



# Roebourne Visitor Centre and Roebourne Old Gaol Strategic Plan (2014 - 2018)

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**Restricted: Draft & Confidential**

Prepared by:

**Peter Farr Consultants Australasia Pty Ltd**

PO Box 1949, West Perth WA 6872

Tel. 041 990 5864, E: [Farr.Peter@farr.com.au](mailto:Farr.Peter@farr.com.au)

**FARR**

Peter Farr Consultants  
Australasia Pty Ltd

CONSULTANTS TO MANAGEMENT

## Roebourne Visitor Centre and Roebourne Old Gaol (WA) Strategic Plan (2014 - 2018)

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**Revision History**

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# **Roebourne Visitor Centre and Roebourne Old Gaol (WA)**

## **Strategic Plan (2014 - 2018)**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### ***Aim***

The Aim of the 2014 Roebourne Visitor Centre and Roebourne Old Gaol Strategic Plan is to guide the centre's operations at a strategic level over the next three to four year period, commencing 2014/15. The Plan is to take into account the City of Karratha's stated requirement "for a Strategic Plan for future governance and operations which is less dependent on Council's support".

Accordingly, the Consultants have endeavoured to provide a practical Strategic Plan with:

- an independent 'blank sheet of paper' analysis and rationale for the key stakeholders;
- practical strategies to deliver an economically sustainable operation; and
- practical recommendations for the best framework for the future governance, management and business-like operation of the Roebourne Visitor Information Centre and Roebourne Old Gaol.

#### ***Audience***

The primary audience for the 2014 Strategic Plan is the Management Committee of the Roebourne District Tourist Association Inc. (R&DTA) (trading as the Roebourne Visitor Centre (RVC)).

The secondary audiences are the City of Karratha and the Ngarluma Yindjibarndi Foundation Ltd (NYFL) (which funded the study as an altruistic gesture of confidence in the Roebourne community).

#### ***Plan Objectives***

The purposes for developing the RVC Strategic Plan are as follows:

- To work towards the RVC and Old Roebourne Gaol each becoming sustainable business entities that maximise the benefits of the service to tourists as well as to the communities of Roebourne and surrounding region.
- To ensure the RVC provides a high level of customer service to potential and existing visitors to Roebourne and surrounding region to encourage return visitation and positive word-of-mouth promotion.
- To consider options for the future resourcing of the RVC.
- To guide the development and operation of the RVC in accordance with the requirements of Level 2 accreditation under the Better Business Tourism Accreditation Program (BBTAP).
- To involve the local tourism industry, City of Karratha and NYFL in the planning process to ensure support of the operation and ongoing development of the facility, as well as to maximise ongoing benefit from their collective expertise and influence.



### Strategic Plan Aims

This Strategic Plan and its recommendations are consistent with the criteria for the operation of a centre accredited at Level 2 under the Better Business Tourism Accreditation Program (nationally-recognised standards).

### Vision

The **Vision** for the RVC and Old Roebourne Gaol is:

***To be a vibrant and valued facility which showcases and interprets all that the Roebourne region has to offer for tourists, whilst also assisting R&DTA's financial members and other stakeholders to meet their tourism-related business/social objectives.***

Following is an expanded **Vision** for the Roebourne Visitor Centre and Old Roebourne Gaol in four years' time:

*The Roebourne Visitor Centre is a best practice visitor information service where visitors are given a warm welcome and introduction to Roebourne and the wider Pilbara. Our knowledgeable staff members are skilled at responding to and anticipating visitors' information needs, providing a consistent level of outstanding service.*

*Resulting from a successful membership drive, R&DTA membership has achieved a 'critical mass', thereby expanding both the diversity and the resource base that can be tapped for 'self-help' projects and programs.*

*The RVC has moved into a purpose-designed building occupying the south-east corner of the existing carpark, and linked by a covered breezeway to the Old Roebourne Gaol - which itself is a prime tourism attraction. The freed up space in the Gaol is transformed as a modest size Interpretive Centre plus a controlled environment space for fragile artefacts.*

*The RVC staff ensure maximisation of the synergy between the RVC and the Old Roebourne Gaol, as well as the cost optimisation made possible by their collocation.*

*The more appealing upgraded Visitor and Information Center features a changing series of displays and exhibits that has established the RVC as a drawcard to the Roebourne region, and keeps the centre fresh and engaging for regular visitors.*

*Our use of the latest technology in information provision on-site increases the appeal of the centre and raises our standard of service. We facilitate our customers and prospective visitors to be able to use online and SmartPhone/tablet technology to get*



*information "when they want it and how they want it" and encourage them to become part of our marketing mix via use of social media.*

*The RVC is recognised by the City of Karratha, traders and the broader Roebourne community as vital to the economic well-being of the region, and as providing a valuable service for tourists and residents.*

### Values

The Values that will guide the RVC's operations.

The RVC Mgmt Committee and staff are all committed to:

- fully supporting the Roebourne District Tourist Association Inc. (R&DTA) financial members and stakeholders;
- excellence in customer service;
- recognising and promoting the unique attributes of the Roebourne region - including the archaeology, geology, ecology, Aboriginality, ancient rock art, pre-colonial and early colonial history, pearling, mineral and natural gas resources, and the pastoral industry;
- celebrating the diversity of the region and strengthening the Roebourne region's appeal as both a destination and a 'must see';
- providing/promoting high-quality and appealing products/services and experiences for visitors;
- working with partners and stakeholders to develop a vibrant program of activities/experiences that attracts visitors and local residents;
- using innovative approaches in areas such as interpretation/displays, technology and marketing;
- building new partnerships and nurturing existing strong/worthwhile partnerships;
- setting a public example in environmental sustainability to R&DTA members and RVC customers.

### Goals for the R&DTA/RVC

The top **10** goals of the RVC for the period **2014 - 2018** are:

- 1 Secure a suitable lease for the RVC and Old Roebourne Gaol historic sites.
- 2 Develop a Master Plan for the RVC-Roebourne Old Gaol site that includes the location of a purpose-built Visitor Centre fitting as the western gateway to the Pilbara.
- 3 Listen to and work with R&DTA members and key stakeholders to assist them in their business and social objectives. Act as a constructive conduit between visitors and R&DTA members.
- 4 Promote the best tourism products and services in the Roebourne region to increase visitors' experiences, length of stay and 'word of mouth' publicity.
- 5 Provide high quality information and support services (physically and on-line) to enhance visitor awareness and increase their access to positive tourism experiences.

In conjunction with the KVC, develop a digital platform as a key marketing tool and assist the local tourism industry to be able to convert using the digital platform.

- 6 Showcase the attributes of the Roebourne region (physically and on-line).
- 7 Create a vibrant hub for community engagement.
- 8 Develop, maintain and support strong partnerships.
- 9 Ensure Governance structure and best practices for the Management Committee to guide the advancement of the RVC.
- 10 Put the RVC well on the way to a sustainable financial model. Separate the finances of the RVC and the Old Roebourne Gaol.

### ***Key Directions - the Top Ten Strategies (and associated Actions)***

The Plan sets down Key Directions involving the Top Ten Strategies (and associated Actions).

- 1 Ngarluma Yindjibarndi Foundation Ltd Partnership or Joint Venture
- 2 Expand and Nurture Existing Partnerships
- 3 RVC Membership Drive
- 4 Improve Branding, Image, Customer Service, and Operations
- 5 Expand and Improve Community Relations
- 6 Cossack
- 7 Accreditation
- 8 Improve Management, Organisation and Planning
- 9 Staffing
- 10 Finances

NB: The priorities for Year 1 and each succeeding year are to be set by the Management Committee, in collaboration as appropriate with the City of Karratha/staff and the KVC.

### ***The Key Measures for Success 2014-2018***

**Accountability:** The Strategic Plan is also the fundamental component against which the Management Committee measures and reports progress. The Key Measures for Success 2014-2018 set out in the Plan encompass:

#### **1 NYFL Partnership**

- (i) Mutually acceptable MOU arranged with NYFL that includes resource commitments and mutual obligations.

#### **2 Partnerships**

- (i) Considerable evidence of leveraging off the opportunities made possible by the new Ngurin Pilbara Aboriginal Centre, including possibly a 'satellite' RVC desk at the Ngurin Pilbara Aboriginal Centre.



- (ii) Discernible uplift in interworking with the City of Karratha/staff and the Karratha Visitor Center (KVC) to leverage off each respective organisation's resources/strengths.
- (iii) Considerable evidence of liaising intensely with Rio Tinto to retain and develop the existing working relationship, supplementary funding and MOU.
- (iv) More evidence of liaising with both Art centres in Roebourne (Yinjaa-Barni Art and Roebourne Art Group), as well as the nearby Roebourne Community Resource Centre (CRC).

### **3 Membership Drive**

- (i) Discernible expansion in the R&DTA membership, achieving a 'critical mass', and expanding both the diversity and the resource base that can be tapped for 'self-help' projects and programs.
- (ii) A perceptively more engaged local tourism industry.

### **4 Branding, Image, Customer Service, and Operations**

- (i) Roebourne district map as a large billboard.
- (ii) Discernible uplift in RVC appearance from the carpark.
- (iii) RVC website more current, more interesting, more interactive, more RVC focussed.
- (iv) Digital platform set up as a key marketing tool, leading to a conspicuous increase in the capacity of both the RVC and the local tourism industry to deliver tourism related services digitally.
- (v) Brochure display policy that differentiates between financial members and others.
- (vi) Interpretive displays in the RVC - with a focus on promoting the natural attractions of the region.
- (vii) Touch-screens to provide out-of-hours access to visitor information.
- (viii) Free Wi-Fi hot-spot at RVC.
- (ix) Increased profile of the RVC's services and benefits to the local/region economy.
- (x) Regular and reasonably detailed surveying and analysis of visitation to the RVC, including customer satisfaction data. Competent statistical analysis and interpretation of data.
  - This is then used to shape the marketing/promotion and customer service strategy.
  - It is imperative not to rely on the traditional Visitors Book as an indicator of visitor opinions.
- (xi) Measured increase in visitor satisfaction (via a credible evaluation methodology).
- (xii) Increase in total visitors serviced in person or virtually by 12% over 4 years (i.e. average of +3% pa).
- (xiii) Increase in overnight visitors to the Roebourne region by 6% over 4 years (i.e. average of +1.5% pa).

### **5 Community Relations**

- (i) Uplift in the supporting the operations of key community events/programs.
- (ii) Basic level of information on local services and facilities provided to new residents and businesses, and other community members.

### **6 Cossack Heritage Trail**

- (i) Replacement (by the City of Karratha) of all damaged/deteriorated Cossack Heritage Trail and Emma Withnell Heritage Trail signage by the end of FY 2014/15.

## **7 Accreditation and Alliances**

- (i) Level 2 accreditation maintained through the Better Business Tourism Accreditation Program.
- (ii) Considerable evidence of networking with Visitor Centres in adjacent towns and regions, and to participate in regional initiatives to improve the operation of Visitor Centres in North West WA.

## **8 Management, Organisation and Planning**

- (i) Lease secured by the RVC for the Old Roebourne Gaol historic site.
- (ii) Ensure governance structure and best practices for a fully representative and appropriately skilled Management Committee to guide the advancement of the RVC.
- (iii) External funding secured in order to develop a Master Plan for the RVC and Old Roebourne Gaol site that includes the provision of a new purpose-built Visitor Centre. Completion of the Master Plan for the RVC and Old Roebourne Gaol complex.
- (iv) Roebourne-Cossack Heritage Foundation established as a prerequisite step to putting the management of Roebourne's heritage buildings and Cossack onto a better footing.
- (v) External funding secured in order to develop a Conservation Plan for the Old Gaol. (This is a vital prerequisite to guide essential conservation maintenance).
- (vi) Funding secured (and staff training undertaken) for MoSAIC data base to record Old Roebourne Gaol and Cossack artefacts.

## **9 Staffing**

- (i) An appropriate combination of staff/volunteers with formal qualifications is in place for the Old Roebourne Gaol Heritage Site/Museum.
- (ii) Meaningful and measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) implemented for both the Management Committee and RVC manager.

## **10. Finances**

- (i) The finances of the RVC and the Old Roebourne Gaol separated so as to identify Income and Expenditure and Balance Sheets, as a forerunner to preparing the way for a formal separation with each entity focussing on its specific Mission.
- (ii) Entry charges introduced for the Old Roebourne Gaol and are shown to generate far more income per annum than the previous voluntary 'Gold coin donation'.
- (iii) Steady and acceptable progression made by the RVC towards a sustainable financial model in which the percentage of total operating income provided by the City of Karratha falls significantly from 66% in the baseline year of 2013/14 to 53% for Years 2015/16 to 2017/18.

**Figure 1: Funding Model Trend**

FY	City of Karratha - Proposed Funding Model					
	Grant amount \$			% of Budgeted Gross Income		
	Roebourne Visitor Centre core functions only	Roebourne Old Gaol Museum	Total	Roebourne Visitor Centre core functions only	Roebourne Old Gaol Museum	Total
2013/14	\$ 292,572		\$ 292,572	66%		66%
2014/15	\$ 263,500	\$ 46,500	\$ 310,000	64%	42%	59%
2015/16	\$ 263,500	\$ 46,500	\$ 310,000	60%	31%	53%
2016/17	\$ 263,500	\$ 46,500	\$ 310,000	60%	31%	53%
2017/18	\$ 263,500	\$ 46,500	\$ 310,000	60%	31%	53%

This plan should find support with the City of Karratha given the Resolution carried by Council on 21 July 2014.

However, much more to the point is to recognise that:

- 1) Funding for tourism is an investment, not a subsidy.
- 2) Visitor Information and Booking Centres have proven ability to extend length of stay and increase expenditure in regional areas
- 3) Visitors, businesses and local government ALL need the visitor centre services.

Note: The \$ amounts shown in this forward Plan above for Earned Income and Tours DO NOT INCLUDE any significant allowance for new and expanded revenue generators that are described in Chapter 7 KEY DIRECTIONS - THE TOP TEN STRATEGIES and Section 8.1.1 Income - Past and Future. Accordingly, it is contended that the Income expected from Earned Income and Tours should exceed the figures herein, all other things being equal.

Note: All dollar values quoted are in 2014 dollar terms, with no allowance made for future inflation.

### **List of Recommendations**

The report contains nine **Key Recommendations** which are listed below for convenience:

#### Page Number

Recommendation 1: Secure external funding in order to develop a Master Plan for the RVC-Roebourne Old Gaol site that includes the provision of a new purpose-built Visitor Centre which would be fitting as the western gateway to the Pilbara. .... 42

Recommendation 2: In conjunction with the City of Karratha and the National Trust of WA, establish the Roebourne-Cossack Heritage Foundation as a prerequisite step to putting the management of Roebourne's heritage buildings and Cossack onto a better footing. .... 42

Recommendation 3: The ownership status of the historical museum collection (artefacts displayed in glass cabinets) needs to be resolved, and a Collection Policy formulated. .... 42

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Recommendation 4: Separate the finances of the RVC and the Old Roebourne Gaol Museum so as to prepare the way for a formal separation with each entity focussing on its specific Mission. ....	43
Recommendation 5: The Roebourne Tourism Association Inc will mount a drive to significantly expand the RVC membership with the aim of achieving a 'critical mass', and expanding both the diversity and the resource base that can be tapped for 'self-help' projects and programs. ....	44
Recommendation 6: Increase pricing of goods, adjust the mix of retail items, and promote retail sales more proactively in order to achieve an acceptable level of profit taking true costs into account. ....	45
Recommendation 7: Target tours so as to become a more substantial part of RVC income; renegotiate commission on tours. ....	46
Recommendation 8: Take on more fee-for-service opportunities especially accommodation bookings. ....	46
Recommendation 9: Introduce entry charges for the Museum in order to substantially increase self-earned income, and thereby contribute to keeping the Museum sustainable. ...	46

## DISCLAIMER

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**Peter Farr**  
Chairman  
Peter Farr Consultants Australasia Pty Ltd

17 August 2014

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## Abbreviations

FARR	Peter Farr Consultants Australasia Pty Ltd
KVC	Karratha Visitor Centre
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NYFL	Ngarluma Yindjibarndi Foundation Ltd.
R&DTA	Roebourne District Tourist Association Inc.
RVC	Roebourne Visitor Centre

## 1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

### 1.1 Background

Roebourne, in the Pilbara Region of the North West of Western Australia, is the oldest town between Geraldton and Darwin and is situated 30 kilometres east of Karratha. Roebourne land falls within the boundaries of the Ngarluma people, and the dominate language group in Roebourne are the Yindjibarndi.

