.

**MOUNT AUGUSTUS OUTBACK RESORT**

• Mount Augustus Station
• Nearest facility to Mount Augustus (less than 5km) expected to close when new facility opens.
• Dongas - $77 twin share
• Family, 2 brm, self contained, $140
• Camping Powered $13 Adult, $5 child Under 7 free
• Camping Unpowered $11 Adult $4 child Under 7 free

**COBRA STATION**

• Cobra-Mount Augustus Rd, Cobra Station - 37km from Mount Augustus
• En-suite double rooms (air-conditioned): $145 per night
• 10 x Single station rooms (air-conditioned): $95 per night
• Caravan and camping area.
• Wilderness views, historic home-stay (national trust building). The Inn also has a swimming pool.

**BIDGEMIA**

• Ten kilometres east of Gascoyne Junction, over 200km from Mount Augustus
• Bidgemia offers a range of accommodation including up-market homestead style facilities and basic backpacker style shearer’s quarters.
• Prices not published

**GASCOYNE JUNCTION**

There is a hotel offering donga style accommodation and a Shire owned leased out caravan park operating at Gascoyne Junction. Gascoyne Junction is a three to four hour drive from Mount Augustus.

**DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT**

Due to the location’s remoteness from its source market, high construction and operating costs, the development and leasehold tenure, the business opportunity may be considered high risk. Development at Mount Augustus is a long-term investment and requires that the development be amortised over a relatively long lease term.

However, the opportunity to provide ongoing economic sustainability, employment and training and business incubation for the local community suggests that a contribution from Government toward establishing the infrastructure would be a worthwhile offset.

The proposed product mix is designed to mitigate investment risk. It provides sufficient capacity to accommodate the greater number of visitors without the high level investment in infrastructure that becomes a financial burden in the low season. The product mix can be altered to improve the capacity of high yield accommodation as the visitor numbers increase.

"Sustainable Development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs." (Brundtland Report, Oxford University Press, 1987)

To be identified as an international eco-tourism destination, Mount Augustus will need to provide more than a short visit experience. It is essential to develop ancillary attractions and access prior to investing too heavily in accommodation infrastructure.
A number of small, high yield eco-tourism accommodation facilities that are based around unique Australian natural attractions have proved to be very successful in Australia. Examples are Longitude 131, Daintree Eco Lodge, Seven Spirit Bay Wilderness Lodge, Faraway Bay, El Questro Homestead and Kooljaman at Cape Leveque (see case study in appendix). The concept is to create an iconic, international-ready, first-class accommodation facility looking out at Mount Augustus. Each of the proposed accommodation facilities is designed to complement the attraction and is targeted to a particular market segment.

Due to the extremely remote location and high cost of freight and building, eco-tents and prefabricated accommodation and related infrastructure is expected to provide for the best return on investment. The warm climate during the tourist season provides an opportunity to accommodate guests in tented accommodation similar to that at Karijini, Eco Beach and Kooljaman. Advantages to this style of accommodation includes:

- Minimal negative impacts on the land
- Quick to erect (once platforms and bathrooms in place)
- Lower cost of initial development
- Blends with the natural environment
- Easy to expand in line with occupancy growth
- Opportunities for community involvement in the project set up
- High appeal for tourists as it engenders sense of adventure

To provide adequate facilities for visitors to the resort, the proposal also includes a dining/bar facility, reception and kiosk in a central area within the facility. A new manager’s residence is incorporated in the resort, with staff accommodation from the existing resort.

**ACCOMMODATION INFRASTRUCTURE**

**SAFARI TENTS**

The tents would be located in a staggered line so as to afford exclusive views for occupants. The eco-tents would have a full opening front to maximise the view. The tents would be spaced at appropriate intervals to provide acoustic and visual separation.

The design is to be open-plan with king single size beds or twin singles and a set of bunks to cater for individuals travelling together, families and couples. An en-suite bathroom with flushing toilet and shower is to be included. A small gas-electric refrigerator would maintain guest’s food and beverage. The emphasis will be on quality and uniqueness with comfortable quality furniture and fittings, including Indigenous artwork.

The tents can be insulated with double skins if required. Shade structures and orientation can further serve to minimise heat extremes inside the tent. The tents are constructed from
durable, natural-looking materials to ensure longevity as well as high visual appeal. The tent design and external colours will be in harmony with the unique environment.

Tariffs for the eco-tents will be established to position the facility toward high-end travellers, maintain exclusivity and provide an excellent income stream. Similar tourist accommodation ranges from around $200 to $600 or more per night. Eco-tents will need to be serviced daily with cleaning and at the guest’s option and daily change of linen and towels.

Hampers and breakfast items will be delivered to the tents, on a daily basis (on request), for self-service by guests. The in-room guest services directory will detail services and facility information, provide cultural history, safety information and promote the region’s attractions.

The eco-tents will be located in the prime position facing Mt Augustus within easy walking distance of the restaurant. Investigations should be made into the possibility of realigning the road passing between the facility and the rock to avoid traffic passing in front of the tents if possible.

