

# Bundaberg Tourism

2019/20 *Annual Report*



**VISITATION SNAPSHOT**

**CHAIR & CEO REPORT**

**DESTINATION MARKETING**

**VISITOR SERVICES**

**INDUSTRY SUPPORT**

**COVID-19 RESPONSE**

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## Our Role

Originally established in 1971 as a regional tourism and economic development body, today Bundaberg Region Ltd.'s key priority areas are focused on driving visitation to the destination, as we strive to build and maintain a healthy and sustainable regional tourism economy.

### PRIORITIES INCLUDE

-  Product & Experience Development
-  Visitor Experience
-  Identity & Influence
-  Upskilling & Training
-  Marketing & Events

### KEY FUNDING PARTNERS



## KEYSTATS

**\$507 million**  
visitor expenditure

**over three million**  
visitor nights

**5,220**  
tourism jobs

**Average**  
length of stay ...  
**4.43 nights**  
or more  
domestic + international

\* YE Dec 19

# 2019 BUNDABERG REGIONAL VISITATION STATISTICS

*1,734,000 total visitors*

## DOMESTIC VISITORS

**\$478 million**  
spent in region by  
domestic visitors ↑ 18.9%  
YOY

**97.5%**  
domestic visitors

**760,000 overnight**  
domestic visitors ↑ 12.9%  
YOY

**3.5 nights**  
average stay

**931,000 domestic**  
daytrip visitors ↑ 23.5%  
YOY

**50,000 visitors**  
across three Bundaberg  
Visitor Information Centres

## INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

**43,000 overnight**  
international visitors

**20.7 nights** average stay

**\$29million**  
spent in region by  
international visitors

**TOP 4** international  
source markets  
for Southern Great  
Barrier Reef

- 1. United Kingdom**  
24,000 visitors
- 2. Germany**  
20,000 visitors
- 3. New Zealand**  
16,000 visitors
- 4. USA**  
11,000 visitors

# From the Chair and Chief Executive Officer

As the world comes to terms with what a 'new normal' looks like, the Bundaberg region's tourism and business community has undoubtedly ridden the rollercoaster of 2019/20 with the resilience, spirit and entrepreneurship that has seen this region through previous hard times and makes it an extraordinary place to live and visit.

The visitor economy is our region's third largest industry and a vital contributor to economic growth and jobs across the Bundaberg Region.

Together we welcomed over 1.7 million visitors to the region in 2019, injecting \$507 million into our regional economy. (Tourism Research Australia, 2019) With over 5000 local jobs supported by our industry, tourism is a big part of what makes the Bundaberg region tick and this number will continue to grow as we look to the future.

September 2019 saw the release of a refreshed Destination Tourism Plan (DTP) for the Bundaberg and North Burnett regions. And whilst the world has changed in the face of a pandemic, the foundational pillars of Green & Meaningful, Reef Custodians, and Taste Bundaberg defined in the DTP, along with our strategic priority areas, still stand as our true north.

In October 2019, the Bundaberg Region Social Indicators Report was released. This is a social indicator study that monitors local community views on tourism, where Queensland residents are surveyed with a focus on understanding their sentiment towards tourism, their local area, and the impacts of tourism on their local area. We were encouraged to

see that Bundaberg residents are significantly more likely than the average Queenslanders to agree that tourism has a positive impact on the community.

Early November saw the launch of the 19/20 turtle season in the newly developed Mon Repos Turtle Centre. Bundaberg Tourism has worked closely for more than 5 years with the QPWS team at Mon Repos in the marketing, publicity, and delivery of the nightly Turtle Encounter.



Ross Peddlesden, Chair & Katherine Reid, Chief Executive Officer



Minister for State Development, Tourism and Innovation Kate Jones and Bundaberg operators attending Australian Tourism Awards 2019

Not only does the work at Mon Repos provide significant benefit to global turtle conservation, it is also recognised as an important nature-based tourism experience for Queensland. With 50 years of extraordinary turtle research and conservation work at Mon Repos, along with a contribution of approximately \$8.5 million to the regional economy each year through tourism, the \$22million Mon Repos Turtle Centre redevelopment presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the Bundaberg Region to be recognised as a world class, year round ecotourism experience. For those of you that have visited the new Centre already, we're sure you'll agree, its spectacular! The building's architecture and the enhanced interpretative design is truly remarkable and a welcome addition to the wonderful work delivered by the Rangers and volunteers on the beach for the Turtle Encounter tour.

On behalf of the tourism industry, Bundaberg Tourism provided a submission and statement to the public hearing for the Parliamentary Inquiry into the redevelopment of the Mon Repos Turtle Centre, with more information on the issues raised included on page 16.

The peak summer holiday period didn't escape the negative effects of the Australian bushfires and weather events, with a decrease in interstate visitation and then of course the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak. With around 30% international visitation to our Southern Great Barrier Reef islands off Bundaberg, the closure of Australia's borders had considerable impact on the Bundaberg visitor economy and, within a few weeks, life as we knew it.

As the pandemic intensity increased, Bundaberg Tourism paused all interstate and active international marketing and publicity and transitioned its operations to be focused on leading and supporting the industry as the situation continues to evolve. More about the COVID response and recovery activity can be found on page 18.

Despite the restrictions on travel and border closures, we know that people were still dreaming and researching their bucket list experiences. The destination marketing team lead by Ellie Tonkin smashing their KPI's once again this year, with a strong focus on consistent messaging, engaging audiences through fresh and relevant content and a concentrated shift to driving conversion to industry through our digital channels. Visitors to the website increased by over 20% year-on-year and drove hundreds of thousands of dollars of bookings to operators online. The region reached over 4.4million people social media, more than 6million through digital marketing, and millions more through national and international media outlets thanks to the industry-supported PR program. See page 10 for more insights into Bundaberg Tourism's destination marketing activity.

