

Clarence Valley Council

THE CLARENCE - RIVER WAY MASTER PLAN II

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Clarence Riverway Master Plan is an integrated market driven tourism destination initiative. Originally developed by CLOUSTON Associates in 2009, the master plan sought to position the Clarence River as one of the nation's great river experiences.

The Master Plan was not conceived as one single thing, but the combination of many interrelated actions spread over a large geographical area and time frame.

Since the original Master Plan was adopted in 2009, it has been used to generate funding and guide strategic development initiatives along the Clarence River and in its towns and villages.

Many of the actions of the original Master Plan have been implemented, in particular those focused around the lower reaches of the river and associated towns and villages.

Ten years on, Clarence Valley Council and CLOUSTON Associates are reviewing, evaluating and updating the Clarence River Way Master Plan II to ensure it remains a relevant reference document and strategic action plan.

This new Clarence - River Way Master Plan II reviews the social and environmental factors that have changed in the last 10 years, both in the physical environment and for the people who live, work and visit the Clarence region. There is an acknowledgement of the initiatives that have been implemented and to what degree.

The project has been underpinned by ongoing community, council and industry consultation. Focus groups were conducted with various Council, industry and community stakeholders and government agencies. Face to face meetings have been held with tourism operators whilst surveying the hinterland and townships along the Clarence River.

The Grafton Ngerrie Land Council and Yaegl Traditional Owners have been engaged for comment.

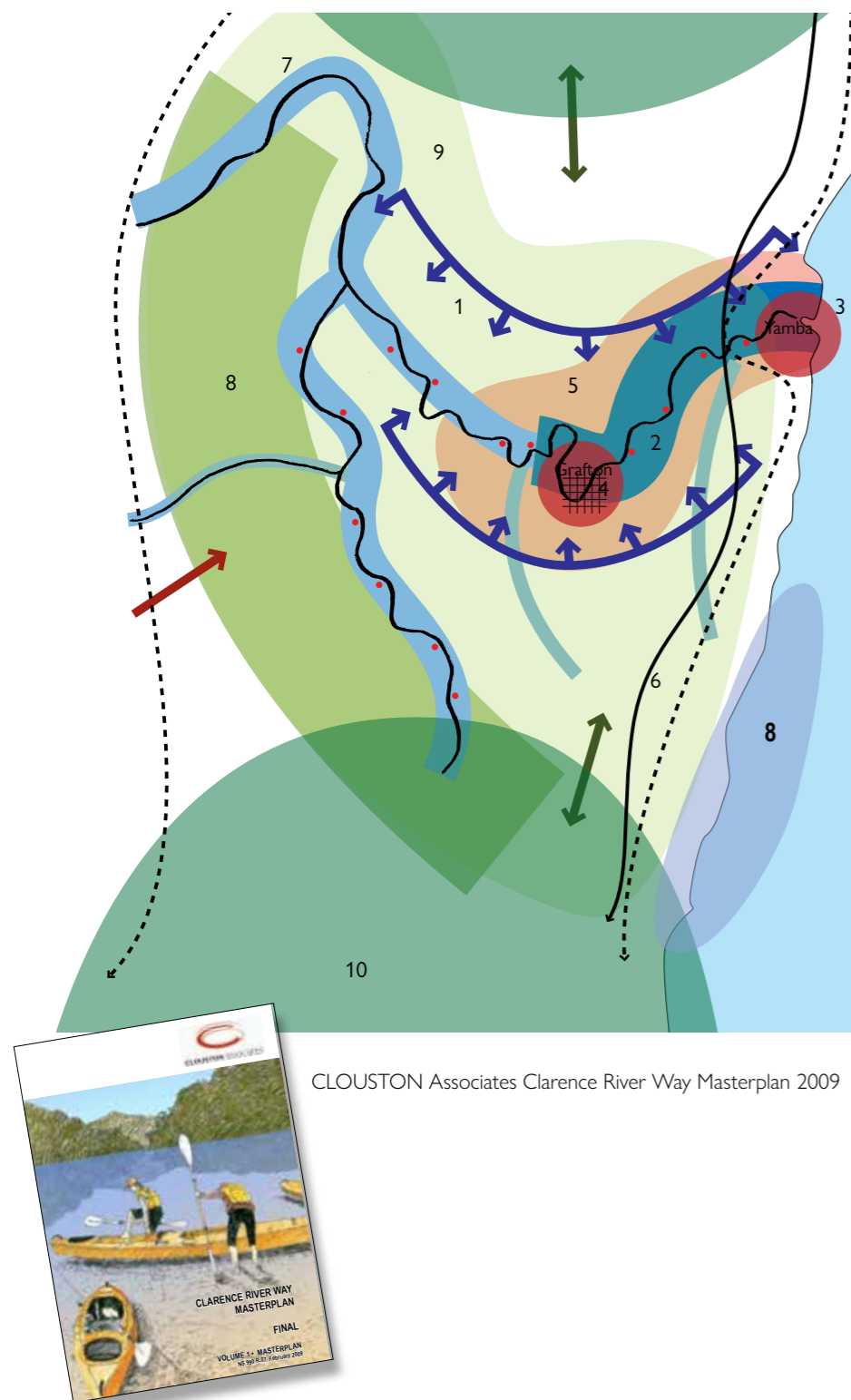
In addition to the current consultation for The Clarence – River Way Master Plan II, significant community consultation and liaison has occurred throughout the past ten years of implementing initiatives throughout the catchment.

