

# Cook Shire Tourism Strategy

## *Phase I Consultation Report*

**Version 1.0**  
**May, 2012**

*A leading Australian consulting group recognised through the success of our clients*

- Economics, Planning & Development 
- Business Strategy & Finance 
- Community Research & Strategy 
- Design, Marketing & Advertising 
- Information & Knowledge Management 

## Document Control

---

Job ID: 15972  
Job Name: Cook Shire Tourism Strategy  
Project Director: Carey Ramm  
Project Manager: Thor Lyster  
Company: Cook Shire Council  
Job Contact: David Barker  
Document Name: AECgroup Cook Shire Tourism Strategy Phase I Consultation Report  
Last Saved: 23/7/2012 12:42 PM

Version	Date	Reviewed PM	Approved PD
V1	5/07/2011	JD, TL	
Final	29/05/2012	TL	CR

Disclaimer:

Whilst all care and diligence have been exercised in the preparation of this report, AEC Group Limited does not warrant the accuracy of the information contained within and accepts no liability for any loss or damage that may be suffered as a result of reliance on this information, whether or not there has been any error, omission or negligence on the part of AEC Group Limited or their employees. Any forecasts or projections used in the analysis can be affected by a number of unforeseen variables, and as such no warranty is given that a particular set of results will in fact be achieved.



# Table of Contents

---

<b>DOCUMENT CONTROL.....</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 BACKGROUND .....	3
1.2 PURPOSE OF REPORT .....	3
<b>2. PHASE I CONSULTATION APPROACH .....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 CONSULTATION PROCESS.....	4
2.2 KEY THEMES FOR PHASE I CONSULTATION .....	5
2.2.1 TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT .....	5
2.2.2 CAMPING AND GREY NOMAD POLICY CONSULTATION FRAMEWORK .....	6
2.2.3 REGIONAL COLLABORATION OPTIONS.....	6
2.2.4 MARKETING OPTIONS.....	7
2.2.5 OPERATING / INDUSTRY ISSUES.....	8
2.3 COMMUNITY PLAN WORKSHOP .....	9
<b>3. RESULTS FROM PHASE I CONSULTATIONS.....</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1 PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT.....	10
3.2 CAMPING AND GREY NOMADS.....	12
3.3 REGIONAL COLLABORATION.....	13
3.4 MARKETING OPTIONS .....	14
3.5 OPERATING ISSUES .....	15
<b>4. NEXT STEPS .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1: CONSULTATION LIST.....</b>	<b>18</b>



# 1. Introduction

---

## 1.1 Background

In 2009, the Cooktown Chamber of Commerce with the support of the Cook Shire Council, commenced the preparation of a marketing action plan, which was later published in 2010. The marketing plan recommended that further research be undertaken to develop the long term sustainability of tourism in Cook Shire. The Cook Shire Council adopted this recommendation and has commissioned AECgroup to develop the Cook Shire Tourism Strategy, which will provide strategic direction for tourism in Cook Shire over the next 10 years. The Cook Shire Tourism Strategy has the following desired outcomes and key aims:

- Strategy for the successful management of the 'grey nomad' and cruise ship tourism markets;
- Development of appropriate measures for estimating and recording tourism visitation numbers and associated statistics in the region;
- Sustainable use of resources in relation to tourism development;
- A long term marketing action plan;
- Identification, analysis and prioritisation of tourism product and infrastructure development;
- Comprehensive consultation with community members, regional tourism industry operators and tourism planning representatives.

## 1.2 Purpose of Report

The Phase I consultation report represents the first phase of a two-phase community, industry and government stakeholder consultation process. This report details the format, structure, key consultation topics and results from the Phase I consultations.

The topics discussed during Phase I consultations were prioritised as the most critical issues, and included:

- Tourism product development;
- Camping policy;
- Grey nomads policy;
- Regional collaboration options;
- Marketing options; and
- Operating / industry issues.

Phase II consultation will be undertaken in the first two weeks of October 2011 and will include the following key topics:

- The cruise shipping market;
- Developing mountain biking opportunities in the region;
- Tourism infrastructure development;
- Signage strategy and policy; and
- Employment, training and skills.

## 2. Phase I Consultation Approach

### 2.1 Consultation Process

The Phase I consultation process has been developed by *AECgroup* in conjunction with the Cook Shire Council. *AECgroup* conducted the consultations in June and July 2011, which included:

- **20 – 23 June:** Site visit to Cooktown;
- **23 June:** Cooktown Community Plan Workshop; and
- **27 June – 8 July:** Remote consultations made by telephone.

