



Tourism Strategy 2026–2031



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land within the Shire, the Ballardong and Yued people of the Noongar nation, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. The Shire recognises the integral role these community members play in our culture, diversity, history and future.



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ABOUT

The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu is a rural local government area located in the northern Wheatbelt region of Western Australia, approximately two hours north-east of Perth. Its accessibility from Perth positions the Shire as an attractive destination for day trips, short stays and seasonal tourism experiences.

The Shire is characterised by expansive agricultural landscapes, remnant natural bushland, granite outcrops and distinctive seasonal changes. The region is widely recognised for its significant wildflower displays, which attract visitors annually and contribute to the Wheatbelt's broader nature-based tourism appeal. In addition, the area's low population density and minimal light pollution create ideal conditions for dark sky experiences, and the Shire is proudly recognised as an Astrotourism Town, supporting night sky observation and Astrotourism as a growing niche within the visitor economy.

The townships of Wongan Hills, Ballidu and Cadoux each contribute to the Shire's identity, offering a mix of heritage, community facilities and local experiences. The Shire's history, including its agricultural development and events such as the Cadoux earthquake, provides a strong foundation for heritage interpretation and storytelling. Public art, local museums, cultural centres and community-led initiatives further enhance the cultural landscape.

Tourism within the Shire aligns with broader state and regional trends, which show increasing demand for authentic, nature-based and experience-led travel, particularly within regional areas. Visitors are increasingly seeking destinations that offer open space, connection to nature, and genuine community experiences. The Shire is well positioned to respond to these trends, with existing strengths in wildflower tourism, walk trails, heritage assets and a welcoming rural environment.



Historically, tourism development within the Shire has been strongly community driven, with local volunteers and organisations playing a central role in shaping the visitor experience. Key stakeholders such as the Wongan Hills Tourism Group, Wongan Ballidu Bushcare and Wongan Hills Tidy Towns, alongside groups including the Wongan Hills and Districts Museum Committee, Ballidu Heritage Centre, local arts and cultural centres, the Ballidu Progress Group and the Cadoux Sports Council, have all contributed significantly to maintaining public spaces, supporting community events and enhancing tourism offerings across the Shire. This strong culture of volunteerism, collaboration and local pride is a defining feature of the Shire and continues to underpin its tourism identity and development.

This Strategy represents the Shire's first coordinated approach to tourism planning. It provides a framework to guide sustainable tourism development over the next five years, aligning local priorities with regional and state tourism directions. It recognises the importance of supporting existing community-led initiatives and does not seek to duplicate these efforts. Instead, it focuses on strengthening collaboration, improving enabling infrastructure, enhancing visitor information and positioning the Shire more effectively within the regional tourism market.

Tourism presents an opportunity to contribute to the Shire's economic diversification, support local businesses, and increase visitation and length of stay. At the same time, it offers social benefits through increased community activation, strengthened place identity and continued investment in local assets. This Strategy aims to direct these outcomes, ensuring that tourism growth is sustainable, community-supported and reflective of the Shire's unique character.



TOURISM IDENTITY

Nature & Landscapes

Seasonal wildflowers, granite outcrops, bushland reserves, and expansive agricultural scenery that define the region's visual identity.

Heritage & Culture

Pioneer history, agricultural innovation, and community-led museums and heritage centres that preserve culture and our local stories.

Community & Lifestyle

A strong volunteer ethos and welcoming towns where community groups, events, and local initiatives shape the visitor experience.

Nature-Based Experiences

Opportunities for stargazing, birdwatching, walking trails, scenic drives, and passive recreation in natural surroundings.

BALLIDU

Ballidu, 219km north east of Perth, is the second largest town within the Shire, and famous for the 'Bike it to Ballidu' gravel cycling event, which has been running since 1999. Now delivered by the Ballidu Progress Group, the event raises funds for local projects delivered in conjunction with community groups. The Ballidu Contemporary Arts Gallery, Ballidu Heritage Centre, and the Mangaart Miya Nyungar Cultural and Heritage Centre provide valuable opportunities for locals and visitors to enjoy, promote and preserve culture and the arts within the region.