In the three Visitor Information Centre's, Chantele Nelson and the team of staff and volunteer ambassadors, pre COVID closure, assisted over 46,000 visitor enquiries this past financial year. See page 17 for more insights into Bundaberg Tourism's visitor services.

Whilst it is difficult to think of 'celebrating' the year that was when the health of Australians and the economy presents so much uncertainty, we are thankful for the collective efforts of the Bundaberg region community, the strong partnerships nurtured and the positive, resilient sentiment that the tourism industry has driven as we all navigate these extraordinary times.

We appreciate the enduring partnership and support of Tourism & Events Queensland (TEQ), Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC), Bundaberg Regional Council (BRC) and North Burnett Regional Council (NBRC). These key stakeholders help to shape the work that the organisation delivers, and we are looking forward to continuing to work together to lead the sustainable growth of the region's tourism industry maximising economic benefits for our businesses and communities.

With the challenges facing our tourism industry and uncertainty on what the next few years looks like for global travel, we recognise that it's now more than ever that we need to band together as Team Bundaberg, to work strategically, to market collectively and to unite as a single voice for the destination. And we look forward to the next 12 months with energy and optimism.

Ross Peddlesden  
CHAIR

Katherine Reid  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

## FOUNDATIONAL PILLARS

### GREEN AND MEANINGFUL



Sustainability is at the forefront of the visitor experience, with a strong community sense of responsibility for the land, for the turtle population and for the Great Barrier Reef.

### REEF CUSTODIANS



As the southernmost gateway to the Great Barrier Reef, the Bundaberg region is committed to delivering an outstanding reef experience that is interactive, educational and sustainable.

### OWN THE TASTE BUNDABERG BRAND



By sharing the vibrant stories of our people, place and produce, we will enhance the Bundaberg region's reputation as a quality agri-tourism destination.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS



Product and Experience Development



Visitor Experience



Identity and Influence



Upskilling and Training



Marketing & Events

## Our dedicated board

Providing strategic direction to the organisation is an elected Board of Directors representing the industry. Board Directors meet monthly and give of their time on a voluntary basis. Director positions are based on a two-year rotation and fall due at each Annual General Meeting.



Ross Peddlesden  
Tourism Supporter  
Chair



Teena Mammino  
Tourism Supporter  
Deputy Chair



Warrick Wright  
Bundaberg Brewed Drinks  
Treasurer



Duncan Littler  
Bundaberg Distilling Co  
Director



Rhys Kummerow  
Tourism Supporter  
Director



Tina McPherson  
Tinaberries  
Director



Carly Clark  
Splitters Farm  
Director from October 2019



Alex Cameron  
Water St Kitchen  
Director from November 2019



Sue-Anne Chapman  
Bundaberg Regional Council  
Director

## Committed and passionate team

Team BT is made up of a hard-working and passionate team motivated to make a difference for our tourism industry, our communities and the broader regional economy.

**Katherine Reid** Chief Executive  
**Sheryl Thompson** Office Manager / Accounts  
**Jessica Mann** Administration Assistant

**Ellie Tonkin** Marketing Manager  
**Jon McPherson** Digital Specialist  
**Greer Zunker** Marketing Coordinator  
**Maddison Clerke** Marketing Assistant  
**Connie Rixon** Marketing Assistant  
**Terri Taylor** Industry Relations Officer  
**Amanda Baxter** Project Officer  
**Loni Hammond** Project Officer

**Chantele Nelson** Visitor Services & Sales Manager  
**Emily Cleaver** Visitor Information Centre (VIC) Coordinator  
**Zoe Murch** Childers VIC Supervisor  
**Kim Kopllick** Gin Gin VIC Supervisor  
**Louisa Hyland** Bundaberg VIC Supervisor  
**April Dingle** Bundaberg VIC Supervisor  
**Holiday Experience Specialists**  
Maddison Clerke, Cheryl Cooper, Sierra Darney, Sandi Davis, Elke Grieving, Leanne Holyoake, Barbara Ries

## Engaged and supportive community

The region has an extraordinary group of tourism businesses working together for the region.

### BUNDABERG REGION SOCIAL INDICATORS REPORT 2019

The Report is a social indicator study that monitors local community views on tourism, and has been conducted by TEQ in 2010, 2013, 2017 and 2019. This report was released in October 2019 and can be [found online here](#)

Queensland residents are surveyed with a focus on understanding their sentiment towards tourism, their local area, and the impacts of tourism on their local area.

- The proportion of Bundaberg residents who 'really like' tourists continue to be significantly higher than the Queensland average and has increased from 59% in 2017 to 63% in 2019.
- We also saw that 70% are happy to see continued growth in tourism development. Over half (52%) would like more tourists in their local area, this proportion has decreased since 2017, however it remains above the Queensland average.
- Bundaberg residents are significantly more likely than the average Queenslanders to agree that tourism has a positive impact on the community. Seven in ten (71%) of residents agree that tourism has a positive impact on the community, compared with 45% in Queensland.

### QUEENSLAND TOURISM AWARDS NOVEMBER 2019

The Queensland Tourism Awards recognise the outstanding achievements of the state's tourism industry, including individuals, businesses (industry operators) and events.

The Awards are a submission and inspection based program and provide the opportunity to publicly acknowledge and showcase Queensland's finest tourism operators. The Awards cover 30 categories ranging from attractions, events, tour and transport, accommodation, restaurants, culture, marketing and more.