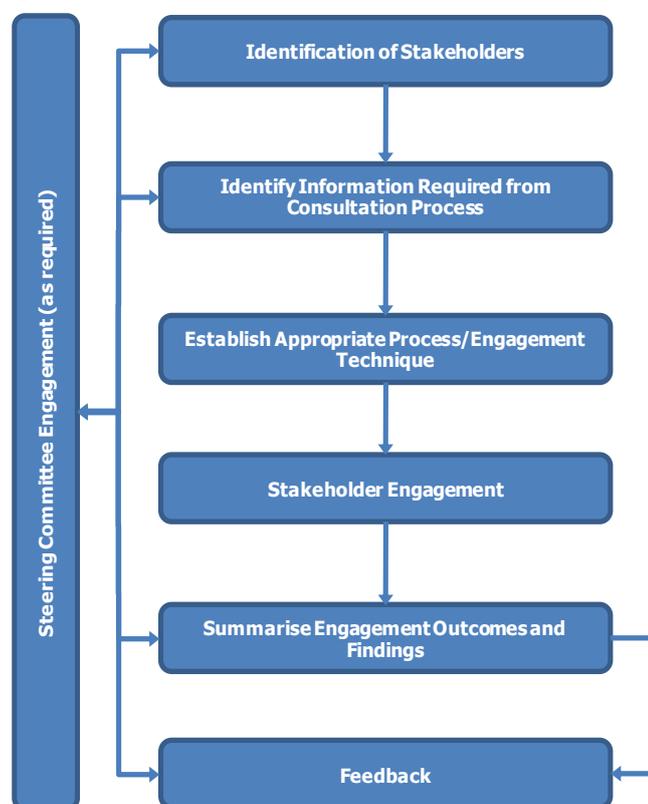
*AECgroup* consulted with a range of stakeholders including Councillors, Council staff, industry and community members. Industry stakeholders included broad range of businesses, including accommodation, restaurants, tour operators, transport, retail, historical organisations and real estate agents.

Phase I consultations were primarily one-on-one face-to-face meetings conducted during *AECgroup's* site visit to Cooktown in June. *AECgroup* also presented at the Community Plan Workshop and guided community members through the Phase I consultation framework. Stakeholders from outside of Cooktown were contacted and consulted by telephone meetings.

The key themes discussed in Phase I consultations were initially provided by the Cook Shire Council and have been incorporated into a detailed framework. The key themes included tourism product development, camping and grey nomad policy, regional collaboration, marketing and operating issues. Themes are discussed in detail in Section 2.2.

The diagram below outlines the approach utilised during the planning and implementation of Phase I consultations for the Cook Shire Tourism Strategy.

**Figure 2.1: Adopted Consultation Process**



Source: *AECgroup*

## 2.2 Key Themes for Phase I Consultation

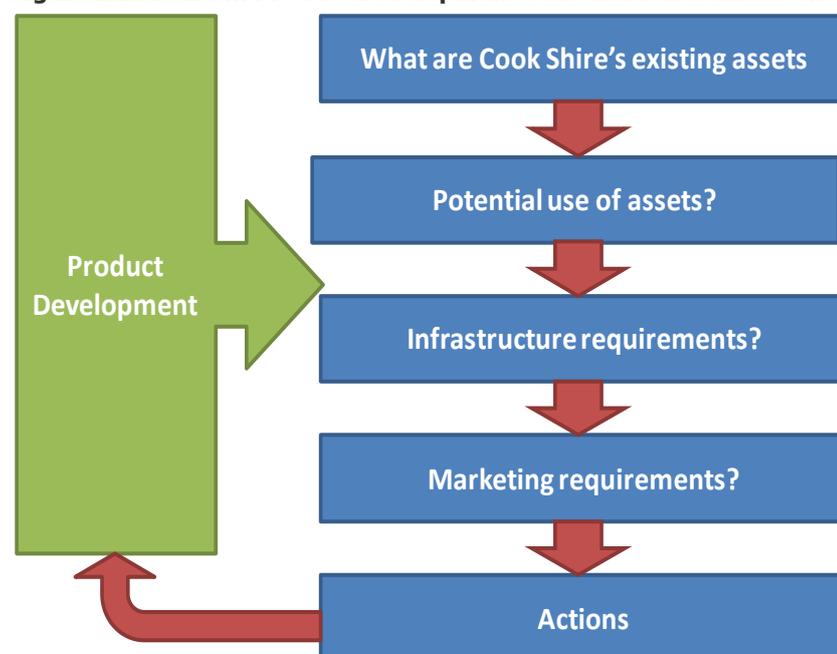
The consultation process was developed to be administered in two phases to ensure tourism operators experienced minimal disruption during the peak tourism season in June and July. Phase I consultations conducted during June and July were designed to consider the first key issues for the region's tourism sector. Key themes for Phase I consultations were based on those suggested by the Cook Shire Council in the project terms of reference. AECgroup adopted these consultation issues and developed a framework for each issue, with the aim to stimulate discussion on each topic. The key themes for consultation Phase I include:

- Tourism product development;
- Camping policy;
- Grey nomads policy;
- Regional collaboration options;
- Marketing options; and
- Operating / industry issues.

### 2.2.1 Tourism Product Development

The tourism product development theme aims to encapsulate stakeholder opinions on the current key tourism products in Cook Shire (i.e. why do tourists travel to the region), the future direction of the tourism industry in the region (in terms of maximising economic and social benefit) and various tourism products and how they can be further developed. Stakeholders were informally guided through the tourism product development consultation framework (Figure 2.2) and asked to provide comment on existing products and their desired future direction of the regional tourism industry. In some cases where specific product lines were mentioned, infrastructure requirements and appropriate marketing techniques to commercialise the products were discussed. AECgroup's framework for discussing tourism product development with stakeholders is outlined in Figure 2.2.