Key Attractions:

- Alpha Park
- Balli Balli Walk Trail
- Ballidu Contemporary Arts Gallery
- Ballidu Heritage Centre
- Mangaart Miya Nyungar Cultural and Heritage Centre
- Public Artworks



CADOUX

The town of **Cadoux** is located on the eastern edge of the Shire. Cadoux Primary School provides education opportunities for nearby residents, and the Cadoux Sports and Recreation Centre support both sporting and community events and activities. The Cadoux Sports Council operate as a not-for-profit, with funds raised through activities being reinvested into projects within the town.

Key Attractions:

- Cadoux Earthquake Site
- Cadoux Rest area and RV stopover site
- Dingo Rock Reserve
- Flat Rocks Reserve



WONGAN HILLS

Wongan Hills is approximately 184km north of Perth and is named after the nearby range of hills located to the north-west of the town. As the primary service centre of the Shire, Wongan Hills is home to the majority of local businesses, services and community infrastructure.

The town supports a strong and active community, with many community groups offering activities across the arts, history, playgroups, sport and senior support. The Wongan Hills Community Resource Centre is located at 'The Station', a modern, multi-use facility that also houses the Wongan Hills Visitor Centre, Library, LUMEN Regional Study Hub and the Wongan Arts & Crafts Centre, alongside a range of rooms and services available for community and commercial hire.

Additional community assets, including the Wongan Hills and Districts Museum, sporting and recreation facilities, civic buildings and education spaces, further contribute to the town's role as a social, cultural and administrative hub for the Shire.

Key Attractions:

- Christmas Rock Reserve
- Elphin Reserve
- Gathercole Reserve
- Lake Ninan
- Mount Matilda
- Mount Obrien
- Public Art
- Shops and Cafe's
- Wongan Hills Arboretum
- Wongan Arts Society
- Wongan Hills Heritage Walk Trail
- Wongan Hills and Districts Museum
- Wongan Hills Railway Water Tower and Barracks
- Wongan Hills Wildflower Walk Trail
- Wongan Hills Visitors Information Centre



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

To inform the development of this Strategy, the Shire undertook targeted community engagement, including a stakeholder workshop and a broader community survey.

The workshop brought together representatives from community groups, local organisations, and key stakeholders to identify:

- The Shire's key tourism assets
- What is currently working well
- Gaps and challenges
- Priorities for future investment

Key Themes from Engagement

Several consistent themes emerged from the workshop, highlighting both strengths and opportunities:

- The Shire's natural assets, particularly wildflowers, landscapes and dark skies, are highly valued and form the core of the visitor experience.
- There is a strong appreciation for the sense of community, friendliness and local pride.
- Walk trails and arts experiences are key strengths with further potential for development.
- Signage and wayfinding is the most significant gap impacting visitor experience.
- There is a need for improved visitor infrastructure, particularly seating and development at RV sites.
- Better promotion and access to information, especially online, is required.

“Many ways to have a wonderful experience be it walk trails, our skies, wildflowers, arts and culture and much more. Wongan Ballidu is very blessed in all of what we have to offer.”

“Be proud of this fantastic Shire.”

-Responses from the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu 2026 Community Tourism Survey



POSITIVE TRACK & TRAILS
NATURE ACCESSIBILITY ART
DARK SKIES FRIENDLY
TIDY OPEN **COMMUNITY**
SCENIC LANDSCAPES CLEAN
SAFE STARGAZING
WELCOMING WELL-MAINTAINED SPACES
WILDFLOWERS
HISTORY VOLUNTEERS PEACEFUL
TOWN PRIDE COLLABORATION
CULTURE

Our Approach

This Strategy recognises the significant contribution made by dedicated community groups, volunteers and local organisations, who play an important role in maintaining, promoting and activating places across the Shire.

The Strategy aims to build upon and support these existing efforts through strengthened collaboration, strategic direction and targeted investment in areas where Council can add the greatest value.

Our Vision

To grow a sustainable and authentic tourism offering that showcases the Shire's natural beauty, heritage and community spirit, while enhancing the visitor experience and supporting local economic development.