The safari tents are proven designs, which have been exposed to similar climates and high wind regions. They have performed well over considerable periods of time. The heavy-duty canvas sleeping pod is supplemented by a PVC flysheet and a shade net flyscreen. They are erected on a raised platform, which is constructed on-site onto the provided leg assemblies. The Serengeti style safari tent from Canvas and Tents is one option to be used as the premium accommodation. The tents provide a larger, more spacious accommodation experience that is more cost effective than competing styles, without compromising durability. The tents have been tried and tested in various remote locations, including SalSalis in Exmouth, Kooljaman at Cape Leveque and Paperbark Camp in Jervis Bay.
The tent has an internal space of 5.2m x 3.5m wide although the overall platform covers 10m x 6m to include an open sitting/ viewing area to the front and an enclosed ablution facility at the rear. The raised platform could be constructed at a height of 580mm allowing maximum clearance to avoid periods of flooding meanwhile avoiding the requirement for balustrading, which opens the accommodation up to the surrounding desert and view of Mount Augustus. The platform is to be constructed from 200mm steel tubing and secured into concrete footings. Eco style composite decking could be used on the platform for increased lifespan and result in a significant reduction in ongoing maintenance.

The ablution comes flat packed though once assembled is a complete waterproof self supporting module. The modules come with full plumbing and electrical fit out and all holes required for fitting are pre drilled. Externally the ablutions are concealed by the tent’s canvas. It is envisaged BCAC members could be contracted to construct the platforms, ablutions and erect the tents.

Fitout of the tent would include a king size bed or two singles and a set of bunks, reading lamps, small fridge, luggage storage unit and oscillating fans. The front deck will have table and chairs to accommodate four guests as well as built in day lounge. Dependent upon climatic conditions the tents may be dismantled and stored in the low season or remain erected all year round.

**CABINS**

The cabins consist of sleeping quarters with an ensuite and are targeted towards independent travellers (FIT) and group travellers, prepared to upgrade. They have a veranda with view to Mt Augustus. The area of the cabin is approximately 20m$^2$. Cabins occupants utilise the communal kitchen or the café.
**BUDGET CABINS**

The budget cabins are basic twin sleeping quarters of approximately 14m² per room interconnected in blocks of 4 rooms. They are designed to cater for budget travellers, tour groups and backpackers.

The budget cabins occupants will use communal ablutions and campers kitchen or café facilities. The budget cabins have a small veranda at the entry.

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**CAMPGROUND**

A significant proportion of visitors to the region currently stay in caravan and camp sites, to accommodate these people, it is envisaged that at least 35 powered caravan and camp sites will be required. An unspecified number of undesignated overflow sites can be allowed for on an informal basis to provide for extreme peak periods such as the July school holidays and Landor Race Day.

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**AMENITIES**

**CAFÉ/BAR/ALFRESCO DINING**

A large centrally located building will contain a kitchen with freezers, cool-room and dry storage area. A bar will be located within the enclosed area of the building with dining and bar seating in a covered alfresco area attached to the building. The alfresco area may be enclosed as required by flexible blinds. Cool Mist or other energy efficient cooling methods should be utilised if required. A fire pit could be located within the licensed area to provide a casual meeting spot for visitors to socialise and enjoy a pre-dinner drink.

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**ABLUTIONS**

An ablation block will have male, female and disabled showers, toilets and basins. The ablation block will be located within a short distance from the budget accommodation rooms and the café/bar. The ablation facilities may also be used as public toilets for day visitors to the area.

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**INFORMATION DESK/ TOUR DESK /ADMINISTRATION/KIOSK**

The office and shop area will be located in a single building near the park entry and be able to provide information on Mt Augustus and local tour options. It will also be the central reception area and incorporate the back office administration function. The kiosk will stock essential items, a limited range of dry goods and frozen meat and vegetables. It will also stock tourist goods such as ice creams, drinks, local arts, crafts and souvenirs.
CAMP KITCHEN

The camp kitchen will have several stations each containing gas cooking rings and a barbecue grill/flat plate. A stainless steel preparation bench at each station will have large inbuilt sinks for washing up of dishes and pots and pans. A covered area with bench style setting and tables will be provided as a dining area for users of the camp kitchen.

LAUNDRY

A guest laundry with coin-operated washing machines will be required with appropriate drying area. An opportunity exists for the local community to install and operate the guest laundry facility as a standalone enterprise, sharing the income with the facility operator.

FACILITY BUILDINGS

MANAGER’S RESIDENCE

A three bedroom re-locatable home is to be installed as the Manager’s residence. The management park home will be located within close proximity to the office to ensure a presence for after hour’s assistance if required.

STAFF ACCOMMODATION

A separate staff village will be established away from the main facility allowing privacy. The area will be landscaped with turf and trees with provision for communal entertainment areas (BBQ, fire pit, TV/ Lounge room). All accommodations will have patio/ shade structures placed in front to allow for outdoor living so staff don’t feel confined to their room. Staff accommodation will be sourced from the existing accommodation resort and will utilise 2 x 5 room relocatable units with ablutions (1 x 3 male/ female toilet/ shower unit from existing facility). Kitchen facilities and TV room for staff will be provided in a 2 room relocatable unit from existing facility

Assistant management will reside in 2brm relocatable unit with own ablutions and kitchenette/ lounge (from existing facility). Although the overall integrity of the infrastructure from the existing facility is good, it all will require some refurbishment and fit-out, the costs for this, including transportation and connections to services has been included in the budget.

COMMERCIAL LAUNDRY

There will be one commercial laundry facility for guest linen and towels and other washing associated with the facility operations. The commercial laundry may be a separate building
or attached to the maintenance shed. Lock-up storage for accommodation linen, cleaning materials etc. will be provided in the laundry.

**MAINTENANCE SHED/WORKSHOP**

A large building for the storage of vehicles undertaking of repairs and maintenance and spare parts storage will be required.

