



Visitor Servicing Review & Recommendations Report



KARRATHA TOURISM & VISITOR CENTRE

OUR OPENING HOURS ARE SEASONAL:

PEAK APRIL - OCTOBER

Monday 9:00-4:00

Wednesday 9:00-3:00

Public Holiday 08:00-12:00

OFF-PEAK NOVEMBER - MARCH

Monday 10:00-2:00

Wednesday 10:00-2:00

Public Holiday Closed

KARRATHA
GILLING

City of
Karratha

Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Karratha acknowledges the Traditional Owners throughout this vast land and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging; and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

Executive Summary

This report provides a recommendation to the City of Karratha local government organisation (the City) on a best practice model for servicing visitors to City of Karratha local government area into the future.

The recommended model takes a visitor-centric approach where the focus is on ensuring visitors receive the information they are seeking when and where they need it across their travel journey, customised to their requirements.

The following image outlines contemporary channels of visitor information servicing (VIS).



Visitor information servicing channels

The following outlines the current economic benefit of the Karratha Tourism & Visitor Centre (KTVC)

Current KTVC use and economic benefit	
Number of visitors visiting KTVC 37% of non-business visitors to City of Karratha visit KTVC ¹	17,248 ²
Net cost to the City	\$618,000 ³
Economic injection into local visitor economy	\$2.59 million ⁴
Return on investment (ROI)	\$1 : \$4.19 ⁵
Cost per VIC user	\$28.09 ⁶
Performance vs importance	7.4 ⁷

Note: The net cost of KTVC in 2024 was 35% higher than in 2023, so typically, the return on the City's investment is higher than it was in 2024, and the cost per visitor lower.

¹ 2023 KTVC visitor count compared with non-business visitors 2022-2023 (2 years average); Tourism Research Australia

² 2024 KTVC visitor count

³ 2024. The net cost to the City was 35% (\$158,807) higher than in 2023, due to Activity Based Distribution (\$96,691) and the addition of a casual staffer, payment of long service leave and the overlap of the previous and current VIC supervisors (\$61,000).

⁴ 17,248 visitors to KTVC in 2024 (out of 21,996 total KTVC users including those who phone for VIS) x \$150.19 average additional spend of visitors to WA VICs (Tourism WA's Value of Visitor Centres 2024) = \$2.59 million

⁵ \$2.59 million economic injection / \$618,000 net cost to City

⁶ \$618,000 / 21,996 KTVC users (2024)

⁷ 2023/24 community survey; reveals that KTVC's performance is higher than the importance placed on it by the community.

The desired outcomes from VIS in the City of Karratha are:

1. Improve visitor economy outcomes
 - Grow year-round visitation into the City of Karratha.
 - Increase visitor expenditure in the City of Karratha.
 - Disperse visitors across the City of Karratha.
 - Increase the spend of visitors with local businesses (tourism operators, artists, retailers, etc).
2. Support liveability for residents.⁸

The value of visitors staying one more night

If the KTVC staff successfully encourage every visitor information centre (VIC) visitor to stay one more night in the City of Karratha, this would equate to an estimated additional \$3.49 million injected into the local visitor economy (based on 21,996 VIC users/year⁹ and an average spend of \$159/night for leisure visitors to City of Karratha¹⁰).

To deliver these desired outcomes, the recommended model includes:

- KTVC refreshed as a Welcome Centre
- Effective online/digital presence managed by KTVC staff
- Improved wayfinding and interpretive signage
- Information at visitor hotspots (e-kiosk or brochure rack)
- Mobile or pop-up visitor centre used at visitor hotspots
- VIS at key visitor hotspots and journey decision making points outside of the City of Karratha
- Upskilling operators to improve the VIS they provide.

⁸ Supporting the City's vision to be Australia's most liveable regional City

⁹ 2024 VIC users (visiting the VIC, or phoning for information)

¹⁰ 2020-2021 (2 years average)

Achievement of these outcomes will optimise the City's return on investment in VIS by providing direct benefits for the local economy, local businesses, and residents.

The challenge of VIC financial viability

A number of recent reviews of VICs undertaken across Australia identified that it is extremely challenging for VICs to be financially self-sufficient, particularly in remote destinations with low visitation and low supply of bookable tourism product and experiences, as in the City of Karratha. Hence this report utilises economic impact rather than direct financial return as the measure of the City's return on investment into VIS.

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Acronyms and definitions

4WD	Four wheel drive
ATDW	Australian Tourism Data Warehouse – a place for tourism businesses to list their business online, and listings are distributed to multiple tourism websites, including those of Australia’s North West and Western Australia.
City	The City of Karratha local government organisation
City of Karratha	Used to refer to both the local government organisation; and the Local Government Area of the City of Karratha.
Eastern Corridor	Roebourne, Wickham, Cossack and Point Samson
FIFO	Fly-in, fly-out worker; no longer counted as a visitor by Tourism Research Australia as they are attending their usual place of work.
Karratha	The population centre surrounding Karratha central business district (CBD, including the residential suburbs from Nickol in the east to Bulgarra in the west.
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KTVC	Karratha Tourism & Visitor Centre (accredited Visitor Information Centre)
Omni-channel	The use of multiple channels
RV	Recreational Vehicle
VFR	Visiting friends and relatives of locals
VIC	Visitor information centre
VIS	Visitor information servicing
WA	Western Australia



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1. Project introduction

1.1 Project purpose

The purpose of this Visitor Servicing Review and Recommendations Report is to provide the City of Karratha with a recommended best practice model for servicing visitors, and to inform the City's Economic Development and Tourism Strategy. This report is based on an assessment of current visitor services, facilities, and visitor touchpoints. It considers the needs of visitors to City of Karratha, and trends in their travel planning and decision-making.

Visitor Information Servicing (VIS) involves providing relevant tourist information to visitors throughout the different stages of their trip to support their visit. The purpose of VIS is to provide information that entices and enables visitors to

- stay longer
- disperse across the region
- spend more
- choose to have tourism experiences (i.e. spend on more than just basics such as groceries and fuel)
- have a great experience so they will share positive word of mouth recommendations to others, including via online reviews.

VIS is one pillar of sustainable destination development. The other five pillars of destination development will be addressed in the City's Economic Development and Tourism Strategy.

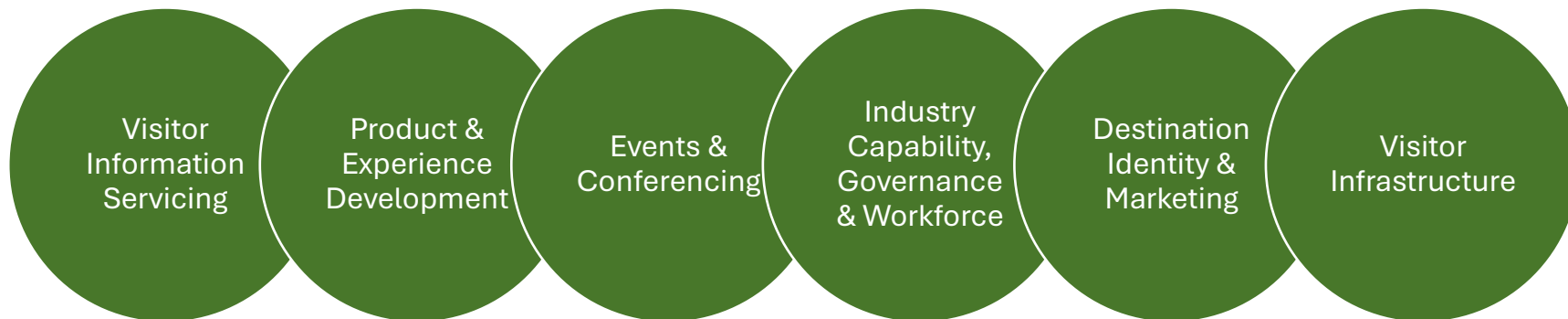


Figure 1. The pillars of destination management

VIS is an important element of City of Karratha's tourism development. The information visitors receive impacts their decision-making relative to where they travel, stay, and spend, and shapes the perceptions visitors take away with them. Visitor servicing is critical to driving positive outcomes for the City of Karratha's visitor economy and the destination's reputation. It plays an important role in achieving the tourism goals which will be articulated in the City's Economic Development and Tourism Strategy.