The Clarence - River Way Master Plan II provides an up-to-date strategic action plan to guide tourism policy and investment in the region. The project scope is the boundaries of the Clarence Valley Council, as well as important linkages and viewpoints in the surrounding areas.



STRATEGIC INTENT AND THEMES 2009

The Clarence Riverway Masterplan 2009 strategic intent summarised 10 key actions to guide the economic development of the Clarence Region.



CLOUSTON Associates Clarence River Way Masterplan 2009

1. **Refocus upon the Clarence River for destination development.**
Establish the Clarence River as the primary driver of destination development.
2. **Develop the township hubs along the lower reaches.**
Build upon the strong assets between Grafton and Yamba and develop a series of tourist hubs supporting land and river based activity.
3. **Promote Yamba as the gateway port to the Clarence.**
Promote Yamba as a port. Capitalise upon existing tourism potential, infrastructure and market awareness.
4. **Reposition Grafton as a "River City" Tourist destination.**
Reposition Grafton as a tourist hub around the concept of a 'River City.'
5. **Develop a Clarence River Way touring region.**
Simplify touring routes down to a single "touring region" focused around the core tourism hubs, delivering on The Clarence themes.
6. **Capitalise upon visitors using the Pacific Highway Touring Route.**
Capitalise upon the Pacific Highway Touring Route and develop east west connections and partnerships.
7. **Develop the upper reaches of the Clarence.**
Develop the upper reaches through the provision of greater visitor access and infrastructure.
8. **Develop opportunities in the Wilderness Arc.**
Develop opportunities in the Wilderness Arc surrounding the Valley that value add to the Clarence River Way.
9. **Create linkages from the hinterland to the Clarence.**
Create linkages between the river and core industry sectors, facilitating access and infrastructure investment in key nodes.
10. **Promotion and regional linkages.**
Promote the Clarence River Way and build upon regional links with the Green Cauldron, Rainforest Way and Waterfall Way.

The Clarence Riverway Masterplan 2009 themes are based on the character and history of the region:

A Continuous Culture

Spanning from the Dreamtime to today's realities of rapid social change and development, the story of the Aboriginal people of the Clarence tells of a proud and resilient community. Their culture and understanding of country continue unbroken, revealed through their sites, tales and art.

A Productive Landscape

All along the river, across the flood plain, around lakes and into the foothills, the landscape produces crops, supports grazing, fishing, mining and logging. This story has a rich human dimension. It is a theme full of character and conflicts and demonstrates the continuing challenge to maintain environmental balance.

Life from the River

As the centre piece of the region's ecology the Clarence River is inextricably linked to every facet of the catchments natural environment, and beyond. The story of the varied landscapes, habitats and native animals, as well as critical relationships with introduced species and the modified environment, extends out in waves from the river to the Community and returns back.

A Creative Community

Responding to the practical needs of early settlers to equip and entertain themselves or record their experiences, through to the artistic expression of today's diverse multicultural community, shows the people of the Clarence to be creative and constructive.