**FUEL OUTLET**

While there appears to be high demand for fuel from travellers it is preferable to locate the fuel remotely to the facility, as it is somewhat in conflict with the eco-tourism theme of the facility. It is proposed that either a card controlled self-service fuel outlet be installed at the airstrip and prepaid fuel card sold at the kiosk, alternatively fuel may be purchased from Burringurrah Community (50 kms away).

**OPERATIONS VEHICLES**

The facility will require two vehicles for maintenance, guest transfers, collecting supplies and emergencies. A Toyota troop carrier allows for greatest flexibility and durability for the conditions as well as a trayback vehicle for transport of large materials and rubbish (Landcruiser HZJ or Hilux).

Two 250cc quad bikes will be set up with large front and rear carrier trays for housekeeping and maintenance duties. A dual axel trailer will be used for maintenance, extra capacity for collecting supplies and emergency fire fighting.

**UTILITIES**

The distance from main services including electricity, scheme water and deep sewer means that the tourism facility needs to be self-sufficient in energy, water, sewerage and waste. Far from regarding the issue as a major problem it can be seen as an opportunity to seek out and establish alternative systems.

**POWER**

The facility will be required to generate its own power supply. With careful management energy use can be minimised thus lowering both cost and environmental impact.

A number of other eco-wilderness camps have successfully limited power usage, especially where operating with remote power systems. It is envisaged that the following power sources could be utilised:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Restrictions</th>
<th>Primary source</th>
<th>Secondary source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>No restrictions</td>
<td>Gas oven, gas hotplates, gas fryer</td>
<td>Hybrid power system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking (Self Catering) camp ground</td>
<td>Pay per use for campground to limit usage.</td>
<td>Gas BBQ, Gas Hotplates (camp kitchen)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking (Self Catering) accommodation</td>
<td>No provisions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>Low wattage only</td>
<td>Hybrid power system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Heating</td>
<td>Request showers/ water use kept to minimum</td>
<td>Solar</td>
<td>Gas - Instantaneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heating</td>
<td>Circuit breakers</td>
<td>Wood campfire in common area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Circuit breakers</td>
<td>Hybrid power system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooling</td>
<td>Circuit breakers</td>
<td>Mist Spray in Bar/ Restaurant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refrigeration</td>
<td>Circuit breakers</td>
<td>Hybrid Power system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Electrical Appliances</td>
<td>Circuit breakers</td>
<td>Gas or Hybrid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles</td>
<td>Circuit breakers</td>
<td>Diesel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Pump</td>
<td>Restricted use / allocation (contracted)</td>
<td>Solar bore</td>
<td>Hybrid power system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers and staff accommodation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gas and Hybrid power system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is proposed to utilize a hybrid power system with the mix of diesel/ solar ratio dependent on the funding available. The current facility and Mt Augustus station share a 60KVA generator with a 40KVA backup. For the purposes of this feasibility we have based the system on the following power requirements:

- All appliances are selected on a six star energy rating as outlined on [http://www.energyrating.gov.au/](http://www.energyrating.gov.au/)
- The design of the facility focuses on energy efficient construction.
- A capacity with surplus to supply power during estimated peak load
- A capacity to supply power with minimal diesel usage throughout non peak periods
- A capacity to provide ongoing power for up to 2 days if there is a breakdown
- A capacity to increase the solar component as funding or investment comes to hand
- A system with minimal maintenance requirements
- A system with reduced noise output
- Design and installation by a experienced service provider who can assess the system onsite and remotely to troubleshoot issues and ensure efficient operation
The system allowed for in the preliminary budget is the Outback Power Pack. Consisting of two modules, one containing the power conversion equipment and a 132 kWh, @ 50% discharge battery bank, the other containing a 50 KVA diesel generator. Both modules will be fitted with 6 kW of solar panels as well as a 6 kW ground mounted unit providing a total of 18 kW of solar generation.

The “heart” of the system is to consist of a 40Kw 3 phase inverter charger. This Australian manufactured unit will supply 40 kW of AC power continuously to the camp. The power will be drawn from the battery bank that will be charged from the solar panels. In times of low solar generation and or peak loads then the 50 KVA generator will be automatically started providing seamless power up to a total capacity of 90 KVA to run the facility.

From estimate load data it is expected that the system would run with minimal generator input in the off season. During the peak tourist season, higher diesel use would be required to meet the loads. If further funding or investment becomes available, the addition of extra ground mounted solar panels can easily be added into the system further reducing the diesel input.

The Outback Power Pack is manufactured and comprehensively tested in Kalgoorlie before being trucked to site. No digging or concreting apart from the trenching of power between the OPP and the facility. Total cost of approx $350,000 before rebates.


WATER

There are currently two bores shared between the station and the resort supplying ample water although this has been tested to be not appropriate for drinking. The Department of Agriculture have also recently sunk a bore approximately 2 kilometers from the proposed site and although significant in capacity, it has been shown to contain a level of salinity unsuitable for drinking (1100 – 1300ppm). Due to the salinity content of the local water drawn and consideration for the power load of the facility, this feasibility has mixes two options in which to provide potable water for guest consumption that meets health regulations.

a) Rain water harvesting – The region, on average, only receives around 200mm per year with several large downpours of upto 60mm in a shower. Catchment mechanisms can be utilized to fill tanks although this water will require UV treatment to meet health regulations – see http://www.public.health.wa.gov.au/cproot/1806/2/Country_Rainwater_Collection.pdf http://www.public.health.wa.gov.au/3/970/2/drinking_water_treatment.pm The roof surface area of the larger buildings which are common accessible gathering points including administration/ restaurant, camp kitchen and staff quarters have a significant
catchment potential (as a guide to collection capacity each 1mm of rain = 1 Litre (L) of water per square metre (m²) of roof area, then allow a 15% wastage factor). The independent units (10kL tank) could be set up with UV filtration for approx $3000 each (rebates are available).

