ACTIVATION PLAN

13.1 DEVELOP AN AGRITOURISM BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

This program will provide local producers with clear information to help them understand the tourism industry and how they can diversify into this industry to support and supplement their agricultural enterprise. It will build their skills and provide opportunity to learn from others who have gone before them.

DRIVER:

Council - Manager Community and Culture

PURPOSE:

- Build critical mass of agritourism product offering by supporting new product development

- Fill current gaps in offering

- Add stories that can be told about the region

- Demonstrate the value of agritourism to a business owner, and how easy it can be to add a lucrative element to their business which is a source of pride and stable income

- Establish strong foundations to permit the development trade-ready agritourism packages in the future.

RECOMMENDED PROGRAM INCLUSIONS:

- Destination Riverina Murray's annual six-month Destination Inspiration tourism business development and mentoring program – promote to local producers and operators

- Factsheets on how to develop several types of agritourism products, such as Hipcamp camp sites[21], farm stays, cellar doors, event venues[22] (e.g. a fact sheet that outlines the process for turning a shearers quarters into accommodation). Survey local producers and operators to find out what products they would like to develop, and develop factsheets for the most common one.

- A pack/webpage/booklet which outlines all the necessary requirements across all departments of Council, along with contacts of all consultants' applicants need to engage with, examples of what is correct (e.g. what a sign has to say) and templates such as for a biosecurity plan.

- A grant opportunities calendar (grants that are relevant to agritourism development).

- Smooth DA process (per Section 13.3).

- Mentoring program[23], including one on one mentoring[24] on developing new appealing agritourism products, improving the visitor experience, and product marketing and distribution; and discussing development possibilities with Destination NSW's Industry Development team on experiences that would appeal to desired target markets, focused on the unique offerings of producers' brands.

- Training program[25] with inclusions such as

  - How to develop an on-trend agritourism experience that fits around farming commitments

  - Assessing and analysing a business opportunity

  - Developing a business plan

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21 Previously Youcamp
22 Based on a survey of which developments are of most interest to the region's producers/business owners
23 Consider modelling on Women in Business Wagga Wagga program
24 Such as by agritourism development agency Regionality
25 Use existing resources such as Destination NSW's NSW First Program and Box Hill's micro credentialed short course, 'Promote and develop agritourism'

- Establishing risk management processes including for staff, biosecurity and emergency management

- How to allow visitors to take part in or observe food production processes

- Improving the visitor experience

- Running events such as dinners that showcase local produce

- Storytelling: food/wine production, where ingredients come from, how ingredients can be used, sustainable practices

- Providing high quality customer service; providing a social and educational experience

- Having frontline staff such as wait staff knowledgeable about local produce

- Storytelling, effective digital marketing, collaborative marketing and channels of distribution for tourism products

- How to list your agritourism experiences on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW), TripAdvisor and Google My Business

- Managing customer safety, risk and insurance

- Small business management

- Provide bite-size training by the Destination Network (if possible) (on tourism) and Council (on regulations) where and when producers gather e.g. at agricultural association meetings.

- Networking program (combining provision of information, training and networking) to bring together those with drive, passion, and vision, and those who can be inspired by them. Leverage gatherings that producers already attend where possible.

- A digital marketing audit of each existing agritourism business in the region with improvement instructions.[26]

- Regular communication e.g. a quarterly agritourism development newsletter.

- An annual agritourism forum with guest speakers and successful agritourism operators from other regions.

- An interagency agritourism group meeting biannually, bringing together different departments and external stakeholders to review agritourism developments in the pipeline and discuss new ones to keep agritourism on the radar and ensure all stakeholders are working collectively to support developments.

- An annual business awards program to reward excellence in agritourism (run through an existing business awards program if possible or as part of the annual forum).

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26 Such as by [Tourism Tribe](#)

- A sister-region relationship with a successful agritourism region for producers e.g. Scenic Rim in QLD.
- An inspirational familiarisation tour of the sister region for producers and Council's planning and tourism staff.

ACTIVATION STEPS:

1. Build on this plan's agritourism audit to create and maintain a database of existing and potential agritourism operators. Include how to reach them, details on producers' interest in agritourism, and the time of year they can serve visitors.