A History of Play

In a landscape full of physical challenge and natural opportunity for fun, there has been a strong tradition of sport and games in all the communities that have lived or worked across the catchment. Many conventional sports and events continue, now with the added significance of heritage. Other contemporary recreation additions, some expensively equipped, some relying on personal endurance, bring new appreciation of the catchment and coast's potential.

COMPONENTS

The Clarence River Way Masterplan 2009 objectives were framed under five visitor related considerations:

A. Clarence River identity



- Establish the Clarence River and its catchment as a distinctive place on the Northern coast of NSW and Australia
- Increase market awareness of the Clarence River

B. Attractions and destination development



- Establish the river as the foundation asset in the Clarence Valley
- Build upon the whole catchment including mountains, hinterland and coast
- Cultural tourism that links to the river and reflects a sense of place
- Build upon Aboriginal cultural tourism
- Establish Grafton, Maclean, Ulmarra, Yamba/Iluka as river towns that are the key tourism service hubs for the Clarence River Way.

C. Getting around



- Improve regional access to the Valley
- Improve physical access and visual linkages to the river and understanding of the river
- Improve Clarence Valley "movements"

D. The quality of experience



- Improve the presentation of the destination (including physical presentation, service standards, through training)
- Manage development 'in keeping' with current qualities/target market expectations
- Extend and develop the range of accommodation, food/ beverage, and entertainment
- Integrate interpretation and storytelling into tourism products

E. Management, administration & linkages



- Foster community and regional industry engagement, information, understanding and appreciation of the Clarence River values
- Provide a co-ordinated and integrated approach to planning and management of the river
- Foster and encourage private and public sector investment



WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

From 2009-2021, the Clarence River Way has secured over \$15.3 million in grant funding with a matching contribution from council of \$1.9 million.[1]

Key achievements to date include:

A. Clarence River identity



- Consistent branding identity with “My Clarence Valley ”
- My Clarence Valley itineraries, website, social media, brochures such as 52 Discoveries
- New billboards
- Canoe and kayak trail maps, promotion and brochures,
- Cruising and Sailing Guide
- Tourism hubs established to disperse information
- Aboriginal signage (towns) project

B. Attractions and destination development



- Maclean foreshore parklands, Ulmarra and Harwood Riverside Precinct Plans, Grafton riverfront upgrades underway, Yamba and Grafton streetscape upgrades
- Grafton Regional Art Gallery upgraded with co-located Visitor Information Centre
- Promotion of Grafton Jacaranda season, the Yaegl Tourist Drive, Tourism industry development and marketing strategy
- Tourism & Hospitality, Hinterland, Marine & Manufacturing clusters
- Producers markets, Gate to Plate events, Art in the Paddock event
- Recreation boating plan, waterski resort, expanded houseboat business

C. Getting around



- New marine infrastructure including wharves, jetties, pontoons and boat ramps at Harwood, Ulmarra, Woombah, Lawrence, Maclean, Yamba, Illuka and Cowper
- New accessible access path and lookout to Yuraygir at Angourie
- New signage as part of Pacific Highway upgrades
- The Yuraygir Walking Trail Card and brochure
- Mountain biking trails in Yuraygir and Ramornie

D. The quality of experience



- River based activities including Bridge to Bridge, Clarence 100, wake boarding, bass fishing events, fishing tours, NSW Rowing championships, kayak tours (hinterland and coast), primitive kayak camping, jazz ferry
- Coastal activities including Surfing NSW, longboarders and wave skiers competitions
- Waterbased business investment - paddle boards, BBQ boats
- Yamba Farmers and Producers Markets and Grafton Twilight Markets
- Upgraded Grafton Regional Gallery and arts trails
- Jacaranda Festival review and restructure

E. Management, administration & linkages



- Clarence River Way interagency instigated
- Investment package prospectus developed
- Pacific Highway bypass and upgrades completed
- Reduced traffic on local roads in Ulmarra, Maclean, Harwood.
- New Grafton Bridge
- New Harwood Bridge allows headroom for boating traffic



What has
changed since 2009

WHAT HAS CHANGED SINCE 2009

A range of social and environmental factors have changed since the development of the original Clarence Riverway Masterplan in 2009 including:

Greater engagement with Traditional Owners



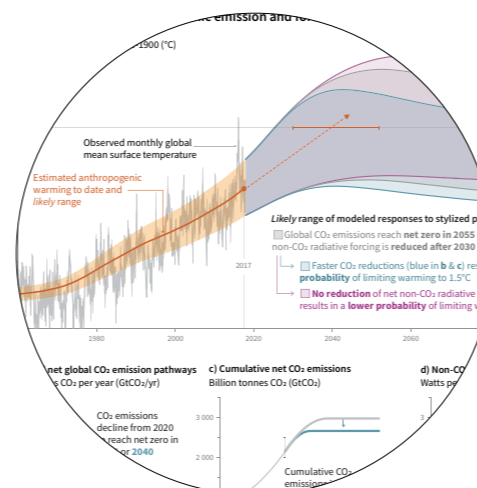
- Genuine desire to make the value of Aboriginal culture of the Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr and Yaegl people more visible.
- Yaegl people now have confirmed native title from Clarence River to the seaward extent of Yaegl country
- Growing understanding of how the river permeates Aboriginal culture, explaining how the landscape was created and how it must be treated. [2]
- Acknowledgement that many transport routes follow traditional Aboriginal song lines, trade routes and ceremonial paths in Country
- Aboriginal Cultural Officer and CDO at Clarence Valley Council

New infrastructure, access and bridges



- The completion of the Woolgoolga to Ballina section of the Pacific Highway upgrade provides the final link to the Queensland border [3]
- This makes small towns like Ulmarra more pedestrian friendly
- The upgrade facilitates day and weekend trips from South East Queensland
- The new Grafton bridge has provided additional capacity across the Clarence River
- The new Harwood Bridge maintains yacht access under the bridge up the Clarence
- Construction of the Clarence Correctional Centre provides employment for 600 people and supports regional businesses and services.

Climate change impacts and targets



- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [4] highlights the need to be net zero carbon by 2050
- The Climate Council [5] points to low carbon economy opportunities and a 75% net reduction in emissions by 2030
- Council has adopted a position for 40% reduction in net emissions by 2030, meeting net zero by 2050
- Council has a 50% renewable energy target by 2030, and 100% target by 2050
- Sea levels predicted to rise by 900mm by 2100, [6] impacting riverside communities and lowland farmlands from water table rises and salt incursion. Long term SLR impacts are 1.7-5m by 2300 [7]

Tourism models changes



- The region has a collective brand in 'My Clarence Valley' [8]
- There is a rise in role of social media for tourism information
- The impact of the traditional Visitor Information Centre has declined in favour of mobile and virtual technology
- There's a shift in tourism accommodation channels to online holiday letting and online campsite providers
- Destination NSW and Destination North Coast established to drive regional tourism