b) Osmosis filtration of bore water - A desalination plant producing up to 10kl/day could be used to store in 25kl holding tank and then pressure system to provide fresh water to Abodes/rooms or delivered during services in 10lt storage containers into fridge. This unit will only be used when required and can be turned off to save power when demand is low or when tanks are filled through rainfall. Model 10TM Desalinator -10kl/day fresh water - with feed pump, float switch control, back washable prefilter, dosing pump all mounted onto marine grade aluminium powder coated skid then filtered through a UV sterilizer and held in 25kl tank - Total system installed for $40,000.

All requirements for water other than drinking will be pumped, using a Grundfos solar pumping unit ($11,000) from bore and stored in tank farm (50kl and 2 x 25kl total $20,000) and pressure system around facility.

A generator back up (1 KVA max portable generator) to allow for supplementary pumping if required, will be on standby, alternatively a larger solar array can be utilised to allow for increased daily flows. Including irrigation, fire fighting and backup supply in case of line/pump breakdown the tank farm would need a minimum capacity of 100kl (average person will use 150L per day if amenities are designed with water wise principles).

Quantum heat pumps could be used for the use of heating water throughout the facility as power usage to operate is extremely low. The systems can also be turned off for long periods of time when not required reducing power consumption. See http://www.energymatters.com.au/quantum-270l-compact-heat-pump-water-heater-p-1130.html

WASTE

SEWERAGE

There are no sewage treatment facilities in the Upper Gascoyne local government area. Composting toilets, waster water gardens and leach drains are the three main systems, which should be considered for handling sewerage.

Initial costing for this feasibility assessment is based on utilising septic systems and leach drains although if a more cost effective and environmentally sensitive alternative can be sourced during the planning stages, this should be implemented instead.
The Mount Augustus Station has a tip that is serviced by bulldozer a few times a year. The existing resort shares the cost for the bulldozer service, and it was suggested by the station owner to allow $2000 per year. Recycling policies would need to be implemented to minimise waste.

**OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE**

**MANAGEMENT AND OWNERSHIP**

Ideally, the sum of the parts of the tourism business enterprises should be retained and operated under the one entity. This operational model provides the best opportunity to develop each part to maximum potential, without internal competition, which could impact on returns. Each of the proposed accommodation components requires similar management and staffing skill sets and procedures but is targeted at different market sectors.

The potential returns to the owners, be they Shire, Indigenous or otherwise will be maximised by sharing in the financial returns from a successful operating entity. Successful tourist operations require specialist management and can benefit from the alliances and networks that large operators are able to provide. There are numerous examples in the tourism and mining industries where the security of sharing ownership or contracting out management rights to established industry partners enhances returns, employment and business incubation opportunities for the stakeholders.

**POTENTIAL OWNERS OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPERATING ENTITY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of funds</th>
<th>Benefits of involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industry Partner(s)</td>
<td>Industry expertise and operating experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private investment/loan funds</td>
<td>Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skills transference</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marketing synergies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burringurrah Community</td>
<td>Delivery of cultural tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBA Loan/ IBA Investments/</td>
<td>Local workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royalties for Regions/ICAS Loan</td>
<td>Community engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shire of Gascoyne</td>
<td>Access to funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal/Grant funds/Loan funds</td>
<td>Local knowledge and networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintain facility in the best interests of the local residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBA Investments</td>
<td>Support interests of local Indigenous community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment funds</td>
<td>Engagement with local Indigenous community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to maximise potential for the best possible outcomes from grant funding applications the following ownership model should be considered and discussed with a taxation specialist or accountant:

![Ownership Model Diagram]

**POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES**

The follow grant and rebate opportunities that relate to the proposed development are as follows:

**ROYALTIES FOR REGIONS**

**CATEGORY:** Regional Grants Scheme

**Funding Scope:** To assist infrastructure, services and community projects, including the provision of headworks, and to assist in the broad development of the community. This includes the establishment of services and programs that will support the development of resilient communities and contribute to regional areas being vibrant and interesting places in which to live.

**Application to this project:** Funding for accommodation infrastructure

**Funding amount:** $2 million

**Next round closes:** 10 February, 2010


**JOBS FUND**

**CATEGORY:** GET COMMUNITIES WORKING - ROUND TWO

**Funding Scope:** One-off grants to support the delivery of innovative projects to build community capacity, improve community strength and amenity and provide opportunities for disadvantaged job seekers. Applying organisations will need to be incorporated.
Application to this project: Funding for workers transport vehicle (troop carrier) and staff accommodation. Funding for training centre and business incubation infrastructure (tour desk, reception and back office).

Funding amount: $2 million

Next round closes: 11 December, 2009


REGIONAL AND LOCAL COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM: ROUND TWO –

CATEGORY: STRATEGIC PROJECTS

Funding Scope: To support local jobs and provide long-term benefits to communities by renewing and upgrading local infrastructure.

Application to this project: This could be channelled to cover the cost of the tourist centre as part of the main facilities building with the cost of common areas covered including exhibition area, tour desk, back office training facility, restaurant and toilets. Ablution facilities could provide much needed public toilets for visitors to the area. The nearest public toilet is currently 300 km away.