In 2019, Bundaberg Tourism members gained state recognition with wins in the following categories at the Queensland Tourism Awards:



The Windmill Café Barga's Kirsty and Joey with Katherine Reid, Bundaberg Tourism CEO at the Queensland Tourism Awards 2019



Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort at the Queensland Tourism Awards 2019



SGBR Operators at the Queensland Tourism Awards 2019

#### GOLD

- Tourism Wineries, Distilleries and Breweries – **Bundaberg Rum**
- Steve Irwin Award for Ecotourism – **Lady Elliot Island**
- Tourism Restaurant and Catering Services – **The Windmill Café Barga**

#### SILVER

- Tourism Attractions - **Bundaberg Rum Distillery Experience**
- Steve Irwin Award for Ecotourism – **Fun Over Fifty**
- Cultural Tourism – **Fun Over Fifty**

These awards are not a small undertaking and Bundaberg Tourism acknowledges the member operators who also nominated - 1770reef Great Barrier Reef Eco Tours, Lady Musgrave Experience and RM Williams Australian Bush Learning Centre (North Burnett Regional Council).

**AUSTRALIAN TOURISM AWARDS  
MARCH 2020**

The Australian Tourism Awards (ATAs) are the tourism industry's peak Awards – recognising and promoting excellence in tourism. Winners of Gold in all categories of the State Tourism Awards become national finalists. In March 2020, three Bundaberg tourism operators competed in the ATAs.

**GOLD**

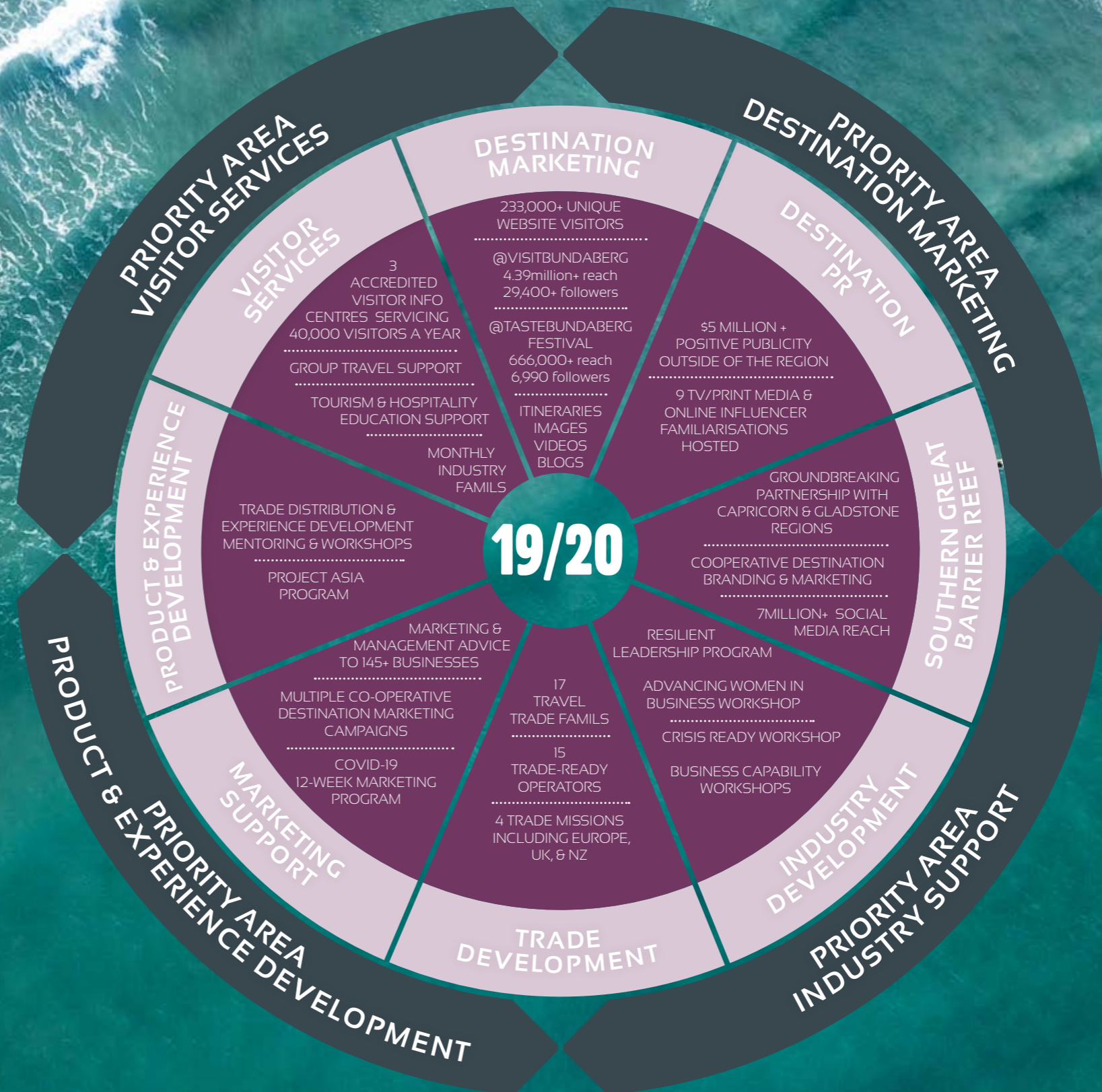
- Tourism Wineries, Distilleries and Breweries – Bundaberg Rum

**SILVER**

- Ecotourism – Lady Elliot Island



# BUNDABERG TOURISM 2019/20 IN REVIEW



# Destination Marketing

## CONSUMER

### Digital Marketing

Bundaberg's 'Always On' digital and social strategy continued to drive significant benefits to the region by engaging digitally savvy travellers at multiple stages within the path to purchase in order the influence decision making.