2. Lobby Destination Riverina Murray to increase the number of networking events they run, and develop an agritourism network to help agritourism operators feel connected and to support collaborative activities. If unsuccessful, use the alliance with Hilltops and Snowy Valleys Councils (see Section 13.7) to run a collaborative program.

3. Leverage the support of Southern Harvest near Canberra which

   - facilitates networking (quarterly gatherings)
   - can connect producers with supporting organisations and agritourism mentors
   - facilitates connections between growers and consumers

   - runs a CSA of multiple producers
   - runs workshops for producers and the public
   - runs Bungendore Harvest Festival and a weekly farmers market
   - runs a public education component

4. Have the development program shovel ready for grant applications.

5. Secure funding to implement the program.

TIMELINE:

2021 (and ongoing)

13.2 AMEND LEP TO INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR AGRITOURISM DEVELOPMENT

An amended LEP will support and encourage increased agritourism product development, increasing the opportunity for producers to develop new products. An LEP that is agritourism friendly and aligns with this plan is critical to ensure successful development of the region as an Agritourism destination.

DRIVER:

Council - Manager Development, Building & Compliance

PURPOSE:

• Support income diversification for producers by permitting land usage for agritourism

• Streamline Council requirements to allow and be supportive of agritourism development

• Cater for the needs of small-scale producers/ providores as well as large-scale producers

ACTIVATION STEPS:

1. Seek input from producers, existing and potential agritourism operators.

2. Include changes in Council's LEP that are relevant to and supportive of agritourism development, such as those as outlined in Council's Rural Lands Strategy 2020:

    • 1.1 Minimum lot size

    • 1.2 Dwelling entitlements

    • 1.3 Dual occupancies

    • 1.4 Agricultural subdivision

    • 1.6 Innovation and enterprise support

    • 2.1 "Open" zones

    • 2.2 Miscellaneous permissible uses

3. Similarly, create a subsection of the Development Control Plan under business and industrial development which deals with agritourism and artisan food/providore businesses (Action 2.3 of the Rural Lands Strategy).

4. Use clear, plain language in LEP or provide an interpretive version for agritourism development that is in clear, plain language.

5. Provide for a variety of smaller, more affordable lots in the LEP and proactively promote to attract tree changers from the ACT and Sydney.

TIMELINE:

2021

BUDGET:

(Internal)

13.3 DEVELOP AN APPROVALS PROCESS FOR AGRITOURISM DEVELOPMENT

A smoother process with fewer frustrations for business owners will reduce one of the biggest barriers to new product development in the region, and a cause of stress and frustration with Council.

DRIVER:

Council - Manager Development, Building & Compliance

PURPOSE:

- Reduce the major barrier to new and expanded agritourism product of development approvals (DA) and frustration with the DA process

EXAMPLE:

- Scenic Rim Regional Council (QLD) uses a case manager approach to new agritourism development. The Council is proactively supportive of new agritourism development, in part because they want new stories to use in PR promotion of the region.

ACTIVATION STEPS:

1. Have a resolution by or instructions from the Councillors to the planners to find a way to support new agritourism development (without frustrating applicants) (i.e. change an attitude of strict interpretation of rules to a supportive interpretation of rules; incorporate flexibility). Measure and follow up on this over time.

2. Provide a pack/webpage/booklet at the start of the DA process, which outlines all the necessary requirements across all departments of Council, along with contacts of all consultants' applicants need to engage, examples of what is correct (e.g.

what a sign has to say) and templates such as for a biosecurity plan.

3. Permit a trial of tourism activities before submission of a DA.

4. Implement the recommendations of Service NSW:[27]

- Provide mentoring for and supervision of less-experienced planning staff around projects that don't fit in the box. Connect planning staff with senior planning staff mentors in agritourism destinations who have successfully smoothed the path for new agritourism development.

- Use a case management approach to new agritourism development – have one point of contact at Council for producers to contact to facilitate the development application and other needs within Council. This person is available to be called on for help with Council obstacles. This will ensure advice from the Economic Development and Tourism staff does not contradict advice from the planning staff.

- Provide all planning information all in one location in clear, plain language – everything operators need to consider when developing and expanding an agritourism business, including clear information about exempt development. Provide examples of what is correct e.g. what a sign has to say.

- Provide all planning requirements up-front, before the applicant begins the DA process.