Global pandemic impacts

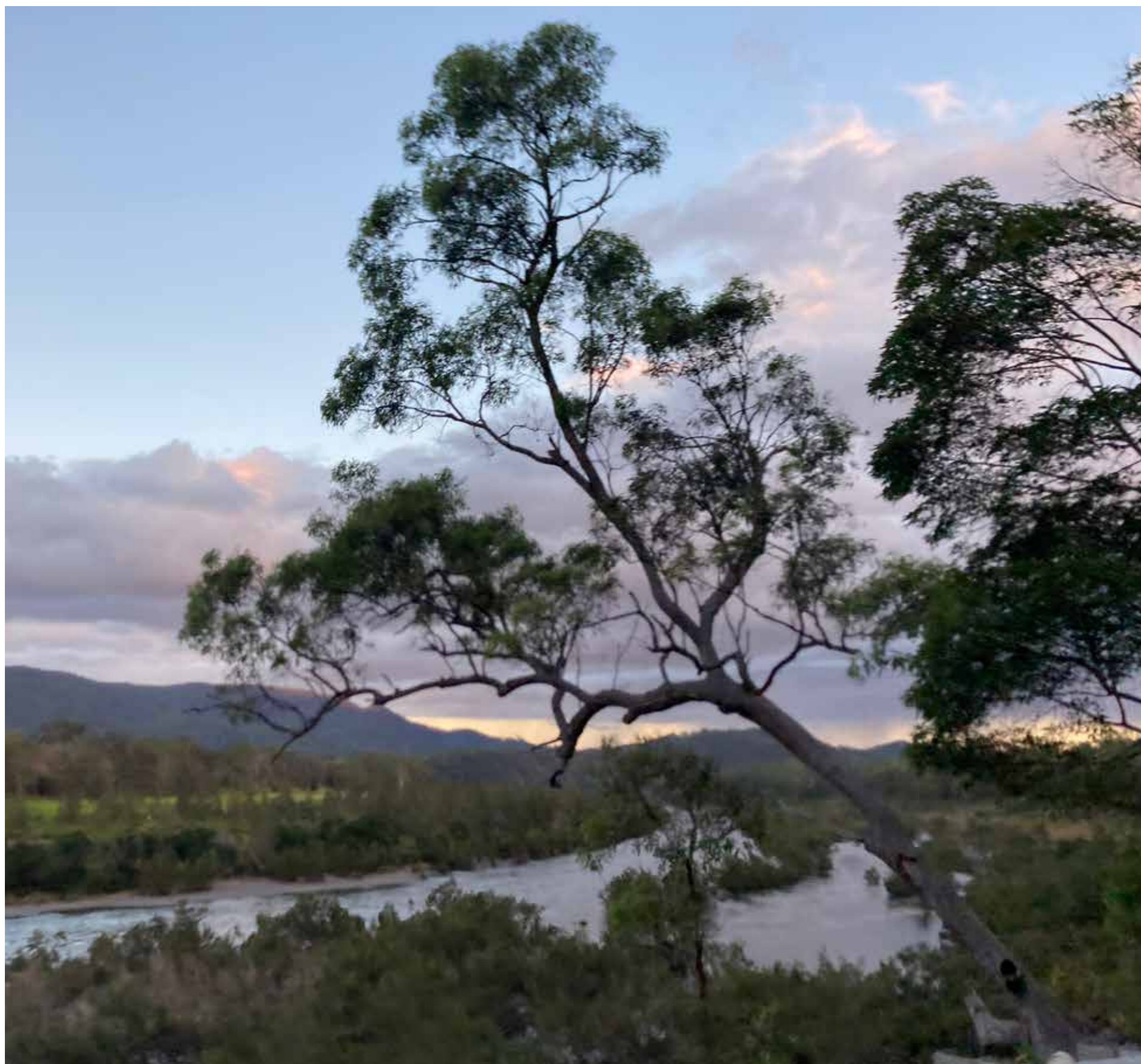


- The social and community impacts of COVID-19 have changed circumstances and perspectives of the Clarence community
- Closed borders has seen a change in migration patterns, with more internal migration and population growth
- The rise in domestic tourism has been in northern NSW's favour, with destinations such as Yamba seeing an increase in popularity
- There is now a wider acceptance of the use of technology
- The value of public open spaces and local recreational resources has increased



The Clarence River Way Master Plan II

VISION



There is a river in the north, a river with a familiar past but with qualities which promise a rich, sustainable future without equal.

It streams free and wild off the range, gathering direction through the foothills to flow wide and deep across the valley's fertile plain. A majestic river, silently guarding the refuge of a hundred islands and flooded wetlands, before surging to life over the bar as it rushes to join the swell of the ocean, to curl around headlands or pound beaches along an unhurried coast.

The waters of the Clarence bind together the life and landscape of its catchment, entire and uncompromised. Long a working waterway serving its productive hinterland, its value to both people and nature ensure that it will thrive as an environment of rare balance – valley and towns where new enterprise, produce, recreation, and scenic beauty respect place and reinforce heritage.

Still an unbroken source of ancient dreaming, this valley has new vitality as a place for sharing stories, fuelling fresh imagination and attracting creative spirits. And at its heart flows the mighty river, pride of its people and their cherished emblem.

To travel The Clarence is to open up to the many moods of the river, understand its landscape treasures and engage with its diverse cultures and attractions; to journey with the luxury of time and independence as the river brings rewards and pleasure today, as well as keen anticipation of the next visit.

STRUCTURE

The Clarence - River Way Master Plan II is structured in three linked sections that cover the where, how, and when of projects and programs for the next decade.



WHERE

A 10 point plan of strategic intent defines the geographic spread and focus of the master plan actions.