What We Want to Achieve

Over the next five years, the Shire aims to:



DATA AND INSIGHTS

COMMUNITY INSIGHTS

As part of the engagement process for this Strategy, the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu released the 2026 Community Tourism Survey. Below are some of the findings from that survey:

Our top rated attraction based on visitor appeal:

Mount O'Brien

Mount O'Brien also rated the highest for the condition and facilities available at our top natural attractions.

The Wongan Arts and Craft Centre along with Mount Matilda were also rated highly based on visitor appeal. The condition and facilities available at our top natural attractions were rated highly at the Wongan Hills Wildflower Walk and at Christmas Rock Reserve.

Data also showed that more than 20% of the respondents to the survey were not aware of the following local attractions:

- Ballidu Heritage Centre
- Ballidu Contemporary Art Gallery
- Flat Rocks
- Wongan Hills Wildflower Walk

This shows the need for increased awareness of these attractions.

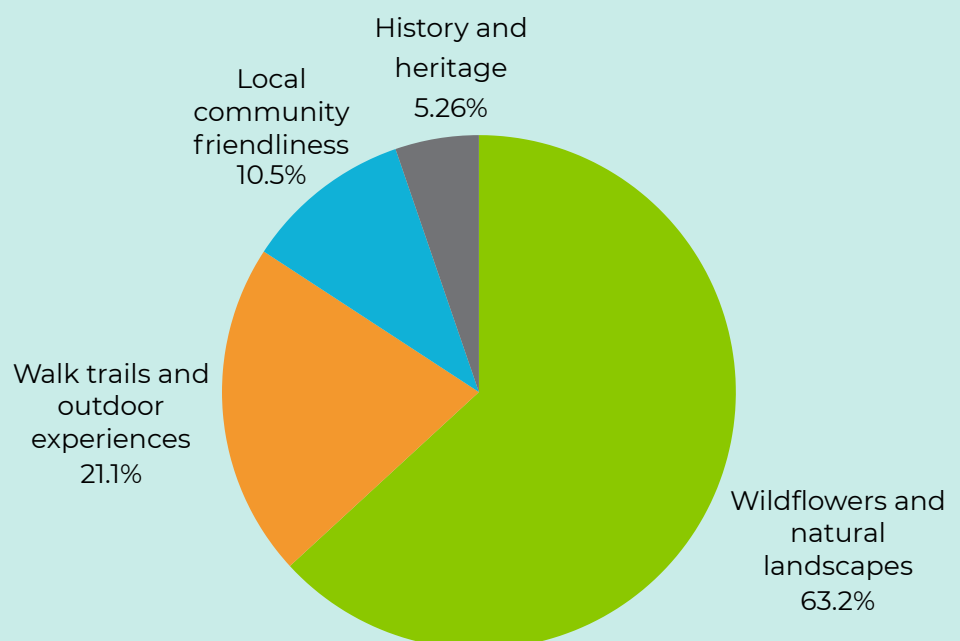
"I think it depends on what the visitors are interested in and what is open, also how far out of town it is."

"Too many of our walk trails and rocks are poorly advertised so many might not know about them."

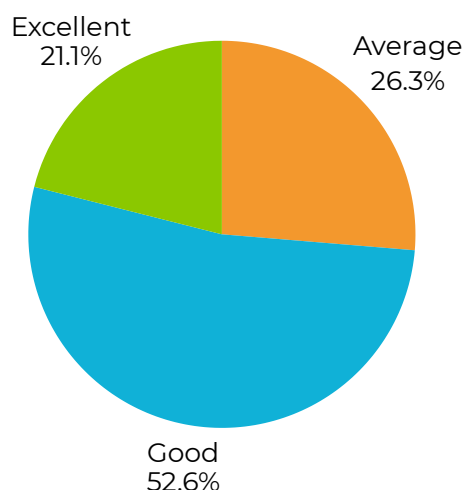
What do visitors love most about our Shire?

The majority of respondents to the 2026 Community Tourism Survey believe that wildflowers and natural landscapes are what visitors appreciate most about our Shire.