This report focuses upon providing visitors with:

- Information that is timely, accurate and impartial, where, when and how they need it.
- Quality customer service across all points of engagement, giving visitors a sense of welcome and encouraging visitors to stay longer, experience more, and recommend the destination to others.
- Experiences that create an authentic connection with the place and its people.

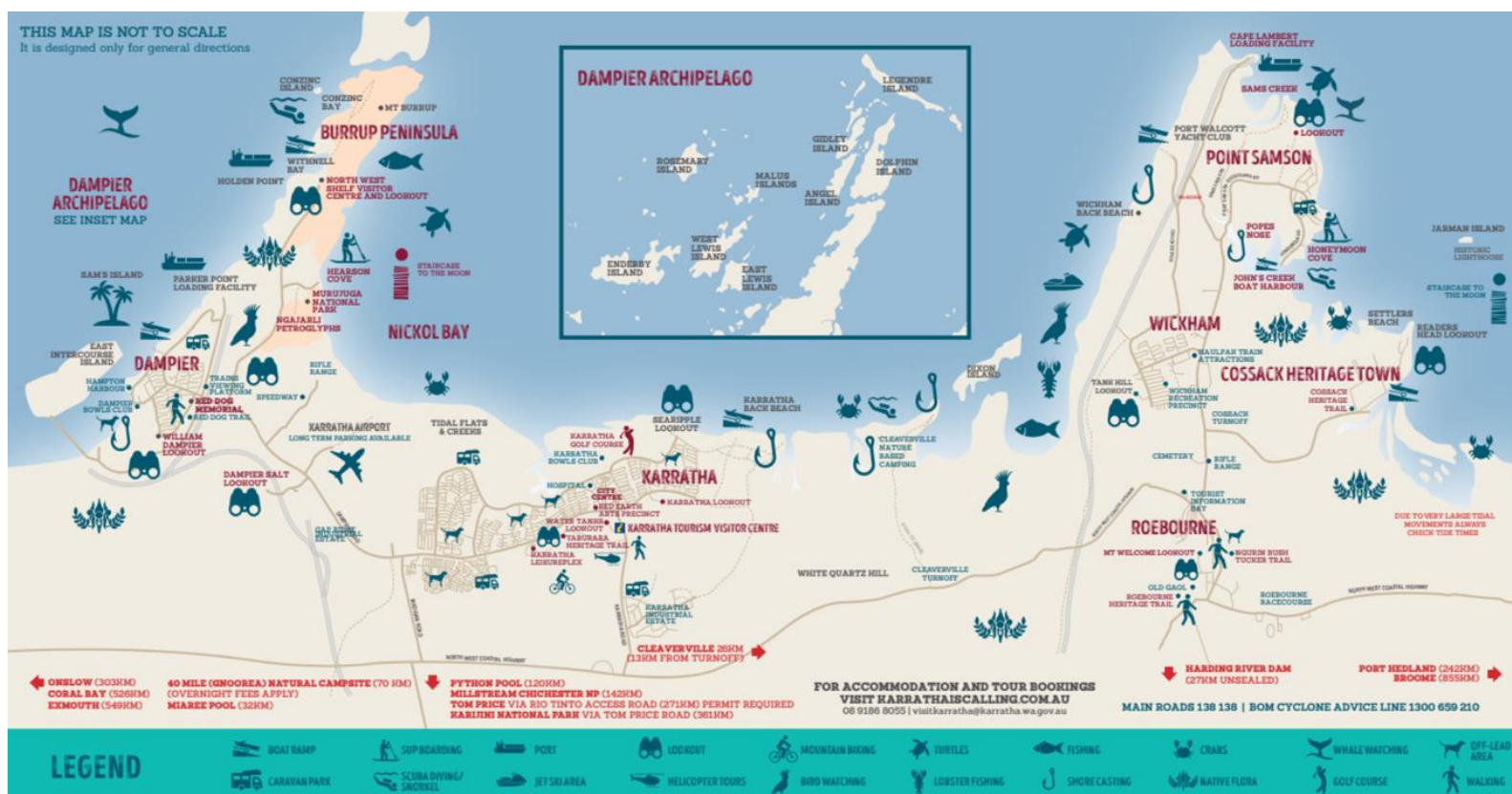
The background research and contextual information that informs this report is outlined in the City of Karratha Visitor Servicing Findings and Discussion Paper. The City requested at least three VIS scenarios for consideration, based on low, medium, and higher human and financial investment. These are outlined in the Findings and Discussion Paper. This report outlines the VIS model recommended by Tilma, and confirmed by the City's Project Reference Group.

1.2 Methodology

This report was developed based on a robust methodology that consisted of

- Consultation with a broad range of visitor information servicing stakeholders within and beyond City of Karratha local government area.
- Extensive desktop review related to VIS in City of Karratha, and best practice in WA, other states, and nationally.
- A tourism audit of City of Karratha, KTVC, tourism flows, visitor hotspots, and VIS across the City of Karratha.

Full details on the methodology, including stakeholders consulted and documents reviewed (which included the City's draft Strategic Community Plan) is outlined in the City of Karratha Visitor Servicing Findings and Discussion Paper.



Tourism map of Karratha region⁶⁸

City of Karratha has world-class coastlines, beaches, nature and wildlife (marine and land-based), and world-class Aboriginal culture and heritage. Its key tourism themes are as follows.

Theme	Examples
Adventure	4WDing, sea kayaking, mountain bike riding, snorkelling, fishing
Heritage & Culture	Ancient rock art, traditional and contemporary Aboriginal culture, pearling history

Nature	Pristine marine and desert biodiversity, ecosystems, and coastlines
Industry	Salt, iron ore, and gas mining

City of Karratha's major towns include Karratha in the centre (the major population centre of the Pilbara region), Dampier in the west, and Roebourne, Wickham, Point Samson, and Cossack in the east (the Eastern Corridor), each with its own character and sense of place.

The primary tourism season is between late April and late October due to summers that are hot (with 100 days per year over 35C) and humid with heavy summer rains and cyclones impacting unsealed roads. The cooler months offer beautiful sunny days and mild nights.

There is limited accommodation (and quality accommodation), tours, experiences, and access for visitors to hero experiences such as Dampier Archipelago. These are due to significant barriers related to remoteness, and competition with the resources industry for staff and housing.

Costs for visitors are high due to the region's remoteness, so most travellers through the region are high-yield travellers. Most non-business (leisure, VFR¹¹, education, and other) travellers to the region are caravanners and RVers.