Funding amount: $1 million

Next round closes: 15 January, 2010


INDIGENOUS CAPITAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME - LOANS

CATEGORY: PROFESSIONAL SERVICES SUBSIDY AND LOAN FINANCE INTEREST REBATE

Funding Scope: Funding for professional services (legal and taxation)

Application to this project: Professional services for assistance with set up advice and contracts. Loan for operating entity equity

Funding amount: Loans (with interest rate subsidy) $20,000 to $500,000. Professional services subsidy $22,500

Next round closes: ongoing


HERITAGE PROJECTS

CATEGORY: JOBS FUND - COMMUNITY HERITAGE PLACES (LARGE PROJECTS) OF LOCAL, STATE OR NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Funding Scope: Regional development agencies, local governments. Community grants (large and small projects): Heritage places of local, state or national significance (including places with historic, Indigenous or natural heritage values). construction of infrastructure to
assist in the interpretation or presentation of a heritage place (eg. a visitors centre, interpretive signs or heritage landscaping works); development of walking trails; and projects that improve visitor experience and/or visitor safety at a heritage place.

**Application to this project:** Development of visitor centre and associate infrastructure (information desk, visitor information, cultural interpretive centre and cafe)

**Funding amount:** Up to $2 million

**Next round closes:** 11 December, 2009


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**TQUAL**

**CATEGORY:** CATEGORY 2 INTEGRATED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

**Funding Scope:** Local government agency (LGA) or not for profit: can apply to enhance the overall tourism appeal of a large area by encouraging inter-regional collaboration to achieve greater tourism benefits.

**Application to this project:** funding for accommodation infrastructure.

**Funding amount:** $100,000 to $500,000

**Next round closes:** Under review


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**REMOTE AREA POWER SUPPLY (RAPS) PROGRAM**

**CATEGORY:** FUNDING FOR THE REMOTE AREA POWER SUPPLY (RAPS)

**Funding Scope:** Funding is available for renewable energy systems that replace fossil fuel generation, or where fossil fuel generation would otherwise have been used.

**Funding amount:** Rebates of 50% of the capital cost of eligible equipment and services are available, including:

- Renewable energy generating equipment such as photovoltaic arrays and turbines
- Essential enabling equipment such as inverters, batteries and battery chargers
- Essential non-equipment expenditure such as design and installation.

**Next round closes:** Funding for the Remote Area Power Supply (RAPS) and the Renewable Energy Water Pumping (REWP) programs is nearly committed and these programs will soon close to new applications.

**Application to this project:** funding for solar component of hybrid power system


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**RENEWABLE ENERGY WATER PUMPING (REWP) PROGRAM**

**CATEGORY:** RENEWABLE ENERGY WATER PUMPING (REWP)
**Funding Scope:** The applicant must be a business, government agency or incorporated organisation that is registered for the GST, and the proposed renewable energy pump must serve a purpose that is essential to the operation of the applicant. The proposed renewable energy pump must replace an existing fossil fuel pump or must be used where a fossil fuel pump would otherwise have been used.

**Funding amount:** The rebate is calculated at 40% of the renewable energy component cost of an eligible pump minus $1,000.

**Next round closes:** Funding for the Remote Area Power Supply (RAPS) and the Renewable Energy Water Pumping (REWP) programs is nearly committed and these programs will soon close to new applications.

**Application to this project:** funding for water pumping system


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**IBA**

**CATEGORY:** BUSINESS ENTERPRISE LOANS AND MENTORING SUPPORT

**Funding Scope:** Through its Business Development Program, Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) assists eligible Indigenous Australians to establish, acquire and grow small to medium businesses, by providing business support services and business loans. To be eligible to participate in the Program you must be over 18 years of age and at least one applicant must be of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent. At least 50% of the ownership of your business must be by a person(s) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent.

**Funding amount:** Loans for any amount (dependant on proof of viability)

**Next round closes:** Ongoing

**Application to this project:** business consultancy services for writing up business plan and marketing planning. Low interest rate flexible structure loans for operational entity set up.


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**DEEWR IEP**

**CATEGORY:** INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (IEP)

**Funding Scope:** encourage and support employers to provide sustainable employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians; encourage and support Indigenous Australians to take up training and employment opportunities, stay in jobs and enhance their future employment prospects; assist Indigenous communities, industry bodies and groups of employers to develop Indigenous workforce and economic development strategies that support local and regional economic growth; or assist Indigenous Australians to develop sustainable businesses and economic opportunities in urban, regional and remote areas.

**Funding amount:** unspecified
Application to this project: recruitment of a business mentor to provide training and support to Indigenous trainees, small businesses and staff.

Next round closes: Ongoing


THE INDIGENOUS HERITAGE PROGRAM (IHP)

Funding Scope: supports the identification, conservation, and promotion (where appropriate) of Indigenous heritage. Development of cultural trail, cultural centre or identification of significant sites external to national park

Funding amount: maximum of $100,000 (GST exclusive)

Next round closes: 5 February 2010


CARE FOR OUR COUNTRY

CATEGORY: ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP, INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

Funding Scope: Caring for our Country is focused on achieving strategic results in six national priorities - biodiversity and natural icons, natural resource management in northern and remote Australia, and community skills, knowledge and engagement.

- large-scale projects in the order of $20 million over four years
- medium-scale projects of up to $3 million per annum (a value of $2-3 million would be expected for most medium-scale projects)
- small-scale projects of between $20,000 and $100,000 per annum.

Application to this project: Ranger program for illegal camping, cultural education and natural rehabilitation around Mt Augustus.