**Figure 2.2: Tourism Product Development Consultation Framework**



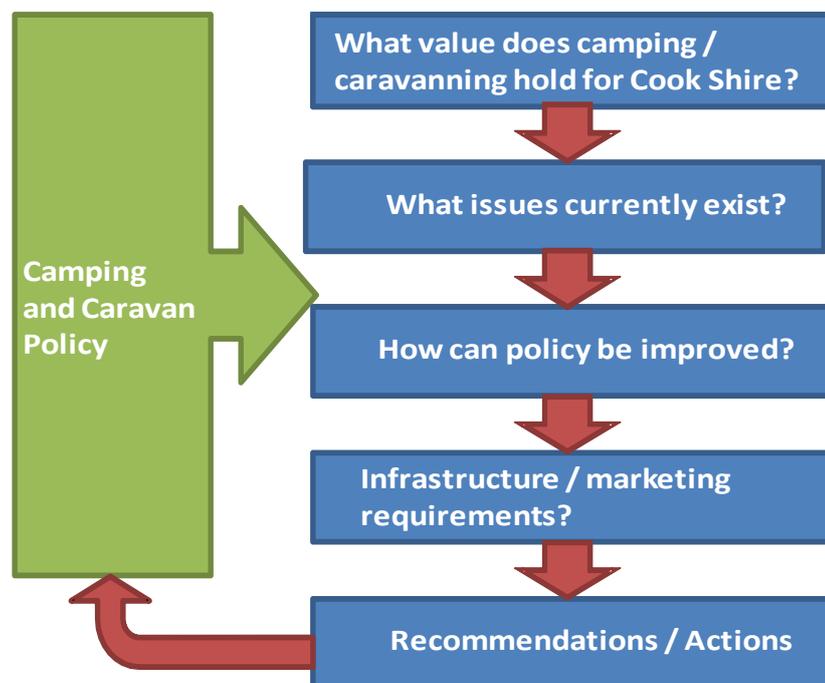
Source: AECgroup

## 2.2.2 Camping and Grey Nomad Policy Consultation Framework

The camping and grey nomad tourism market is one of the more contentious issues for Cook Shire’s tourism industry. In 2005 the Cook Shire Council introduced a local law that prohibits camping within a 15 km radius of Cooktown. Some community members supported the law, arguing that the camping and grey nomad market was relatively low value for the region’s tourism industry (in terms of expenditure) and the existing user-pay caravan parks and camping facilities in Cooktown would be better off. However, this policy has led to Cooktown being unofficially branded as ‘grey nomad unfriendly’, which has reflected poorly on the region’s tourism sector. Proponents for free camping maintain that the grey nomad and camping market holds huge potential in terms of boosting overall visitation and expenditure throughout the region.

Despite objections made by some stakeholders to camping and caravanning, these activities strongly align with Cook Shire’s tourism product offering and therefore is discussed in detail in Phase I consultations. AECgroup’s framework for this issue (Figure 2.3) encourages stakeholders to consider both the advantages and disadvantages of promoting the camping and caravanning market (including both free and user-pay schemes) as a source of tourism throughout the region. Stakeholders were asked to provide feedback on the potential value of these activities to the region, the no free-camping policy in Cooktown and the future role camping and caravanning should play in Cook Shire’s tourism industry.

**Figure 2.3: Camping and Grey Nomad Policy Consultation Framework**



Source: AECgroup

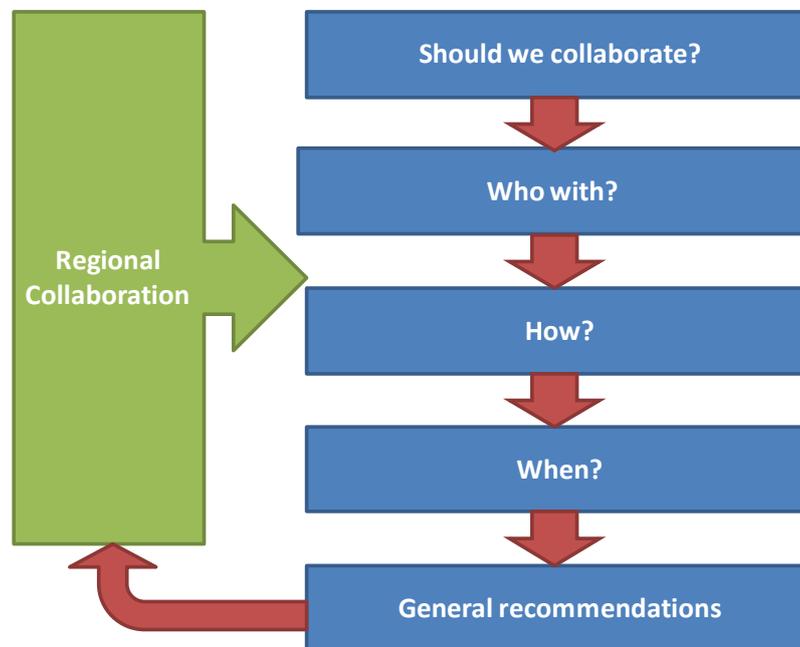
## 2.2.3 Regional Collaboration Options

This issue invites stakeholders to consider the potential for Cook Shire to more closely collaborate with other regions and organisations. There are three key collaborations that were considered during consultations, which included:

- Collaborations made on a local level (including community, business and local government);
- Collaborations with neighbouring regions (e.g. Cairns, Tablelands, Northern Peninsula Area); and
- Collaborations with tourism planning and promotion bodies (i.e. Tourism Tropical North Queensland and Tourism Queensland).

Stakeholders were provided with the three collaborating options (above) and were asked to provide feedback and direction. Where specific collaboration arrangements were mentioned, stakeholders were asked to provide further detail. AECgroup used the following framework (Figure 2.4) to broadly structure discussions made for this consultation theme.