### Website

The destination website continues to significantly expand our digital footprint and enhance our capacity to deliver meaningful digital experiences to those considering and visiting the Bundaberg region. The website attracted over 233,000 unique visitors, an increase of 20.1% compared to 2018/19. Following a redevelopment of the website layout to offer more integrated content, these visitors stayed more than 8 minutes each and visited more pages than ever before.

### Social Media

Leveraging user-generated content through key software integration has enabled the team to reach nearly 4.4million consumers across Facebook and Instagram, generating over 81,000 engagements. We also saw a 22.9% increase in our Visit Bundaberg Facebook followers and a 57.1% increase in our Visit Bundaberg Instagram followers compared to 2018/19.

### EDM

Considerable development of the consumer electronic direct mail (EDM) strategy saw a 30.5% increase in subscribers in 2018/19. 24 EDMs were sent, each tailored to key market segments, which saw an impressive average open rate of 38.8% and average click through rate of 11.3%, well above industry averages.

## MAJOR CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY

### Summer Season (September 2019 – March 2020)

A Hero Experience for the Bundaberg region, the Mon Repos Turtle Encounter drives considerable visitation to the region across summer. Bundaberg Tourism has been the exclusive ticketing provider for the Encounter for many years, and delivers a comprehensive destination marketing campaign to maximise the Encounter's visitors, drive visitor dispersal and encourage increased length of stay and overnight visitor expenditure.

Significant work was undertaken in the lead up to Summer season to develop and implement BookEasy's Packages module on the website, and the marketing campaign promoted the easy-to-book holidays then available, combining Lady Musgrave Experience reef trips with turtle tickets and accommodation. Targetting busy families in SEQ, the strategy drove the sales of 90 packages, comprising 222 individual bookings to operators.

The 2019/20 season saw the launch of the new Mon Repos Turtle Centre, and the encounter was at 79% capacity, with over 26,000 people attending, and had an estimated regional impact of \$9.5million. The season was impacted by the summer's bushfires events and then COVID-19, with more than 3,000 fewer guests attending and 2,000 tickets available. 80% of visitors to the Encounter came from within Queensland. The largest market was South East Queensland (49.5%) and then Bundaberg (16.7%), 9% from interstate and nearly 11% from overseas.

# SUMMER CAMPAIGN 2019/20

## MARKETING & PR RESULTS

### PARTNERSHIPS & ADVERTISING

**NEWSXTEND**  
952,000+ impressions  
23,000 page views across destination website  
270+ conversions

**PAGING FUN MUMS**  
4.5 million+ audience  
Comprehensive campaign blog & social media campaign

**CONCRETE PLAYGROUND**  
210,000+ campaign reach  
2,970 page views across destination website  
9 min 26 sec on CP page

**PR & MEDIA OUTCOMES**  
185million+ total people reached  
\$1.7million+ advertising value

**LEADS TO INDUSTRY**  
\$900,000+ TOTAL BOOKINGS

**COVERAGE**  
Pedestrian TV  
Holidays with Kids  
Queensland Times  
Courier Mail  
Queensland Blog  
The Advertiser (SA)  
The Guardian (UK)  
Chinese NZ Herald  
NT News (NT)  
Herald Sun (VIC)  
The Mercury (TAS)  
Food Wine Travel

**FAMILIARISATIONS INTO REGION**  
8 travel media  
16 travel trade hosted  
19 operators involved

90 packages sold online

222 bookings for operators

**SOCIAL MEDIA**  
\$467,026 POTENTIAL ON INVESTMENT#  
1,819,906 TOTAL SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

**EDM**  
12 STRATEGIC EDMS  
7,810 subscribers +25% YOY  
46.1% open rate  
16.9% click rate

4,000+ new followers  
26,785 total social followers +31.2% YOY  
45,475 total engagements\* +22.1% YOY

**DESTINATION WEBSITE**  
149,000+ unique visitors +22.2% YOY  
522,000+ page views +20.7% YOY  
9:27min av. time on site +12sec YOY



Results for period of 1 September 2019 - 31 March 2020  
#Destination Thinkr whitepaper - Potential On Investment for DMOs  
\* Total engagements = reactions, comments, shares & conversions

## 2019/20 MON REPOS VISITORS

26,079 Turtle Encounter visitors  
89.2% domestic visitors  
10.8% international visitors  
79% of available tickets sold

QLD (80.3%)  
SEQLD (49.5%)  
NSW (5.2%)  
VIC (1.9%)

GERMANY (2.4%)  
UK (2.1%)  
USA (0.9%)  
FRANCE (0.8%)

## REGIONAL IMPACTS OF MON REPOS VISITORS

OVER \$9.5 million estimated regional visitor expenditure  
MORE THAN 91,000 visitor nights  
Based on TRA Visitor Stats Y/E June 2019

## TASTE BUNDABERG FESTIVAL 2019

After three successful years, Winterfeast underwent significant rebranding and restructuring in 2019 to become Taste Bundaberg Festival.

The motivations behind this include challenges and opportunities highlighted in the 2017 Winterfeast Strategic Report, especially branding issues tied to the existing event name; operational challenges facing the Bundaberg Tourism marketing team, particularly the PR value of a late-in -season event; fatigue faced by event organisers following ten days of multiple events; and audience competition due to the peak event season and school holiday timing of the event.

TEQ supported Bundaberg Tourism in the rebranding of the event.

## TASTE BUNDABERG FESTIVAL 2020

Due to COVID-19, the 2020 Taste Bundaberg Festival was cancelled, but work is well underway to deliver the Festival under a new model in 2021.