Three near-term major projects are likely to influence the number of visitors travelling into Karratha:

- An upgrade to the Dampier Wharf that is currently underway will enable shore visits by small cruise ships.
- The potential announcement of UNESCO¹² World Heritage status for the Burrup Peninsula in July 2025.
- The sealing of the Manuwarra Red Dog Highway between Karijini National Park and Karratha, which may be completed by 2029.

An expected future development of a Murujuga Living Knowledge Centre and tourism precinct in the Murujuga National Park at the end of the Burrup Peninsula will also support increased tourism.

¹¹ Visiting friends and relatives of locals

¹² United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

1.3 Best practice visitor information servicing

As indicated in figure 2 below of an omni-channel (using all channels to reach visitors) approach to VIS,¹³ modern and best practice VIS includes information provision via multiple channels, including

- Visitor Information Centres (VICs)
- Phone calls, texts, emails, and live chats
- Online/digital channels (e.g. websites, social media, digital ads)
- Printed materials (e.g. brochures, maps, guides)
- Information kiosks, both electronic and staffed
- Signage (wayfinding and interpretive)
- Marketing to visitors once they've decided to come to the region or are in the region (as opposed to demand-driving marketing)
- Other methods of information distribution.

Visitors need information at each stage of their trip: dreaming about a holiday, planning, booking, experiencing, and sharing about their trip such as via social media. Visitors consume different types of information at different stages of their journey. Visitor information servicing should meet the information needs of visitors at each stage.

¹³ Based on a diagram in A National Perspective on Visitor Information Servicing



Figure 2. VIS touchpoints at different stages of the visitor journey¹⁴

¹⁴ A National Perspective on Visitor Information Servicing

Critical success factors

From analysing best practice visitor servicing across Australia, common factors emerge that can be considered critical to visitor servicing success. Each is relevant to maximising economic and social benefits from visitor servicing in the City of Karratha.

Critical success factor	Description
Applies a visitor lens	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Needs and preferences of visitors are central to the VIS model. Visitors expect immediacy of information and to be able to book directly, instantly and easily.• Visitors like to connect with locals and feel that they are receiving inside knowledge and connection to local culture. They seek out local knowledge such as road closures, weather conditions, lesser-known things to experience (locals' secrets) and personalised itineraries that meet the travel party's needs.• Information is available via multiple formats and channels. Around half of visitors say they prefer to use online sources of information.¹⁵ Peer review sites (particularly Google reviews) are trusted sources of information.• VIS involves the entire community as visitors engage with multiple touchpoints that influence their travel decisions and experience, from bakeries to petrol stations.• AI is changing how travellers search for information and plan trips, such as creating personalised itineraries.
Located where visitors are	Consistent quality visitor information is available online and offline where visitors need and expect it (based on visitor flows and hotspots/touchpoints), rather than expecting visitors to make a special trip to access information.
Delivers quality, objective information (recognised through accreditation)	Often it is the quality customer service visitors receive at a VIC that results in word-of-mouth recommendations to visit the VIC (and the destination).
Delivers a WOW experience	Visitors don't go to a destination to visit a VIC – they go for an experience. The VIC provides an experience that attracts target markets (reasons for visitors to visit the VIC) and increases dwell time.

¹⁵ Measuring the Value of Visitor Centres in WA, 2024

Valued by local businesses and residents	VIS draws visitors to the destination, generates spend with local businesses, and meets the needs of the community.
Governed by effective leadership and management	A governance structure is in place that enables efficient and effective VIS.
Financially sustainable	<p>VIS generates economic and social benefits and delivers sufficient commercial return.</p> <p>It is difficult for VICs to be financially self-sufficient, particularly in regions with low numbers of operators and visitors. In such cases, as in the City of Karratha, the financial sustainability of a VIC should be seen as the economic return on the investment into it, rather than its ability to break even or make a profit.</p> <p>A study of WA VICs undertaken in 2014 found 40% of VIC operations are funded by local governments,¹⁶ and 48% are managed by local government (up from 26% in 2004).¹⁷</p>
Monitors and measures performance	Data is gathered to demonstrate performance against key performance indicators. However, there are no set standard measures used by Australian or WA VICs.
Collaboration across borders	Visitors do not see boundaries between regions.

¹⁶ The future of visitor centres in WA, 2014

¹⁷ The Future Of Tourism Services In The City Of Karratha, 2018

1.4 Current visitor servicing in City of Karratha

Visitors to City of Karratha	
Domestic overnight leisure visitors ¹⁸	55,000 ¹⁹
Average length of stay: leisure visitors	2 nights ²⁰
Average spend per trip: leisure visitors	\$384 ²¹
63% of leisure visitors reside in Western Australia ²²	

Current KTVC use	
37% of non-business visitors to City of Karratha visit KTVC ²³	
Number of visitors visiting KTVC	17,248 ²⁴
Over 80% of VIC users visit in May – September ²⁵	
Total revenue generated through KTVC	\$49,602 ²⁶
Value of tour bookings made by KTVC	\$39,967 ²⁷

¹⁸ Insufficient information is available on non-FIFO business visitors.

¹⁹ Non-business visitors 2022-2023 (2 years average); Tourism Research Australia

²⁰ Holiday visitors 2020-2021 (2 years average); Tourism Research Australia

²¹ Holiday visitors 2020-2021 (2 years average), down from \$560 in 2016-2019 (4 years average)

²² Domestic overnight holiday and VFR visitors to Australia's North West; 2022-2023 (2 years average); Tourism Research Australia

²³ 2023 KTVC visitor count compared with non-business visitors 2022-2023 (2 years average); Tourism Research Australia

²⁴ 2024 KTVC visitor count

²⁵ 2024 KTVC visitor count

²⁶ 2024

²⁷ 2024

Net cost to the City	\$618,000 ²⁸
Economic injection into local economy	\$2.59 million ²⁹
Return on investment (ROI)	\$1 : \$4.19 ³⁰
Cost per VIC user	\$28.09 ³¹
Performance vs importance	7.4 ³²

Refer to the City of Karratha Visitor Servicing Findings and Discussion Paper for more data and insights into visitation and visitor servicing.

²⁸ 2024. The net cost to the City was 35% (\$158,807) higher than in 2023, due to Activity Based Distribution (\$96,691) and the addition of a casual staffer, payment of long service leave and the overlap of the previous and current VIC supervisors (\$61,000).

²⁹ 17,248 visitors to KTVC in 2024 (out of 21,996 total KTVC users including those who phone for VIS) x \$150.19 average additional spend of visitors to WA VICs (Tourism WA's Value of Visitor Centres 2024) = \$2.59 million

³⁰ \$2.59 million / \$618,000





³¹ \$618,000 / 21,996 KTVC users (2024)

³² 2023/24 community survey; reveals that KTVC's performance is higher than the importance placed on it by the community.

1.5 City of Karratha visitor profiles

Following is a snapshot overview of current and opportunity target visitor markets for the City of Karratha.