**Figure 2.4: Regional Collaboration Options Consultation Framework**



Source: AECgroup

#### 2.2.4 Marketing Options

The Cook Shire has made significant progress in tourism related marketing over the last few years. In 2010, the Cooktown Chamber of Commerce and Tourism and the Cook Shire Council developed a two-year marketing action plan for tourism in the region. As such, marketing has been nominated by the Cook Shire Council as one of the key points of discussion for regional stakeholders. The marketing options theme provides stakeholders with opportunity to provide feedback on recent marketing efforts and generate marketing ideas and strategies on a regional and business level. The marketing options framework below (Figure 2.5) has been designed to ensure current and potential marketing strategies and relevant issues are discussed.

**Figure 2.5: Marketing Options Consultation Framework**

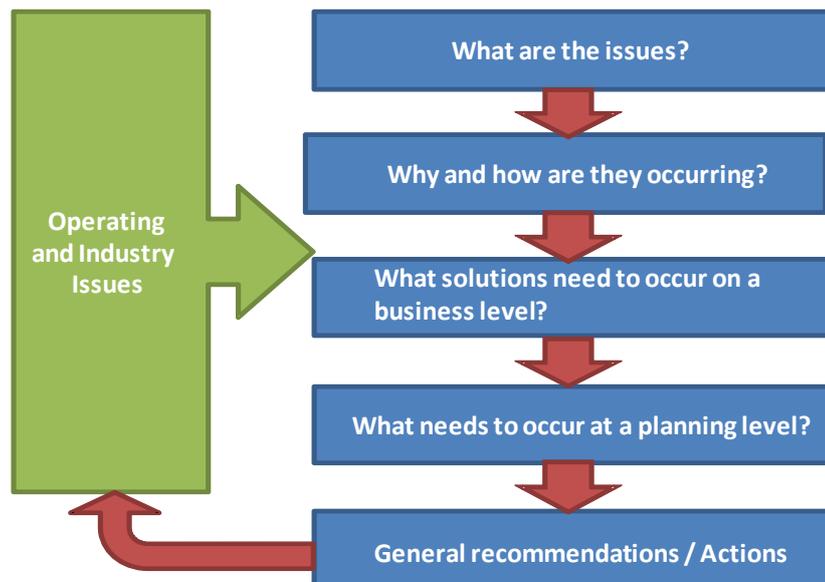


Source: AECgroup

### 2.2.5 Operating / Industry Issues

The final key theme that was discussed during Phase I consultations is general operating and industry issues in the tourism industry in Cook Shire. Discussions regarding this key theme were kept relatively broad, which provided stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback on a broad range of issues and concerns in the tourism environment in Cook Shire. AECgroup used the following framework (Figure 2.6) for generating discussion in regard to general and operating issues. The framework goes further to allow stakeholders to discuss potential solutions at a business and planning level and make recommendations to overcome issues.

**Figure 2.6: Operator / Industry Issues Consultation Framework**



Source: AECgroup

## 2.3 Community Plan Workshop

AECgroup attended the Cook Shire Council's Community Plan workshop held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 2011. The workshop invited community members in Cooktown to attend and provide input and direction into the ongoing development of the Cook Shire Community Plan. As the Cook Shire Tourism Strategy is being developed in conjunction with the Community Plan, the workshop provided an excellent opportunity for the community to provide input on tourism.

The Tourism Strategy component of the Community Plan workshop was held in the evening to encourage businesses to attend. The format of the workshop was largely informal, with community discussions held in a focus group style format. Each of the key consultation issues used during Phase I consultations were discussed in turn during the workshop. Approximately 20 people attended, including council staff, councillors and community members. Discussions were recorded on an audio recording device, which were later transcribed and analysed to identify key themes and directions.

## 3. Results from Phase I Consultations

### 3.1 Product Development

Cooktown’s stakeholders generally identified history (particularly European, Chinese and Indigenous), the Cape York touring route and nature as the key reasons that tourists travel to the region. Fishing, rural Australian culture and Indigenous culture were also mentioned as key tourism products for the region. The future direction of the industry was split over a number of small catalyst projects and policy / legislative changes. Capitalising on the traffic heading up the Peninsula Development Road and increasing the share of these tourists visiting Cooktown was widely recognised as being essential for tourism development in the region. The development of a marina in the mouth of the Endeavour River also received several mentions, however, several stakeholders were quick to point out limitations such as environmental impacts, venture capital, commercial viability and ongoing maintenance and dredging costs associated with the project.

Stakeholders from remote Cook Shire primarily identified the Cape touring route as the primary tourism product for the region. Fishing and nature based tourism also received several mentions as key tourism products for the region. The Four-Wheel-Drive (4WD) market is understood to be the biggest tourism market for remote Cook Shire. Stakeholders accept that the continual development of the Peninsula Development Road will provide community benefits and potentially open up new markets, however, are concerned that it may damage the region’s reputation and credibility as a premier 4WD destination. Product development was centred around small-scale and specific projects (including improvements to camp sites and signage) as opposed to more broad and visionary initiatives.

Participants at the Community Plan Workshop identified the climate as one of the key draw cards for Cook Shire. Participants also discussed the potential for encouraging tourists to come in the summer months (development of the tourism off-season). Community stakeholders took a relatively micro view of tourism development across the region and identified a number of specific opportunities (including fishing tours, 4WD tours and Indigenous tourism products) for the future development of the industry.