27 See Appendix 14.4

- Provide clear communication about rules and expectations.

- Provide pragmatic assistance before and during the DA process.

- Council's planner should always visit the site at the beginning of the DA process.

- Align fees with the number of customers, not with the size of a building.

- Consider fee waivers for agritourism developments to support a sufficient concentration of product in the region to attract visitation

TIMELINE:

2021

BUDGET:

(Internal)

13.4 CREATE AN AGRITOURISM BRAND STORY FOR THE REGION

The brand story will be the framework for the promotion of the region's agritourism experiences (the focus is on the story that the region tells, and how it is told, not on a logo). In order to be recognised as an agritourism destination a strong brand story that captures the essence of the region and the distinctive difference/s is essential.

DRIVER:

Council – Manager Community and Culture

PURPOSE:

- Communicate to potential visitors the appeal of the destination in marketing tactics
- A framework for agritourism operators to align their story within

INCLUSIONS:

- Brand story
- Supporting marketing copy and key messages
- Photo library, video content
- Producer stories

ACTIVATION STEPS:

1. Secure funding

2. Hire a marketing agency to develop the story, copy and key messages (see Section 13.6 re photo library and stories)

3. Hire a photographer and videographer to build a content bank of images and videos (concurrently with the development of the story bank to capture imagery for the producer stories. See Section 13. 6)

4. Use the brand elements in marketing the region's agritourism products

TIMELINE:

2022

BUDGET:

$120,000

13.5 BUNDLE PRODUCTS INTO ITINERARIES AND A MAP

To overcome the region's low concentration of agritourism experiences, and the lack of easily accessible information available online on what does exist, the bundling of existing products and experiences will clearly show potential visitors that the region is worth their effort to visit.

DRIVER:

Council - Manager Community and Culture

PURPOSE:

- Provide visitors with compelling reasons to visit the region
- Provide visitors with easily-accessible information to help them see the concentration of experiences in the region, and support trip planning

INCLUSIONS:

- Agritourism micro-website
- Itineraries - seasonal (e.g. what to do in winter; what to do in summer), demographic-specific (e.g. itineraries for families) and niche-interest options.

Include both paid attractions and attractions to support extended length of stay such as picnic, swimming and fishing spots, dump points, and river access points.

- A back roads scenic drive map highlighting attractions, farm stays, picnic spots, where to buy local produce for a picnic hamper, rail trail, fishing spots, and seasonal farming activities. Promote the seasonal farming activities that can be seen via this map. This will provide visitors with multiple attractions that can provide 1-2 days of activities, which is necessary to inspire food and wine trips.

EXAMPLE:

The Canola Trail includes itineraries themed by interests such as antiques shopping, for foodies, and for nature lovers.

ACTIVATION STEPS:

1. Use the agritourism audit and knowledge of the region's tourism products to bundle experiences into itineraries for the target markets' interests.

2. Have a graphic designer map the itineraries to brand.

3. Load the itineraries and map to a new agritourism micro website which will focus on the region's agritourism story, local produce, and stories of producers ('meet the growers'). Link to the agritourism microsite from each tourism website to provide easily accessible, up to date information on the region's agritourism experiences[28]. Necessary online information includes websites that help visitors plan their trip including places to visit along the way. The 'journey' to a destination is increasing in importance so information on things to see and do along the way, and tools such as trip planners on websites enables travellers to plan and maximise their food and wine experience. Important information to share online includes[29]

   - where/how to eat fresh, locally grown food for breakfast, lunch and dinner

   - where to buy local produce in its various forms

   - arts/crafts shops/markets

   - short drives to places of interest near the main destination

   - 'interest' stops on the way on the journey from travellers' homes to the region

   - where to talk with local growers about their produce

   - where to indulge (day spa or massage)

   - where to learn something new

   - entertainment and nightlife

   - where to experience nature and outdoor activities

TIMELINE:

2022

BUDGET:

$15,000 (graphic design and development of micro site)

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28 An example is www.victoriashighcountry.com.au/food-wine-beer/produce-farm-gates
29 Food and Wine Tourism in NSW, 2015, Tourism Research Australia

13.6 CAPTURE AND SHARE THE REGION'S STORIES

Rather than advertising, the region will focus promotional activity on connecting potential visitors with locals, and life as a local; both strong trends in what captures people's attention, and inspires them to travel, and to share their experience with friends. Using storytelling to promote the region will help make the emotional connection and provide a rich marketing message for potential visitors.