For this Master Plan II version, there is a refocusing from the river and coast to the regions and 'upriver'.



HOW

The Master Plan's specific objectives and strategies 'how to do it' are structured around five visitor oriented questions:

- How do visitors know about you?
- How do they get here and get around?
- What is there to do when they are here?
- What is the quality of their experience?
- How is it all managed?



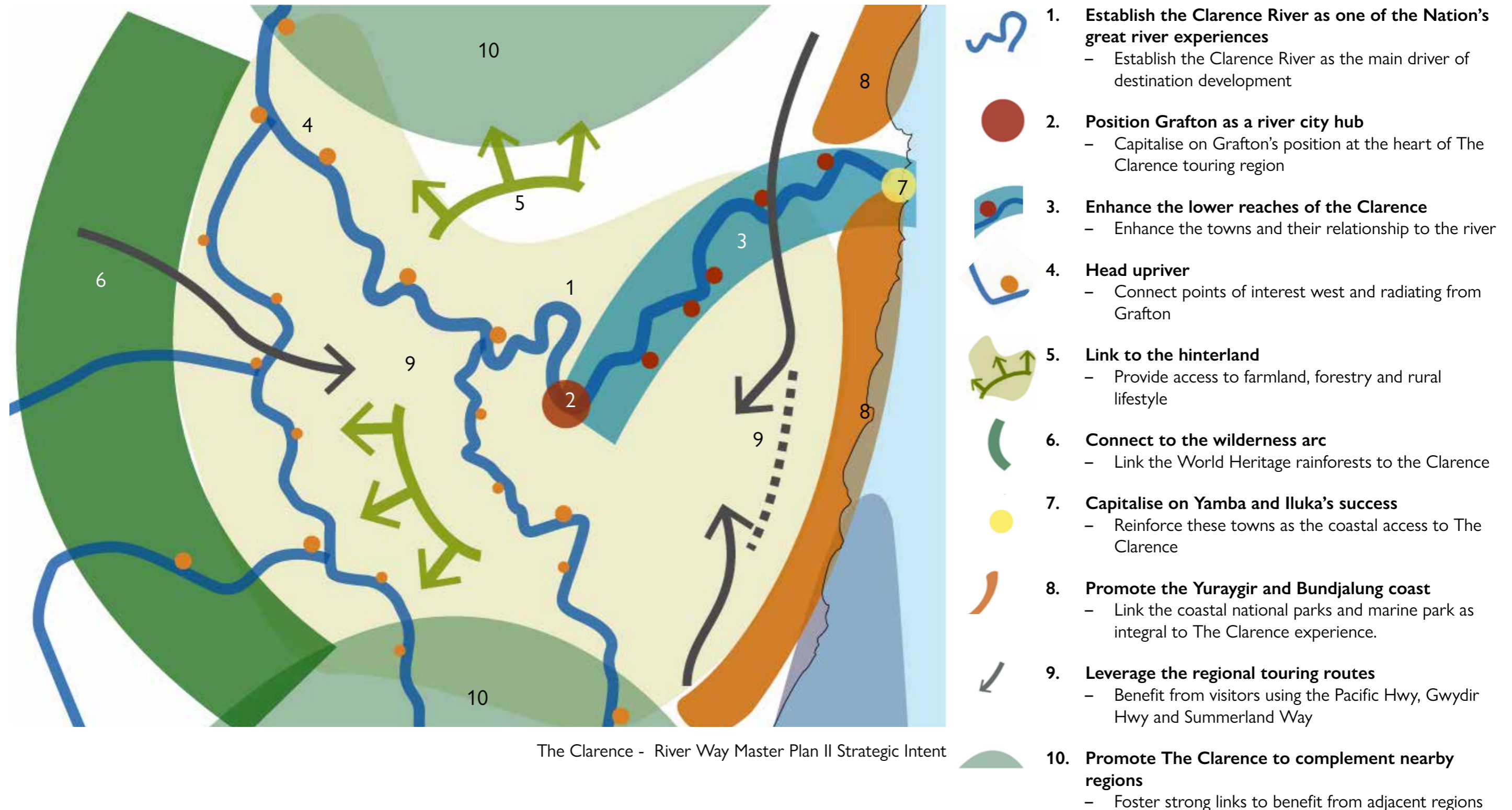
WHEN

To prioritise distribute valuable resources and effort, an action plan and program is recommended based on:

- Planning, management and co-ordination with support for innovation and investment
- Upgrading infrastructure, access and training to ensure visitor options and expectations are met
- Promotion and marketing

STRATEGIC INTENT

The master plan is the combination of many interrelated actions spread over a large geographical area. The top 10 ideas of strategic intent are shown here distributing actions and benefits throughout The Clarence.