In the Tourism WA categorisation of WA's regions, Roebourne fall within the vast **Australia's North West**, encompassing the Kimberley and Pilbara regions, from Onslow in the south to Kununurra in the north eastern corner.



The Roebourne Visitor Centre (RVC) has a history of excellence in customer service. Situated as it is on the eastern gateway to the Pilbara, the RVC provides a tremendous opportunity for its Members and other stakeholders to showcase the diverse array of attractions, attractions and experiences available to visitors.

The City of Karratha (formerly the Roebourne Shire Council) has, for over a decade, been the principal funding partner for the RVC and Karratha Visitor Centre (KVC) via an annual funding contribution and MOU.

### 1.2 History Snapshot

The Pilbara region was first explored by Francis Thomas Gregory in 1861. The first settlers, including Gregory's cousin Emma Withnell and her young family, arrived in the Roebourne area in 1863. The Withnells established themselves on the banks of the Harding River 13 km from the coast, where they had access to a reasonable fresh water supply.

Roebourne's name honours John Septimus Roe, the first Surveyor General of Western Australia.

Roebourne prospered during its gold boom of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and was once the largest settlement between Darwin and Perth. Due to gradual decline in local opportunities, by the 2006 census, Roebourne had a resident population of 857. Happily, many of the original buildings in and around historic Roebourne and Cossack have been restored and provide an insight into the early pioneering times in the Pilbara.

Currently Roebourne is a sub-regional centre, serves the passing highway traffic and tourism, especially as the gateway to national parks in the interior. Many services are provided from Karratha, 40 km to the west.

Roebourne land falls within the boundaries of the Ngarluma people, but many Yindjibarndi and Banyjima people previously from outlying stations also live in the town. The dominant language group in Roebourne are the Yindjibarndi.



In 2005, Native Title was granted to the Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi people. The Ngarluma Aboriginal Corporation (NAC) was set up in 2005 and is the Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC) for Ngarluma.

The Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation (MAC) was established in 2006 as a consequence of an agreement called the Burrup and Maitland Industrial Estates Agreement. Murujuga Park is vested with the MAC comprising traditional custodians the Ngarluma-Yindjibarndi, the Yaburara-Mardudhunera and the Woon-goo-tt-oo. It is estimated that there are in excess of one million petroglyphs within the park itself. The rock art not only tells the story of human habitation, dating back to when the land was some 100 km inland from the sea, but it also records the lore for Aboriginal people to the north western tip of Australia.

In recent years, the Ngarluma Yindjibarndi Foundation Ltd (NYFL) has become a key Aboriginal membership organisation and provider of a wide range of social and commercial services, including running the local supermarket, café in the main street, and sponsor of the new Ngurin Pilbara Aboriginal Centre. Hence it is logical that the interest expressed by the NYFL in taking a constructive involvement with the RVC should be fully explored as a priority, and this Strategic Plan is written with this in mind. Also important is the Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation.

### 1.3 Roebourne Visitor Centre

The City of Karratha (formerly the Shire of Roebourne) vision is to effectively deliver services that meet the needs and aspiration of the community and the overriding principles of social, economic and environmental sustainability. In relation to tourism this means maximising tourism potential in the City by:

- Maximising Council's visitor servicing investment.
- Encourage the development of tourism infrastructure
- Maximising opportunity for Tourism Product Development and sustainability.

Located at Lot 4548 Karratha Road, the KVC is standalone and purpose built. Whereas, the RVC is sited in cramped quarters in the Old Roebourne Gaol which was first constructed by George Temple Poole in 1887.

The Roebourne Visitor Centre and Karratha Visitor Centre are approx. 40 km apart, with the KVC predominantly serving Karratha as a destination plus east to west traffic, and the RVC predominantly serving west to east traffic.

From the feedback in the Centre's visitors' books and from past surveys and anecdotal feedback, the RVC is a great asset to the Roebourne Region and the community and acts as a contact point that regularly provides travellers with a positive experience. Indeed, the status of the RVC is partly testified by these awards:

- 2011-2012-2013 Tourism & Hospitality Business Award
- 2003 Tourism Award
- 2001 People's Choice: Best Visitor Services.

### 1.3.1 RVC Funding in 2014/2015

The City of Karratha (formerly the Shire of Roebourne Council) has, for over a decade, been the principal funding partner for both the RVC and KVC via an annual funding contribution and Memorandum of Understanding. Each MOU places obligations on the respective KVC/RVC with respect to:

- membership and visitor stats, plans, performance and reporting, submitting an Annual Audited Financial Statement, etc.;
- Maintain accreditation through the Australian Tourism Accreditation Standard;
- Attend bi monthly meetings of the Shire Staff, Karratha and Roebourne Visitor Centre Managers to provide and report on the abovementioned information.

In turn with respect to the Council, the MOU has usually included such provisions as for the Council to:

- Maintain interpretive and directional tourist related signage to Icon and Heritage locations throughout the Shire/City.
- Include the Manager of the Roebourne Visitor Centre in Community Development planning/progress meetings which will assist identification of tourism product development opportunities and promotion.

The Shire/City receives membership and associated benefits of membership to both the RVC and KVC.

For an inexplicable reason, various official Council papers prepared over the years by Council staff have repeatedly only referred to the RVC as a Visitor Centre and seldom take into account the important aspect that the RVC is actually sited within the Old Roebourne Gaol and the staff serve dual roles as RVC staff **AND** heritage site/museum staff.

On 21 July 2014, Council carried the following Resolution:

That Council by SIMPLE Majority pursuant to Section 5.42 and 6.8 of the Local Government Act 1995, RESOLVES to ENTER into a funding agreement with the Roebourne Visitor Centre (RVC) for the first quarter (Q1) period 1/07/14 to 30/09/14 with a funding allocation of: \$79,990 (incl. GST) with the RVC to provide a Strategic Plan for future governance and operations which is less dependent on Council's support by 30/09/14.

**REASON:**

Councillors for the motion considered Option 2 – 25% of funding will enable the Roebourne Visitor Centre (RVC) to operate at current level enabling sufficient time to complete and submit to Council their Strategic Plan for future governance and operations to Council which is less dependent on Council's support by 30/09/14. Councillors requested their reason for being against the motion be recorded in minutes based on the following ...considered while the RVC Strategic Plan was nearing completion Option 3 – 50% of funding was needed to provide more time for Strategic Plan development /implementation, and would provide assurance and stability to the operations of the RVC.

## 1.4 Plan Objectives

The purposes for developing the 2014 RVC Strategic Plan are as follows:

- 1 To work towards the RVC becoming a sustainable business entity that maximises the benefits of the service to the communities of Roebourne and surrounding region. In particular, to team up with the Ngarluma Yindjibarndi Foundation Ltd (NYFL) and leverage off the launch of the new Ngurin Pilbara Aboriginal Centre.
- 2 To ensure the RVC provides a high level of customer service to potential and existing visitors to Roebourne and surrounding region to encourage return visitation and positive word-of-mouth promotion.
- 3 To consider the best options for the future resourcing of the RVC.
- 4 To guide the development and operation of the RVC in accordance with the requirements of Level 2 accreditation under the Better Business Tourism Accreditation Program (BBTAP).
- 5 To involve the local tourism industry, City of Karratha and NYFL in the planning process to ensure support of the operation and development of the facility, as well as to benefit from their collective expertise and influence.

This Strategic Plan and its recommendations are to be consistent with the criteria for the operation of a centre accredited at Level 2 under the Better Business Tourism Accreditation Program (nationally-recognised standards).

## 1.5 Consulting Resources

The independent Management Consultants appointed to research and produce the Plan were:

- **Peter Farr Consultants Australasia Pty Ltd** (*Peter Farr*)


## 1.6 Timing

The evaluation consultancy began in April 2014, with a detailed draft Plan submitted in mid-August, and is scheduled to be completed by September 2014.

## 1.7 Methodology

The methodology for the plan has involved:

- Meeting with RVC and NYFL key officers to clarify the project brief.
- Site inspections of the Karratha Visitor Centre, the RVC and the co-located Old Roebourne Gaol.
- Review of the current 'RVC Strategic Business Plan, 2012-2015'.
- High-level examination of the current operations of the RVC and the co-located Old Roebourne Gaol.
- Literature Review including 'Shire of Roebourne Local Government Heritage Inventory, Sept. 2013'.
- Inspection of the Emma Withnell Heritage Trail and Cossack.
- Briefing on Whim Creek Hotel.
- Review of RVC visitor trends data and relevant visitor servicing trends.
- Review of RVC finances.

- 
- Review of Council documents relating to resourcing of the Karratha Visitor Centre and the RVC.
  - Review of 'Good Practice' and International trends for Visitor Centres.
  - Discussion group and Key Informant interviews to identify issues/concerns, potential opportunities and partnerships for the RVC.
    -  Personnel included Dagmar Kraus, Chair of the RVC; Evan Maloney, CEO of NYFL; Ruth Ellis, Centre Manager, RVC and Yohanna Kelly; Eileen Wright, Curator, NYFL.
  - Dinner meeting with the R&DTA Management Committee.
  - Formulation of the strategy.
  - Formulation a Financial Model.
  - Production of a draft Strategic Plan for distribution to the R&DTA Management Committee, NYFL and Council staff.
  - Feedback received. Further refinement of the draft plan.
  - Production of the final plan.

## 2 BACKGROUND AND SITUATION ANALYSIS

### 2.1 Introduction

Tourism is a very important industry for Australia's North West for its role in generating regional employment and economic prosperity that flow on to other businesses because of the number of businesses that rely on direct and indirect benefits from tourism.

Tourism encompasses a wide range of businesses, including accommodation, cafes, restaurants, travel agents, tour operators and major tourist attractions. It also includes a range of related businesses and activities including retailers, art galleries, bus companies, vehicle hire, museums, historic properties hotels, conference centres, caterers, laundries, and state and national parks.

Tourism businesses vary greatly in their size and scale. Common challenges that unite them include having a mainly domestic market with a small number of international visitors, finding ways to entice visitors to increase their length of stay, and offering unique and diverse content for visitors at different price points.

### 2.2 Tourism in North West WA

*"Tourism is a major contributor to the Western Australian economy and is directly linked to the State's long term prosperity. .... Tourism develops strong and vibrant regional communities through employment and business opportunities for people living throughout the state. For indigenous communities, tourism can offer employment, business development and the maintenance of culture. The tourism industry is one of few industries to offer economic opportunities that mutually support and rely on environmental conservation objectives."*

In Australia's North West, tourism is seasonal, with visitation varying significantly depending on the time of the year.

### 2.3 Issues and Opportunities

#### 2.3.1 Key Issues/Constraints facing the Australian Tourism Industry and the Region

- 1) **Competition.** Perceived more appealing Value for Money proposition of holidays to nearby overseas tourist destinations (especially versus the Pilbara).
- 2) **Need for sustainable tourism organisations** showing leadership and strategic direction, united and engaged with the industry and community. A united industry, focused in the same direction, will create effective partnerships and success.
- 3) **Tourism industry not keeping up with changing consumer behaviour to digital** including mobile responsive websites, live booking ability and social media interaction. Consumers are searching for information 24 hours a day from home base and while on the move and to be competitive in servicing visitors at all stages of their travel cycle, Roebourne-region tourism must prepare a digital platform consisting of mobile responsive websites for information to be downloaded on desktops, tablets and SmartPhones, and also with Wi-Fi hotspots for visitors to be able to upload their

experiences onto social media platforms and share their photos, videos and experiences with friends while in the destination. This changing consumer behaviour of how travel is sourced and booked drives changes in marketing direction.

- 4) **Diversity of brand within the region** – Karratha and Roebourne (including Cossack and Point Samson) have different brand strengths requiring independent marketing initiatives. Limited dollars generating multiple campaigns dilutes cut through.
- 5) **Need to promote product diversity** – lack of awareness by potential tourists of accommodation options, nature-based products, Aboriginal culture experiences, archaeology/geology/ecology, walking/driving trails, arts, etc etc.
- 6) **Industry involvement in broader forms of visitor servicing.** Historically visitor servicing has focused on Visitor Centres/Tourist Bureaux, but with the advancements in technology and the digital platform, consumers are more reliant on online and SmartPhone technology and 24-hour access to information and the region needs to provide the infrastructure to assist its actual and prospective visitors.
- 7) **Tourist Accommodation.**
  - (a) For some time, it has been generally agreed that the most critical issue affecting the Pilbara is the lack of tourist accommodation which places a significant constraint on the tourism industry's capacity to expand. In particular a shortage of accommodation available for the self-drive market as they pass through the area in the peak season.
  - (b) For R&DTA members/prospective members and customers, the 'natural' coverage of the RVC apart from the town of Roebourne includes *inter alia* Cossack, Point Samson, Wickham/Cape Lambert, and further afield Whim Creek. For visitors passing in an east to west direction, the RVC is a very valuable source of information about Karratha.
  - (c) In terms of what is available close at hand, at present by far the best selection of tourist accommodation and eating/drinking places is to be found at Point Samson. With the closing of the Victoria Hotel some years ago to the public, for short-stay accommodation, Roebourne is pretty well limited to one caravan park/camping ground near the Harding River, and (further afield) limited backpacker accommodation at Cossack.

## 2.4 Statutory Details

The Roebourne & Districts Tourist Association Inc. (Trading as Roebourne Visitor Centre) (RVC). ABN 85 102 747 275. Mailing address PO Box 248, Roebourne WA 6718

The Roebourne Visitor Centre was established in May 1974 as a not-for-profit membership based organisation

Membership is defined in the Constitution as Financial Members and Management Committee members.

The general management and affairs of the Association shall be vested in the Management Committee.



Financial Members Meetings. All members of the public may attend and join in debate but only those people who are financial members of the Association may vote.

Website: [www.roebourne.org.au](http://www.roebourne.org.au)

### 2.4.1 Objectives

The key parameter for an organisation is its set of Objectives which in this case are set out in the R&DTA **Constitution** as follows:

- 1) The Roebourne Visitor Centre will be renowned as the central focus for visitor service actively promoting the diversity and uniqueness of the region.
- 2) Develop and maintain local, state and national network and communication links to encourage sustainable development of the local tourism industry.
- 3) Provide and promote current, relevant and accurate information in conjunction with quality product and services.
- 4) Promote sustainable growth in tourism for the economical and social benefit of the region.
- 5) Upgrade and enhance current facilities.

### 2.4.2 RVC Management Committee

As at August 2014 the MV comprised 10 persons:

Chairperson - Dagmar Kraus

Vice Chairperson - Peter Rodenberg

Local Government representative - Cr Garry Bailey (nominated by the City of Karratha). Also invited is Cr Fiona White-Hartig.