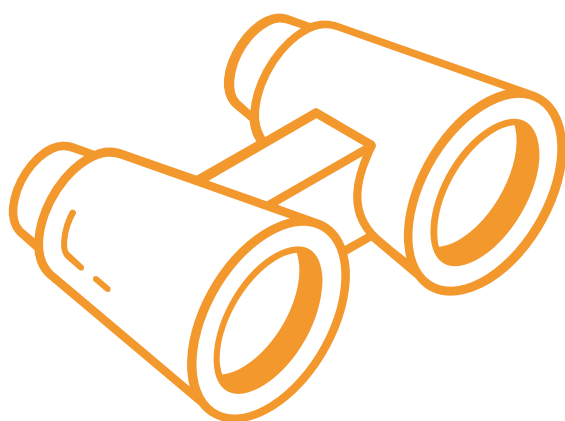
"Very fortunate in our Shire to have such a diverse range of interesting places to go and things to see."



Overall Visitor Experience



**None of the respondents rated the overall visitor experience as poor or very poor quality.*



The Shire ranked best for delivering the following visitor experience:

Natural attractions

(wildflowers, scenery)

with 95% of respondents reporting that these experiences are offered at a good or excellent level. Walk trails and outdoor experiences, along with arts and cultural experiences, were among the top rated experiences in the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu.

Signage and wayfinding was reportedly the worst experience for visitors, with 44.5% of respondents reporting that it was of poor or average quality.

Top voted areas of infrastructure that need improvement:

1. Lack of signage/directions
2. More picnic areas (tables, benches, shade)
3. Improved RV/caravan facilities
4. Public toilets at key tourist sites

Top 5 most important things to the future of tourism in our Shire:

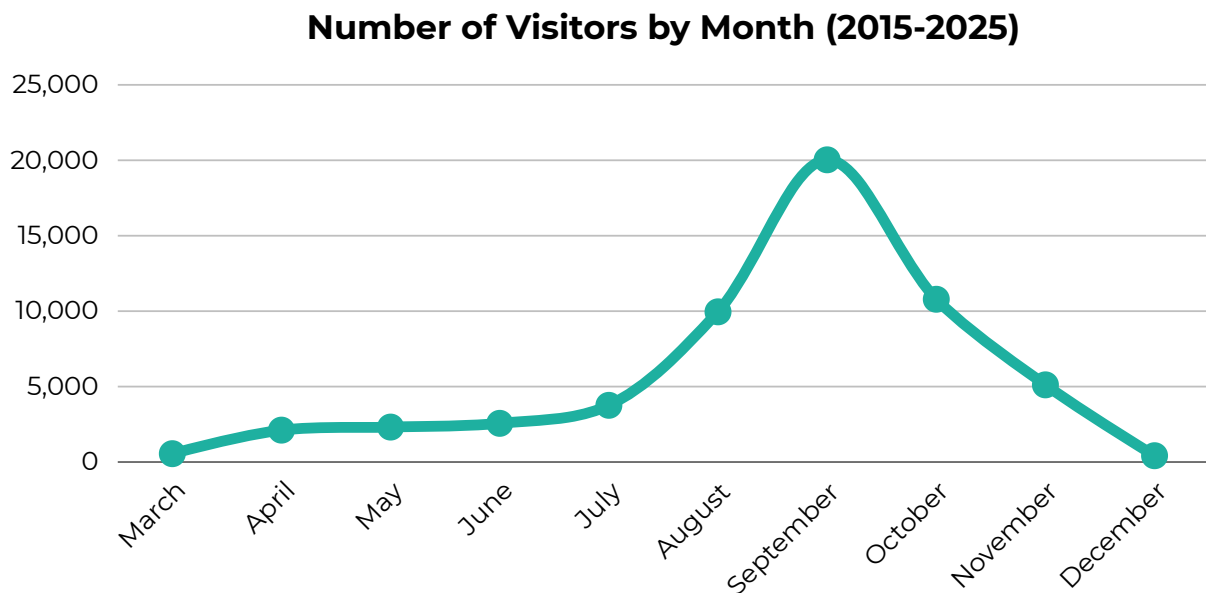
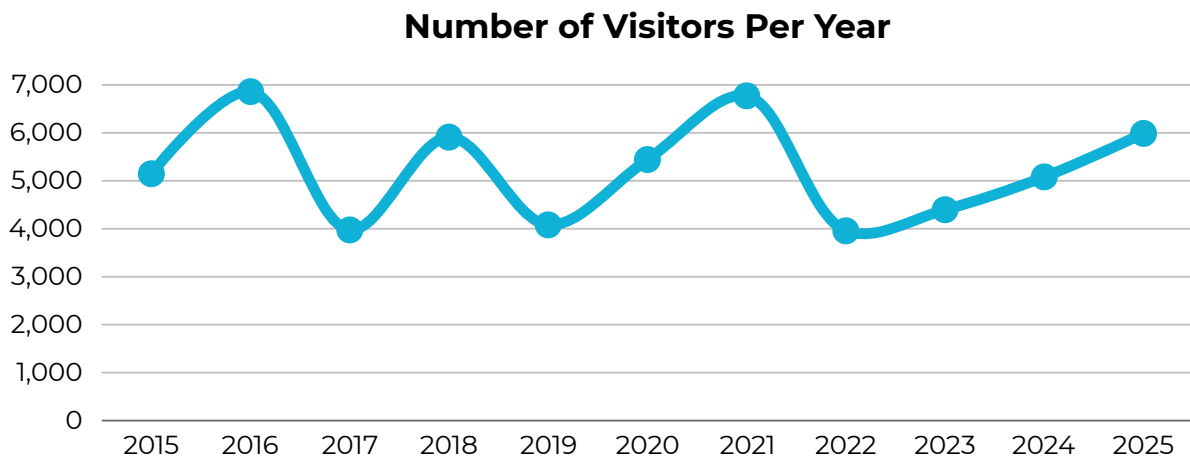
1. Development of key tourist sites
2. Walk trails and nature experiences
3. Wildflowers and seasonal attractions
4. Improved signage and wayfinding
5. RV/caravan facilities