**Table 3.1: Product Development Consultation Summary**

Cooktown and Surrounding Area	Remote Cook Shire and Other Regions	Community Plan Workshop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>History as a key attraction</li> <li>Cape York touring route as a key attraction</li> <li>Fishing as a key attraction</li> <li>Bush / rural / laid back culture as a key attraction</li> <li>Nature / environment as a key attraction</li> <li>Indigenous culture tourism as a market with growth potential</li> <li>Further development of the fishing industry is relatively constrained – close to maximum sustainable number of fishing charters operating</li> <li>Marina for Cooktown has been suggested by several stakeholders</li> <li>Several also concerned about the marina idea and have identified several constraints</li> <li>Reliable transport is an issue (from Cairns, Port Douglas and Daintree)</li> <li>Land tenure is prevalent when developing specific sites for tourism – planning work needs to be considered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Majority of tourists that visit are heading up to Cape York – the Cape York trip is the biggest selling point</li> <li>Fishing is a strong attraction</li> <li>Need to remain unique to other regions</li> <li>Aboriginal cultural tourism is a draw card for tourism</li> <li>Drive market accounts for almost all tourism</li> <li>Natural environment (bird watching, rainforest, Iron Range, Chilli Beach, etc)</li> <li>History is a key product (Captain Cook, Gold rush history, Indigenous, WWII, etc)</li> <li>Sealing the roads is reducing the 4WD market for the region</li> <li>Potential to develop 4WD tours</li> <li>Need a caravan dump point at Lakeland</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nice climate, particularly during the winter months</li> <li>Most accommodation is booked out months in advance during the winter (high season)</li> <li>Need to develop more off-season tourism</li> <li>Access is a major issue – highway floods during the off-season</li> <li>Potential to develop Black Mountain as a tourism asset – could be a draw card given its history</li> <li>Fishing tours may be possible during off season (as fishermen don’t care about rain)</li> <li>Potential to develop 4WD tours in collaboration with Daintree and Cape Tribulation – would only be viable during dry season</li> <li>Further development of Indigenous tourism products</li> </ul>



Cooktown and Surrounding Area	Remote Cook Shire and Other Regions	Community Plan Workshop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peninsula Development Road has a big market but not all are stopping in at Cooktown</li> <li>• Working to increase Cooktown slice of the pie in terms of tourists heading up the Peninsula Development Road</li> <li>• People touring Cape York have had issues with alcohol restrictions – need to provide better information</li> <li>• Generally increase capacity in tours provided</li> <li>• Need to maintain Bloomfield track as a 4WD track – Inland road is not adventurous enough for many visitors</li> <li>• Need better connectivity and path ways in the main street</li> <li>• Potential to move visitor information centre to main street</li> <li>• Training facilities to help develop local workforce</li> <li>• Possible development of reef trips</li> <li>• Improved port and mooring facilities</li> <li>• Developing Battlecamp Road as the Cooktown departure road for 4WD adventures to Cape York</li> <li>• Improved directional signage on the Peninsula Development Road</li> <li>• Greater use of packages (i.e. Valentine's day, etc)</li> <li>• Increasing fly-in market during the wet season</li> <li>• Notice board in Cooktown describing up and coming events</li> <li>• Cruise shipping industry is very important for Cooktown. A marina development is not viable, however, better deep sea mooring and ferrying options would be a big improvement</li> <li>• Reef tour operator would be a great addition. The boat could also be used for ferrying passengers from cruise ships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General information board at Lakeland</li> <li>• Fly-drive tour combinations</li> <li>• Need to develop more attractions to attract tourists – tours operators, etc</li> <li>• Potential to develop new camping grounds throughout the region</li> <li>• Replace former jetty at Portland Roads</li> <li>• Potential to develop more interpretative signage</li> <li>• Continual improvement of the Peninsula Development Road will open up new markets (but may reduce 4WD market)</li> <li>• Dreaming track (to the tip of Cape York) – currently in consultation phase</li> <li>• Increased engagement with Indigenous people in the area to improve Indigenous products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Want to maintain small town feel and rural culture of Cooktown</li> <li>• Potential for more eco-oriented accommodation</li> <li>• Do not want to become another Port Douglas</li> </ul>

Source: AECgroup



### 3.2 Camping and Grey Nomads

Almost all industry and community stakeholders in Cooktown acknowledged that the camping and grey nomad market was significant to the region’s tourism and should be progressed. The key area of disagreement is regarding Cook Shire Council’s no free camping policy within 15km of Cooktown. This policy is stated in Cook Shire’s Local Law *No. 22, Part 6 – 22 (1)*, which declares “A person must not camp, except in a caravan park, within the areas prescribed by subordinate local law”. Some stakeholders hold the viewpoint that there should be areas that permit free camping within close proximity to Cooktown, as this will result in an increase in visitation to Cooktown (from campers and caravaners) and provide a net benefit to the region’s tourism industry. Other stakeholders believe that there should be no free camping near Cooktown, as this will decrease the viability of the region’s existing user-pay caravan parks. Several opportunities were identified for both view points, including improving existing user-pay caravan parks, increasing the capacity to accommodate larger caravans (such as RVs), Indigenous operated camping sites and designated free camping areas.

The remote areas in Cook Shire and other regions were heavily in favour of the continual development of the ‘grey nomads’ and camping market. Free camping was generally more accepted in remote Cook Shire (compared with Cooktown). Stakeholders would generally like to see more camping grounds developed throughout the region.