DRIVER:

Council - Manager Community and Culture

PURPOSE:

• Cost-effective and 'word of mouth' publicity about the region's agritourism attractions

INCLUSIONS:

• A content bank of images and stories

• Media database

EXAMPLE:

South Burnett (QLD) hired a PR agency to compile 20 stories on producers, wineries, tourism operators, events and local characters, and pitch them to relevant media. The stories were used to develop media releases, and were available for ongoing use in social media, on the tourism website as content pages and blog articles, and for future media pitches. Some stories were bundled (e.g. of all the wineries) and sent as a kit to relevant media. Of the pitches made in just four months, the estimated AVE (advertising value equivalent i.e. ad rate x 4) for published articles was over a million dollars, which did not include radio interviews, online news articles, monthly event listing distribution, or long lead media articles. Close to 870,000 in source markets were reached.

ACTIVATION STEPS:

1. Secure funding for the project

2. Hire a PR agency to capture and promote stories of the region's producers and agritourism experiences, including events. Have the agency provide legacy benefits such as a targeted media database (long and short lead media viewed and read in target source markets).

3. Host a media familiarisation tour. Have the visiting journalists and targeted influencers provide legacy benefits such as imagery.

TIMELINE:

2022

BUDGET:

$70,000 (PR agency and media famil)

13.7 DEVELOP AN ALLIANCE WITH HILLTOPS AND SNOWY VALLEYS COUNCILS

This collaboration will build a density of experiences in a corridor between the source markets of Wagga Wagga and Canberra, both increasing the number of experiences available for visitors, and connecting with two main source markets.

Taking a collective approach to destination development and marketing provides a competitive edge for regions and gives a more compelling reason for visitors to visit.

DRIVER:

Council - Manager Community and Culture

STEPS:

• Create a competitive and compelling proposition as a regional agritourism destination

• Collaborate on marketing and product development projects to reduce costs and maximise outcomes

• Leverage Thrive Riverina activity

ACTIVATION STEPS:

1. Facilitate an initial meeting of the three councils (tourism and/or economic development managers) to determine interest and commitment

2. Develop a Memorandum of Understanding that fosters a positive and collaborative approach to developing the 'corridor' as a strong agritourism destination

3. Schedule quarterly meetings to discuss projects and collaborative initiatives.

4. In the future there is scope to consider a more formal arrangement similar to Northern Rivers Food that could be the key industry group to drive agritourism projects across all three LGA's (with close support from each council)

TIMELINE:

2021 (and ongoing)

BUDGET:

(internal) + some of the marketing budget allocation can be used for collaborative activity

13.8 SECURE FUNDING AND IMPLEMENT THE AGRITOURISM BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN COLLABORATION WITH INDUSTRY PARTNERS

Once developed, this program will be rolled out to producers to support skill and knowledge development that will assist the decision to develop new agritourism products.

DRIVER:

Council – Manager Community and Culture

ACTIVATION STEPS:

1. Based on the recommended inclusions in section 13.1 roll out the desired elements of the business development program.

2. Use the PR stories to build local awareness of agritourism products and community pride, and educate local producers, businesses, retailers, Councillors, and the general community about what agritourism is, the value of agritourism, and how to start to engage in developing an agritourism offering.

3. Facilitate an annual agritourism forum. Have presentations by diverse successful agritourism operators and by regions that have successfully developed agritourism, and have participants each share what they are working on, want to work on, challenges they are facing, etc, to make Council aware of issues or collaborative opportunities. Celebrate new agritourism developments in the region by sharing the stories of how they were developed (to inspire new development). Have a clear desired outcome to achieve to ensure producers feel there is value in the forum.

4. Encourage producers to always speak with Council planning and tourism staff at the earliest of stages of considering a new tourism business.

5. Have a project for agritourism operators and others to work on together, such as the spring and autumn harvest festivals

TIMELINE:

2022

BUDGET:

Approximately $100,000 to deliver all elements of the program (this will vary depending on extent of program)

30 See Section 13.12
31 A second phase of the program could include an accredited locavore program, using 'regional heroes' such as wine makers, food producers and chefs.