Top voted priorities for the next 5 years:

1. Improve signage and wayfinding
2. Upgrade key tourist sites
3. Improve seating, picnic areas
4. Develop RV/caravan infrastructure
5. Invest in wildflower tourism
6. Improve marketing and promotion

VISITOR INSIGHTS

Below is some information collated by the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu. Some of this information was obtained through the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu's 2026 Visitor Experience Survey.



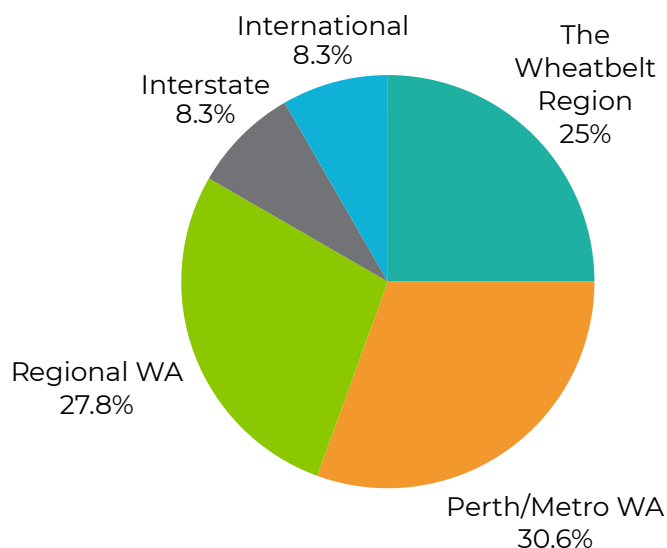
* The above information was provided by the Wongan Hills Tourism Group and is based on visitors who visit the Visitor Centre in Wongan Hills

"The friendliness of the people in Wongon Hills and Cadoux. You cater very well for tourists with your information and offer water and very clean toilets. The mural is beautiful and the historic building and machinery very informative."

"The friendliness and welcoming nature of the local community stood out."

- Shire of Wongan-Ballidu
2026 Visitor Experience
Survey.

Where are Tourists Visiting From



"The hospitality of the residents made me feel very welcome."

"The calm environment and lack of city noise made it very relaxing."

"I enjoyed the peaceful rural atmosphere and the quiet lifestyle."

"I come up every week to visit family and sometimes stay overnight, and I like to visit most of the local shops and get my petrol from Wongan Hills to support local businesses in the regions."