Leveraging our agricultural heritage, abundant produce grown & iconic brands, the Bundaberg region has an extraordinary opportunity to enhance how we celebrate our culinary attributes. After Taste Bundaberg Festival 2019, event partners and stakeholders reviewed the opportunities of the Festival and a new partnership and format was struck to ensure the future viability and success of the event.

Returning to a ten-day festival format and delivered in June, Bundaberg Regional Council will curate the festival program, shaping the experiences to align exactly with the brand proposition, and also develop and execute the marquee events.

Bundaberg Tourism continues to conduct the

marketing and ticket sales of the event as part of our destination marketing and visitor attraction strategies.

The operational aspects of many of the individual events will be undertaken by Event Partners who apply to be a part of the official program.

This shift in scheduling and delivery takes into consideration the state's focus on the Queensland food story and competing regional events over winter and will work towards cementing the region on the food festival calendar for Queensland.

## MARKETING COLLATERAL & DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY

### Regional Collateral

Bundaberg Tourism's ongoing regional collateral distribution strategy aims to promote dispersal of visitors within the Bundaberg region. Key activities include ensuring joint SGBR collateral is available to Visitor Information Centres (VICs) across Australia, that Bundaberg collateral is at VICs within a 400km drive radius of the region, a proactive distribution program to regional businesses, and the availability of all of Bundaberg Tourism's collateral for download from bundabergregion.org. Collateral includes:

- Southern Great Barrier Reef Holiday Planner 2019/20
- Bundaberg North Burnett Visitors Guide 2018/19
- Bundaberg Region Visitors Map
- Great Barrier Reef Drive Brochure

### EVENTS

Bundaberg Tourism supports destination events, providing marketing and PR assistance, event mentoring and strategic advice, and other support as required. A Destination Event is one that has been recognised as a major opportunity for the Bundaberg region, attracting out of region visitation and having a significant economic impact on the community.

In 2020, Bundaberg Tourism supported other regional events with marketing assistance, including:

- Childers Festival (July 2019)
- Creative Regions' Blood Gravy (July 2019)
- Oceanfest (August 2019)
- Pop Up Polo (August 2019)
- Heartland Festival (September 2019)
- Milbi Festival (November 2019)
- Auswide Bank Cycle Fest International (February 2020)

## MEDIA

### Visiting Journalist Program

Part of Bundaberg Tourism's PR strategy are media and influencer familiarisations conducted in the Bundaberg Region in partnership with tourism partners and Tourism & Events Queensland. In 2019/20 Bundaberg Tourism hosted 9 media and influencers delivering millions of dollars in media value, with a further 10 cancelled due to COVID-19.

The program included:

- The Australian's Graham Lloyd and Vanessa Hunter\* (August 2019)
- Paging Fun Mums blogger & influencer (November 2019)
- The Australian's Jeremy Bourke\* (December 2019)
- Total Wild (January 2020)
- Escape's Chantay Logan & Narelle Bouveng (January 2020)
- TEQ Influencer Courtney Atkinson and family\* (January 2020)
- Farmer Wants A Wife Germany (February 2020)
- Weekender (March 2020)
- Londoner in Sydney (June 2020)

\* in partnership with Tourism & Events Queensland

COVID-19 directly impacted famils, with a further 9 media famils planned for Taste Bundaberg Festival which were unable to go ahead.

# TASTE BUNDABERG FESTIVAL 2019

## MARKETING & PR RESULTS

**17,400+**  
ATTENDEES

**31**  
EVENTS

**34** EVENT  
PARTNERS

**ADVERTISING**  
**NEWSXTEND**

408,000+ impressions  
16,000+ page views  
across website

**NEWS MAIL**  
2 full page ads  
(April & June)

### PR & MEDIA OUTCOMES

**10 million+**  
total people reached

#### COVERAGE

Courier Mail  
U on Sunday  
Weekend Extra  
Escape (Australia)  
APN Network (Qld & NSW)  
Australian Traveller  
Delicious Magazine  
Indulge Magazine  
Outback Travel Australia  
ABC QLD - Regional Drive  
ABC QLD - Early Morning Country

**FAMILIARISATIONS**  
**INTO REGION**  
Courier Mail  
Escape  
News Corp

**RANDOM ACTS OF**  
**TASTINESS**

**AIRPORT ACTIVATION**

**CBD ACTIVATION**

**BRUCE HIGHWAY**  
**BILLBOARD**

**WEBSITE**  
**30,000+**  
UNIQUE VISITORS

**SOCIAL MEDIA**  
**1,255,000+**  
TOTAL SOCIAL MEDIA REACH



## SOUTHERN GREAT BARRIER REEF PARTNERSHIP

The Southern Great Barrier Reef (SGBR) continues to be a cooperative destination partnership between Bundaberg Tourism and the Regional Tourism organisations in the Gladstone and Capricorn regions, encapsulating the southern gateway of the world heritage listed Great Barrier Reef.

The Southern Great Barrier Reef partnership aims to grow the Bundaberg region's international market visitation, length of stay and expenditure, and our region's reputation as the start of the Great Barrier Reef.

The United Kingdom, Germany, New Zealand and the USA make up our region's top four international source markets, with these being our priority for targeting marketing and in-market representation.