Committee Members:

Phyllis Marshall - local

Ross Humphries – Rio Tinto

Corinne Oakes – Rio Tinto

Yohanna Kelly - Permanent staff member

Michele Heymans - Casual staff member

Ruth Ellis - Centre Manager - ex-officio.

All ordinary members are elected by the Committee

Comment: It would be considered very unusual for an Incorporated organisation to have as many as three staff members on its Board or Management Committee. If possible, in accordance with best corporate governance practice, the MC balance should be changed, and ideally one completely independent person should be elected to the MC.

### 2.4.3 Partners

The RVC acknowledges the generous support of its two main funding partners over the past several years, the City of Karratha and Rio Tinto. Annually since approx. 1974(?) in the case of the City of Karratha and for the triennium ending 30 June 2014 in the case of Rio Tinto,

the RVC has been provided with funding support in exchange for helping these organisations deliver on their own strategic plans and strategy to support tourism in the region.

The RVC's other key funding partner comprises a small number of local businesses through their Membership subscriptions and other assistance.

## 2.5 Functions of the R&DTA (Management) Committee

The management committee performs the following functions:

- Strategic planning and policymaking;
- Approval of plans and procedures through formal procedures (constituted and minuted meetings);
- Executive supervision of management;
- Monitoring of published accounts; and
- Providing accountability to stakeholders.



On occasions, the Roebourne & Districts Tourist Association has successfully sought grants other than from the (former) Shire of Roebourne; e.g. In 2004, a grant to pay for interpretive signage at the top of Mt. Welcome outlining the history of the township, the Indigenous significance of Mt Welcome and places of interest. The signs were to be multi-lingual - written in English and two local Indigenous languages.

## 2.6 RVC Location

Roebourne Police Station, Gaol and Court House Precinct, 5 Queen Street, Roebourne WA.

### 2.6.1 Limitations

- The existing RVC building is not ideally located (not visible from the main road - up an unimpressive side street); the visitors are confronted by a cyclone mesh fence with barbed wire on top; has inadequate contiguous space to serve visitors (e.g. does not have proper retail space' no space to set up computers for hiring to visitors; the theatre is separate); very limited refreshments service; and very limited 'Back office' space.
- However, the co-location with the Old Gaol is a plus and it does have ample parking spaces.

## 2.7 RVC and Old Gaol Opening Hours

High season - May to October:

9.00 am – 4.00 pm Monday  
to Friday

9.00 am – 3.00 pm Saturday,  
Sunday and public holidays

Low season - November to  
April

9:00 am – 3:00 pm Monday  
to Friday

Closed Saturday, Sunday and public holidays



## 2.8 RVC Memberships and Affiliations

In 2013/14, eight (8) RVC members paid their membership fees, ranging from \$50 to \$150. The 2013/14 Profit & Loss statement (unaudited) shows only an income of \$430 from this source.

The RVC website (<http://www.roebourne.org.au/members-list/>) displays the following businesses as members:

- Delilahs B&B Point Samson.
- Roebourne Art Group Roebourne
- Samson Beach Chalets Point Samson
- The Cove Holiday Village Point Samson

TBC - Status of:

- Samson Beach Chalets/Caravan Park, Harding River Caravan Park, Karratha Visitors Centre.



The Roebourne Tourism Association Inc needs to significantly expand the membership with the aim of achieving a 'critical mass', and expanding both the diversity and the resource base that can be tapped for 'self-help' projects and programs.

RVC is a member of Australia's North West Tourism (not charged a membership fee). RVC is a member of the Visitor Centre Association of WA (VCWA).

The RVC is not what is called a Network Visitor Centre (NVC).

### 2.8.1 Awards and Accreditation

The status of the RVC is partly testified by these awards:

- 2011-2012-2013 Tourism & Hospitality Business Award
- 2003 Tourism Award
- 2001 People's Choice: Best Visitor Services.

Most importantly, the RVC has met the requirements of the Better Business Tourism Accreditation Program (national standards).

Tourism Businesses that display the accreditation tick have met a predetermined level of specific business criteria to enable them to provide a high level of quality customer service and best practice industry standards. An accredited business such as the RVC is a business which has met a set of nationally endorsed industry standards providing a model for continuous improvement in best business practice. These standards include:

- Effective Strategic Planning
- Professional and quality customer service
- Accuracy in advertising
- Compliance with legislative requirements
- Appropriate business licensing
- Sound environmental practices.



### 2.9 Visitor Centre Operations Manual

The Visitor Servicing Study (VSS), released in 2004, was the result of tourism industry feedback. The VSS recognised that if Visitor Centres (VCs) are to be sustainable in the long term, boards, management committees, staff and volunteers must be more creative and proactive in generating revenue and controlling costs. That is, they must do business smarter and more efficiently in an environment of co-operation rather than isolation.

One tangible outcome of the VSS was the Visitor Centre Operations Manual (VCOM) the purpose of which is to develop a coordinated and co-operative approach to Visitor Centre operations through the establishment, monitoring and improvement of effective processes such as, planning, research, marketing, management, administration, tourism development, communication, funding and the introduction of benchmarks. The VCOM has been written to align with the National Tourism Accreditation Program (see above).

## 2.10 Publicity/Publications

The Karratha and Roebourne Visitor Centres jointly produce the annual 'Pilbara Coast Holiday Planner'. The 2013/14 edition is the 10th edition which is testimony to its value to customers and advertisers.

The above booklet is only available over the counter at the RVC but people who go to the KVC's website can download it on-line. This is but one illustration of the need to put more effort into giving the RVC website relevance to customers' needs.

## 2.11 Products & Services

Compared to purpose built visitor centres, the RVC has a very poor amount of space to accommodate for regional /local interpretive displays, tourism industry brochures, shop products, art works & sculptures, bookings desk, computers/Internet for customer use.

### 2.11.1 Souvenirs

Products that sell include postcards, T-shirts, books/booklets about local history, iron ore jewellery, etc.



### 2.11.2 Port to Port Tour

Starting from the RVC, this tour includes heritage buildings significant to Roebourne's rich history, a visit to Rio Tinto's Cape Lambert iron ore ship loading facilities, and a stop at the old pearling town of Cossack (Tien Tsin). (Bookings need to be made in advance.)

The Port-to-Port tour brought in approx. \$16,300 in sales in 2013/14.

### 2.11.3 Washing Machines

This novel service brought in approx. \$2,500 in sales in 2013/14.

### 3 CUSTOMER AND MARKETING INFORMATION

#### 3.1 Key Tourism Demographics

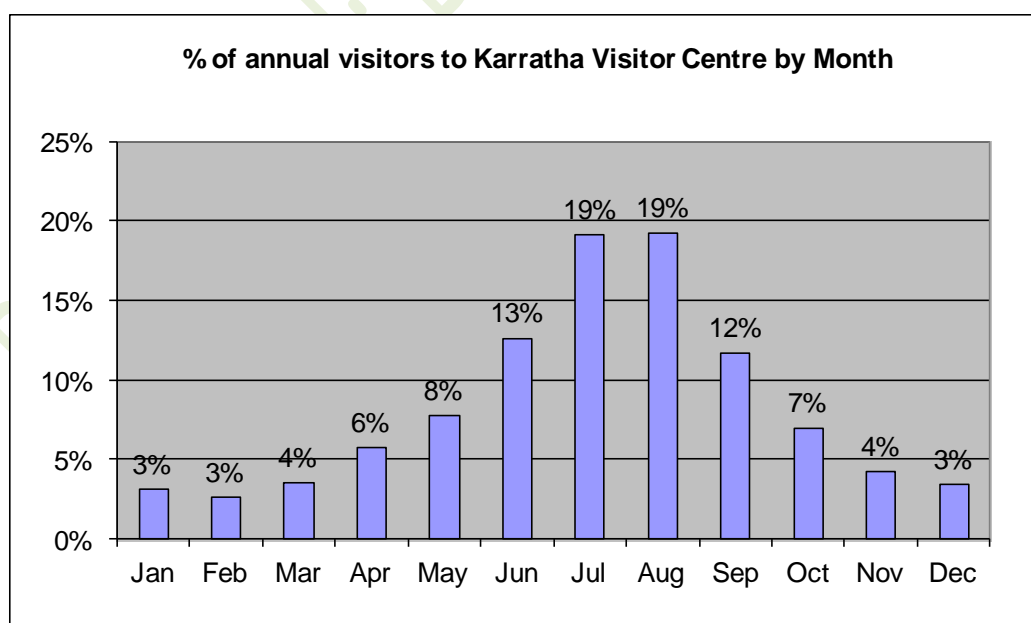
The Quarterly visitor snapshot provides the most current snapshot of tourism activity in Western Australia. Highlights that are relevant to the RVC Strategic Plan are:

- Of the four regional Western Australia tourism regions, **Australia's North West** attracts the largest proportion of interstate overnight visitors, with one in five (19%) visitors to the region in Year Ended (YE) March 2014 originating from interstate. An estimated 72% are intrastate and 8% are international.
- In the Year Ended March 2014, **Australia's North West** saw a large increase in domestic visitation, driven by the intrastate market (intrastate visitors up +37.1%). Visitors from interstate declined by (-) 11.2%, however the 3 Year Average Annual Growth Rate (AAGR) remained positive (+4.7%).
- The number of international visitors to the **Region** in YE March 2014 was consistent with YE March 2013 (-0.2%), however the number of international visitor nights spent in the region saw an increase (+12.5%).
- The 3 Year AAGR is considered a more reliable indicator of trend and shows visitors and nights to **Australia's North West** have risen overall.

##### 3.1.1 Seasonality of Tourism in the Pilbara

The great importance of the prevailing climate on visitor numbers is illustrated in the graph below. Although the figures are for the KVC, it can be assumed that the RVC profile is very similar.

Figure 2: Seasonality of Tourism in the Pilbara



Source: Karratha Visitor Centre statistics for 24 months 2005, 2006



### 3.2 RVC Patronage

The number of persons entering the RVC premises is approximately 15 - 16,000 pa.

There is no direct count of the number entering the Old Roebourne Gaol.

There is at present no entrance fee to go through the Old Roebourne Gaol, and the 'Gold Coin Donation' box yielded approx. \$11,700 in 2013/14. Assuming that about 75% of people who enter the Visitor Centre go on to view the Old Roebourne Gaol, the average donation works out at only \$1. Such a low revenue is completely out of balance with recurrent costs, and a strong case exists to follow normal practice and levy an appropriate level of entrance fee.

#### 3.2.1 TripAdvisor Comment

*"We popped in to the old gaol museum which is also the information desk for Roebourne. The lady there was really helpful and enthusiastic about her town! It was so refreshing! The Old gaol museum was interesting and lovely in its presentation. We had a look at a few of the old buildings and lookout while we were there. Lots of building going on, so good to see the town will stay alive! "*

Visited 24 September 2013

### 3.3 Visitor Survey Findings

This section outlines significant findings from a special survey on Roebourne's visitors, carried out in the Spring Season of 2006 by the Roebourne Visitor Centre (RVC) using a questionnaire designed for the purpose by the present Consultants (FARR).

The 3-page questionnaire was self administered which would encourage more candid responses than if it had been administered or assisted by the RVC staff.

The sample size was 194 persons.

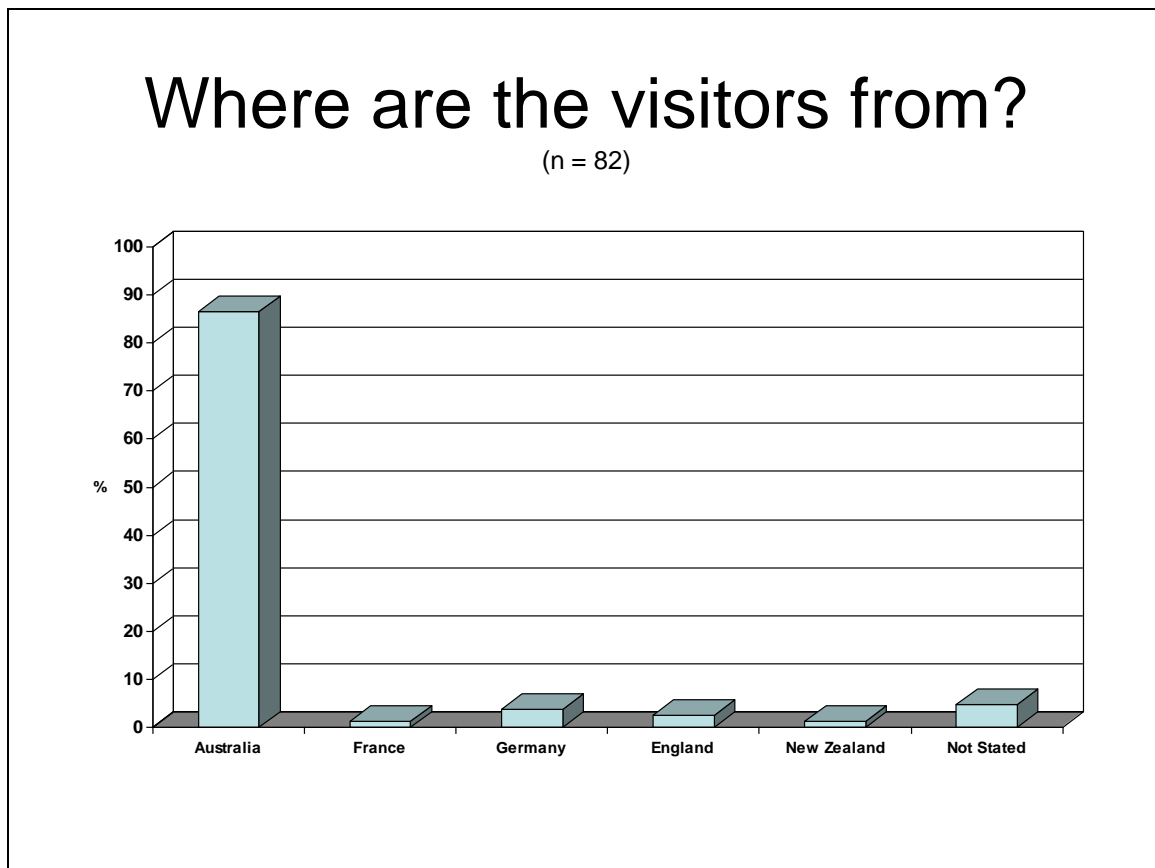
#### 3.3.1 Survey Findings (2006)

##### (a) A predominantly Australian market

Based on the 2006 survey responses, and not unexpectedly, almost 90% of Roebourne's visitors are Australians – refer Figure 3.

Visitors from Germany, England, and New Zealand comprised the most significant international travel groups, contributing just above 10% to the total number of visitors that were surveyed.

Figure 3: Domicile of Roebourne's visitors

**(b) A significant interstate market**

Based on the 2006 survey responses, while over 30% of all visitors surveyed were Western Australians, a further 25% visited Roebourne from Victoria and New South Wales. 12% of the visitors travelled to Roebourne from the Australian Capital Territory, Southern Australia, and Tasmania. With nearly 40% of all respondents visiting Roebourne from other Australian states, there is an indication for a considerable interstate market.

Figure 4: Roebourne Visitors: Where do they live?