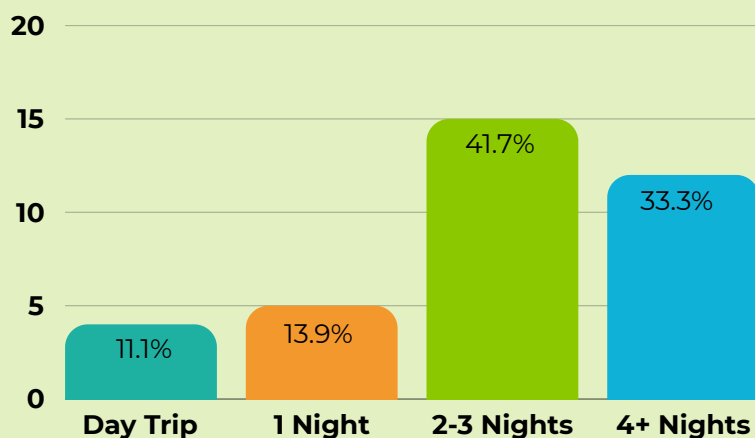
"Residents were super friendly. I went to the Australian Day event which was soooo well ran, they should be proud of themselves whoever was involved."

First Time Visiting:

No
37.1%

Yes
62.9%

Length of Stay



The main reason visitors were travelling was:

Family/friend commitments

with over 30% of respondents reporting this as the reason for visiting. Leisure and work were also common reasons for people travelling to the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu.



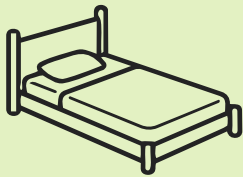
Where Visitors Spend Money



Shopping
36.1%



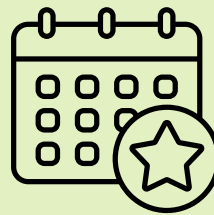
Food and drink
19.4%



Accommodation
16.7%



Fuel
16.7%



Events
5.6%



Other
5.6%



Average rating by visitors of their overall visit to Wongan-Ballidu

"I really enjoyed the beautiful natural landscapes and open spaces."

"I most enjoyed the scenic drives and wide open countryside views."

"How lovely the community is, very welcoming! Beautiful town."

Most Popular Activities While Visiting

- 1.Shopping
- 2.Visiting Lake Ninan
- 3.Exploring wildflowers
- 4.Exploring walking trails
- 5.Visiting friend and relatives
- 6.Visiting Mount O'Brien/Mount Matilda

80.6% found information easy to get

and signage easy to find and follow

The average age of travellers was lower than expected, with a majority of respondents also indicating that they were travelling with young children. This data is not consistent with the observed demographics of visitors and is most likely the result of the survey being offered in a digital online format.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

STAKEHOLDERS:

Here is a list of the current key tourism stakeholders in the Shire of Wongan Ballidu.

TOURISM AND BUSINESS OPERATORS

Includes:

- Accommodation providers
- Hospitality and food businesses
- Retail and service providers

- Wongan Hills Hotel
- Ballidu Tavern
- Wongan Hills Caravan Park
- Ballidu Caravan Park
- Cafe of Note
- Wongan Hills Bakery
- Cadoux Traders
- Ballidu Trading Post
- Wes' Saloon Bar
- Wongan Hills IGA
- Dunnings Road House
- Wongan Hills Pharmacy
- Wongan Hills Post Office
- Comfort Style
- Kanyanya
- Wongan Hills Community Shop
- Boekemans
- TKB
- Auhl's for hair
- Great Southern Fuels
- Tractus tyres
- Walkers Diesel
- AFGRI
- Wongan Hills Hardware
- Wongan Hills Memorial Swimming Pool
- Wheatbelt Vet Services

COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

Includes:

- CRC and Visitor Information volunteers
- Community and volunteer groups
- Heritage, arts and cultural groups
- Environmental and wildflower groups
- Landholders with tourism potential