Next round closes: On going – program runs to 2013


OTHER

Supported tourism marketing initiatives through:

TOURISM AUSTRALIA AND IBA’S INDIGENOUS TOURISM CHAMPIONS

Participants must be nominated through State Tourism Organisation to receive mentoring support and funded trade show participation (current participants selected, though future openings are likely to join program) see:

http://www.etravelblackboard.com/showarticle.asp?id=99541&nav=82
TOURISM WA – PARTICIPATION IN FUNDED ACTIVITIES FOR MARKET READY BUSINESSES

Various programs are offered through Tourism WA for market ready businesses who are listed in their Indigenous Tourism Product Manual. See www.tourism.wa.gov.au//.../Talking%20Tourism%20-%20Issue%2060.pdf

Previous funding has included funding for signage, printing, websites, accreditation, attendance at trade shows etc.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The development proposal for the eco tourism facility includes a mix of four distinctly different accommodation products to cater for a diverse market demographic.

In the owner operator model, revenue is derived from three sources; accommodation, restaurant and bar, and kiosk sales. A variation to the business model is also provided in the financial summary whereby the facility management is outsourced with the owning entity receiving a management fee over the management rights period.

The primary objective of the proposal is to provide a sustainable business model that provides a fair rate of return on the project development whilst meeting the development objectives.

Both Capex and operating expenses have been determined through benchmarking then adjusted to reflect experience of managing and operating other remote development sites.

The financial projections provided in attachment 1 should be read in conjunction with this report.

The priority for the development of each of the key business entities requires analysis based upon:

- Return on investment
- Ability to help grow the total business operations
- Ability to satisfy visitor expectations and attract increased visitation, particularly from higher yielding tourists
- Scope to create employment, business and personal development opportunities for the local resident population

Eco-tourism developments are often well suited to staged development and provided that each of the various stages is financially viable, it is the lower risk development option. Tourism developments contain certain risks and on occasion the cost of servicing capital debt causes such businesses to fail. As such, the development proposed is based on providing sufficient capacity to service existing demand, whilst providing improved facilities by way of Safari Tents to start to grow the yield and visitation. Once these are performing
well, a new tier of high quality, high yield accommodation and additional capacity may be added in.

The quantity or rooms/sites and product mix proposed is reflective of the potential grant funding opportunities identified, if more or less funding was able to be achieved, the mix could be adjusted accordingly.

The product mix and proposed tariffs are:

- 10 x Deluxe Safari Tents priced at $210
- 15 x Air-conditioned cabins priced at $160
- 20 x Budget Rooms (share campground facilities)
- 35 x Powered Caravan or Camp Sites

Other infrastructure, facilities and amenities include:

- Restaurant and bar
- Office, Shop and Managers Residence
- Staff Accommodation
- Solar pump, desalination plant and water tanks
- Ablutions and Laundry
- Campers kitchen

The development schedule presented in attachment 1 presents estimated timeframes for the development as well as the estimated broad costing upon which the feasibility analysis has been based. The estimates will need verification and formal quotes from proposed suppliers once funding is determined.

The overall development has been estimated to cost $4.5 million (plus GST and contingencies). The distribution is presented in the chart below:
### Development Cost

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliminaries</td>
<td>$172,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General facilities</td>
<td>$1,840,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant &amp; equipment</td>
<td>$388,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safari Tent</td>
<td>$530,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabins</td>
<td>$900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget Rooms</td>
<td>$480,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powered Sites</td>
<td>$227,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,537,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The financial analysis is presented on the presumption that the facility is owned and operated by a single entity. This best demonstrates the viability of the project. Within the financials attached to this report profit and loss and cash flow projections are also provided for the combined owner-operator entity, owner entity (with operations under management) and the operating entity separately.

Projected revenues, expenses, EBITDA and cash flows is presented in the charts below for the combined owner/operator entity.
The EBITDA percent of net tangible assets is projected at 11 percent for the first full year of operations (year 3) rising to 14 percent by year 15. This does not take in CPI increases in pricing or costs which generally offset each other and unnecessarily complicate the model. The projections are based on the project being 100 percent grant (or internally) funded and does not factor in borrowing costs. If a loan were to be taken out for 50 percent of the development cost, ie $2.269 million at 6.5 percent interest for 10 years, it would take six years to achieve a positive cash balance.

The owning entity is projected to earn a ROI of 5 to 6 percent (after depreciation) on the facility if it was externally managed. This would allow sufficient funds to maintain the facility and grow it in line with demand. The managing entity could stand to make a profit in excess of $200,000 per year, by year 6, given the relatively low investment and risk involved; this would provide a return averaging out at around 40 percent on investment.

The management entity projections are based on it paying the owning entity a management rights fee of 15 percent of total revenue annually and an initial opportunity fee of $400,000. A higher opportunity fee and operating fee may be achieved if the management rights went out to open tender.

Operating revenue (for the single owning and operating entity) has been forecast at $1.5 million for year 3 (the first full year of operations). This is based on achieving and average annual occupancy of 41.5 percent, and 24,378 visitor nights from 6,772 unique visitors (average stay of 2 nights, with 2 people per room or site).
Carnarvon occupancies have been used to project seasonality. In the absence of the current resort being able to provide historical occupancy data, and there being no published occupancy data for the Shire of Upper Gascoyne, the only other occupancies for the project area were for the Australia’s Golden Outback Tourism Region, and given that it includes Esperance, it was considered of little use for this study. The Carnarvon occupancies have been adjusted (lowered) from November through March to reflect a more conservative estimate of demand during the summer months.