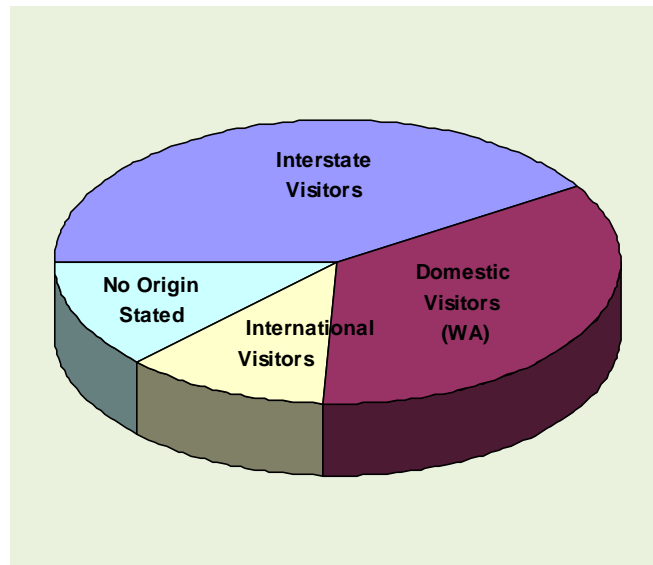
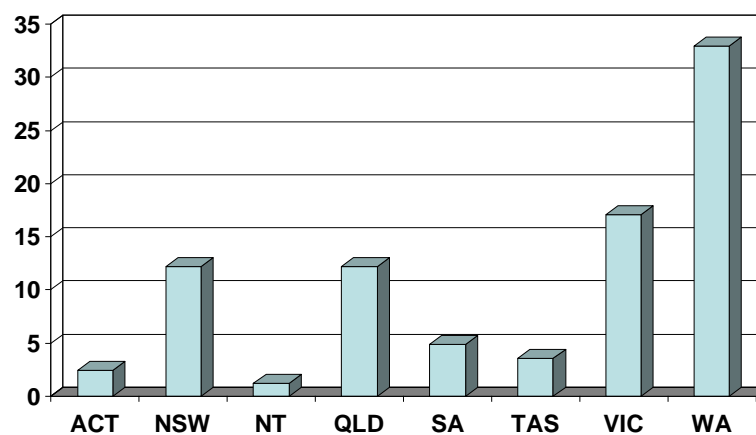


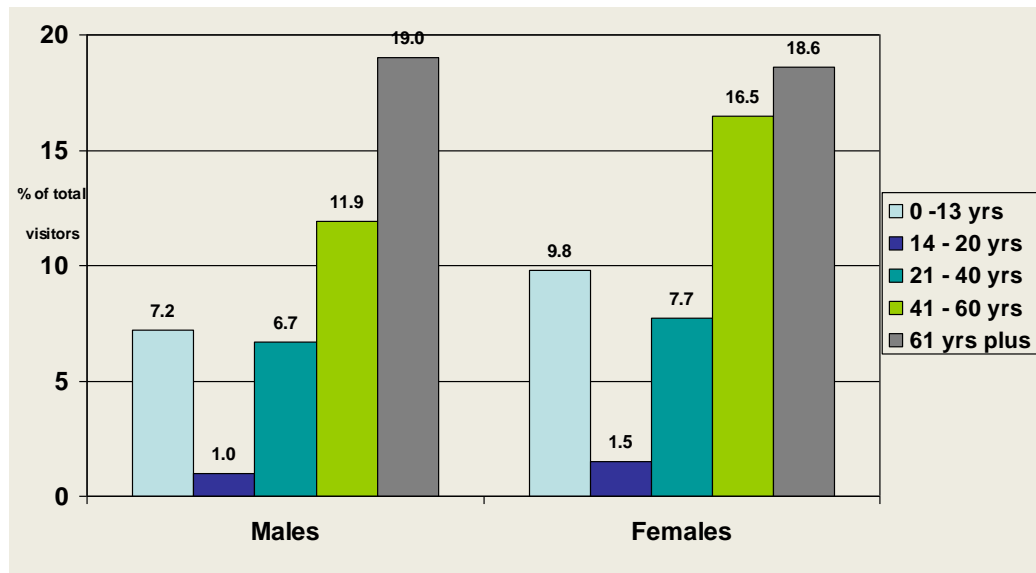
Figure 5: Domicile of Roebourne's Australian visitors

What state are the Australian visitors from?



**(c) Predominantly a mature audience****Figure 6: Roebourne Visitors: Demographics %**

(Total n = 194)



Based on the 2006 survey responses, nearly 20% of people visiting Roebourne (both male and female) in that period were 61 years of age or older.

A further 17% of females and 12% of males were over 40 years old but are younger than 61. With two thirds (66%) of all visitors surveyed being in their 40's or older, it seems reasonable to speak of a 'fairly mature target market' and this should be reflected to some degree in the RVC product and service offering as well as in the marketing strategy.

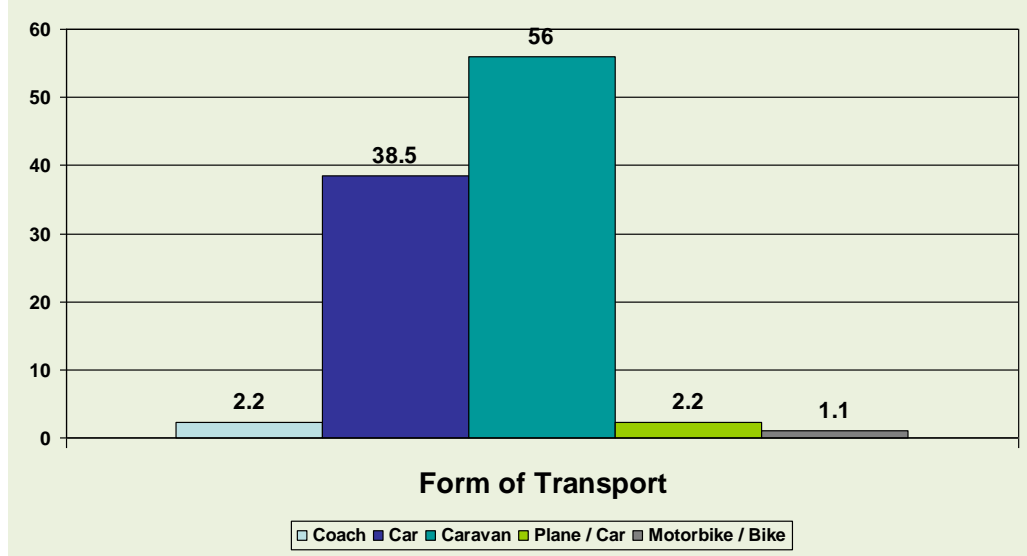
Accompanying children (0 to 13 years) are a significant group (much more so than youth (14 to 20 years)). The backpacker and FIT (free independent traveller cohort might be assumed as 21-40 years and comprises just 14% of the survey sample.

**(d) Predominantly travelling by own vehicle/caravan**

Some 39% of the visitor groups were travelling by car and an additional 56% were towing a caravan, meaning they had a lot of freedom as to how long to stay and where to stay on their trip.

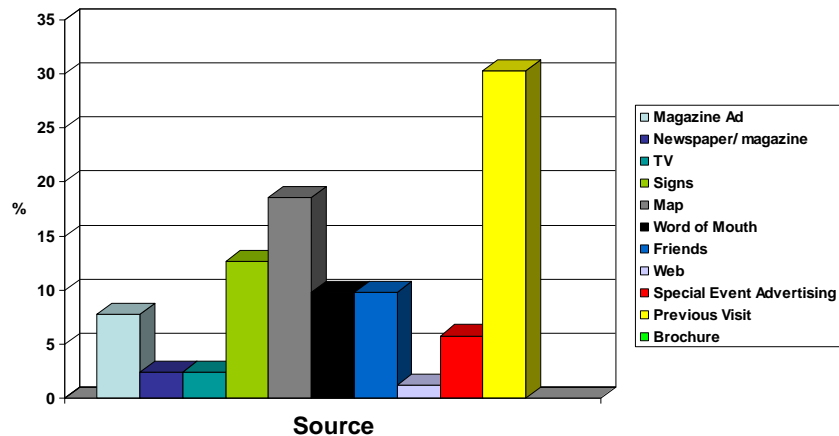
**Figure 7: Roebourne Visitors: Transport %**

(A breakdown of form of transport for people who indicated a form of transport)



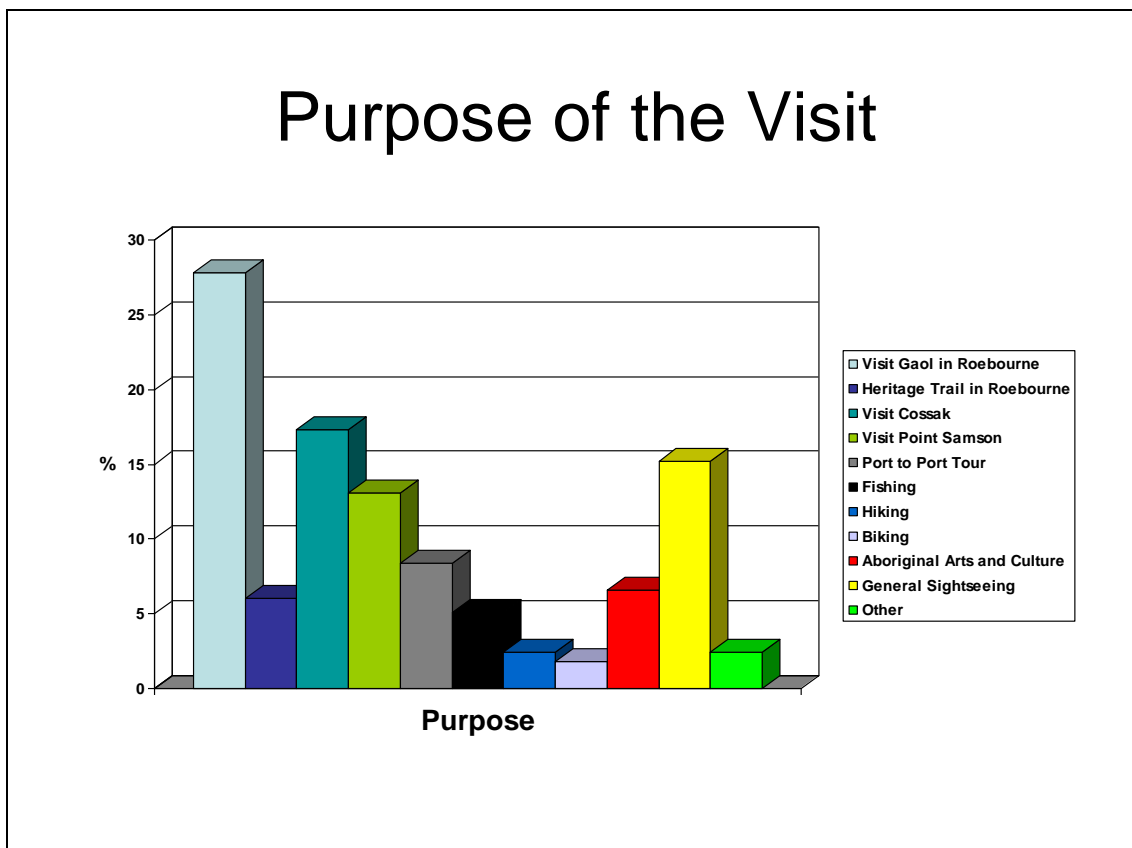
**(e) Pre-visit information sources**

Where the visitors heard about Roebourne/ Cossack / Point Samson



(f) Motivation to Visit Roebourne

Figure 8: Purpose of Visit



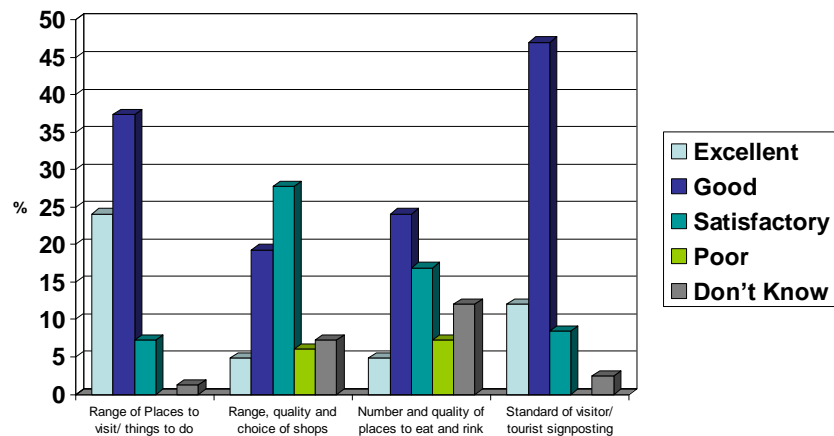
Q10 Which activities will you participate in? Other:

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	74	90.2%	90.2%	90.2%
Convention	1	1.2%	1.2%	91.5%
Eating fish and chips	1	1.2%	1.2%	92.7%
Harding Dam	1	1.2%	1.2%	93.9%
Karijini/Millstream	1	1.2%	1.2%	95.1%
Pilbara Iron Tour	1	1.2%	1.2%	96.3%
Sailing	1	1.2%	1.2%	97.6%
Swimming	1	1.2%	1.2%	98.8%
View port activities	1	1.2%	1.2%	100.0%
Total	82	100%	100%	

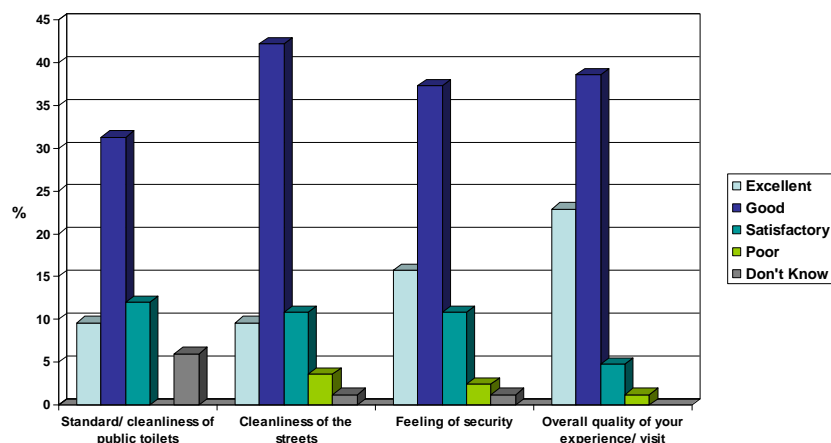


Figure 9: Customer Experience

### Ratings of their visit to Roebourne/ Cossack / Point Samson



### Ratings of their visit to Roebourne/ Cossack / Point Samson



**Figure 10: Customer Experience and Competitive Positioning****What people liked about their visit to Roebourne/ Cossack/ Point Samson**

In order of which was mentioned the most, people enjoyed:

1. The Historical aspects
2. The Atmosphere – this included the weather, the scenery, the friendly people, the amount of things to see, and a general good feeling about the place
3. The Aboriginal Culture and arts
4. The old buildings

Other things that people mentioned they liked included:

- The Wildflowers
- The Visitor Centre – specifically the friendly staff and services offered (the photo displays and Video presentation)
- Fishing
- The free bus tour\*
- The difference between Roebourne/ Cossack and Point Samson compared to Eastern States

\* Note: Whilst one visitor listed 'The free bus tour', this is the 'Port to Port' tour (that takes in Roebourne, Wickham, Cape Lambert and Cossack).