- Residents
- Tourists
- Councillors and Shire staff
- Wongan Hills Youth Group
- Wongan Hills District High School Students
- Wongan Hills Bushcare
- Wongan Hills Tidy Towns
- Mangaart Miya Nyungar Culture and Heritage Centre
- Wongan-Ballidu Aboriginal Elders
- Wongan Hills Apex Club
- Wongan Hills Rotary Club
- CWA - Wongan Hills
- Wongan Hills Writers and Poets
- Wongan Hills Arts Society
- Ballidu Contemporary Art Society
- Wongan Hills and Districts Museum
- Ballidu Heritage Centre
- Ballidu Progress Group
- Wongan Hills Progress Association
- Wongan Hills Vintage Car Club
- Wongan Hills Tourism Group
- Cadoux Recreation Centre
- Wongan Hills Golf Club
- Ballidu Golf Club
- Wongan Hills Sports Council

ACTION PLAN

The following themes will guide tourism development over the next five years:

NATURE-BASED
TOURISM

ARTS, CULTURE AND
HERITAGE

VISITOR EXPERIENCE,
INFRASTRUCTURE
AND INFORMATION

COLLABORATION,
PROMOTION AND
IMPLEMENTATION



NATURE-BASED TOURISM

The Shire's natural landscapes, seasonal wildflowers and outdoor recreation opportunities form the foundation of its tourism offering. This theme focuses on protecting, enhancing and promoting these unique natural assets to strengthen the Shire's position as a leading nature-based destination.

Outcome	Initiative	Key Actions
1.1 The Shire's key natural attractions are protected, accessible and consistently presented as signature visitor destinations	Maintain and enhance key natural sites	1. Maintain access roads to Lake Ninan, Mount Matilda, Mount O'Brien 2. Install entry signage at key natural attractions
1.2 Wildflower tourism is recognised and promoted as a key seasonal drawcard for the Shire	Develop and promote a wildflower tourism experience	1. Map wildflower hotspots. 2. Create seasonal visitor guide. 3. Install and update interpretive signage at key locations
1.3 Walk trails in natural areas provide safe, engaging and well-marked visitor experiences	Upgrade walk trails and nature paths	1. Upgrade trail surfaces where required in consultation with community groups 2. Install wayfinding signage for nature trails 3. Install seating along key walk trails and investigate other infrastructure improvements at sites.
1.4 The Shire is recognised as a leading regional destination for dark sky and Astrotourism experiences	Support and promote Astrotourism opportunities across the Shire	1. Maintain and promote the Shire's recognition as an Astrotourism Town in partnership with Astrotourism WA. 2. Promote dark sky viewing locations and astro photography opportunities through tourism materials and digital platforms. 3. Explore opportunities for Astrotourism events, experiences and partnerships that encourage overnight visitation.

ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

The Shire's cultural identity is reflected through its heritage, public art, museums, cultural centres and community stories. This theme focuses on strengthening interpretation, creativity and cultural experiences to enrich the visitor journey.

Outcome	Initiative	Key Actions
2.1 The Shire's heritage and cultural assets are activated and accessible to visitors	Strengthen the Shires heritage and cultural tourism assets	1. Support enhancements to the Wongan Hills and Districts Museum, Ballidu Heritage Centre and other heritage visitor assets to improve visitor experience and interpretation. 2. Install and upgrade interpretation signage at key heritage sites, including the railway barracks precinct and Cadoux earthquake site. 3. Enhance and expand heritage trail experiences across the townsites. 4. Improve visibility and promotion of heritage and cultural attractions through tourism materials and visitor information.
2.2 Public art contributes to a distinctive sense of place across Shire towns	Develop and promote public art initiatives	1. Support the development of new murals and public art installations across Shire towns. 2. Develop a catalogue of existing public art to support the creation of a Shire-wide Arts Trail experience. 3. Investigate the development of a "Bike Highway" to Ballidu.
2.3 Cultural identity is strengthened through the recognition and inclusion of Aboriginal heritage and knowledge	Integrate Aboriginal cultural storytelling into tourism experiences	1. Incorporate Aboriginal place names and cultural interpretation into signage and materials where appropriate. 2. Develop culturally appropriate interpretation in collaboration with Traditional Owners. 3. Support and promote local Cultural Centres as a place to visit.



VISITOR EXPERIENCE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND INFORMATION

A high-quality visitor experience relies on accessible infrastructure, clear information and well-presented public spaces. This theme focuses on improving facilities, signage and digital information to support longer stays and stronger visitor satisfaction.