**Table 3.2: Camping and Grey Nomads Consultation Summary**

Cooktown and Surrounding Area	Remote Cook Shire and Other Regions	Community Plan Workshop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Almost all industry operators acknowledge the importance of the grey nomad market</li> <li>• Some people were concerned about free camping near Cooktown as it would harm existing caravan parks</li> <li>• Some people thought that free camping would bring more grey nomads to the region and provide net benefits for the community</li> <li>• In addition some participants believe free camping and caravan parks offer different products and that a lot of caravaners would still be willing to pay for caravan parking for the additional facilities</li> <li>• Need bigger parking spaces for bigger rigs (i.e. RVs)</li> <li>• Some industry operators focus more on the camping 4WD market as opposed the grey nomads</li> <li>• Potential for additional user-pay caravan parking facilities</li> <li>• Potential to establish Aboriginal owned and operated camping and caravan parks</li> <li>• Cooktown is currently considered to be ‘grey nomad unfriendly’ - need to change this</li> <li>• Potential to develop road-side rest stops and camping grounds</li> <li>• Potential to develop free camping site at Archer Point</li> <li>• Potential to develop camping site on the Burrigirru Aboriginal land trust (and turn into an Indigenous business)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market is very important to the outer regions (caravans for southern areas and camping / 4WD for the more remote areas)</li> <li>• Issue is how we manage and accommodate</li> <li>• Free camping does not help accommodation / caravan park businesses</li> <li>• There is a lack of camp sites in remote townships</li> <li>• Current camp sites have poor facilities</li> <li>• Concerns about the amount grey nomads spend</li> <li>• Free camping can be provided, but need to be careful where (i.e. near towns and caravan parks)</li> <li>• Potential to provide camping at a small cost for users (want to encourage people to come)</li> <li>• Potential to develop an Indigenous owned and operated camp site in the region</li> <li>• Potential to expand camping facility at Portland Roads</li> <li>• Unauthorised camping is currently taking place on Indigenous land – campers are making a mess. Better signage needed to prevent this</li> <li>• More garbage pits and toilets at camp sites (needs to be State / Federal Government funded)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Almost all participants acknowledge the importance of the grey nomad market for Cook Shire</li> <li>• Some people were concerned about free camping near Cooktown as it would harm existing caravan parks</li> <li>• Some people thought that free camping would bring more grey nomads to the region and provide net benefits for the community</li> <li>• In addition some participants believe free camping and caravan parks offer different products and that a lot of caravaners would still be willing to pay for caravan parking for the additional facilities</li> <li>• Existing parks need to increase their capacity to take bigger caravans (such as RVs)</li> <li>• Potential to develop free camping sites in neighbour regions to Cooktown (such as Archer Point)</li> <li>• Caravan parks could look to use deals such as free nights to attract more grey nomad travellers</li> </ul>

Source: AECgroup



### 3.3 Regional Collaboration

Stakeholders from Cooktown were generally in favour of increased collaboration for the region’s tourism industry. Collaborating more closely with Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) was generally unpopular. Most businesses believed that TTNQ’s fees were too high and they did not see sufficient benefits from their membership. Collaborations with Tourism Queensland (TQ) generally received positive feedback. Most stakeholders saw opportunity to collaborate more closely with surrounding Local Government Areas (LGAs). Cairns was seen as a key tourism source market (both tourists and residents in Cairns), however, most conceded that Cairns’ tourism industry would be difficult to work with as they are struggling for numbers themselves. Most stakeholders believe there should be more collaboration on a business level within Cook Shire itself. In terms of achieving increased collaboration, stakeholders primarily discussed the need for an official touring route through Cape York (similar to the Great Tropical Drive route/s) and the development of Regional Tourism Organisation for Cook Shire.

Stakeholders in remote Cook Shire primarily saw the need for greater collaboration within Cook Shire itself. Some stakeholders expressed concerns that the Cook Shire Council and tourism operators in Cooktown favouritise Cooktown and often forgot about the other communities in the Shire. Stakeholders also recognised potential to work more closely with Carpentaria Shire / western regions, as a significant number of self-drive tourism comes from these regions.

Participants at the Community Plan Workshop focused on the importance of improving collaborations with Cairns. Participants discussed the development of tour packages and strategic marketing to increase the visitation of tourists (and residents) coming from the Cairns region.

**Table 3.3: Regional Collaboration Consultation Summary**

Cooktown and Surrounding Area	Remote Cook Shire and Other Regions	Community Plan Workshop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased collaboration with TTNQ was not popular – most companies believed the membership cost was not worth the benefits of belonging and that TTNQ primarily looks after Cairns</li> <li>• More support generally for working with TQ</li> <li>• Many believed there is opportunity to collaborate with Cairns more to growth tourists coming from that region</li> <li>• Potential for Council’s in Cape York to collaborate more closely</li> <li>• Potential to establish a business development role at Council and have a designated person that works with businesses in the Shire</li> <li>• Need route similar to Great Tropical Drive for Cape York</li> <li>• Need for Regional Tourism Organisation for Cook Shire</li> <li>• Possibility of opening an office / shop front in Cairns to promote travelling to Cook Shire</li> <li>• Need to collaborate more with the big tour companies (i.e. APT, Outback Spirit, etc)</li> <li>• Developing the domestic market in general has great potential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important for businesses in the region to network and promote each other</li> <li>• Potential to work closer with western touring routes (Normanton, etc)</li> <li>• Potential to work closer with airlines (Skytrans and Hinterland) to develop packages, transport and marketing opportunities</li> <li>• Potential for Cooktown to collaborate more for remote Cook Shire</li> <li>• Need to promote to other regions that Cook Shire is accessible without a 4WD</li> <li>• Need website that updates road conditions constantly throughout the wet season</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Townsville and Cairns are big markets – need to collaborate more closely with these (where the majority of tourists come from when visiting Cook Shire)</li> <li>• Cairns’ tourism industry is closely linked to Cook Shire’s tourism industry (in terms of cycles)</li> <li>• Cooktown needs to focus on the self drive market and four wheel drive market – key growth area</li> <li>• Need to work with Cairns to provide better information for tourists looking to come to Cook Shire – often they are told not to bother</li> <li>• Possibility to develop round trips from Cairns (fly-drive, etc)</li> </ul>