**What didn't people like about Roebourne/ Cossack/ Point Samson**

- Very few people mentioned that they disliked aspects of their visit (n = 11 out of the n = 82 total). Their comments related to:
- Aboriginal people lying around / lack of supervision and care for Aboriginal kids
- Some aspects about the town – one person said there was nothing to do and mentioned the "Prison Restaurant"
- The wind
- The Tours and Caravan Parks were too heavily booked
- One person mentioned they would like a viewing platform for Cape Lambert Wharf.
- One person mentioned they would like more information about the "dark past" of Roebourne Gaol

Figure 11: Feedback regarding the RVC

**Comments / suggestions about the Visitor Centre**

Suggestions included:

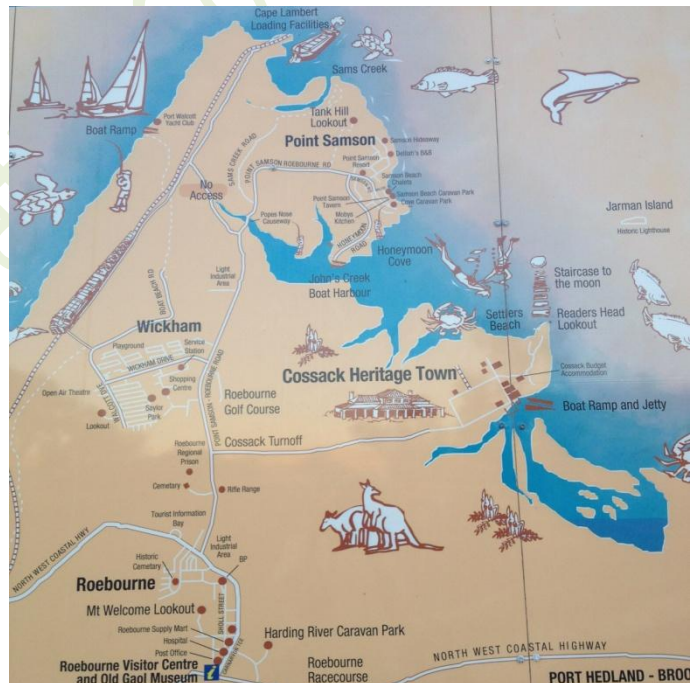
- Extend opening hours of art shop
- Improve the parking for bigger vehicles
- Improve the display of artefacts and jewellery
- Increase the choice
- Include Aboriginal Art
- Make children's souvenirs cheaper
- Increase the variety of postcards
- Make the craft more upmarket
- Put stories on the loudspeakers

**3.4 Tourism Product - Main Tourist Attractions**

Roebourne Old Gaol Heritage Precinct, Cossack, Cossack Acquisitive Art Award, Jarman Island Lighthouse, Point Samson, Roebourne Art Group<sup>1</sup>, Cheeditha Creative Community (Cossack), the Emma Withnell Heritage Trail.

The forthcoming Ngurin Pilbara Aboriginal Centre (including amphitheatre, museum and library) will add a new dimension to the town (refer sub-section 3.5).

Further afield: Harding Dam, Whim Creek Hotel, Cape Lambert iron ore loading facilities (this and Cossack are the main parts of the Port-to-Port tour).



**Key Point:** The authenticity and scale of Roebourne and surrounding district's heritage is its essential attribute that must be valued and supported in all aspects of marketing, and especially by the RVC through its promotional materials and staff. The authenticity may be termed its "sustainable

<sup>1</sup> Roebourne Art Group is the West Pilbara's preeminent indigenous art centre featuring contemporary Australian Aboriginal art. RAG is an Aboriginal community controlled and governed representative organisation and it represents Ngarluma, Yindjibarndi, Guruma, Banjyima, Marthuthunira and Torres Strait Islander artists.

competitive advantage." This advantage is worth remarking in contrast to man-made attractions and experiences that other places have to offer.

There are important marketing reasons for this as well. Visitors should be actively encouraged to see and experience the entire range of attractions, thereby prolonging their stay and ensuring that they get a much more complete experience to take away, and one which hopefully then leads to favourable word-of mouth promotion for the area.

"Evoke a sense of place that embraces the perspectives of the people of the Roebourne district over time."

### 3.4.1 TripAdvisor Visitor Comment

*"Cossack is essentially a colonial ghost town with a bed and breakfast accommodation during the dry season and a boat ramp and stone wharf for fishing.*

*The timber and tin buildings are all gone but several of the stone buildings have been well restored. Most were designed by the WA Colonial Architect George Temple Poole and demonstrate the typical delightfully quirky characteristics of his style.*

*There is little interpretation of the town but there is a variety of documentation online that is worth downloading before a visit.*

*The University of WA Archaeology post graduate students often use the town as a key place of research."*

Visited 5 May 2014

### 3.5 Relevance of the Ngurin Pilbara Aboriginal Centre (NPAC)

Prominently located in Roe Street - the town's main thoroughfare, the NPAC is owned and operated by NYFL. It should draw in extra tourism and other visitation to the town and provide new employment and capacity building opportunities for the local residents. The Cultural Centre (middle section (see Photo 1)) is to open in mid-Sept. 2014, and the right hand (northern) section (including museum and café) hopefully in 2015.



**Photo 1: Roebourne Ngurin Pilbara Aboriginal Centre under Construction - April 2014**

It will provide the cultural, linguistic, artistic, social and environmental needs, wants and desires of Roebourne's local Aboriginal Community, whilst economically sustaining itself through encouraging custom from visitors and tourists.

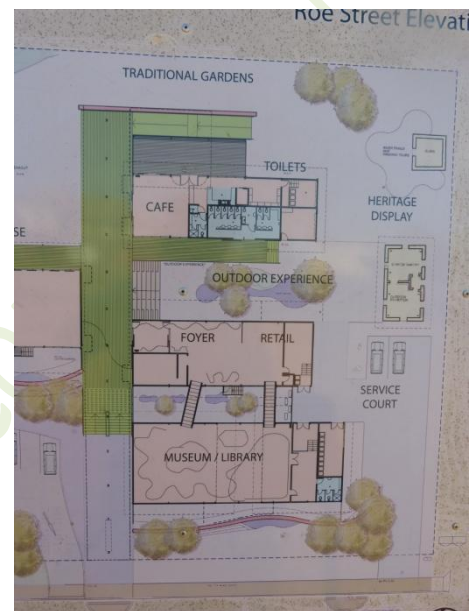
The increased custom could for example come from entertainment shows/film evenings, conferences, trade shows, training courses, yielding both day and overnight visitors.

### 3.5.1 Components and Proposed Programs

The striking design of the Centre includes environmentally sustainable features using solar and water technologies, and once construction of the complex is complete it will comprise:

- Museum, to store cultural artefacts.
- Cafe/Restaurant, for locals and visitors.
- Retail outlet, selling locally-produced Aboriginal product and gifts.
- Separate Men's and Women's spaces, which are traditional meeting spaces.
- Elders Teaching and Workshop space, for producing artefacts and yarnning.
- Rest/recreation and walk trail, by locals for visitors.
- Public display and cultural entrance.
- Conference facilities for up to 150 people, for conferences, expos and social events.

The Amphitheatre was the first part to be completed and will be host to cultural events and staged outdoor events of film, dance, theatre, corroborees and music.



### 3.6 SWOT Analysis

A Strengths, Weaknesses/Constraints, Opportunities and Threats analysis is contained in the report titled: Roebourne Visitor Centre - Strategic Business Plan 2012 -2015<sup>2</sup>, Page 13. The same report contains a comprehensive 'Situational Analysis on Pages 18 - 24 inclusive.

Given that information is mostly still relevant, it has been taken into account in formulating this Plan, but does not need to be repeated verbatim here.

<sup>2</sup> Prepared by Jumping Puddles Community Consultancy



## 4 VISION

The immediate Vision for the RVC is:

***To be a vibrant and valued facility which showcases and interprets all that the Roebourne region has to offer for tourists, whilst also assisting R&DTA's financial members and other stakeholders to meet their tourism-related business/social objectives.***

The following is an expanded **Vision** for the Roebourne Visitor Centre and Old Roebourne Gaol in four years' time:

*The Roebourne Visitor Centre is a best practice visitor information service where visitors are given a warm welcome and introduction to Roebourne and the wider Pilbara. Our knowledgeable staff are skilled at responding to and anticipating visitors' information needs, providing a consistent level of outstanding service, physically and via electronic media.*

*Resulting from a successful membership drive, R&DTA membership has achieved a 'critical mass', thereby expanding both the diversity and the resource base that can be tapped for 'self-help' projects and programs.*

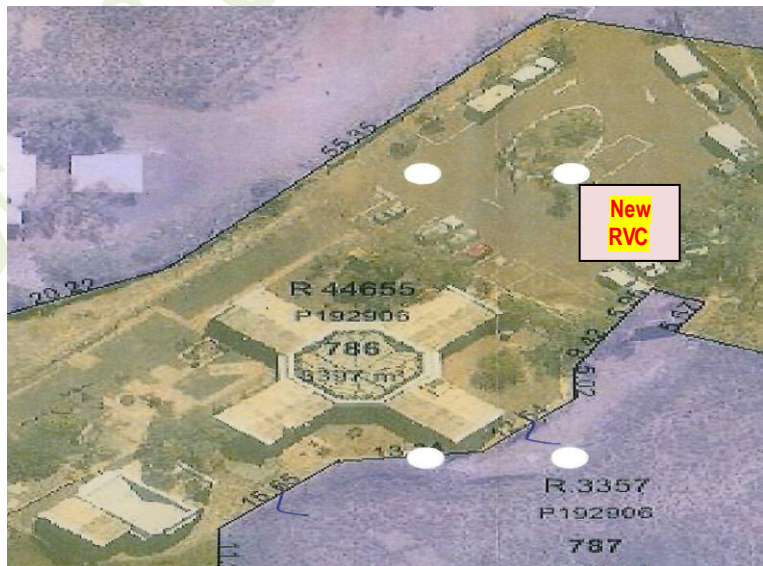
*The RVC has moved into a purpose-designed building occupying the south-east corner of the existing carpark, and linked by a covered breezeway to the Old Roebourne Gaol - which itself is a prime tourism attraction. The freed up space in the Museum is now used for a modest size Interpretive Centre and a controlled environment space for fragile artefacts (e.g. clothing items).*

*The RVC staff ensure maximisation of the synergy between the RVC and the Old Roebourne Gaol, as well as the cost optimisation made possible by their collocation.*

*The new RVC features a changing series of displays and exhibits that has established the RVC as a drawcard to the Roebourne region, and keeps the centre fresh and engaging for regular visitors.*

*Our use of the latest technology in information provision on-site increases the appeal of the centre and raises our standard of service. We facilitate our customers and prospective visitors to be able to use on online and SmartPhone technology to get information "when they want it and how they want it" and encourage them to become part of our marketing mix via use of social media.*

*The RVC is recognised by the City of Karratha, traders and the broader Roebourne community as vital to the economic well-being of the region, and as providing a valuable service for tourists and residents.*



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## 5 VALUES

The Values that guide the RVC's operations for the period **2014 - 2018** are set out in this Chapter:

The RVC Mgmt Committee and staff must all be committed to:

-  fully supporting the R&DTA's financial members and stakeholders;
-  excellence in customer service;
-  recognising and promoting the unique attributes of the Roebourne region - including the archaeology, geology, ecology, Aboriginality, ancient rock art, pre-colonial and early colonial history, pearling, mineral and natural gas resources, and the pastoral industry;
-  celebrating the diversity of the region and strengthening the Roebourne region's appeal as both a destination and a 'must see';
-  providing/promoting high-quality and appealing products/services and experiences for visitors;
-  working with partners and stakeholders to develop a vibrant program of activities/experiences that attracts visitors and local residents;
-  using innovative approaches in areas such as interpretation/displays, technology and marketing;
-  building new partnerships and nurturing existing strong/worthwhile partnerships;
-  setting a public example in environmental sustainability to R&DTA members and RVC customers.

## 6 GOALS FOR THE R&DTA/RVC

The top **10** goals of the RVC for the period **2014 - 2018** are set out in this Chapter:

- 1 Secure a suitable lease for the RVC and Old Roebourne Gaol historic sites.
- 2 Develop a Master Plan for the RVC-Roebourne Old Gaol site that includes the location of a purpose-built Visitor Centre fitting as the western gateway to the Pilbara.
  - (i) Develop a Conservation Plan for the Old Gaol. (This is a vital prerequisite to guide essential conservation maintenance).
- 3 Listen to and work with R&DTA members and key stakeholders to assist them in their business and social objectives. Act as a constructive conduit between visitors and R&DTA members.
- 4 Promote the best tourism products and services in the Roebourne region to increase visitors' experiences, length of stay and 'word of mouth' publicity.
- 5 Provide high quality information and support services (physically and on-line) to enhance visitor awareness and increase their access to positive tourism experiences. In conjunction with the KVC, develop a digital platform as a key marketing tool and assist the local tourism industry to be able to convert using the digital platform.
- 6 Showcase the attributes of the Roebourne region (physically and on-line).
- 7 Create a vibrant hub for community engagement.
- 8 Develop, maintain and support strong partnerships.
- 9 Ensure Governance structure and best practices for the Management Committee to guide the advancement of the RVC.
- 10 Put the RVC well on the way to a sustainable financial model. Separate the finances of the RVC and the Old Roebourne Gaol.

## 7 KEY DIRECTIONS - THE TOP TEN STRATEGIES

The Key Directions involving the Top Ten Strategies (and associated Actions) are set out in this Chapter.

NB: The priorities for Year 1 and each succeeding year are to be set by the Management Committee, in collaboration as appropriate with the City of Karratha/staff and the KVC.

### 7.1 Strategies to be Implemented

#### 1 Ngarluma Yindjibarndi Foundation Ltd Partnership or Joint Venture:

- (i) The R&DTA will endeavour to partner/joint venture with the NYFL so as to leverage off that organisation's proven commercial acumen, contacts, influence and employment record. Take advantage of the enthusiasm of the NYFL Board and management for mutually reinforcing collaboration with the RVC.
- (ii) Arrange a MOU with NYFL that includes resource commitments and mutual obligations.


#### 2 Expand and Nurture Existing Partnerships:

- (i) Recognise and leverage off the potential 'game changing' opportunities that will be made possible by the new Ngurin Pilbara Aboriginal Centre<sup>3</sup>, including the possibility of a 'satellite' RVC desk at the Ngurin Pilbara Aboriginal Centre, possibly manned by a volunteer and a trainee.
- (ii) Work diligently with both the City of Karratha/staff and the Karratha Visitor Center (KVC) to leverage off each organisation's resources for the mutual benefit of citizens, KVC/RVC members, and visitors.
- (iii) Liaise intensely with Rio Tinto to retain and develop the existing working relationship, funding and MOU.

#### 3 RVC Membership Drive:

- (i) The Roebourne & District Tourism Association Inc will mount a drive to significantly expand the RVC membership with the aim of achieving a 'critical mass', and expanding both the diversity and the resource base that can be tapped for 'self-help' projects and programs.

#### 4 Improve Branding, Image, Customer Service, and Operations:

- (i) Clean up the front landscape of the RVC to provide a more welcoming appearance.
-  Provide a new large-size district map as a billboard (*as per the example below shown at the KVC*).

<sup>3</sup> The Ngurin Pilbara Aboriginal Centre ideally located in Roe Street - the town's main thoroughfare, will draw in tourism to the town and provide new employment and capacity building opportunities for the local residents. The Centre will be owned and operated by NYFL and will provide the cultural, linguistic, artistic, social and environmental needs, wants and desires of Roebourne's local Aboriginal Community, whilst economically sustaining itself through encouraging custom from visitors and tourists.

- (ii) Revamp the RVC website<sup>4</sup> to be more current, more interesting and more interactive. In particular, the website will focus a lot more on the RVC itself and the services its staff offers, *vis a vis* just a catalogue of the local tourist attractions<sup>5</sup>.

- (iii) (In conjunction with the KVC) develop an appealing digital platform as a key marketing tool and assist the local tourism industry to be able to convert using the digital platform.