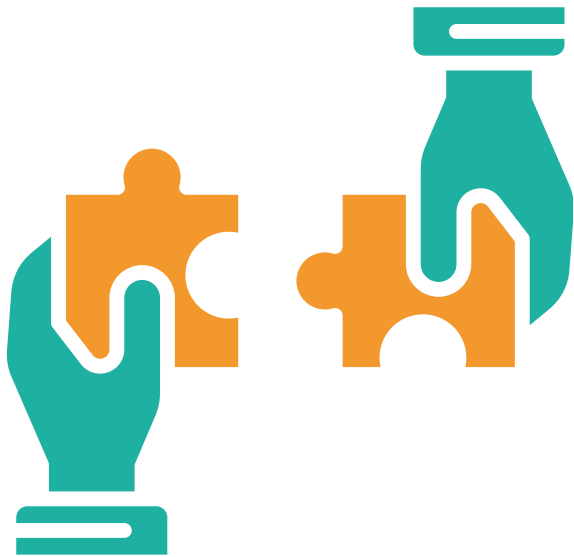
Outcome	Initiative	Key Actions
3.1 Visitors can easily navigate and access key attractions across the Shire	Deliver a consistent signage and wayfinding system	1. Complete a signage audit across the Shire's key attractions. 2. Install directional signage to key attractions and towns. 3. Implement consistent Shire signage style and branding 4. Install wayfinding signage along walk trails.
3.2 Visitor comfort and amenity levels support longer stays and repeat visitation	Upgrade visitor facilities	1. Install benches and picnic tables at key visitor sites and RV areas. 2. Explore the installation of BBQ facilities in high-use areas 3. Improve lighting in key pedestrian areas
3.3 Visitors have easy access to clear, consistent and engaging tourism information	Strengthen visitor information systems	1. Further develop tourism information available online. 2. Develop self-drive itineraries and visitor guides. 3. Introduce QR codes on signage and tourism materials
3.4 Tourism experiences are accessible and inclusive for all visitors	Improve accessibility across tourism sites	1. Provide local accessibility information online for visitors. 2. Audit key visitor sites for accessibility improvements

COLLABORATION, PROMOTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Successful tourism development relies on strong partnerships between Council, community groups, businesses and regional stakeholders. This theme ensures coordinated delivery of the Tourism Strategy while strengthening promotion and collective impact.

Outcome	Initiative	Key Actions
4.1 Tourism development is coordinated through strong partnerships and shared decision-making	Build and maintain effective partnerships with key community groups and stakeholders to support collaborative tourism development and delivery	1. Form Tourism Working Group with key stakeholders. 2. Regular engagement with key tourism and community groups. 3. Facilitation of collaboration across projects and events
4.2 The Shire is positioned as part of a broader regional tourism network	Develop partnerships with neighbouring Shires	1. Explore the development of joint tourism route/drive trails. 2. Explore to collaborate on regional marketing campaigns.
4.3 The Shire's tourism offering is actively promoted to increase visitation and awareness	Strengthen tourism marketing	1. Develop updated tourism content and branding. 2. Improve digital promotion and social media presence.
4.4 Community-led tourism initiatives are recognised and supported as a core strength of the Shire's tourism identity	Support and enable existing community-led tourism and place-based initiatives	1. Provide ongoing liaison with key volunteer and community groups. 2. Support coordination of community-led projects and events. 3. Support the Wongan Hills Tourism Group in the delivery of the annual Reynoldson Reserve Festival where required. 4. Support the Wongan Hills Tourism Group to maximise their online presence in use of their website and social media.
4.5 Tourism visitation contributes to the vitality and sustainability of local businesses and the broader Shire economy	Strengthen linkages between tourism and local business opportunities	1. Promote local businesses within tourism materials and itineraries. 2. Encourage visitors to spend in towns through improved information and signage. 5. Support collaboration between tourism operators and local businesses.

IMPLEMENTATION AND PARTNERSHIPS



Successful delivery of this Strategy will rely on strong collaboration between the Shire, local community groups, businesses and regional partners.

The Shire will play a coordinating and enabling role, supporting existing efforts and focusing on strategic investment, while continuing to work closely with community organisations who are already delivering significant value to the tourism offering.





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