Current markets

			
Older couple tourers	Family tourers	Residents ³³	Locals' visiting friends and relatives (VFR)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing market • Circumnavigating Australia or visiting Karijini, National Park, and/or the Kimberley • Travelling between Broome and Perth; some are looking for alternatives to Exmouth and Broome, or don't want to travel as far north as Broome • Often bypass City of Karratha, heading inland from Port Hedland and/or Coral Bay to experience Karijini National Park • Experience Seekers: experienced travellers, adventurers, off the beaten track, self-challenging • Primarily residents of WA, and therefore have more awareness of the Pilbara and its attractions • Western Australians are the least likely to travel interstate (13% compared to national average of 33%). 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23,000 residents • Population is forecast to grow, mostly within 25-34 age group. • Median age is 32 • Working-age population that ranks among the most affluent in the country. • Median annual income over \$200,000 • High proportion of children • High cultural diversity, with 24% born overseas and 15% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35% of non-business visitors to City of Karratha • Many stay at the homes of friends/family • Participate in commercial attractions, events and other experiences, largely with the family and friends they are visiting

³³ [Area Search](#); Economic Development Strategy

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High income • Stay for very short or very long visits: 80% stay 1-3 nights or 15+ nights • 48% of road trippers travel for 3 to 7 nights • 1 in 4 road trippers spend more than 17 hours on the road • Interested in nature-based tourism • Over 80% of visitors are interested in Aboriginal tourism experiences 		speaking a language other than English at home.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Today older caravanners are wealthier than the grey nomads of the past • Healthy and active • Have more freedom with their road trips, able to go on longer trips (32% travel more than 1,000km/17 hours), spend more, and more likely to embark on a road trip whenever they want to (60%) • Seek value for money • Growing number are online and using social media to connect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families and younger couples (35-49) • 65% of caravan owners are under age 55 • Homeschooling children on extended trip 		

Opportunity markets

		
Cruise Passengers	Corporates	Intraregional holidaymakers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luxury and ultra luxury small ship cruises • Australians have a high rate of taking cruises (1 in 17 Australians) • 85% of cruisers are repeat cruisers • Average age 47; Millennials (28-43) are an emerging market (1/3 are under 35) • Average passenger shore spend on domestic transit stops is \$197 per day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International or east coast of Australia residence • VIP visitors on a corporate trip or delegation • Conference delegates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing market in the Pilbara • High income • Looking for short breaks that are easy • Have more awareness of the Pilbara and its attractions

Refer to the City of Karratha Visitor Servicing Findings and Discussion Paper for more comprehensive information on the visitor information needs of these markets, which have been considered in this recommendation.

1.6 Visitor journey mapping and touchpoints

Visitor journey mapping

The following table outlines the current VIS touchpoints available to City of Karratha's visitors at each stage of their travel journey.

Dreaming	Planning	Booking	Experiencing (in region)	Sharing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Destination websites: Tourism WA, Australia's North West, Destination Pilbara, Karratha is Calling• Other websites (e.g. cruise lines, special interests)• Social media (e.g. Instagram)• Word of mouth from family and friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Search engines• Websites (e.g. itineraries)• Visitor guide• VIC phone/email• Online reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online travel agents (e.g. Booking.com)• Operators' websites/phone• Karratha is Calling website	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• VIC walk-in/phone• Locals• Other travellers• Visitor guide/map• Signage/way finding• Destination and operators' websites• Online reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social media• Review sites• Word of mouth

Visitor flows

The main routes followed by visitors in City of Karratha and throughout the Pilbara are as follows.

- Between Perth and Broome along the North West Coastal Highway (Highway 1) south of Karratha.
- Bypassing City of Karratha by driving between Port Hedland, Karijini National Park, and Coral Bay/Ningaloo.
- Driving through Roebourne on the North West Coastal Highway where visitors can be inspired to turn off to the Eastern Corridor and influenced to stay longer. In future this may change with the construction of a bypass. Still, Roebourne will remain visible from and adjacent to the highway and bypass.
- City of Karratha entry roads: De Witt Rd (Karratha Rd) and Madigan Road.

- Between Karratha and Dampier, and to nearby Hearson Cove on the Burrup Peninsula.
- Karratha Airport.
- Roads to nature-based free or low cost campsites (e.g. Cleaverville and Gnoorea 40 Mile).
- Manuwarra Red Dog Highway between Karijini National Park, and Karratha.

Visitor hotspots

The key locations and sites that visitors frequently stop at/in provide opportunities for visitor servicing to ensure that they are aware of City of Karratha and what it has to offer as a visitor destination (alternatively they will bypass City of Karratha).

Visitor hotspots within City of Karratha	Visitor hotspots beyond City of Karratha
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karratha Airport • KTVC • Roebourne, including dump point, petrol station and information bays. • Cleaverville, Gnoorea (40 Mile), Miaree Pool, Kialrah Pool and Fortescue River free or low cost campsites. • Rest stops, information bays, and public toilets across the City of Karratha such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Peawah ○ Roebourne ○ Karratha ○ Miaree Pool ○ Robe River ○ Wickham • Dump point at the BP on way to Dampier, and water refill in CBD. • Shell at intersection of Madigan Road and Northwest Coastal Highway. • Cossack Heritage Town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Port Hedland (decision point to bypass Karratha) • Karijini National Park. • Python Pool and Millstream Chichester National Park • Nanutarra Roadhouse, North West Coastal Highway, close to the turn off to Karijini National Park. • Onslow • Ningaloo / Exmouth / Coral Bay • Broome

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point Samson Tavern • Whim Creek 	
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Refer to the Karratha Visitor Servicing Findings and Discussion Paper for more comprehensive information on the visitor flows and hotspots, which have been considered in this recommendation.

2. Recommended best practice model

2.1 Vision for visitor servicing

The City of Karratha community welcomes and inspires visitors at all stages of their travel journey by curating and sharing our region’s hidden wonders and connecting visitors with our region’s people and places.

2.2 Outcomes seeking to achieve

The desired outcomes of visitor information servicing for City of Karratha are to:

1. Improve visitor economy outcomes
 - Grow year-round visitation into City of Karratha.
 - Increase visitor expenditure.
 - Disperse visitors across the City of Karratha.
 - Increase the spend of visitors with local businesses (tourism operators, artists, retailers, etc).

2. Support liveability of residents.³⁴

Achievement of these outcomes will optimise the City's return on investment in visitor servicing and provide direct benefits for local businesses and residents.

The value of visitors staying one more night

If the VIC staff successfully encourage every VIC visitor to stay one more night in the City of Karratha, this would equate to an estimated additional \$3.49 million injected into the local visitor economy (based on 21,996 VIC users/year³⁵ and an average spend of \$159/night for holiday visitors to City of Karratha³⁶).

2.3 Recommended visitor servicing model

The recommended model is an omni channel approach with a refreshed Welcome Centre at the current location of KTVC (the most ideal location to reach visitors with a VIC) – a flexible approach that will ensure maximum return to the local economy and community through visitor servicing.

³⁴ Supporting the City's vision to be Australia's most liveable regional City

³⁵ 2024 VIC users (visiting the VIC, or phoning for information)

³⁶ 2020-2021 (2 years average)

The elements of the model include:

- a. Refreshed KTVC as a Welcome Centre that includes the co-location of a visitor experience and a focus on improving financial sustainability.
- b. Phone, email and live chat service.
- c. Current and comprehensive online digital presence (destination website, Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) and Google Business Profile listings, social media, and Warlu Way app) managed by the KTVC team.
- d. Improved information bays, and improved wayfinding and interpretive signage at hotspots within and beyond the City of Karratha's borders.
- e. Visitor information kiosks (e-kiosk or brochure rack) at key visitor hotspots.
- f. Mobile or pop-up visitor centre to be used at visitor hotspots, including to greet cruise ships, seasonally at Roebourne, at major events, and outside the region (e.g. Karijini National Park, Broome, Coral Coast).
- g. Upskill operators to play a VIS role as destination ambassadors and to have current ATDW and Google Business Profiles.