- The revamped RVC website will deliver on content and booking ability through a variety of channels, suggested itineraries and interactive itinerary planner.
  - Assist the local tourism industry to be digitally active delivering live booking facilities and active in social media.
  - Focus on increasing content on digital platforms to better service visitors in the planning and booking process.
  - Increase the amount of industry video content uploaded onto YouTube.
- (iv) Develop a brochure display policy that has acceptance by the Roebourne region tourism industry (and advantages financial members versus non members).
- (v) Enhance the provision of quality visitor information in the RVC through (for example) interpretive displays (given space limitations).
- (vi) Investigate the installation of a touch-screen to provide up-to-date out-of-hours access to visitor information. (refer example in the photo right<sup>6</sup>)
- (vii) Increase the profile of the RVC's services and benefits to the local/region economy, and to local residents and businesses through print/electronic media and direct communications, including social media.



<sup>4</sup> The RVC offers no interactivity (other than the capacity to send an email message).

<sup>5</sup> Compare the highly utilised Albany Visitor Centre and Booking Service: [www.amazingalbany.com.au/albany-visitor-centre-information](http://www.amazingalbany.com.au/albany-visitor-centre-information)

<sup>6</sup> Secure afterhours display is available via a through-glass touchpad, so visitors who arrive outside of working hours can still access local information at any time. See: <http://www.datatrax.com/tourismtouchscreens/>



- Investigate options to increase the visibility of the RVC to attract the attention of tourists and local residents, and as well the Internet (Search Engine Optimisation) and social media presence.
- Work with the City of Karratha and industry to package product and promote experiences to attract events/conferences etc to the Roebourne region.
- The website should be designed to also sell merchandise products as a means of promoting the location and increasing profits.

(viii) Institute free Wi-Fi hot-spot access for visitors to the RVC site.

(ix) Seek ways to add high-profitability 'impulse buy' items. The tourism market welcomes cold drinks/hot beverages being available at Visitor/Interpretive Centres, so it is envisaged that the RVC will acquire two or three vending machines to dispense:

- Snack bars, confectionary, etc.;
- Bottled water, cool drinks, fruit juices, etc.;
- Quality hot coffee<sup>7</sup>.

■ The availability of a coffee service and drinks machine is likely to attract additional patronage to the shop, simply by getting people to stay a little longer.

(x) Commence a regular and reasonably detailed surveying of visitation to the RVC, including customer satisfaction data. Arrange for competent statistical analysis, interpretation of data, and reporting to stakeholders.

■ This will assist in shaping the marketing/promotion and customer service strategy.

■ It is imperative not to rely on the traditional Visitors Book as an indicator of visitor opinions.

## 5 Expand and Improve Community Relations:

(i) Provision of a basic level of information on local services and facilities to new residents and businesses, and other community members. (i.e. Welcome Pack)

(ii) Support the operations of key community events, as much as feasible.

(iii) Special events: Events can be a marvellous tool to attract both additional patronage and publicity. They can be designed to appeal to a market segment with a specific interest or to a wider audience dependent on the theme of the event. A common practice is to use an event to raise demand during a period of low demand. For events to be successful they need:

- an appealing theme or reason for the event; an effective promotional program; good lead times for planning, promotion and publicity; and good management.
- The theme needs to appeal to the target market. An event will succeed if customers, particularly if they are some distance away, are aware and reminded of features of the event to secure their commitment to attend. Various techniques are available such as direct mail, advertisements, targeted

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<sup>7</sup> Margin is approx. \$3.00 per cup

promotional activities, publicity, accommodation packages, etc. Any promotional program needs to be tailored to the target market.

6 Cossack:

- (i) Through the Cossack Working Group, prepare a recommendation to the State Government on the future of Cossack.
- (ii) Given the very badly deteriorated state of most of the Cossack Heritage Trail signage, which is to the serious detriment of the visitor experience, ensure that the City of Karratha abides by its responsibilities under the previous MOUs with RVC so as to replace or refurbish Cossack Heritage Trail signage and Emma Withnell Heritage Trail signage at Cossack by the end of FY 2014/15.
  - Further financial assistance should also be sought from the Lotterywest Trails Grant Program.



7 Accreditation:

- (i) Annually review and take steps to maintain Level 2 accreditation through the Better Business Tourism Accreditation Program (national standards).
- (ii) Continue to network with Visitor Centres in adjacent towns and regions, and to participate in regional initiatives to improve the operation of Visitor Centres in North West WA.


8 Improve Management, Organisation and Planning:

- (i) Secure a suitable lease for the RVC and Old Roebourne Gaol historic sites.
- (ii) Ensure Governance structure and best practices for the Management Committee to guide the advancement of the RVC.
- (iii) Secure external funding in order to develop a **Master Plan** for the RVC-Roebourne Old Gaol site that includes the provision of a new purpose-built Visitor Centre<sup>8</sup> which would be fitting as the western gateway to the Pilbara.
  - Factors to be considered in the planning process include:
    - (a) Significantly increased service area and display space for brochures, sales merchandise and exhibitions of interest to tourists and the local community.
    - (b) New facilities including large interactive video maps utilising GIS technology, computer/Internet access for visitors, bigger retail component, staff offices and a brochure storage area.

<sup>8</sup> This is consistent with Objective #5 in the R&DTA Constitution, namely: Upgrade and enhance current facilities.

- (c) New interpretation displays that tell local social/cultural, heritage and environmental stories of the area and its residents, and underpin the brand positioning of Roebourne region, including Wickham, Point Samson, Cossack and Whim Creek.
- (iv) In conjunction with the City of Karratha and the National Trust of WA, establish the Roebourne-Cossack Heritage Foundation as a prerequisite step to putting the management of Roebourne's heritage buildings and Cossack onto a better footing.
- (v) Secure external funding to develop a Conservation Plan for the Old Gaol. (This is a vital prerequisite to guide essential conservation maintenance).
- (vi) The ownership status of the historical museum collection (artefacts displayed in glass cabinets within the Old Roebourne Gaol) needs to be resolved<sup>9</sup>.
- (vii) Secure funding for MoSAiC Collections Management system (data base)<sup>10</sup> (and the requisite staff training) to record artefacts held by the Old Roebourne Gaol (and possibly Cossack and Whim Creek Hotel).

## 9 Staffing

- (i) No radical changes are anticipated in the immediate future to RVC staffing, but rather fine tuning would happen if/when a satellite desk is set up at the Ngurin Pilbara Aboriginal Centre and if/when the proposed new standalone Visitor Centre building is achieved.
- (ii) Regardless, the guiding light is the provision of a high level of customer service and professionalism in both the RVC and Old Roebourne Gaol by well-trained staff and volunteers.
  -  In particular, this means that an appropriate combination of staff/volunteers with formal qualifications is required for the Old Gaol Heritage Site/Museum, and in order to contribute to joint efforts with the City of Karratha with respect to Cossack, and with NYFL with respect to the Ngurin Pilbara Aboriginal Centre and Whim Creek Hotel.

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<sup>9</sup> The Consultant was informed that the collection was initially assembled by the (former) Roebourne Historical Society, and the Shire believes ownership was later given over to the Local History Office at the Karratha Library. Some of the RVC Committee contest this and also believe that a number of very old documents were taken for safekeeping by the (former) Shire (now City of Karratha) but have not been returned. The City has keys for the cabinets and from time to time the cabinets get an internal clean, however that is the extent of its custodianship. The Roebourne Museum collection also includes a number of boxes held at the Local History Office in Karratha, containing artefacts removed in 2013 from beneath the cabinets


<sup>10</sup> **Collections MoSAiC** is a Western Australian made Collections Management system that is simple to use, affordable, and flexible enough to suit collections of any size. Designed for use by museums, historical societies, galleries, libraries and cultural heritage organisations that have collections with heritage significance. Fully searchable data, with built-in and user-definable reports and data export functions. Pre-loaded with industry standard validation lists, but fully customisable by the user organisation. Collection data can be uploaded to the Internet for searching by the public or just the organisation's authorised staff).

See: [www.istechnology.com.au](http://www.istechnology.com.au)

- (iii) Implement meaningful and measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for both the Management Committee and RVC manager.

#### 10 Finances

- (i) Put the RVC well on the way to a sustainable financial model.
- (ii) Separate the finances of the Old Roebourne Gaol and the RVC so as to prepare the way for a formal separation with each entity focussing on its specific Mission.
- (iii) Introduce realistic entry charges for the Old Roebourne Gaol (in lieu of the present voluntary 'gold coin donation') in order to increase self-earned income.


-  The suggested charges (based on the present (2014) entry charges for the comparable Central Greenough Historic Settlement) are:

\$6 adult; \$5 concession; \$3 child 5 to 14 years; \$14 family.


**REFER: Section 8, FINANCIAL BASELINE AND FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

### 7.2 Key Recommendations

**Recommendation 1: Secure external funding in order to develop a Master Plan for the RVC-Roebourne Old Gaol site that includes the provision of a new purpose-built Visitor Centre which would be fitting as the western gateway to the Pilbara.**


-  This is obviously conditional upon success in securing a satisfactory lease on the RVC/Old Gaol site.

**Recommendation 2: In conjunction with the City of Karratha and the National Trust of WA, establish the Roebourne-Cossack Heritage Foundation as a prerequisite step to putting the management of Roebourne's heritage buildings and Cossack onto a better footing.**

-  Also secure external funding to develop a Conservation Plan for the Old Roebourne Gaol. (This is a vital prerequisite to guide essential conservation maintenance).

**Recommendation 3: The ownership status of the historical museum collection (artefacts displayed in glass cabinets) needs to be resolved, and a Collection Policy formulated.**

**Recommendation 4: Secure funding for MoSAIC Collections Management system (data base) (and the requisite staff training) to record artefacts held by the Old Roebourne Gaol (and possibly Cossack and Whim Creek Hotel).**

-  With the above two recommendations acted upon, collection data can then be uploaded to the Internet for searching by the public or just the organisation's authorised staff.

## 8 FINANCIAL BASELINE AND FINANCIAL STRATEGY

### 8.1 Introduction

(Note especially that dollar values in this Chapter are in 2014 dollar terms, with no allowance made for future inflation).

The detailed income and expenditure data (from MYOB) for 2013/14 (unaudited) may be found at Appendix B R&DTA Profit & Loss [Cash], 2013/2014. The purpose in this Chapter is to focus on the meaning of the data and what it implies for the Strategic Plan.

The specific complication is that the data relate to two 'Business Units' - the RVC in its own right and the Old Roebourne Gaol Museum.

**Recommendation 5: Separate the finances of the RVC and the Old Roebourne Gaol Museum so as to prepare the way for a formal separation with each entity focussing on its specific Mission.**

#### 8.1.1 Income - Past and Future

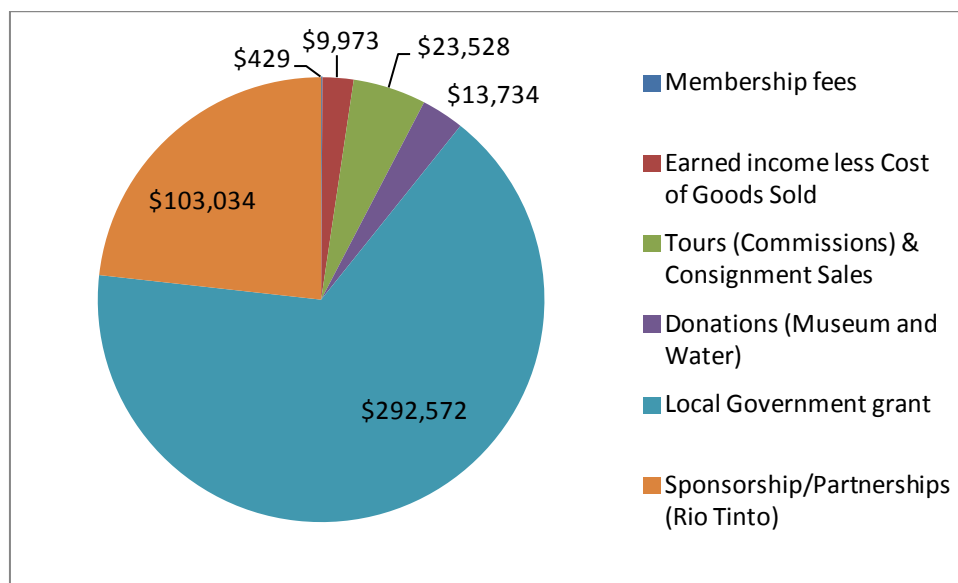
In 2013/14, the RVC's Income comprised these sources:

**Figure 12: RVC Income 2013/14**

Category	\$	% of Income	Note
Membership fees	429	0.1%	1
Earned income less Cost of Goods Sold	9,973	2.2%	2
Tours (Commissions) & Consignment Sales	23,528	5%	3
Donations (Museum and Water)	13,734	3%	4
Local Government grant	292,572	66%	5
Sponsorship/Partnerships (Rio Tinto)	103,034	23%	6
<b>Gross profit before expenses</b>	<b>443,270</b>	<b>100%</b>	

This is depicted in the following pie chart.

Figure 13: Pie Chart depicting RVC Income for Base Year 2013/14

**Note 1**

In 2013/14, eight (8) RVC members paid their membership fees, ranging from \$50 to \$150, but yielding only an income of \$430 from this source.

**Recommendation 6: The Roebourne Tourism Association Inc will mount a drive to significantly expand the RVC membership with the aim of achieving a 'critical mass', and expanding both the diversity and the resource base that can be tapped for 'self-help' projects and programs.**

**Note 2**

Earned income less Cost of Goods Sold (i.e. \$9,973) before expenses works out at only a profit of 8.5%, not even taking into account any other costs in the form of the attributable portion of General Expenses plus Employment Expenses. Drilling down, the largest item is Stock Sales, for which this picture emerges:

Table 1: RVC Retail Sales and Stock Analysis 2013/14

1	Stock Sales in 2013/14	\$106,446
2	Stock Purchases, freight etc in 2013/14	\$100,890
3	Profit <u>before expenses</u>	\$5,556
4	Profit % <u>before expenses</u>	5.5%
5	Capital value of stock on hand at 30/6/2014	\$26,000
6	Stock Turn Ratio	Est. 2.0 <sup>11</sup>
7	Average retail spend/visitor in 2013/14	\$6.87

<sup>11</sup> A low turnover rate (i.e. 2.0) may point to overstocking, obsolescence, or deficiencies in the RVC's product line or marketing effort. (NB Direct Cost of Sales Retail (excluding expenses) assumed by Consultants to average 50% of turnover.)

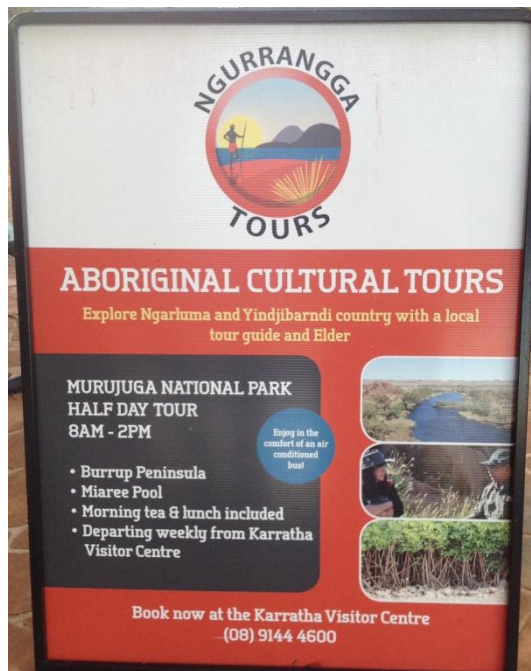


From #3, it is therefore concluded that this vital part of the RVC operation actually ran at a loss in 2013/14. Obviously this must be redressed.