Source: AECgroup

### 3.4 Marketing Options

Industry stakeholders generally considered the grey nomads / 4WD market to be the most important for Cook Shire. Effective marketing on a business level varied from business to business, with some relatively proactive (e.g. attending tourism shows, using web-based products) and others relatively limited. Businesses generally believed that marketing was a business responsibility, however, most believed a combination of business-level and regional / planning level marketing would provide optimal results for the region's tourism industry. In addition, businesses were also relatively pleased with Cook Shire's recent branding position, *Cooktown and Cape York*.

**Table 3.4: Marketing Options Consultation Summary**

Cooktown and Surrounding Area	Remote Cook Shire and Other Regions	Community Plan Workshop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some businesses are quite proactive in terms of marketing (attend shows down south, market on an international level, etc)</li> <li>• Caravan / 4WD market generally considered to be the most important</li> <li>• Face to face contact marketing considered to be one of the more effective approaches</li> <li>• Marketing should be strategic and targeted rather than mass</li> <li>• Most businesses believed a combination of business-level and planning level marketing would provide the best result</li> <li>• Important for businesses in the region to promote each other</li> <li>• Businesses in Cook Shire need to share information to increase overall product knowledge and awareness (leading to on-selling, etc)</li> <li>• People generally happy with the Cooktown and Cape York branding theme</li> <li>• Some believe the slogan – 'the history is just the beginning' is not general enough and excludes the region's other major assets</li> <li>• Possibility of re-branding Nature's Powerhouse VIC to refer to Cape York</li> <li>• Potential to develop packages to entice people from Cairns to travel to the region</li> <li>• Assistance for businesses in packaging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Businesses use a combination of traditional print, advertisement placements, internet websites, social networking and word of mouth</li> <li>• Marketing / branding on a regional scale should occur</li> <li>• Marketing should be a combination at a business and planning level</li> <li>• Should be looking to tap into the Chinese market – develop the Chinese history in the region</li> <li>• Fly-drive packages</li> <li>• Some businesses would like help and advice on marketing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People are generally misinformed about environment and climate in Cooktown – people think it's too hot and humid</li> <li>• Marketing needs to focus on activities to do whilst in Cook Shire – this will help draw more visitors to the area</li> </ul>

Source: AECgroup

### 3.5 Operating Issues

Operating costs was the most frequently mentioned issue / constraint associated with operating a business in Cook Shire. Businesses generally believed Council driven costs, such as general rates, water rates and waste disposal, to be relatively high. General operating costs, including electricity, transport and insurance, are also considered to be high. All businesses identified high-seasonality of the tourism industry to be an issue, particularly in terms of business viability and cash-flow. Access to skills and relatively cheap labour was also seen as a significant problem for the region. There are frustrations with Council’s development and compliance processes, and a need for greater flexibility and small business assistances.

**Table 3.5: Operating Issues Consultation Summary**

Cooktown and Surrounding Area	Remote Cook Shire and Other Regions	Community Plan Workshop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It’s much more expensive to operate in North Queensland, let alone Cooktown</li> <li>• Finding staff is a problem</li> <li>• Cost is labour is high</li> <li>• Council rates are generally considered to be high</li> <li>• Water charging scheme is generally considered to be poor and expensive</li> <li>• Cost of waste disposal is generally considered to be unnecessarily high</li> <li>• Businesses are generally concerned about transporting waste to Mareeba</li> <li>• Council’s development approval process for small construction projects</li> <li>• Tourists often come on the weekend – most businesses are shut</li> <li>• Highly seasonal market</li> <li>• Council signage procedures is considered by many to be too difficult</li> <li>• Council should value and communicate with businesses more</li> <li>• State and Federal Government regulations (i.e. food, transport, etc)</li> <li>• Strong Australian Dollar</li> <li>• Fishing industry – best fishing is in the wet period of the year where tourist visitation is low</li> <li>• Road infrastructure (flood inundation)</li> <li>• Cost of fuel and vehicle maintenance</li> <li>• Some businesses are concerned that poor information is being provided by regional VICs and other operators regarding facilities and access – need for the industry to work together</li> <li>• Limited range of accommodation types in Cooktown</li> <li>• Customer service is lacking</li> <li>• Perception that poor information is being provided to tourists in Cairns about the region</li> <li>• Visiting cruise ships are experiencing issues. There are relatively poor deep water docking facilities. Ferrying passengers into</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport and postal times is an issue</li> <li>• Waste disposal costs are high</li> <li>• Council need to be more active in the remote communities</li> <li>• Communication / mobile coverage is an issue at times</li> <li>• Signage for businesses is very costly and difficult to develop with Local, State and Federal Government regulations</li> <li>• Red tape and bureaucracy generated by State Government (eg. DERM)</li> <li>• Potential to improve facilities at Cooktown airport</li> <li>• Potential to provide business mentoring for Indigenous organisations</li> <li>• More funding and support required to develop Indigenous and non-Indigenous products and programs</li> </ul>	<p>NA (community focus, not business)</p>



<p>Cooktown can only be done when the seas is calm. Need better facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shops in Cooktown often closed on weekends when cruise ships visit</li></ul>		
---	--	--

Source: AECgroup



## 4. Next Steps

---

The second round of stakeholder consultations (Phase II) will occur throughout October and November 2011. Phase II consultations will follow a similar structure to Phase I, whereby AECgroup will travel to Cooktown for face-to-face consultations and conduct phone interviews for remote areas in Cook Shire. The key themes to be discussed during Phase II consultations include:

- The cruise shipping market;
- Developing mountain biking opportunities in the region;
- Tourism infrastructure development;
- Signage strategy and policy; and
- Employment, training and skills.