The occupancies used project the new facility to accommodate 50 percent of the estimated annual average visitor nights for the Shire of Upper Gascoyne for the years 2002 to 2009 (source: TWA – based on information extrapolated from the NVS and IVS). To achieve these projections, it would likely require a combined stakeholder effort to include strong marketing support, investment into maintaining best possible visitor access (roads and air), and concerted efforts to reduce or eliminate free and illegal camping within the region.

Income for the restaurant has been estimated using an assumption of 20 percent of guests spending $70 per guest on food and beverage per day (breakfast, lunch and dinner). Income for the kiosk is estimated assuming 25 percent of guests spend $8 per day at the shop on convenience items (including soft drinks, bottled water, ice creams, souvenirs etc).

Expenses have been estimated using BDO Kendals benchmarks for caravan parks with a turnover in excess of $800,000 per year. These have been adjusted to increase occupancy costs by an addition 1.8 percent of accommodation income and wages by an additional 5 percent of accommodation income to reflect higher costs expected due to the remoteness.

Rent is not quantified as it is anticipated that a peppercorn Crown lease will be sought. A two percent allowance has been made for consultants to act as advisors to the board in the owner/operator single entity model.
Restaurant expenses have been based on IBIS World benchmarks for Cafes and Restaurants. Rent and depreciation has been excluded from the IBIS World benchmarks. Depreciation has been estimated at 4 percent for all fixed buildings and 13 percent for plant and equipment. Tax has been assumed at 30 percent, though this would need to be adjusted to reflect the taxation status of the owning and operating entity once established. A loan for $680,000, being eighty percent of the managing entities set up costs, has been factored in, with a loan interest rate of 6.5 percent (reduced IBA or treasury rate) over five years.

Overall expenses for the owning and managing entity combined are projected to be $1 million by year three, providing an operating profit of just under $500,000. With the management fee factored in for the operating entity separated, expenses in year three are projected at $1.25 million, leaving an operating profit of $234,000. Given the low risk and investment required from the operating entity, this is considered a worthwhile return (subject to forecast occupancies and benchmark expenses being achieved).

**INVESTMENT SUMMARY**

Essentially, the financial analysis of the proposal has been predicted upon the underlying assumptions, itemised as follows;

**PROJECTED ASSET VALUATION**

The projected asset valuation and subsequent individual asset component break down has been calculated on the discounted cash flow (DCF) method. The residual value used in the DCF calculations and added to the end period cash flow is the book value of the said asset at the end of the estimated 15-year project. A 10% discount rate has also been applied in the calculation for the projected asset valuation which has been determined to meet the cost of capital. The Internal rate of return (IRR) for each asset component, have been calculated on the same projected cash flows and are populated alongside the asset valuation. The proposal assumes the development is fully funded by equity investment. Project cash flows are assumed at the end of each period which tends to understate net present value (NPV).

**SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS**

The sensitivity analysis aims to provide a general what if scenario of projected EBITDA and forecasted revenue against averaged Expense, Occupancy and Capex ratios. The underlying assumption in each sensitivity analysis is the historic revenue which has been based on projected revenue in year two and uses an average projected growth percentage = 11.8%.

- The underlying projected growth and the expense/revenue and Capex ratios are based on the geometric average from period to period over the full term of the project.
- Occupancy rates are based on industry standards.
- Project Capex ratio is derived from the capital outflow as reported on the cash flow statement against revenue for the corresponding period.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT RATIO ANALYSIS

Financial statement ratios are summarised in the investment summary for the purpose of analysing the liquidity, solvency and profitability of the three project proposals and for the ease of decision making. Whilst ratios can provide clues to the underlying conditions of a project that may not be apparent from an inspection of the individual components, a ratio itself may not be meaningful unless viewed holistically with all relevant financial data.

It is assumed the reader is familiar with standard financial ratios and terms.

OWNER OPERATOR DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL - INVESTMENT SUMMARY SYNOPSIS:

Asset valuation consists of the four separate revenue producing accommodation components. The value is the NPV of the assets operating revenue over the life of the project as at year 1. All derived revenue is expected to commence in year two. Total individual asset valuation as at year 1 equals $1,359,856 - Net Present value (NPV).

Overall, the project has a positive NPV and totals $2,378,253 based on net cash flow forecasted and a discount rate of 10%. The overall internal rate of return (IRR) calculates at 9%. It should be noted that the IRR for the life of the project is assuming Book value of the total assets in the final period (yr15).

The IRR itemisation on the investment summary includes Yr 5, Yr 10 and year 15 for comparison along with a breakdown of the IRR at time lines of the project. The IRR itemisation on the investment summary includes Yr1, Yr 5, Yr 7, Yr 10 and year 15.

A sensitivity analysis is provided in the investment summary. Three what if scenarios use an averaged projected revenue growth as it basis. The tabled scenarios show that by decreasing growth forecasts by 5% whilst, at the same time increasing both the averaged expense to revenue and averaged Capex spend to revenue, it decreases the forecasted revenue and EBITDA by approximately $77,000 per year. Although the projections are general in nature they should be considered in conjunction with the project NPV.