## TRADE MISSIONS

### Queensland on Tour - Europe & UK

The SGBR attended Queensland on Tour UK/Europe 2019, a seven-day trade mission with 26 other Queensland RTOs and operators, engaging with the UK/European tourism industry, including:

- one-on-one training with approximately 80 agents in Pforzheim, Germany;
- one-on-one training with approximately 60 Product Managers and agents in Paris, France;
- one-on-one training and networking events over two days to another 70 Product Managers and agents in Salzburg, Austria;
- one-on-one training to 25 key Product Managers at Australia House in London, UK;
- group presentation to approximately 50 agents in London; and
- group presentation to approximately 50 agents and Product Managers in Manchester

### Trade Mission - New Zealand

In February, SGBR attended a Tourism Trade event in Auckland with TEQ to provide product updates to trade partners in Auckland, including House of Travel, Go Holidays, Flight Centre and Air New Zealand. This was accompanied by attendance at the Flight Centre Expo with TEQ and with colleagues from the Gold and Sunshine Coasts, along with TEQ NZ Manager Mandy Veale. The Southern Great Barrier Reef was the only destination outside of the south east corner and was

received exceptionally well from consumers. **Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE)**

ATE brings together Australian tourism businesses, and tourism wholesalers and retailers from around the world through a combination of scheduled business appointments and networking events. It also provides international travel buyers with the opportunity to experience Australia's tourism offering first-hand through pre and post-event familiarisations.

Around 1,500 Australian seller delegates from approximately 550 companies, 650 key buyer delegates from over 30 countries, and 70 international and Australian media attend this global event, which was scheduled to be held in Melbourne in April 2020 but was cancelled due to COVID-19.



## TRAVEL TRADE FAMILIS

Visits to region are a great opportunity for our industry and trade partners to familiarise themselves with the destination and product, and a fantastic chance for our operators to build relationships with our travel trade partners.

The 19/20 travel trade famil program included:

- TEQ's international directors Kai Osterman - Europe and Leigh Arredondo - North America (November 2019)
- 9 x Trailfinders UK agents and TEQ UK's PR & Communications Manager Naomi Pedlow (November 2019)
- TEQ's Group Executive – Global Marketing Michael Branagh (December 2019)
- TEQ Great Barrier Reef Destination Team (February 2020)
- First Class Holidays UK travel agent (February 2020)

## TRADE ACTIVITY DURING COVID-19

Throughout COVID-19, Bundaberg Tourism has been working actively with our regional and SGBR operators to provide support during a period of great upheaval in the trade space. Activities include working closely with QTIC and other bodies to lobby for clarity in the changing industry, developing industry updates and communications with our trade contacts, and creating opportunities for collaboration within the SGBR region between operators.

## GREAT BARRIER REEF CAMPAIGN

The Great Barrier Reef Campaign continued in 2019/20, following on from its great successes in 2018-19. Focusing on increased visitation to the Great Barrier Reef and adjoining destinations from the lucrative German market, the project is part of a multi-year partnership between TEQ Europe and the seven Regional Tourism Organisations along the Great Barrier Reef.

The campaign educates consumers and trade about the diversity of premier experiences both on the Reef and on the adjoining mainland. It also highlights the ongoing commitments to preserve the Great Barrier Reef. The campaign will drive visitation to the Tropical North Queensland, Townsville, Whitsundays, Mackay, Gladstone, Rockhampton and Bundaberg regions.

Enquiries increased strongly throughout the campaign, before flattened as the bushfire situation continued to be omnipresent in the media and finally collapsing when CoViD-19 hit.

Nevertheless, the travel partners in-market worked closely with customers to re-book with the support of the Queensland Industry on flexible cancellation regulations. This was particularly successful amongst the specialists which maintain a great trust level with their clients. The markets have proven to be resilient very quickly. The desire to travel remained unbroken almost through the lock-down and ongoing crisis.

Key activities in 2019/20 included:

### OOH Campaign with Cathay Pacific + Explorer Fernreisen

- Billboards in Frankfurt, Munich + Stuttgart (November - December 2019)
- Explorer POS Activities, Social Media & Landing page (November 2019 - January 2020)

### Online Campaign with Boomerang Reisen

- Banner Advertising with CTA linking through to dedicated Boomerang Landing page (December 2019 - March 2020)
- OOH Bus Advertising Düsseldorf (January - February 2020)
- POS + Trade/Consumer Activities + Social Media: (November 2019 - March 2020)
- Consumer Newsletter (February 2020)

### Editorial in Dive Magazine Unterwasser with Travel Essence (January 2020)

### Trade Training Roadshow with TUI (December 2019)

### Integrated Marketing Campaign with Tour Pacific (Spring 2020)

- EDM
- Social Media
- Google ads

### Inspiration Campaign Banner

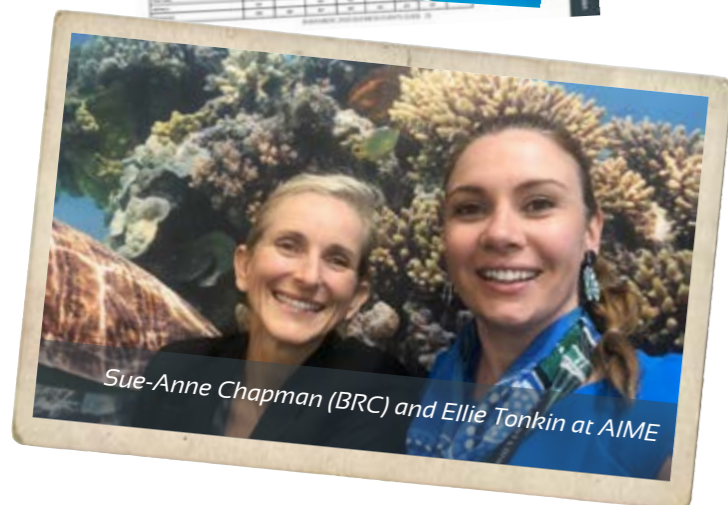
- Advertising linking through to dedicated German Blog (April - July 2020)



# Product and Experience Development

## CAPABILITY BUILDING PROGRAMS

- 18 participants in a 12-week Digital Marketing Program, delivered by Tourism Tribe with thanks to tourism network funding from both state and local government.
- 17 participants in a 6-month Resilient Leadership Program, delivered by Tourism Institute of Australia, with thanks to CQ Bushfire relief funding from the Queensland government.
- Project Asia phase 2 – workshop + series of podcasts for further developing the cultural capabilities of Bundaberg region tourism industry and business community.
- Crisis Ready Workshop, delivered by Earthcheck and QTIC
- Over 30 participants in Business Capability Programs in partnership with QTIC and the Queensland Government. The programs support the tourism industry by building digital capability empowering them to deliver a consistently high standard of visitor experience. This second year of the program built upon the gains from year one, focusing on digital and trade capabilities, with one on one mentoring and workshops.