Figure 3: Karratha omni-channel model

It is recommended to include the establishment of visitor servicing in Roebourne in line with the town's place making project, ideally co-located with an attraction such as an artists' studio. This is a longer-term addition to the model, with the short-term solution being the use of the mobile or pop-up visitor centre in Roebourne during the tourism season.

This contemporary, omni channel model will:

- Be governed by effective leadership and management.
- Meet the information needs of visitors by providing information where visitors go (including online), in multiple formats from multiple sources, and providing locals' knowledge.
- Increase the visitor spend in the City of Karratha, resulting in a greater overall return for effort on visitor servicing.

- Deliver quality, objective information, recognised through accreditation.
- Deliver an authentic experience of the destination that visitors will share about.
- Be valued by local businesses for increasing visitation to their business and offering opportunities to showcase their business through the Welcome Centre and familiarisation tours.
- Provide an opportunity for local residents to engage more with visitors and build their pride and passion in the City of Karratha.
- Enable robust monitoring and measurement of performance.
- Improve collaboration and visitor information servicing across borders.

Refer to the case studies at the end of this document for examples of a mobile visitor centre and a kiosk.

A comparison of KTVC's current location and a number of proposed alternative locations revealed that KTVC's current location is well positioned to capture visitors after they turn off the Northwest Coastal Highway (Highway 1) towards Karratha CBD. The location is easy to access off the highway, has good parking, is accessible for people with disability, is connected to the CBD via a footpath, and is co-located with the attractions of a lookout and trails. Tilma recommends not to move KTVC, as there is no suitable co-location option, and the current location provides development opportunities.

2.4 Measures of success and targets

Annual measurement of the visitor servicing model against the following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be used to assess the success and relevance of the model.

Desired VIS outcome	KPI	Means of measurement	Baseline	Recommended target for 2028
Improve tourism outcomes				
Grow year-round visitation into City of Karratha.	Increase in visitation to City of Karratha.	Tourism Research Australia data ³⁷ and/or purchased visitor data	55,000 non-business visitors (two-year average 2022–2023) ³⁸	64,000 non-business visitors (Minimum growth of 5% year on year annually)
Increase visitor expenditure.	Average visitor spend.	Tourism Research Australia data and/or purchased visitor data	\$560 / trip for holiday visitors \$576 / trip for VFR visitors ³⁹	\$950/trip based on the average length of stay of 3 nights.
Disperse visitors across the City of Karratha.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of bookings with operators outside of Karratha. 2. Number of bookings of the City's campsites 40 Mile and Cleaverville. 3. Number of personalised itineraries created. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VIC booking website and/or destination website. • VIC staff or website (AI-generated itineraries). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dampier: 142 tours booked worth \$18,555 (2024) Murujuga & Indigenous: 86 tours booked worth \$15,990 (2024) 2. 5,765 bookings (2024) 3. To be determined in 2025 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 15% incremental growth year on year (e.g. 207 tours booked for Dampier & 131 tours booked for Murujuga & Indigenous).

³⁷ Once FIFO visitation is excluded from Tourism Research Australia's data for City of Karratha, data is likely to be unusable. For example, for [domestic overnight leisure visitors to City of Karratha](#) in 2021–2022 (2 years average) and 2022–2023 (2 years average) Tourism Research Australia's data is too sparse to be publishable due to low visitation (under 24,000 annual leisure visitors).

³⁸ Tourism Research Australia

³⁹ Four-year average 2016–2019; Tourism Research Australia

Desired VIS outcome	KPI	Means of measurement	Baseline	Recommended target for 2028
				2. 5% incremental growth year on year 3. To be determined
Increase the spend of visitors with local businesses.	Average visitor spend.	Tourism Research Australia data and/or purchased visitor data	\$560 / trip for holiday visitors \$576 / trip for VFR visitors	\$950/trip based on the average length of stay of 3 nights.
	Total value of sales of locally produced retail and art via the VIC.	VIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$64,874 (2024) \$41,758 paid to consignees + \$16,426 (local merchandise purchased in 2024 to be sold in 2025) = \$58,184 	\$87,000 Based on 10% annual incremental growth
	Total number of bookings made 1. At the VIC 2. Via the destination website.	VIC's booking website and/or destination website	1. 149 via KTVC staff 2. 74 via website	300 bookings Based on 10% annual incremental growth
Support liveability for residents				
Liveability	Numbers of locals using the 1. Destination website 2. VIC	1. Website analytics 2. VIC	1. Waiting to hear from website owner 2. To be determined	1. TBD 2. To be determined when baseline is set
Return on investment				
Generate a sustainable return on investment (ROI) to the City through increased	1. ROI of City investment into VIS in terms of economic impact of visitors in City of Karratha.	1. Number of VIC visitors x \$150.19 increase in average spend of a regional	1. \$1 : \$4.19 2. 4 accommodations, 3 tour operators, and 2 eateries ⁴⁰	1. Maintain (based on increased investment over next 3 years).

⁴⁰ As listed on AustraliasNorthWest.com, March 2025, which pulls from ATDW

Desired VIS outcome	KPI	Means of measurement	Baseline	Recommended target for 2028
spend in Karratha, visitor dispersal, brand awareness, and value for local businesses and residents.	2. Complete and accurate online listings of City of Karratha tourism-related businesses. 3. VIC staff familiarity with the region's tourism product, and ability to share local stories and inspire visitors. 4. Retail sales made at the VIC.	WA VIC visitor / City investment into VIS. 2. Numbers of ATDW listings for tourism-related businesses. 3. Records of familiarisation tours. 4. KTVC financials	3. Number of staff participating in familiarisation visits to tourism businesses 4. \$124,977 (2024)	2. Increase to 100% of tourism businesses listed 3. 100% 4. \$220,000
Improved sustainability				
Reduced environmental impact from VIS	1. Reduced emissions from City-delivered VIS 2. Add measures of success for improved social and environmental sustainability after undertaking the Sustainable Tourism Accreditation which will revealed the ideal targets, activities, and measures	1. Azility Sustainability Platform 2. Carbonhalo report ⁴¹	1. 9.75 tCO ₂ e in 2024	1. In line with City emission reduction targets (under development)

⁴¹ Provided by undertaking the Australian Tourism Industry Council's [Tourism Emissions Reduction program](#)

3. Implementation plan

The following Implementation Plan provides the action steps to establish and transition to the new visitor servicing model. The actions will deliver on the desired outcomes for visitor servicing in City of Karratha. In turn, achievement of these outcomes will optimise the City's return on investment in visitor servicing, by increasing benefits for local businesses and residents.