13.9 ATTRACT AGRITOURISM INVESTMENT

Council will proactively try to draw new private and public investment into the region to fill strategic product and experience gaps in the region's agritourism offering

DRIVER:

Council – Manager Community and Culture

PURPOSE:

- Inspire investors and tree changers to invest in developing new agritourism products and experiences in the region.

INCLUSIONS:

- Business cases
- Investment prospectus

STEPS:

1. Secure funding to engage an economist/ consultant to develop robust business cases for the recommended agritourism product and experience developments (see Section 8.3).

2. Develop an agritourism investment prospectus based on filling identified product gaps (the recommended developments in Section 8.3). Ensure projects are shovel ready for future investment attraction and government funding support

3. Use the prospectus to proactively seek to attract targeted investment and new businesses.

4. Council to pursue a targeted development approach to fill identified gaps, such as by opening a parcel of land for development (e.g. 20 acre lots) to attract food businesses and tree changers.

TIMELINE:

2022 (and ongoing)

BUDGET:

$250,000 (business cases)

13.10 INVEST IN STRATEGIC MARKETING

Strategic, targeted marketing will build on the development of an agritourism brand story, website content, stories, and itineraries.

Sharing stories and content to help build brand awareness and appeal is critical to building the region as an agritourism destination.

DRIVER:

Council - Manager Community and Culture

PURPOSE:

- Promote the region to target markets to inspire them to visit
- Support owners of existing agritourism products with distribution and marketing

INCLUSIONS:

- If there is interest amongst producers, have a co-operative Cootamundra-Gundagai stall at nearby markets, particularly in source markets such as Capital Region Farmers Market and Southside Farmers Market in Canberra and the Riverina Producers Market in Wagga, to promote the region's produce and agritourism experiences This could be done in collaboration with Thrive Riverina and could use the Taste Riverina brand.

STEPS:

1. Improve visitor statistics collection by organising Council assets (visitor information centres, museums, popular attractions and nature reserves) and tourism operators to collaboratively gather visitor statistics: demographics, motivations for visiting, and preferred experiences[32] using opt-in GDPR/privacy-compliant QR codes with a link to a short survey; and for accommodations to join STR for regular region-wide accommodation occupancy reports. This will fine-tune target market identification, supporting more effective marketing campaigns and aligned product development.

2. Secure funding for destination marketing and brand activation (aim for three years of funding to allow for consistency).

3. Develop and implement a strategic and targeted marketing plan in collaboration with Hilltops and Snowy Valleys Councils. Focus on building the day trip and weekend holiday market from Wagga Wagga (1h), Canberra (2h), and Victoria (2h to the border), particularly strategic and targeted activity into the ACT, using day trips from Gundagai as the key message. Measure and review effectiveness of all marketing activities, and adjust to improve ROI over time.

4. Look for opportunities to leverage collaborative marketing

   - Collaborate with producers to jointly fund an LGA wide premier food/agritourism products marketing campaign[33]
   - Use the regional tourism brands or Taste Riverina to promote local produce
   - Jointly fund a marketing campaign of the region's premier food and agritourism products
   - Leverage nearby agritourism events to give a reason to stay an extra day such as Young cherry season for an excursion to Cootamundra
   - Increase local recommendations and cross promotion
   - Leverage/buy in to Thrive Riverina's collaborative marketing campaigns in Canberra market and Visit Riverina social media, email database/seasonal newsletters,

32 As per the CGRC Tourism & Economic Development Strategy 2019
33 From the CGRC Tourism and Economic Development Strategy 2019

and media famils.

- Collaborate across regions for destination marketing campaigns

5. Integrate food and wine content and agritourism experiences into the broader destination story.

6. Ensure agritourism experiences are listed on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW), TripAdvisor and Google My Business

7. Promote the Delicious award and similar products (and where they can be bought and experienced).

8. Leverage the Taste Riverina brand and the Riverina Food Directory website. Have representation on the Taste Committee (a Council officer or an industry representative).

9. Leverage Tourism Australia's Restaurant Australia activities when and where relevant

10. Provide training and development in tourism promotion for Cootamundra VIC's volunteers (including famil trips to agritourism businesses).