## DEVELOPMENT

Bundaberg Tourism supported BRC's presence at the 2020 Asia-Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME) in Melbourne (preCOVID). At the event, we met with 24 event managers and professional conference organisers from around the world in pre-scheduled appointments, and participated in networking functions with buyers each evening.

To build on the opportunities presented by this event, Bundaberg Tourism produced the region's first Business Events Guide which can be [found online here](#).

## ADVOCACY

The parliamentary inquiry into the redevelopment of the Mon Repos Turtle Centre held a public hearing in Bundaberg, and our CEO presented on behalf of the tourism industry.

The submission to the inquiry focused on the other important elements in delivering a world-class visitor experience, including the need for car parking, a cafe/dining experience and collaborative partnerships for long-term sustainable management of the Centre - to drive social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits for the region.

Our advocacy along with the efforts of BRC has contributed to additional investment being committed for car parking at the Centre and we continue to work with the Queensland Government and local stakeholders to ensure success of the Mon Repos Turtle Centre as a significant hero experience for the region.

# Visitor Information Centres

The 2019/2020 has been an extremely challenging time for our visitor services, as we navigated through our response to COVID 19 restrictions and implementation of safe operational practices whilst delivering exceptional visitor services. We have seen a reduction of 52.5% of visitation numbers in comparison to last financial year, due to our centre closures, and border restrictions both domestically and internationally.

We welcomed 32,051 visitors through our three centres, with a breakdown of 26,999 domestic travellers and 5,052 international travellers.

We offered 6 FAMIL excursions to our staff, Ambassadors and Industry throughout 2019/ 2020 including Woodgate Beach, Bargara Beach, North Bundaberg, and a private tour of the Mon Repos centre prior to its grand opening.

Our Ambassadors play an integral role in our visitor services, and although we made the challenging decision to pause their support during 2019/ 2020 due to COVID 19 restrictions they supported the tourism industry with over 4,869 hours of service.

Through support from the Bundaberg Regional Council, our Childers Visitor Information Centre was given a refurbishment enhancing the consumer experience and showcasing our region.

With an invigorated focus on showcasing local products and produce, our 3 retail spaces support over 30 locally operated businesses.

## VOLUNTEER AMBASSADORS FOR 2019/20

### Bundaberg VIC

- |                       |                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Connie Battley        | Peter Mulachy   |
| Brett Burgess         | Angus Watson    |
| Evelyn Bury           | Cheryl Cooper   |
| David Corfield        | Michael Geaney  |
| Janet Hermann         | Norma Jensen    |
| Paula Lavender        | Judith Mason    |
| Ngairie McRae         | Judy O'Donoghue |
| Sheona Webster-Gorrie | Maree West      |

### Childers VIC

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| Athol Rankin   | Barbara Grimes |
| Sandii Bennett |                |

### Gin Gin VIC

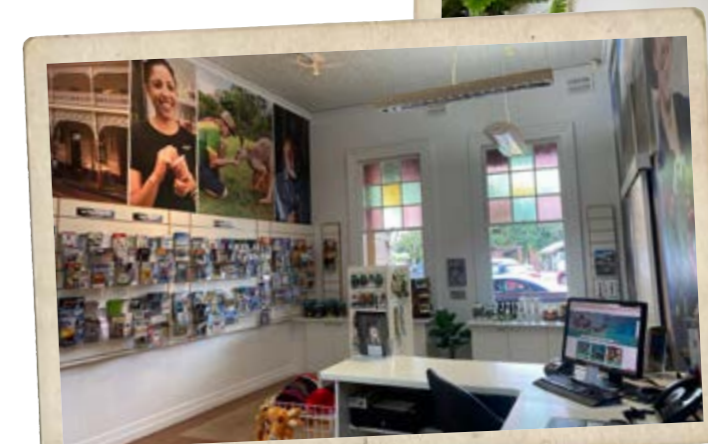
- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| Cassie Davies  | Scott McCarthy |
| Marie Robinson | Karen Lawson   |



Woodgate Beach famil



Childers Visitor Information Centre fit out



Welcoming back our volunteers

# COVID-19 Response

In response to the global pandemic of COVID-19, and the national lockdowns from March 2020 affecting businesses right across the nation, Bundaberg Tourism commenced crisis management activities to support the tourism industry and wider community to navigate the uncertain and emotional times.

Intensive industry support delivered by the organisation included:

- information interpretation through the Industry Support and Safe Planning pages
- dispersal of key information through BT's corporate Facebook and EDMs
- business counselling
- industry advocacy
- business impact tracking through online survey and one-on-one check ins with operators
- emotional and social connection through the weekly Friday Virtual Happy Hours
- training opportunities through Tourism Tribe (see Product & Experience Development on page 16)
- marketing resources including regional Zoom backgrounds and the Simple Guide To Marketing During Coronavirus
- major new marketing initiatives

## CRISIS MARKETING

### The Take It Away Project

In response to the Federal Government requirement for all restaurants and cafes to only offer takeaway food, Bundaberg Tourism established one dedicated central place for all local cafes, restaurants and other food producers to offer takeaway food, drinks and other produce during the Coronavirus restrictions.