Project priority scale

1. Immediate: 2025 (within 12-months)
2. Short term: 2026-2027 (within 2 years)
3. Medium term: 2027-2028 (2-3 years)
4. Long term: 2028 – 2030 (3+ years)

#	Action	Priority	Driver
1	Refresh KTVC as Welcome Centre		
1.1	Refresh KTVC Hire a retail consultant or interior designer to redesign the interior of KTVC to support effective VIS, and financial viability via increased bookings and retail sales (with a focus on increasing high-profit retail sales). In the redesign, include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A genuine sense of place that reflects City of Karratha's unique identity, and celebrates the City of Karratha's world class attractions: world heritage rock art, world class reef, millennia-old culture, and unique and special desert nature. Integrate local cultural stories and interpretation into the VIC. • A refresh of the building's exterior to brighten and add appeal, such as with a mural by a local Traditional Owner/s. • Reuse of the meeting room for a visitor experience that increased dwell time, such as an exhibition gallery for local Aboriginal art and artefacts, with space for an artist in residence or for artist demonstration. • Add a touchscreen table that staff can stand at with visitors to help them find attractions that meet their needs (to remove the barrier of the counter when serving visitors). • The addition of skylights to improve lighting, if possible. 	Immediate <i>A key priority to be implemented as grant funding permits</i>	KTVC

#	Action	Priority	Driver
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large scale destination video screen to promote the region via a hero destination video, user-generated content from social media (and encouragement for visitors to share their City of Karratha photos then and there), and video ads purchased by operators to increase revenue. • A quality visitor-operated automated coffee machine and comfortable seating and phone and electric vehicle charging station to encourage visitors to linger and to increase revenue. • A child-friendly space with local educational games, worksheets or colouring in sheets, local children's stories, and a photo op related to the region's hero nature experiences. • Themed and curated retail with sense of space that facilitates purchases. • Provide a clear sense of place: City of Karratha in the Pilbara, and promote key accessible attractions with low awareness such as the Murujuga rock art. • Improved accessibility (for all types of disability, not only for wheelchair users). • Improved sustainability (such as energy efficiency). • Install bike racks in coordination with the planned construction of a bike path on De Witt Rd. • A garden showcasing City of Karratha's native and bush tucker plants with educational signage about local to connect visitors with the region's hero experience of nature. Leverage the garden to include a kids' educational activity such as a scavenger hunt. • Dump point and water refill station (potable water). <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S2 Architects specialise in the design of visitor centres and other tourism businesses. • They also provide a guide on improving visitor centres. • Guide to transforming visitor centres into experience centres. 		
1.2	Rebrand KTVC Rebrand KTVC to Karratha Welcome Centre with a narrative that talks to visitors and residents about it being a welcoming and safe place for everyone to learn more about the City of Karratha.	Short term	KTVC
1.3	Activate KTVC's exhibition space Activate KTVC's exhibition space in collaboration with Community Programs, with regular events such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New resident welcome functions 	Medium term	KTVC

#	Action	Priority	Driver
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally sensitive and respectful Children’s colouring worksheets (always available) • Artist in residence demonstration • Reading of local children’s books by local Elders, such as When The World Was Soft • Collaborate with other City departments to deliver art exhibition launch events (targeted at engaging locals and new residents with the VIC) • Sharing of stories and truth telling by local Elders • Shopping events • Leverage seasonal retail promotions (such as Christmas and Mothers’ Day) 		
1.4	Provide 24/7 information outside KTVC Provide 24/7 information outside KTVC (such as on the verandah), such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable visitors to access the destination website and other online sources of information via QR codes using free wifi • Provide the City of Karratha brochure and map 	Short term	KTVC
1.5	Leverage KTVC’s toilets Leverage the back of KTVC’s toilet doors, such as posting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A what’s on guide for the month • Links to the destination website 	Short term	KTVC
1.6	Increase commissions To increase commissions to improve KTVC’s financial viability, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help more operators to become trade ready (able to sell with commission) so there is more product for KTVC to book. This will also help the operators to sell via cruise ships, travel agents and online travel agents (e.g. Booking.com and Viator). • Bundle and package offerings, including of non-tourism businesses (e.g. by developing a retail trail brochure) 	Short term <i>2025-26 off peak season in preparation for 2026 tourism season</i>	KTVC and/or City Growth
1.7	Add a visitor experience	Long term	KTVC

#	Action	Priority	Driver
	<p>Add an appealing ticketed (revenue-raising) attraction, such as a VR experience, or a participatory sculpture, such as the Genestreams Songlines sculpture of local flora and fauna which engages visitors (and locals) with nature journaling.</p> <p>A VR experience will enable visitors to access local attractions that are difficult to access due to lack of tourism operators, such as the Dampier Archipelago (islands and underwater wildlife), mining (behind the gate), and rock art (beyond the Nganjarli/Deep Gorge boardwalk), and with insights from a virtual guide (e.g. a miner or a Traditional Owner).</p>	<i>When a suitable grant program becomes available</i>	
1.8	<p>Add solar panels</p> <p>Add solar panels to eliminate the VIC's electricity bill (\$5,700/year)</p>	Immediate	KTVC
1.9	<p>Install an EV charger</p>	<p>Long term</p> <p><i>State Government Charge-Up Grant Program</i></p>	KTVC
2	Mobile or pop-up visitor centre		
2.1	<p>Develop a mobile or pop-up visitor centre</p> <p>Develop a mobile or pop-up visitor centre to be used by KTVC staff at visitor hot spots, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To greet cruise ships • At events and conferences • Eastern Corridor (noting that Roebourne is currently the only town in 2,000km that visitors drive through) • Outside of City of Karratha, such as at Broome, Karijini National Park, and local caravan and camping expos. <p>Create an annual schedule of where to position the mobile VIC based on visitor travel patterns, seasons and marketing opportunities to ensure the best return is gained.</p>	Medium term	KTVC

#	Action	Priority	Driver
	A lower-cost option would be a marquee, folding table, power source (battery), and internet provision, such as Starlink Roam , however this would be challenging with weather and other conditions not being suitable for staff. A more suitable but higher-cost option, which could be grant-funded, would be an all-inclusive purpose-built visitor servicing van with air conditioning and an awning.		
3	Strong online digital presence		
3.1	<p>Develop a new destination website</p> <p>Develop a new destination website on an easily updateable platform that is a stand-alone tourism website and is owned by the City and easily updateable by its managers, the KTVc staff. Undertake an annual review and refresh of the website, ensuring information is comprehensive (all operators and key events are listed) and up to date, and add a blog article or two to maintain content freshness for search engines and to meet the changing needs of visitors.</p> <p>Include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website accessibility • Operator and attraction listings, including the City's tourism assets (e.g. playgrounds, beaches) • Online booking (only for City of Karratha products), including packages • City of Karratha map • Events calendar (ideally automated using software such as Everi to pull online event listings from across the web) • Logistics information • Itineraries for target markets (e.g. family caravanners) • Live chat • Trail maps (mountain biking, cycling, hiking, kayaking, boating) • Blog articles for search engine optimisation and to meet the needs of visitors, such as Top 5 family attractions on the Point Samson peninsula, or Locals' favourite mountain bike trails in Karratha. 	<p>Immediate</p> <p><i>2025-26 off peak season in preparation for 2026 tourism season</i></p>	KTVc
3.2	Ensure online listings are current	Immediate	KTVc