TIMELINE:

2022 (and ongoing)

BUDGET:

$15,000 minimum per annum (this can be part of the overall destination marketing budget)

13.11 SECURE A DESTINATION ATTRACTION AT THE GUNDAGAI OLD MILL

It is recommended that the new development that Council accepts for the Old Mill site includes an immersive experience that connects visitors to local produce and agriculture. There is opportunity for this site to link in with the Coolamon Cheese Factory and Junee Licorice & Chocolate Factory to create another iconic repurposed building that provides a quality hero tourism attraction.

DRIVER:

Council - Manager Community and Culture

PURPOSE:

Connect visitors to local produce and agriculture and local agritourism experiences

INCLUSIONS:

Some suggested uses of the site include one or a combination of the following:

- Artisan bakery using local produce
- Winery cellar door to showcase wine from the region
- Craft beverage manufacture
- Tourism facilities
- Destination dining with a focus on local produce
- Special events celebrating and promoting local produce

STEPS:

Council has made necessary updates to the building, and put out a call for EOIs for a development in the Mill. The attached product development recommendation one-pager can support pitching for a new tourism business to use this site.

13.12 DEVELOP A SPRING AND AN AUTUMN FOOD FESTIVAL

Two region-wide foodie/harvest/local produce festivals held in spring and autumn when the weather is most suitable for an event (on a long weekend where possible). An umbrella festival name will encompass a range of events run by agritourism operators, producers, community groups and others. These festivals would replace the fortnightly farmers markets.

DRIVER:

On the Road to Gundagai, GREG and CDC will lead the event development and event marketing.
Council's role is as enabler: to assist with compliance and help make it easy for events to take place, and support event promotion.

PURPOSE:

- Attract visitation
- Increase destination awareness
- Increase collaboration
- Trial new products such as short term PR collaborations (e.g. Wagga's strawberry beer collaboration between a strawberry farm and a microbrewery)

INCLUSIONS:

- Two region-wide foodie/harvest/local produce festivals[34]
- Food produced within 100km of the region
- Elements such as tasting plates, product/wine tasting, showcases of local chefs and produce, farm tours and on farm meals

EXAMPLE:

The fast-growing Eat Local Week in the Scenic Rim attracts 40,000 people to the region and contributes more than $2 million to the local economy (not including expenditure by locals).

ACTIVATION STEPS:

1. Bring together the main potential players to feel out interest, and flesh out the event's inclusions across the region, such as GREG, CDC, major tourism operators and existing event holders such as Cootamundra Wattle Time Fair & Street Parade

2. Engage an event expert to develop event development plans an marketing plans for each event, highlighting the governance model, budget, program, brand, etc.

3. Establish working groups for each event and determine a key coordinator to lead each event

4. Commence event planning by sending out a request for EOIs for events for the festival (Example: Eat Local Week event application)

TIMELINE:

Commence planning in 2022, with the events to be launched in 2023

BUDGET:

$40,000 to engage consultant to do event development plans and marketing plans

Seed funding of $50,000 per event will be required with the future budget dependent on size and scale of events

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34 Kimo Estate is intending to develop a food and wine festival that could be leveraged for one of these

14. APPENDICES

14.1 DESKTOP RESEARCH AND CONSULTATION

In developing this report, Tilma Group reviewed the following:

- Rural Lands Issue Paper: Agricultural Tourism 2018, Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council

- Tourism and Economic Development Strategy 2019, Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council

- Community Strategic Plan 2018, Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council

- Brand Strategy Cootamundra, Gundagai & Villages presentation

- Boosting Regional Australia Through Agritourism Discussion Paper 2018, Australian Regional Tourism

- Agritourism – An industry skills gap scoping study, Box Hill Institute

- Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan 2018

- The Riverina Strategic Plan 2020, Thrive Riverina

- Starting and running an agritourism business, Farmers' experiences and needs 2019, Service NSW for Business

- An inquiry into the development of agritourism survey results snapshots 2020, Australian Regional Tourism

- NSW Food and Wine Tourism Strategy 2018, Destination NSW

- Food and Wine Tourism in New South Wales 2015, Tourism Research Australia

- Food Tourism to NSW 2018, Destination NSW

- Wine Tourism to NSW 2018, Destination NSW

- Riverina Research Key Insights (target market research), Destination NSW

- Gundagai Visitor Information Centre recent visitor statistics

- Local Government Area Profile 2018 for Cootamundra Gundagai, Tourism Research Australia

- Regional NSW Visitor Profile 2019, Destination NSW

- Community Donations Policy 2020, Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council

- Business Connect Agritourism webinar with Regionality

- Scenic Rim Locavore Program

An audit of agritourism and tourism experiences was developed via desktop research.