The Clarence - River Way Master Plan II Strategic Intent

1. ESTABLISH THE CLARENCE RIVER AS ONE OF THE NATION'S GREAT RIVER EXPERIENCES



The Clarence River is Australia's second largest river after the Murray River. The scale of the Clarence River is unrivalled in the Northern Rivers. It is a highly valuable natural resource and represents a key competitive advantage.

Its value and tourism potential is now being recognised, and development is once again turning to face the river.

It is essential that this valuable resource be protected and managed well – without it, all the other initiatives will have limited relevance and beneficial impact.

A co-ordinated and integrated approach is needed to planning and managing the waterway and its environs. As part of this approach, the community and industry need to be engaged. Public and private sector investment should also be fostered and encouraged.



OPPORTUNITIES

- Re-establish a centralised point of management by through The Clarence inter-agency, for example involving Clarence Valley Council, National Parks and Wildlife, Traditional Owners, Maritime and Fisheries, and Destination North Coast.
- Facilitate a marine industry cluster in the lower reaches of the Clarence to establish the Clarence River as a key boating centre of the east coast.
- Update the Recreational Boating operational plan to guide the strategic and staged implementation of increased river front access.
- Review road reserves and crown land parcels for opportunities to facilitate river access.
- Continue to engage the community in improving understanding and appreciation of the river.
- Ensure development control plans reflect the Clarence community and visitor values
- Encourage private sector investments in riverside infrastructure through the preparation of development of investment packages and prospectuses.
- Continue the community and arts strategy for the river to reinforce the Clarence River Way themes, values and principles.

2. POSITION GRAFTON AS A RIVER CITY



Grafton is the original trading capital of the river, and is strategically placed centrally within the catchment. Virtually all local roads lead to and from Grafton. Clarence Valley Council have adopted a position for Grafton to be reinstated as a Regional City under the NSW planning hierarchy.

Grafton can capitalise on its position as a river city in the heart of the Clarence. With good quality architecture and facilities, Grafton is an ideal starting point for visitor journeys. By positioning Grafton as a tourist hub around the concept of a 'river city', it can become an inland alternative destination to Yamba on the coast.

The upgraded Regional Gallery and newly accredited Visitor Information Centre located in the Gallery help raise Grafton's profile and position in the heart of the Clarence region. Grafton should be seen as a launching pad to encourage tourism dispersal from Grafton's centre further upriver and downstream.

Grafton is earning a name for itself as a Jacaranda city and event town. By becoming a destination town all year round, the ebbs and flows of visitation can be evened out. Grafton could benefit from extended operational hours such as evenings, public holidays, Sundays and during events.

The Clarence River is a year-round asset, and Grafton is only now starting to see the river front address as a tourism attraction.

Like most of the townships and villages in the Clarence, Grafton also has a poor sense of arrival - particularly through South Grafton.

The quality of service delivery and presentation of retail and commercial areas for tourism are also below market expectations, with a lack of high quality restaurants, cafes and accommodation. Accommodation options are in short supply during peak times, are not family friendly and don't entice people to stay.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Continue to reorient Grafton and South Grafton towards the river - currently underway through the Grafton Riverfront Precinct Plan.
- Simplify decision making and create a sense of arrival, gateway statement and enhance first impressions of Grafton from the Pacific Highway.
- Continue investment in the cityscape mainstreet programme for the CBD, primarily with Prince Street for its waterfront linkage and Fitzroy Street for its gateway arrival first impressions.
- Promote the development of a waterfront precinct adjacent the town centre. Focus on the redevelopment and vitalisation of the core river edge from Queen Street to under the Grafton bridge.
- Improve the presentation of retail, commercial and civic areas for tourism.
- Encourage extended trading hours for restaurants and cafes, particularly during events, with temporary outlets in the riverside precinct.
- Facilitate investment in new infrastructure and improve accommodation presentation levels to meet expectations of target markets.
- Through negotiation with private land holders investigate options to provide safe public waterfront access or easements that respects privacy and security.
- Improve public access to the waterfront through existing public open space, emphasising walking and cycling circuits that connect the city parklands.
- Encourage private operators to consider bike hire and kayak hire attractions as a means of exploring the town and its river.