AECgroup will design a framework for each of these consultation themes, as was done prior to Phase I consultations. The framework will provide guidance during Phase II consultations.

## Appendix 1: Consultation List

Extensive consultations were conducted during Phase I. A list of stakeholders contacted is outlined in the following table. Several attempts were made to contact each stakeholder however not all were available.

**Table 4.1: Product Development Consultation Summary**

Name	Business/ Organisation
Peter and Sayah Scott	Alamanda Inn
Meryllyn Holmes	Alkoomie Station
Andrew Burnes	AOT
Greg Bowman	Balkanu
Sean Gillen	Balkanu
Dave Donald	Barradave Fishing Tours
Ken and Wendy	Big4 Cooktown Holiday Park
John Duncan	Bloomfield River Watersports
Kim Roberts	Bowls Club
Gregg Mayo	Caltex
Ray Wright	Cape York Tyres
Tina Flemming	Cook Shire Council
Ian McCrae	Cook Shire Council
Mike Edmonds	Cook Shire Council (Planning)
Bev	Cooks Landing Kiosk
Ian	Cooktown Butchers
Vicki	Cooktown Café
Mary Noonan	Cooktown Caravan Park
Greg Whittaker	Cooktown Chamber of Commerce and Tourism
Pam and Lyle Robertson	Cooktown Cruises
Bev and John Shay	Cooktown History Centre
	Cooktown Newsagents
	Cooktown Orchid Travellers Park
Justin and Mal Coventry	Cooktown Tours
Tony Briggs	Coral Princess Cruises
Charlie Martin	Councillor
Allan Harlow	Country Road Coachlines
Trish Butler	CYSF
	Endeavour Falls Caravan Park
Tyson Hang	Endeavour Pharmacy
Terry and Leanne Rayner	Endeavour River Escape
Mulley Family	Exchange Hotel
Ann Williams	Fisherman's Wharf
Mark Privett	Gone Fishing
Judy Bennett	Guurrbi Tours
	Haleys Cabins
Sharon Rowling	Hidden Valley Trail Rides
Mark Dorward	Hinterland Aviation
Linda Masterson	Homestead Guesthouse
Penny Johnson	James Cook Museum
Sharon Harwood	JCU
Roka Welch	Lakeland Caravan Park
	Lakeland Coffee Shop
Mike Edmonds	Land tenures
Allan Wilson	Laura Area
Max Nulley	Lion's Den Hotel
Vera Scott-Bloxam	Milkwood Lodge
David Reid and Hamish Haslop	Mungumby Lodge
Beverley Grant and Jacqui Collins Hermann	Natures Powerhouse VIC
Vanessa Gillen	Njumgkal Rangers
John Finlay	Outback Spirit
Mike Hinz	OzTours
Carol	Palmer River Roadhouse
Scott Orchard	Pam's Place Motel
Barbara Hay	Paradise Real Estate
Mary Thackeray	Peninsula Caravan Park
Greg Westcott	Portland House
Lex Bloomfield	Quikan Regional and Cultural Centre

Name	Business/ Organisation
Kevin Darmody	Quinkan Hotel
Karen Olsen	Rainforest Real Estate
Loretta Sullivan	Re-Enactment Assoc
Keith and Vicki	Restaurant 1770
Kylie and Brett Hocking	River of Gold Motel
Susie	RSL Club
Sandra	Seaview Hotel
Bruce	Shadows of Mt Cook
Keith	Sovereign Resort Hotel
Linda Rowe	The Croc Shop
John	The Italian Restaurant
Russell Bowman	The Lure Shop
Ed Krop	The Top Pub
	Top End Camping
Sarah Murdoch	Tourism Queensland
Simone Howe	TTNQ: Wet Tropics National Lanscapes Application
Frances Walker	Walker Family Tours
Guy Chester	World Herritage Cape York
	Wujal Wujal Arts and Cultural Centre

Source: AECgroup

PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK





<b>Brisbane</b>	Level 5, 131 Leichhardt Street Spring Hill QLD 4000	PO Box 942 Spring Hill QLD 4004	T F	+61 7 3831 0577 +61 7 3831 3899
<b>Melbourne</b>	Level 13, 200 Queen Street Melbourne VIC 3000	GPO Box 4500 Melbourne VIC 3001	T F	+61 3 8648 6586 +61 3 8648 6480
<b>Sydney</b>	Level 3, 507 Kent Street Sydney NSW 2000	PO Box Q569, QVB Sydney NSW 1230	T F	+61 2 9283 8400 +61 2 9264 9254
<b>Townsville</b>	233 Flinders Street East Townsville QLD 4810	PO Box 5804MC Townsville QLD 4810	T F	+61 7 4771 5550 +61 7 4771 5152
<b>Perth</b>	Level 18, Central Park 152 - 158 St Georges Terrace Perth WA 6000		T F	+61 8 9288 4456 +61 8 9288 4457