Consultation was conducted by Tilma Group with the following stakeholders:

- Mayor Abb McAlister, Tourism and Economic Development Officer Jeana Bell, Manager Community and Culture Miriam Crane, Manager of Development, Building & Compliance Sharon Langman, and Tourism Administration Trainee Casey Polsen, Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council

- Members of the Gundagai Tourism Action Committee and Cootamundra Tourism Action Group

- David Ferguson, Kimo Estate

- Rachel Whiting, RDA Riverina

- Arcadia Addams, Small Business Commission

- Richie Robinson, Destination Riverina Murray

- Brent Lawrence, Thrive Riverina

- Leah Sutherland and Gwen Norman, Cootamundra Development Corporation

- Louise Freckelton, Highfield Farm and Woodland

- Rose de Belin, Planted Cootamundra

- Annie Jacobs, Wallendbeen Park Farm

- Jamie, Rusty Table

- Nina Piotrowicz

- Ali Betts, formerly of Muddy Pigs

- Kerenza Brown, Southern Harvest

- Miriam Hewson Destination Marketing Officer, Snowy Valleys Council

- Melanie Whitechurch, Tourism and Events Manager, Hilltops Council

- Fiona Hamilton Visitor Economy & Events Coordinator, Wagga Wagga City Council and tourism staff

- Craig Sinclair Economic Development Manager, Temora Shire Council

Additionally, an online survey was distributed to Cootamundra-Gundagai producers and agritourism operators and the wider community via Coota Local and Gundagai Local and direct mail with 14 responses.

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions no site visits were undertaken by Tilma Group.

14.2 HOW LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAN SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF AGRITOURISM BUSINESSES

This report by Service NSW for Business explores the experience of farmers in NSW who are trying to start, run and grow agritourism businesses, and provides insights into their pain points and how to resolve them: Starting and running an agritourism business; Farmers' experiences and needs.

14.3 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRIORITY PROJECTS

Agritourism industry group Northern Rivers Food secured $240,000 over three years from a State MP (their previous Lower House Member, now in the Upper House). The MP's staff member advises that Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council or an agritourism industry group should approach the region's state and federal members of parliament and the State Minister for Tourism to ask how the region can work with government to secure financial support for agritourism development.

Grant opportunities for each project requiring funding include the following:

Project	Grant Name	Description	Who can apply	Rounds
1.8 Implement the Agritourism Business Development Program	FRRR Strengthening Rural Communities	Supports organisational capacity building	Not-for-profit, community-based organisation	4/year
	FRRR Tackling Tough Times Together	Supports projects with one of these aims: 1. Building community resilience 2. Developing organisational resilience and capacity 3. Enhancing environmental sustainability 4. Fostering cultural vibrancy 5. Lifelong learning and education 6. Economic strength 7. Improving community health and social wellbeing	Community groups and not-for-profit organisations in drought-affected regions	Always open

1.12 Develop a spring and an autumn food festival	Building Better Regions Fund	Up to $20,000 unmatched (or double budget) for new or expanded events	Not-for-profit organisations and Councils	1/year (November)
	FRRR Strengthening Rural Communities	A broad range of charitable projects are considered under this program, including: • Delivering, or providing activities, events, programs and services; • Purchasing or hiring equipment and materials; • Community infrastructure projects; • Organisational capacity building; • Community resource development.	Not-for-profit, community-based organisation	4/year
	Destination NSW Regional Event Fund	It is not clear if DNSW will support new events in the future as they did in the past.	Not-for-profit organisations	

Grants do not typically fund destination marketing projects, such as

• 1.4 Create agritourism brand story

• 1.5 Bundle products into itineraries and a map

• 1.6 Hire a PR agency

• 1.10 Invest in strategic marketing

However, it may be possible to secure funding from drought or bushfire related grants for destination marketing activities.