#	Action	Priority	Driver
	<p>Ensure Google Business Profiles, ATDW listings, and TripAdvisor listings for KTVC, local tourism operators, businesses, and City-managed tourism assets (e.g. key playgrounds) are live and up to date; engaging operators to list their businesses themselves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the City of Karratha tourism audit each year pre-peak visitation season, and check the online listings are live and up to date. 	<i>2025-26 off peak season in preparation for 2026 tourism season</i>	
3.3	<p>Deliver social media in-house</p> <p>Develop a Service Level Agreement between Communications and KTVC that allows for the upskilling of KTVC permanent staff members to manage the destination's social media accounts: Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, scheduling posts during the off-season for the peak season using scheduling software, complemented by live updates during peak season such as road conditions and just-announced events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimise the Menu of the Facebook page Post regularly (at least 4 times per week during the peak tourism season) on themes related to the needs of target markets such as local attractions (tourism businesses as well as attractions), local places to eat, places to stay, services the VIC offers (including retail sales), testimonials/reviews, etc. Ensure Facebook events are added to the Facebook page Encourage user-generated content (e.g. with a regional hashtag or competition) Add updates to KTVC's Google Business Profile listing (which will support SEO) 	<p>Immediate</p> <p><i>2025-26 off peak season in preparation for 2026 tourism season</i></p>	KTVC
4	Improved wayfinding and interpretive signage		
4.1	<p>Develop a signage strategy</p> <p>Develop a signage strategy leveraging signage planning undertaken in the past, that identifies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which key tourism (wayfinding and interpretive) signage needs to be updated, and when (prioritised) Which City department is responsible for the improvement and ongoing management of signage (such as replacement after a fixed number of years as signage weathers); and responsible for coordinating with other organisations which deliver tourism signage such as Main Roads Western Australia and Pilbara Tourism Association. How to incorporate local traditional culture, such as with dual place-naming, using current and traditional place names. 	Short term	Community Planning

#	Action	Priority	Driver
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A signage improvement and maintenance budget 		
4.2	Update information bays Update the information bays at each entry point to town. This will involve fresh new signage, landscaping and beautification and addition of rubbish bins and other supporting infrastructure where appropriate.	Medium term <i>2026-27 off peak season in preparation for 2027 tourism season</i>	KTVC
5	Information at visitor hotspots (e-kiosk or brochure rack)		
5.1	Enhance the visitor experience at Karratha Airport Provide visitor information at Karratha Airport's luggage area, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TV screen screening destination videos and images QR code to destination website City of Karratha brochure and map Invest in indigenous artwork and integration of local Ngarluma language throughout the airport terminal to make visitors feel more welcome and to feel immediately connected to the country they are on. A good example is the Broome airport, which was completed through funding from WAITOC.	Short term <i>2025-26 off peak season in preparation for 2026 tourism season</i>	City Growth and/or Karratha Airport
5.2	Add VIS at visitor hotspots Strategically place a digital kiosk (preferred) or a brochure rack for the City of Karratha brochure and map (which will require regular refills) (a weatherproof brochure holder if outdoors) at key visitor hotspots within and beyond the region, such as Karratha's Shell fuel stop, Cossack Heritage Town, Roebourne Café and Gallery, Point Samson Tavern, and free and low-cost campsites.	Medium term <i>2026-27 off peak season in preparation for 2027 tourism season</i>	KTVC

#	Action	Priority	Driver
5.3	<p>Provide VIS in Roebourne</p> <p>Provide visitor information in Roebourne, a key decision point for dispersing into the eastern corridor, ideally as a visitor welcome centre co-located with an attraction such as an artists' studio, otherwise as mobile visitor centre and/or an e-kiosk or brochure rack, such as at the City's Roebourne office (with a visitor information flag or sign on the main road directing visitors to the office).</p> <p>The purpose is to provide an attractive, safe and welcoming place for visitors passing through to stop and be tempted to stay longer in Roebourne to explore, and to discover, and turn into, the eastern corridor, such as to visit Cossack.</p> <p>For any new development by the City in Roebourne, the possibility of providing a home for VIS in the development should be included, such as if the City develops a caravan park in Roebourne.</p>	Ongoing – short term could be e-kiosk and mobile visitor centre and long term a Welcome Centre.	KTVC
6	Upskilled operators		
6.1	<p>Provide a monthly industry newsletter</p> <p>Provide a monthly (year-round) industry newsletter for tourism business owners, and other businesses that benefit from tourism. Include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional, state, and national training opportunities (such as one-off webinars) and resources (such as Tourism WA's marketing resources, and Australian Tourism Export Council's Trade Ready online course) • Grant opportunities • Information on upcoming events and what's new in tourism locally • Information about opportunities to promote tourism businesses via the VIC (such as screening an ad on the video wall, providing brochures, etc) • Access to tools and resources such as the Connecting to Cultural Tourism toolkit 	Short term and ongoing	KTVC or City Growth
6.2	<p>Ensure operators' online listings are current</p> <p>Each year in the months leading up to peak tourism season, engage tourism operators and event organisers in developing or updating their ATDW listing (for operators, this can be linked to their Google Business Profile so updating one updates both).</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing</p> <p>2025-26 off peak season in</p>	KTVC or City Growth

#	Action	Priority	Driver
		<i>preparation for 2026 tourism season</i>	
6.3	Upskill operators to deliver VIS Upskill operators to play a VIS role as destination ambassadors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate a half-yearly familiarisation tour for operators and KTVC staff to build their knowledge of experiences available across the region. These could be networking and mini-training events hosted at different tourism operators each time, or a tour of several. Engage operators to join the mobile VIC on trips beyond the region's borders to have them help promote City of Karratha. 	Medium term <i>2026-27 off peak season in preparation for 2027 tourism season</i>	KTVC
7	VIS outside of the City of Karratha		
7.1	Distribute tourism brochure and host billboards outside of the City of Karratha Distribute the City of Karratha brochure and map and host billboards at key visitor decision-making and turn-off hotspots outside of the City of Karratha, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broome Karijini National Park Ningaloo Reef and Coral Coast Port Hedland, Newman, Tom Price Nanutarra Roadhouse Pilbara VICs 	Short term <i>2025-26 off peak season in preparation for 2026 tourism season</i>	KTVC
7.2	Deliver digital ads outside of City of Karratha Deliver digital ads (search and social media ads) to visitors at these key visitor decision-making and turn-off hotspots outside of the City of Karratha to encourage them to turn towards the City of Karratha.	Medium term <i>2026 tourism season</i>	
7.3	Improve collaboration of the Pilbara VICs Improve collaboration of the Pilbara VICs by	Medium term	Shared role of all VICs, instigated by

#	Action	Priority	Driver
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having a video conference catch up prior to the beginning of the tourism season, and as a debrief at the end, to identify an annual activity to cross promote and collaborate. Hosting a Pilbara-wide competition with entries at VICs (the more VICs you visit, the more chances to win) Incorporating cross promotional information in marketing to encourage visitors to circulate in the Pilbara and stay longer. If the Warlu Way guide is no longer in print, provide each other with a guide to distribute, such as City of Karratha's brochure and map. 	<i>2026-27 off peak season in preparation for 2027 tourism season</i>	KTVC with handover to each VIC in turn to drive an element or the next activity
8	Measure, report and use visitor data		
8.1	<p>Purchase visitor data</p> <p>To compensate for Tourism Research Australia's lack of City of Karratha statistics, purchase data on visitors to City of Karratha, such as</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. numbers of visitors 2. visitor spend 3. visitor hotspots and flows 4. residence 5. motivation for travel 6. accommodation type 7. transport type <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spendmapp uses financial transaction data Placemapp use pings from mobile phones off mobile phone towers to provide spend and movement visitor data. 	Immediate	City Growth
8.2	Deliver a visitor survey	Short term	KTVC