SEGMENTED PERFORMANCE BREAKDOWN

The segmented performance breakdown is incremented over four time periods of the 15 year project; Yr 1 , Yr 5 , Yr 10 & 15 to reflect an accurate snap shot of the overall life of the project. Revenue has been split into the three income producing sources.
DECISION

Using the decision rule of NPV analysis obtained from the forecasted cash flows, the development proposal gives an accept capital investment decision. Without known investor required rate of return, an IRR at 9% over the life of the project tends to support the NPV accept decision. The investor must consider what their required rate of return is for the project and access in conjunction with all other financial analysis. Analysis is based on best estimates forecasted for the term of the project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

Set up an ownership and governance structure suited to the long-term sustainability of the project and economic prosperity of all stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Seek grant funding for this project. The primary prerequisite for most funding is to have a credible, incorporated entity established (see recommendation 1).

RECOMMENDATION 3

Proceed with the development a full costed, eco tourism facility concept, business and marketing plan, environmental strategy and risk management plan to establish priorities and timeframes for the business enterprise consistent with funding options. IBA could be approached by the Burringurrah Community to request support in funding this aspect of the strategic planning. It is recommended that the following staging be used to guide the development of the business plan:

STAGE 1

- Initial facility development to include:
  - 10 x Deluxe Safari Tents
  - 15 x Air-conditioned cabins
  - 20 x Budget Rooms (share campground facilities)
  - 35 x Powered Caravan or Camp Sites priced at $38.00 per night (peak)
  - Restaurant and bar
  - Office, Shop and Managers Residence
  - Staff Accommodation
  - Solar pump, desalination plant and water tanks
  - Ablutions and Laundry
  - Campers kitchen
  - Workshop
Hybrid Power System
- Work with community to develop cultural tours
- Work with LG and RTO’s to further develop awareness drive trails
- Improve air access linkages
- Develop awareness and iconic status
- Gain market ready status
- Develop tour operator relationships

STAGE 2
- Gain Export ready status
- Domestic and international tradeshow representation
- Link in with wholesale and inbound programs
- Enhance green credentials and power system capabilities
- Develop community stay product
- Develop Swag Camp at the Rock concept
- Improve facilities – cultural centre, pool
- Improve road access and linkages
- Develop fly in fly out packages

STAGE 3
- Go totally solar and environmentally friendly
- Develop tented or eco-pod luxury accommodation
- Expand other accommodation capacity once average peak occupancy of any accommodation type exceeds 80%

RECOMMENDATION 4
- Set up appropriate mechanisms to improve training, employment and entrepreneurial outcomes for the Burringurrah Community.
- Partner with TAFE and other training providers to tailor programmes, which enhance vocational skills amongst the community focussing on the young people. Ensure a work-ready team of staff are available to work on the construction team and take on ongoing staff roles within the new business.
- Establish cultural tour opportunities that can be developed with the Burringurrah Community.
- Work towards employing a suitably qualified indigenous person to work across the various business activities in the areas of visitor servicing, and providing advice on cultural integrity for the business operators and guests. This person would act as mentor and support Indigenous trainees, assisting in the development and implementation of appropriate programmes. Apply for support through DEEWR’s IEP for the funding of this position.
RECOMMENDATION 5

- Assist in the tourism development and economic growth of the Region. Work with local visitor centres, Australia’s Golden Outback, Tourism WA and Tourism Australia to position Mount Augustus as the leading geo-tourism attraction for Western Australia and a significant cultural and eco-tourism attraction.
- Collaborate with local businesses across the Gascoyne Region and at a broader level to create partnerships that are mutually beneficial.
- Work with the wider tourism industry to foster greater employment opportunities for the Indigenous trainees that have reached competency through the in-house training initiatives and are looking for new employment opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION 6

- Investigate ways to improve tourist access to Mount Augustus through air and road linkages and packaged touring.
- Promote new and improved facilities to coach tour operators, charter air services and small tour operators.
- Investigate introduction of scenic flights and/or helicopter flights.

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The recommendations outlined will create the infrastructure that will help develop Mount Augustus into an outstanding world-class tourism icon - a unique destination attracting people of all ages, socio-economic backgrounds, and cultures. It will also have strong appeal for tourist product developers and operators, who are always looking for the latest and greatest opportunities with unique and marketable attractions.

Most importantly, Mount Augustus can play a major role in providing significant benefits for the Burringurrah Community – a sound and growing income stream, opportunities for training and employment, plus the ability to act as an incubator for a host of potential micro-businesses. With increased visitation to Mount Augustus there is also potential for sales of quality arts and crafts created by the people of the Burringurrah Community. However, the most important benefit that can result from this project is the growing pride and self determination of the community and individuals, where young people in particular can see a much more positive future with real opportunities for those that want to succeed.

It will bring new opportunities for the regions residents and ratepayers as well as important new facilities to the Mount Augustus attraction. This is an important strategic project that will have multifaceted beneficial outcomes for a range of stakeholders.
REFERENCES

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Tourism Profiles for Local Government Areas – Meekatharra Shire, Tourism Australia, March 2008


BDO Kendalls Benchmarking Report for Caravan Parks in excess of $800,000 turnover, BDO Kendalls. 2009.

## ATTACHMENTS

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<td>2</td>
<td>Site Map</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Artists Impression</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>AGO Overnight Visitor Factsheet - Year Ending December 2008</td>
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<td>TWA Estimated Visitor To Upper Gascoyne YE Dec 2009</td>
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THIS PROPOSAL REPRESENTS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE A NEW WORLD CLASS TOURISM DESTINATION WHICH ENHANCES THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE THE WORLD’S BIGGEST ROCK (MONOCLINE).

THIS IS A SITE OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE

OUR OPPORTUNITY LIES IN THE RECOGNITION OF THE COMING TOGETHER OF A UNIQUE NATURAL EXPERIENCE WITH A CULTURE THOUSANDS OF YEARS IN THE MAKING....