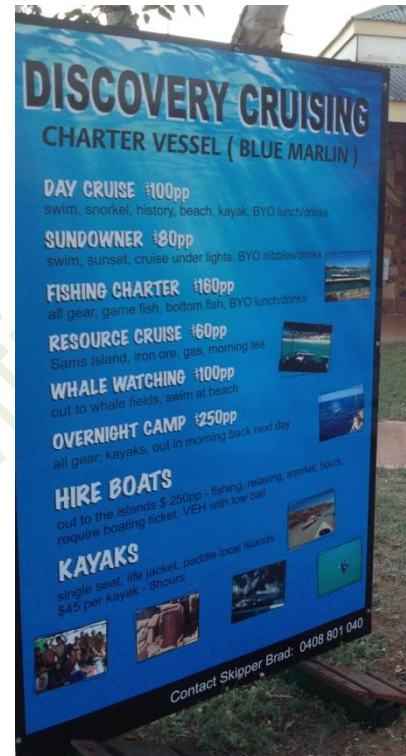
**Recommendation 7: Increase pricing of goods, adjust the mix of retail items, and promote retail sales more proactively in order to achieve an acceptable level of profit taking true costs into account.**

### Note 3

The income from tours sold (i.e. Integrity/Greyhound Bus, and Port to Port Tour) is shown as \$21,170 in 2013/14.



As shown in the accompanying photos of large signs taken outside the KVC in April 2014, that organisation is heavily into marketing tours, and given the north to south traffic reaches Roebourne before Karratha, the opportunity must be there for the RVC to increase tour sales.



Furthermore, it is noted that the RVC Strategic Business Plan 2012-2015 listed this projected income from tours:

<u>Tour</u>	<u>Projected Sales Income 2013/14</u>
Port to Port Tour	21,450
Sunday Towns Tour	7,896
Harding Dam Tour	3,810
Python Pool Tour	4,998
Rio Tinto Cultural Awareness	6,000
Gurrugura Cultural Awareness	23,160
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>\$96.819</u></b>

**Recommendation 8: Target tours so as to become a more substantial part of RVC income; renegotiate commission on tours.**

**Recommendation 9: Take on more fee-for-service opportunities especially accommodation bookings.**

- Given the high cost of a 'Bookings Engine', the logical solution is to work hand-in-hand with the KVC.

#### **Note 4**

There is at present no entrance fee to go through the Old Roebourne Gaol, and the 'Gold Coin Conation' box yielded approx. \$11,700 in 2013/14. Assuming that about 75% of people who enter the Visitor Centre go on to view the Old Roebourne Gaol, the average donation works out at only \$1. Such a low revenue is completely out of balance with recurrent costs, and a strong case exists to follow normal practice and levy an appropriate level of entrance fee.

**Recommendation 10: Introduce entry charges for the Museum in order to substantially increase self-earned income, and thereby contribute to keeping the Museum sustainable.**

- The suggested charges (based on the present (2014) entry charges for the comparable Central Greenough Historic Settlement) are:  
\$6 adult; \$5 concession; \$3 child (5 to 14 years), preschool age free; \$14 family.
- Design an impressive entrance ticket to give it souvenir status; the souvenir ticket will then serve as a fitting memento of the visit. In due course, should Cossack, the Ngurin Pilbara Aboriginal Centre and Whim Creek Hotel come into the fold, create a joint annual 'Passport' option ticket that covers all these attractions at a discount.
- Notices should be displayed in the RVC foyer and the Museum entrance with wording along these lines: *'All income from entry fees is used to maintain and improve this unique Museum and heritage buildings for the benefit of future visitors'*.

The notional projected level of income if the above fees were applied in 2013/14 would be approx. **\$54,000** at an average of \$4.80 per head.

**Note 5**

Local Government grant (formerly from Shire of Roebourne, now City of Karratha). The amount received by the RVC in 2013/14 was \$292,572, representing two thirds of total income for the year, and covered the Total Operating Expenses (see below).

It is noted that with respect to its grant, the Shire of Roebourne, now City of Karratha, in various Council papers (e.g. 'Review of Visitor Information Services Discussion Document, 12/11/2013', makes a couple of logical errors:

- (i) Comparisons of funding made with the KVC and 'Cost to Council per Visitor' fail to take into account the very important fact that the KVC is a purpose-built, stand-alone visitor information centre, whereas the RVC also takes responsibility for a large heritage site and the care of artefacts donated or loaned by the general public;
- (ii) A metric is created using the name 'Return on Investment' which is calculated as:  

$$\frac{\text{total income of the visitor centre (excluding the Shire/City funding allocation)}}{\text{funding allocation for the visitor centre}}$$

[This formula produced a figure of \$1.37 for the RVC in 2012/13.]

Noting that in accounting and financial management, the term **ROI** has a well understood meaning (see below) that is completely different to the above, it is undesirable in a public document to misuse the term. Also, as the figure is a ratio, it can't have a dollar value. The Shire/City would have been better to rename the above metric as Visitor Centre self-earned Income per dollar of Local Government Grant Income.

The metric for 2013/14 works out as \$0.88. i.e.:

$$\frac{\text{Earned Income: \$257,803}}{\text{Grant: \$292,572}}$$

**Definition of Return On Investment - 'ROI'**

ROI is a performance measure used to evaluate the efficiency of an investment or to compare the efficiency of a number of different investments. To calculate ROI, the benefit (return) of an investment is divided by the cost of the investment; the result is expressed as a percentage or a ratio.

The return on investment formula:

$$\text{ROI} = \frac{(\text{Gain from Investment} - \text{Cost of Investment})}{\text{Cost of Investment}}$$

Source: <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/r/returnoninvestment.asp>

However, much more to the point is to recognise that:

- 4) Funding for tourism is an investment, not a subsidy.
- 5) Visitor Information and Booking Centres have proven ability to extend length of stay and increase expenditure in regional areas
- 6) Visitors, businesses and local government ALL need the visitor centre services.

**Note 6**

The amount received by the RVC in 2013/14 in Sponsorship/Partnerships (Rio Tinto) was \$103,034. This was the third moiety of a three-year commitment by Rio Tinto, and in return under the MOU:

- the RVC provided services requested by Rio Tinto including tours for employees/contractors, and Issuing Rio Tinto Access Road permits;
- Upgrades, Repairs and Maintenance were carried out to the heritage buildings and perimeter fencing on the site (approx. \$24,000 in 2013/14);
- Two Rio Tinto personnel contributed expertise by taking positions on the RVC Management Committee.

According to the RVC Strategic Plan, there was also the intention to increase tourism services, and to conduct cultural awareness tours.

### 8.1.2 Expenses

In 2013/14, the RVC's Expenses are summarised below. (NB The detailed income and expenditure data (from MYOB) for 2013/14 (unaudited) may be found at Appendix B R&DTA Profit & Loss [Cash], 2013/2014.)

**Figure 14: RVC Expenditure 2013/14**

	\$	\$	%
Sub-total all General Expenses	62,676		25%
Sub-Total Employment Expenses	188,212		75%
<b>Total operating expenses</b>		<b>250,888</b>	
Repairs & Maintenance - Building	20,652		
Rio Tinto Partnership outlays	23,901		
Total Expenses		295,441	
<b>Operating Profit</b>		<b>147,829</b>	

#### **Note 7**

Considering the nature of RVC's core business, it is noted that these items may or may not be in line with industry benchmarks for comparable Visitor Centres:

Renewals/Subscriptions	\$4,560
Dist - WPC Brochure	\$7,970
Advertising	\$4,780
Promotions	\$2,650
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$19,960</b>

(NB: Some promotions spending could have been coded under printing, and the coding for hosting/managing the website is not known to the Consultant).

### 8.1.3 Retained Earnings

The RVC's Retained Earnings stood at **\$99,100** at 30 June 2013 (source: MYOB Trial Balance report run on 11/08/2014). This is equivalent to about 5 months of operating expenses and is considered an acceptable level of reserves (in the absence of a major capital works program).



## 8.2 Future Funding Basis

### 8.2.1 Key Proposition

It will be more meaningful and appropriate for both the City of Karratha and Rio Tinto to split their funding support for the RVC into two distinct components:

- 1) **Roebourne Visitor Centre core functions only**
- 2) **Roebourne Old Gaol Museum.**

This is to be accompanied by the RVC splitting its MYOB bookkeeping into these same components, which is easily done.

- Using the KISS principle, some income and expenditure items will be easily identified as being entirely or mostly associated with one entity or the other. Common items such as cost of utilities can in the first instance be fully allocated to the RVC and a year-end journal entry made in MYOB to transfer an appropriate portion of the common costs to the Roebourne Old Gaol Museum (e.g. 20%).
- There is insignificant extra cost involved and the important benefit will be to establish a sound baseline for budgets, future strategies and decision making.
- (Analogy: In the tourism driven City of Albany, the Albany Visitor Centre is entirely operated as a City of Albany business unit, and as well the Princess Royal Fortress operates as a separate business unit.)

In the near future, the **Roebourne Old Gaol Museum** component could conceivably have **Cossack** added to it, and a separate **Management Group** should be formed of people/organisations with a specific interest in heritage matters including heritage tourism.

### 8.2.2 Baseline 2013/2014

The following table establishes the baseline retrospectively.

**Figure 15: RVC Funding Sources in 2013/14**

Partner/Sponsor	Percentage		Amount \$			% of Budgeted Gross Income
	Roebourne Visitor Centre (incl Roebourne Old Gaol Museum)		Roebourne Visitor Centre	Roebourne Old Gaol Museum	Total	
City of Karratha	100%		\$ 292,572	\$ -	\$ 292,572	66%
Rio Tinto	100%		\$ 103,034	\$ -	\$ 103,034	23%
Total			\$ 395,606	\$ -	\$ 395,606	89%
			100%	0%		
Budgeted Earned Income						
Total Sales & Miscellaneous Income			\$ 143,073	\$ 11,697	\$ 154,769	
Cost of Goods Sold			\$ 107,105	\$ -	\$ 107,105	
Net profit from sales (before expenses)			\$ 35,969	\$ 11,697	\$ 47,665	11%
Gross Income before expenses			\$ 431,574	\$ 11,697	\$ 443,271	100%

### 8.2.3 Notional Funding Source Model 2014/15 to 2017/18

For the purposes of this Strategic Plan, it will suffice to make a nominal split of City of Karratha, Rio Tinto and (hopefully) NYFL funding support. Figure 16 and

**Figure 17** which follow establish the proposed separated funding model, also with the inclusion from 2014/15 of a JV (or Sponsorship/Partnership) with NYFL.

**Figure 16: Notional Funding Model in 2014/15**

Partner/Sponsor	Percentage		Amount \$			% of Budgeted Gross Income
	Roebourne Visitor Centre core functions only	Roebourne Old Gaol Museum	Roebourne Visitor Centre core functions only	Roebourne Old Gaol Museum	Total	
City of Karratha	85%	15%	\$ 263,500	\$ 46,500	\$ 310,000	59%
Rio Tinto	65%	35%	\$ 68,250	\$ 36,750	\$ 105,000	20%
NYFL	85%	15%	\$ 42,500	\$ 7,500	\$ 50,000	10%
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$ 374,250</b>	<b>\$ 90,750</b>	<b>\$ 465,000</b>	<b>89%</b>
			80%	20%		
<b>Budgeted Earned Income</b>						
<b>Total Sales &amp; Miscellaneous Income</b>			\$ 149,800	\$ 20,000	\$ 169,800	
<b>Cost of Goods Sold</b>			\$ 112,460	\$ 1,000	\$ 113,460	
<b>Net profit from sales (before expenses)</b>			\$ 37,340	\$ 19,000	\$ 56,340	<b>11%</b>
<b>Gross Income before expenses</b>			<b>\$ 411,590</b>	<b>\$ 109,750</b>	<b>\$ 521,340</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Note 8**

NYFL funding is intended to broaden the scope of services offered/undertaken by the RVC and may partly be in kind or via labor contributed or via services delivered.

- This may include for example, a staffed RVC satellite presence at the new Ngurin Pilbara Aboriginal Centre in Roe Street Roebourne, or underwriting a project officer to, for example, develop and follow through on grant applications (to Lotterywest, Royalties for Regions, Pilbara Development Corporation, etc).

**Figure 17: Notional Funding Model in 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18**

Partner/Sponsor	Percentage		Amount \$			% of Budgeted Gross Income
	Roebourne Visitor Centre core functions only	Roebourne Old Gaol Museum	Roebourne Visitor Centre core functions only	Roebourne Old Gaol Museum	Total	
City of Karratha	85%	15%	\$ 263,500	\$ 46,500	\$ 310,000	53%
Rio Tinto	65%	35%	\$ 71,040	\$ 38,160	\$ 109,200	19%
NYFL	85%	15%	\$ 57,500	\$ 10,100	\$ 67,600	12%
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$ 392,040</b>	<b>\$ 94,760</b>	<b>\$ 486,800</b>	<b>83%</b>
			81%	19%		
<b>Budgeted Earned Income</b>						
<b>Total Sales &amp; Miscellaneous Income</b>			\$ 164,806	\$ 55,000	\$ 219,806	
<b>Cost of Goods Sold</b>			\$ 118,100	\$ 2,000	\$ 120,100	
<b>Net profit from sales (before expenses)</b>			\$ 46,705	\$ 53,000	\$ 99,705	<b>17%</b>
<b>Gross Income before expenses</b>			<b>\$ 438,745</b>	<b>\$ 147,760</b>	<b>\$ 586,505</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: NYFL funding is intended to broaden the scope of services offered by the RVC and may partly be in kind or via labor contributed or via services delivered. This could include underwriting a project officer to, for example, develop and follow through on grant applications, or managing/organising special projects for the Museum.



Under the proposition, steady and acceptable progression will be made by the RVC towards a sustainable financial model in which the percentage of total income provided by the City of Karratha falls in the manner shown in the next table and graph.