#	Action	Priority	Driver
	<p>Develop and deliver an ongoing visitor survey to measure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where visitors are coming from and going to How long they are staying in City of Karratha Their motivation for travel (e.g. holiday or visit family and friends) Activities they are interested in experiencing during their trip Travel party (e.g. family, older couple, younger couple) Sources of VIS information they use/used in City of Karratha or prefer Why they visited the VIC VIS needs (information sought) Satisfaction with VIS in the region Their suggestions for VIS improvements or what they would like the VIC to offer <p>Resource:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism & Events Queensland's Collection of Visitor Data guide 	<i>2025-26 off peak season in preparation for 2026 tourism season</i>	
8.3	<p>Report on the value of VIS</p> <p>Compile an annual report of analysis of the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchased visitor data Insights from users of the destination website and social media followers A visitor survey <p>Communicate the value of the KTVc and visitors to the City executive, the tourism industry, and the community by publishing the report and a media release.</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing</p> <p><i>End of each calendar year</i></p>	KTVc
9	Improved liveability		
9.1	<p>Consider a City of Karratha volunteer ambassador program</p> <p>Review other existing successful programs such as the iCity visitor service in the City of Perth and create a volunteer program that supports local engagement and adds to the visitor experience. This will also help alleviate some resourcing challenges at the Centre.</p>	Medium term	KTVc

#	Action	Priority	Driver
9.2	Promote tourism experiences to locals Have a weekly brief column on tourism published in the Pilbara News to promote to locals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractions to visit • Upcoming events • Reasons to invite family and friends to visit City of Karratha (such as major events coming up in the future) • Stories on local hosts and their pride and passion in the region 	Short term	KTVC
9.3	Enable locals to experience local tourism experiences at a discount. Work with tourism businesses to develop an annual 'locals day' outside of peak season where locals can enjoy tourism experiences across the region at a reduced price.	Medium term	KTVC
10	Improved sustainability		
10.1	Improve KTVC's environmental sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake the Australian Tourism Industry Council's (ATIC) Sustainable Tourism Accreditation. • Undertake ATIC's Tourism Emissions Reduction Program. • Using learnings from this process, develop a sustainability plan to improve environmental and socio-cultural outcomes from KTVC and VIS. Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austrade's Sustainable Tourism Toolkit • The Global Sustainable Tourism Council's (GSTC) Destination Criteria recommends setting quantifiable environmental targets (such as reduction targets for emissions, waste to landfill, and energy and water use) and socio-cultural targets (such as facilitating connections between visitors and local Aboriginal artists and storytellers). 	Short term and ongoing <i>Begin in 2025-26 off peak season, and continue each off peak season</i>	KTVC

Case studies

Moira Shire Council's Mobile VIC

Visitor servicing in Moira Shire

- Large geographic area with small population (2 major towns and 2 smaller)
- Originally 4 VICs which were rationalised to 2 VICs plus 1 mobile VIC

Moira Shire's visitor servicing van's fit out includes:

- Large screen showcasing attractions and events
- Brochure racks
- Work desk
- Storage
- Electronic awning
- Flags, canopy, and table for displaying flyers
- Steps to enable access
- Ability to run events out of it
(e.g. to transport a marquee and event equipment)



Upfront cost: \$240,000

- Purchase of two-seater Mercedes Sprinter for \$150,000 (2020) (other models were considered but length of warranty was important for Council; [electric vans](#) have lower running and maintenance costs, and can be a source of electricity while in use as a visitor servicing hub in remote locations)
- Fit out: \$80,000
- Vehicle wrap: \$10,000

Usage:

- The mobile VIC is run 5 days/week as an accredited mobile VIC under their accredited bricks and mortar VIC
- A calendar on Council's website displays the van's location

- It receives good visitation at markets and events
- It is taken outside of the shire as well (e.g. to trade events)

Outcomes:

- Moira's mobile VIC reaches 2.5 times more visitors than its bricks and mortar VIC.
- The running costs of the mobile VIC are 20% the cost of running the bricks and mortar VIC.
These costs would be significantly less if a volunteer was allowed to staff the mobile VIC, but Council's staff's union requires that it is staffed by two paid staff, and that no volunteers are used. Staffing the van is a very high cost for Council.
- The cost per visitor serviced is about \$20. This would be significantly less if the van was volunteer run.

Learnings

- Short bursts are better than all day in the same location (i.e. visiting 2-3 locations per day for a few hours each)
- Identify the best locations (e.g. could be a petrol station on a Saturday morning)
- Consider adding a coffee machine and fridge to increase engagement (e.g. to act as a Driver Reviver service on a roadside pull-off or at a park with playground)

Goulburn Shire Council's Mobile VIC

- Provides interactive elements e.g., games for kids
- Provides free Wi-Fi and phone charging
- Provides Council services to locals (e.g. a place to provide feedback on Council projects and pay rates)

St Kilda Tourism & Events Mobile VIC

- St Kilda's mobile VIC van distributes 700,000 brochures/year and costs about \$20-25,000/year to run (brochures, petrol, maintenance, registration, etc).
- It is used most actively in the shoulder seasons (spring and autumn) and the peak season of summer.

- It is staffed on weekends and during events (depending on the weather and what's on) by a team of 40 volunteers. The team is managed by a volunteer. A core group of retired, community-minded volunteers are supplemented with tourism students, each of whom learn from the other. Training for volunteers is via online software.
- The van has its own power source (battery), so it can, for example, host a DJ at the beach.
- The van hosts competitions such as free ticket giveaways and prizes donated by local businesses, which used as an incentive to sign up to the St Kilda Tourism & Events' newsletter.

Yarra Ranges Tourism's Digital Kiosks

Yarra Ranges Tourism inherited two bricks and mortar VICs when it formed, one just outside of its region and one within.

Several years ago, these were replaced with digital visitor servicing (destination website, social media and digital information kiosks) and brochure carousels (which distribute the region's map and trail brochures). This was for a variety of reasons:

- The region has multiple entry points so there were no centralised locations suitable for a visitor information centre.
- The cost of the VICs was around \$250,000/year: \$180,000 in cash and the rest in hidden costs such as in staff time to manage volunteers. This represented about 1/3 of the tourism organisation's budget to service just 0.4% of visitors.
- The difficulty in recruiting, managing and retaining a team of 40 volunteers.
- The volunteers' lack of interest in undertaking business improvement or consistently recording visitor data.



The tourism organisation secured an innovation grant of \$250,000 to install five digital kiosks (each cost approximately \$15,000, though there are a range of models available, including wall mounted kiosks and kiosks of different sizes). Today the continuously expanding program includes 30 kiosks spread across the region in high-traffic visitation spots, at a cost of \$50,000/year.

Costs include wifi maintenance, and replacement if vandalised (they are difficult to find insurance for; one has had to be replaced).

Electricity costs are paid for either by the local Council or the business operator (e.g. an attraction that hosts a kiosk).

The large-screen kiosks house the destination website. Geolocated pages enable visitors to find search results (e.g. attractions and accommodations) near to them (close to the kiosk).

Outcomes for this new model to date:

- The kiosks help travellers find the best source of information on the destination: the destination website.
- The kiosks collect data, such as where visitors are travelling to next, and mobile phone numbers for SMS remarketing (for those visitors who opt to send text to themselves of a page from the website to their phone; some visitors simply take a photo of the page).
- When the screens are not being used by visitors, they can be used to show hero images and videos of the destination, the destinations' Facebook and Instagram feeds, deals offered by RTB members, community notifications from the local Council, and ads (as in a digital billboard). It was predicted that ads sold (managed by a billboard company) could generate \$12,000/year/kiosk in income from outside the region as visitor servicing revenue for the RTB.
- Demand from operators who would like to host a kiosk is high.
- Maintenance has not been an issue. Sometimes the screens freeze, but they reset themselves every few hours. There is a sign that says, 'If there is an issue, text this number' for visitors.