The community was able to access the best of the region's cafes, restaurants and foodie goodness at home, supporting small businesses during this time of great change and hardship. Listing on the webpage was free of charge and open to any relevant operator in the Bundaberg and North Burnett local councils areas, regardless of whether they were a Bundaberg Tourism member or not.

The pages saw over 7,500 pageviews by end of June 2020, and listed 67 local businesses. Social media marketing ensured the page reached over 80,000 people in this period.

### Content Marketing

Bundaberg Tourism posted regular digital content through our social media channels to keep awareness of the region high amongst consumers during lockdown, a time of increased social media usage and dreaming.

With a key focus on resilience, the content shared good news and fun things that are coming out of the region to inspire future travel.

### PR

Bundaberg Tourism worked constantly with our media and industry partners to continue to distribute positive news and pitch to journalists throughout lockdowns, resulting in national and international distribution of destination and operator content through multiple media outlets.

### Holiday At Home Campaign

As restrictions on businesses lifted across the nation and with sentiment for domestic travel high, Bundaberg Tourism called on locals to take a holiday in their own backyard from May 2020, encouraging them to share that "my backyard is my bucketlist".



The campaign aimed to encourage residents to explore their backyard like 1.7 million tourists did in 2019; to inspire home-town pride & sense of identity through local economic activation; and to positively influence purchasing decisions to encourage economic recovery.

The campaign leveraged social media, PR, content and digital marketing to target residents and their visiting friends and relatives

### Put Our Backyard On Your Bucketlist

Extending the Holiday at Home campaign, from June 2020 Bundaberg Tourism targeted our key 400km drive market to inspire High Value Travellers to take a holiday in the Bundaberg region - Queenslanders supporting Queenslanders.

The campaign used social media, PR, content and digital marketing to emphasis our unique selling points – the southern-most access point to the Great Barrier Reef, the home to iconic brands, our culinary attributes, our beautiful natural environments and our welcoming locals.

### Good To Go

TEQ's Good to Go campaign aims to inspire visitors to explore the very best of their own backyard and reconnect with friends and family as travel restrictions eased.

A core message of the campaign is built on the premise that Queensland's tourism industry is open, ready to welcome visitors and is following COVID Safe practices.

Bundaberg Tourism worked closely with TEQ to leverage the campaign and take advantage of many opportunities offered to the region as part of this activity. This included a print package comprising advertising and advertorial in the Courier Mail and content in the Big Book, distributed across Queensland and interstate. Activity continues to occur in 2020/21.

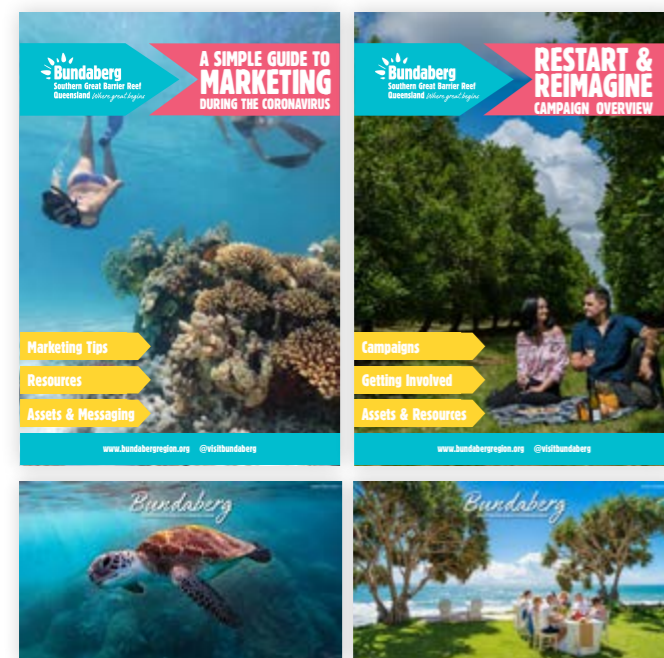
### 2020/21 COVID-19 Support Package

Thanks to Bundaberg Regional Council's ongoing support of Bundaberg Tourism, further COVID-19 support for the region's tourism and hospitality businesses left reeling from the COVID-19 lockdowns and travel restrictions was announced in June 20

A relief package of no-cost membership for Bundaberg and North Burnett businesses for the 2020/21 financial year was created.

- All 2019/20 financial members (as of 1 April 2020) had their membership term extended to 30 June 2021 at no cost;
- New members who operate a business within the Bundaberg and North Burnett Local Government Areas (LGA) are eligible for a special New Membership package, with membership fees waived until 1 July 2021; and
- New members who operate a business outside the Bundaberg and North Burnett LGA boundaries will be eligible for membership at the 2019/20 rates.

Additionally all co-operative investments in marketing campaigns was waived until the end of August 2020, as the industry worked hard to drive visitors back into the region and through the doors of businesses, tours, attractions and accommodation houses in the safest way possible and for economic recovery.





# Bundaberg

Southern Great Barrier Reef  
Queensland *Where great begins*

## DESTINATION INFORMATION

[www.bundabedrgregion.org](http://www.bundabedrgregion.org)

   @visitbundaberg

#visitbundaberg - #southerngreatbarrierreef - #tastebundaberg

## CORPORATE INFORMATION

[www.bundabedrgregion.org/corporate](http://www.bundabedrgregion.org/corporate)

 @bundabergtourism