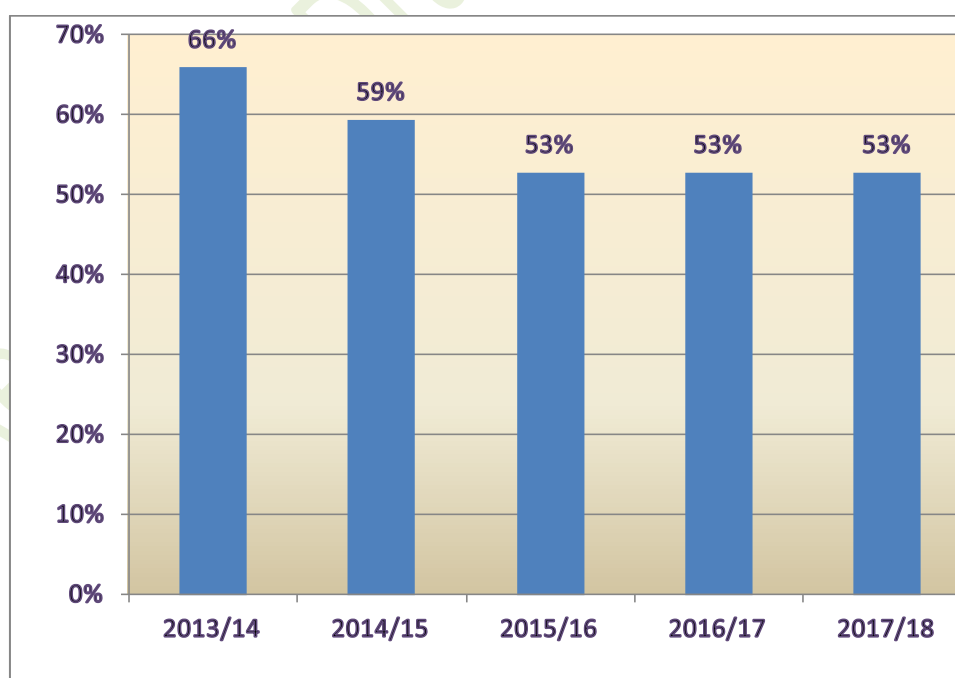
**Figure 18: City of Karratha Proposed Funding Model**

	City of Karratha - Proposed Funding Model					
	Grant amount \$			% of Budgeted Gross Income		
FY	Roebourne Visitor Centre core functions only	Roebourne Old Gaol Museum	Total	Roebourne Visitor Centre core functions only	Roebourne Old Gaol Museum	Total
2013/14	\$ 292,572		\$ 292,572	66%		66%
2014/15	\$ 263,500	\$ 46,500	\$ 310,000	64%	42%	59%
2015/16	\$ 263,500	\$ 46,500	\$ 310,000	60%	31%	53%
2016/17	\$ 263,500	\$ 46,500	\$ 310,000	60%	31%	53%
2017/18	\$ 263,500	\$ 46,500	\$ 310,000	60%	31%	53%

**Note 9**

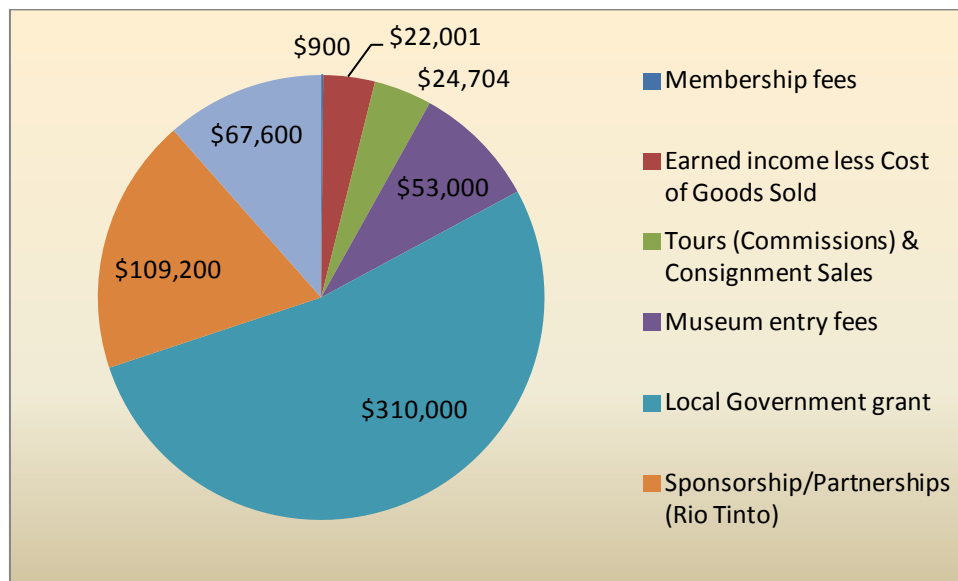
By Resolution of the Council on 20 July 2014, it committed to enter into a funding agreement with the RVC for the first quarter (Q1) period 1/07/14 to 30/09/14 with a funding allocation of: \$79,990 (incl. GST). On the funding model proposed above (Figure 18), the balance to pay in the remainder of 2014/16 in respect to the **RVC core operations** would be \$183,510 (or \$61,170 in each of the three remaining quarters), and in respect to the **Roebourne Old Gaol Museum** would be \$46,500 (or \$15,500 in each of the three remaining quarters). Sub-total = \$ 230,010, grand total for 2014/15 = \$310,000.

**Figure 19: City of Karratha Proposed Funding Model**



The model is depicted in the following pie chart, which should be compared with the baseline depicted in Figure 13.

**Figure 20: Pie Chart depicting RVC Income for 2015/16 - 2017/18**



**Note 10**

The \$ amounts shown above for Earned Income and Tours DO NOT INCLUDE any significant allowance for new and expanded revenue generators that are described in Chapter 7 KEY DIRECTIONS - THE TOP TEN STRATEGIES and Section 8.1.1 Income - Past and Future. Accordingly, it is contended that the Income expected from Earned Income and Tours should exceed the figures herein, all other things being equal.

**Note 11**

All dollar values in this Chapter were in 2014 dollar terms, with no allowance made for future inflation.

## 9 MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Once the R&DTA Management Committee has adopted this four-year Strategic Plan (2014-2018) to guide its actions and initiatives, the plan will require the buy-in and participation of all the RVC's stakeholders if the Plan is to succeed. It cannot just be 'Business as Usual'.

The Strategic Plan will be the Management Committee's key governance document (its bible) used to define the RVC direction, and how to get there. It is the framework by which the Management Committee should identify the priorities and allocate organisational resources.

### 9.1 The Key Measures for Success 2014-2018

**Accountability:** The Strategic Plan is also the fundamental component against which the Management Committee measures and reports progress.

#### 1 NYFL Partnership

- (i) Mutually acceptable MOU arranged with NYFL that includes resource commitments and mutual obligations.

#### 2 Partnerships

- (i) Considerable evidence of leveraging off the opportunities made possible by the new Ngurin Pilbara Aboriginal Centre, including possibly a 'satellite' RVC desk at the Ngurin Pilbara Aboriginal Centre.
- (ii) Discernible uplift in interworking with the City of Karratha/staff and the Karratha Visitor Center (KVC) to leverage off each respective organisation's resources/strengths.
- (iii) Considerable evidence of liaising intensely with Rio Tinto to retain and develop the existing working relationship, supplementary funding and MOU.
- (iv) More evidence of liaising with both Art centres in Roebourne (Yinjaa-Barni Art and Roebourne Art Group), as well as the nearby Roebourne Community Resource Centre (CRC).

#### 3 Membership Drive

- (i) Discernible expansion in the R&DTA membership, achieving a 'critical mass', and expanding both the diversity and the resource base that can be tapped for 'self-help' projects and programs.
- (ii) A perceptively more engaged local tourism industry.

#### 4 Branding, Image, Customer Service, and Operations

- (i) Roebourne district map as a large billboard.
- (ii) Discernible uplift in RVC appearance from the carpark.
- (iii) RVC website more current, more interesting, more interactive, more RVC focussed.
- (iv) Digital platform set up as a key marketing tool, leading to a conspicuous increase in the capacity of both the RVC and the local tourism industry to deliver tourism related services digitally.
- (v) Brochure display policy that differentiates between financial members and others.

- (vi) Interpretive displays in the RVC.
- (vii) Touch-screens to provide out-of-hours access to visitor information.
- (viii) Free Wi-Fi hot-spot at RVC.
- (ix) Increased profile of the RVC's services and benefits to the local/region economy.
- (x) Regular and reasonably detailed surveying and analysis of visitation to the RVC, including customer satisfaction data. Competent statistical analysis and interpretation of data.
- (xi) Measured increase in visitor satisfaction (via a credible evaluation methodology).<sup>12</sup>
- (xii) Increase in total visitors serviced in person or virtually by 12% over 4 years (i.e. average of +3% pa).
- (xiii) Increase in overnight visitors to the Roebourne region by 6% over 4 years (i.e. average of +1.5% pa).

### **5 Community Relations**

- (i) Uplift in the supporting the operations of key community events/programs.
- (ii) Basic level of information on local services and facilities provided to new residents and businesses, and other community members.

### **6 Cossack Heritage Trail**

- (i) Replacement (by the City of Karratha) of all damaged/deteriorated Cossack Heritage Trail and Emma Withnell Heritage Trail signage by the end of FY 2014/15.

### **7 Accreditation and Alliances**

- (i) Level 2 accreditation maintained through the Better Business Tourism Accreditation Program.
- (ii) Considerable evidence of networking with Visitor Centres in adjacent towns and regions, and to participate in regional initiatives to improve the operation of Visitor Centres in North West WA.

### **8 Management, Organisation and Planning**

- (i) Lease secured for the RVC and Old Roebourne Gaol historic sites.
- (ii) Ensure governance structure and best practices for a fully representative and appropriately skilled Management Committee to guide the advancement of the RVC.
- (iii) External funding secured in order to develop a Master Plan for the RVC and Old Roebourne Gaol site that includes the provision of a new purpose-built Visitor Centre. Completion of the Master Plan for the RVC and Old Roebourne Gaol complex.
- (iv) Roebourne-Cossack Heritage Foundation established as a prerequisite step to putting the management of Roebourne's heritage buildings and Cossack onto a better footing.
- (v) The ownership status of the historical museum collection (artefacts displayed in glass cabinets) is resolved, and a Collection Policy formulated.

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<sup>12</sup> Baseline must first be established. e.g. Refer Section 3.3.1, Figure 9: Customer Experience, Figure 10: Customer Experience and Competitive Positioning, Figure 11: Feedback regarding the RVC

- (vi) Funding secured (and staff training undertaken) for MoSAIC Collections Management system (data base) to record artefacts held by the Old Roebourne Gaol (and possibly Cossack and Whim Creek Hotel).
- (vii) With the above two actions completed, selected collection data can then be uploaded to the Internet for searching by the public or just the organisation's authorised staff.

## **9 Staffing**

- (i) An appropriate combination of staff/volunteers with formal qualifications is in place for the Old Roebourne Gaol Heritage Site/Museum.
- (ii) Meaningful and measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) implemented for both the Management Committee and RVC manager.

## **10. Finances**

- (i) The finances of the RVC and the Old Roebourne Gaol separated so as to identify Income and Expenditure and Balance Sheets, as a forerunner to preparing the way for a formal separation with each entity focussing on its specific Mission.
- (ii) Entry charges introduced for the Old Roebourne Gaol and are shown to generate far more income per annum than the previous voluntary 'Gold coin donation'.
- (iii) Steady and acceptable progression of the RVC towards a sustainable financial model in which the percentage of total income provided by the City of Karratha falls significantly from 66% to 52% in this manner:

**Figure 21: Funding Model Trend Summary**

FY	City of Karratha - Proposed Funding Model					
	Grant amount \$			% of Budgeted Gross Income		
	Roebourne Visitor Centre core functions only	Roebourne Old Gaol Museum	Total	Roebourne Visitor Centre core functions only	Roebourne Old Gaol Museum	Total
2013/14 (baseline)	\$ 292,572		\$ 292,572	66%		66%
2014/15	\$ 263,500	\$ 46,500	\$ 310,000	64%	42%	59%
2015/16	\$ 263,500	\$ 46,500	\$ 310,000	60%	31%	53%
2016/17	\$ 263,500	\$ 46,500	\$ 310,000	60%	31%	53%
2017/18	\$ 263,500	\$ 46,500	\$ 310,000	60%	31%	53%

**Conclusion:** This overall plan should find support with the City of Karratha given the Resolution (below) carried by Council on 21 July 2014:

That Council by SIMPLE Majority pursuant to Section 5.42 and 6.8 of the Local Government Act 1995, RESOLVES to ENTER into a funding agreement with the Roebourne Visitor Centre (RVC) for the first quarter (Q1) period 1/07/14 to 30/09/14 with a funding allocation of: \$79,990 (incl. GST) with the RVC to provide a Strategic Plan for future governance and operations which is less dependent on Council's support by 30/09/14.

REASON:

Councillors for the motion considered Option 2 – 25% of funding will enable the Roebourne Visitor Centre (RVC) to operate at current level enabling sufficient time to complete and submit to Council their Strategic Plan for future governance and operations to Council which is less dependent on

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Council's support by 30/09/14. Councillors requested their reason for being against the motion be recorded in minutes based on the following ...considered while the RVC Strategic Plan was nearing completion Option 3 – 50% of funding was needed to provide more time for Strategic Plan development /implementation, and would provide assurance and stability to the operations of the RVC

Restricted: Draft & Confidential



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## 10 APPENDICES

### A. Australia's North West Tourism

Australia's North West Tourism is a non profit, non government, member based association, formed in 2004. Australia's North West Tourism primary responsibility is to increase visitation to the region by marketing the destination to the domestic and international marketplace.

Australia's North West Tourism is member based and acts at all times in the best interest of its members. Currently Australia's North West Tourism has an excess of 200 members, covering a broad range of businesses that are dispersed throughout the region.

The objectives of the organisation are as follows:

- foster the development of travel services and facilities in Australia's North West region
- preserve and encourage the upgrading of existing attractions and develop new ones
- promote the attractions of the region
- co-ordinate organisations, companies, businesses and individuals benefiting from the tourism industry and assist them to achieve profitable growth
- convey to the community the benefits that travel and tourism bring to the region
- liaise with regional, state, national and international tourism bodies in the achievement of mutual objectives
- produce updated tourism development plans for the region
- produce, or acquire, printed, audio/visual or other promotional information either for sale or free distribution
- foster co-operation and work for the mutual advantage with the tourist associations of other regions
- ensure that its promotional and marketing activities are complementary to the management of the features of the region and to the best of its ability to support proper management to ensure their sustainable use.

## B. R&DTA Profit & Loss [Cash], 2013/2014

Income	\$	\$
<b>Sales</b>		
Integrity/Greyhound Bus	4,855	
Port to Port Tour	16,315	
Washing Machines	2,509	
Book Exchange PWCA	848	
Stock Sales	106,446	
Consignment Sale	2,358	
Water Donation	2,038	
Reimbursement	5,459	
Refunds	351	
Membership Fees	429	
Trinity Church	577	
Museum Donation	11,697	
Shire Reimbursement	292,572	
Bank Interest	617	
Rio Tinto P/Ship	103,034	
<b>Total Sales</b>		550,105
Venue Hire		270
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>550,375</b>
<b>Cost of Sales</b>		
Integrity/Greyhound	3,672	
Stock Purchases	95,739	
Consignment Sales	2,543	
Last Cost Variance	2,323	
Freight	2,829	
<b>Total Cost of Sales</b>		<b>107,105</b>
<b>Gross profit before expenses</b>		<b>443,270</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Advertising	4,777	
Accounting & Audit Fees	3,245	
Adjustments / Rounding	1,152	
Bank Fees & Charges	1,534	
Cleaning Products	3,916	
Computer Exp	1,912	
Renewals/Subscriptions	4,554	
Dist - WPC Brochure	7,963	
Electricity	7,463	
Insurance	4,245	
Office Supplies	6,173	
Book Exchange PWCA	57	

Promotions	2,438	
Promotions air fare, allowance	205	
Postage, Printing & Stationary	4,815	
Trinity Church	165	
Vehicle Hire	177	
<b>Sub-total General Expenses</b>		<b>54,793</b>
Motor Vehicle - at cost		
MV - Fuel & Oil	702	
MV - R & M	1,097	
MV- Lic & Rego	558	
<b>Sub-total Motor Vehicle expenses - at cost</b>		<b>2,357</b>
Telecommunications, Internet	4,101	
Water	1,426	
<b>Sub-total Utilities Expenses</b>		<b>5,527</b>
<b>Sub-total all General Expenses</b>		<b>62,676</b>
<b>Employment Expenses:</b>		
Staff Travel	556	
Superannuation	14,872	
Wages & Salaries	163,013	
Staff Amenities	2,731	
General Supplies	2,725	
Training/Workshops/Meetings	4,314	
<b>Sub-Total Employment Expenses</b>		<b>188,212</b>
Repairs & Maintenance - Building		20,652
Rio Tinto Partnership		23,901
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>295,441</b>
<b>Operating Profit</b>		<b>147,829</b>
<b>Other Expenses</b>		-
<b>Net Profit (Loss)</b>		<b>147,829</b>

Say it again: 1. Funding for tourism is an investment, not a subsidy. 2. Visitors AND businesses both need to