3. ENHANCE THE LOWER REACHES OF THE CLARENCE



The townships of Ulmarra, Maclean, Harwood, Lawrence, Brushgrove and Iluka on the lower reaches of the Clarence are valuable waterfront assets and provide many of the lower reaches attractions. Geographically they create a river corridor linking the two anchor destinations of Yamba and Grafton.

The diversion of the Pacific Highway away from these towns has been a catalyst to reinvigorate these township hubs. Access to and from the river along this stretch is also improving with new boating infrastructure such as pontoons, jetties and boat ramps.

As part of this renewal, there is a need to create a sense of arrival into the townships and villages, and improve the quality of presentation of commercial areas for tourism.

The intent should not be a defined a single Big River Way tour or drive, but create a touring region that identifies the range of attractions for visitors to choose their own itineraries and routes. This is for both banks of the Clarence River and riverine landscape.



OPPORTUNITIES

- Continue to increase water based access as a priority.
- Provide a range of land/water interface access points along the river allied to the main townships and tourist nodes between Yamba and Grafton.
- Develop a network of a river based hubs that integrate land based attractions with river front access.
- Investigate options for additional boat ramps and marine infrastructure for commercial fishing.
- Develop the tourism appeal of the riverside towns by facilitating investment in a range of accommodation, food beverage and entertainment options for key visitor hubs.
- Co-ordinate promotion and interpretation of points of interest in the lower reaches eg local museums, galleries and libraries.
- Continue to develop pedestrian links and access to the water particularly through improvements to publicly owned road reserve lands particularly in townships and villages.
- Promote Tourist Route 22
- Develop a viable cycling route along the Big River Way.
- Invest in signage improvements at key junctions and turn offs.
- Develop a training package for businesses in the Clarence region, addressing experience delivery, interpretation and business presentation.

4. HEAD UPRIVER



There are many 'hidden gems' in the Clarence region west and north of Grafton that offer novel customer experiences for visitors. However they are difficult to find, and many lack any form of interpretation to explain their significance. Much of the area is private land, making it difficult to access or manage for tourism values.

Accommodation, food and beverage options are also scarce upriver, and are not primarily tailored to tourism needs.

The natural settings upriver are intrinsically linked to the heritage of the Aboriginal people, offering a connection for visitors to explore the rich culture of its first peoples.

There is a need to unlock the Clarence's attractions and precincts into a network of positive experiences and sustainable assets.



OPPORTUNITIES

- Link the remote attractions and precincts upriver into a network of experiences for tourists.
- Tell the story through improved interpretation and wayfinding signage for points of interest such as Dalmorton and the historic tunnel cut through solid rock.
- Work with Traditional Owners and Crown Lands to determine how to best to manage assets on restricted or private land.
- Link the visitor experience and understanding to the Aboriginal story.
- Investigate townscape improvements in hinterland townships such as Glenreagh, Copmanhurst and Coutts Crossing.
- Investigate opportunities for protecting, viewing and interpreting the Platypus colony in Nymboida.
- Encourage inward investment from private operators offering food and accommodation options.
- Identify suitable camping areas and determine the best way to manage these sites, including the option of Council-operated sites.
- Package experiences with canoe and kayak attractions.

5. LINK TO THE HINTERLAND



The hinterland of the Clarence valuable for its scenic qualities, where the natural beauty of the broad expanses provide a prime source of appeal for visitors.

The hinterland supports primary industries that add value and character to the Clarence such as sugar cane, macadamias, blueberries, beef and timber. Agriculture and forestry not only provides employment, but contributes to the lifestyle that draws many people to live in the Clarence region.

These industries have the opportunity to contribute to tourism through the agritourism initiatives such as farm stay accommodation, farm gate activities and events.

Likewise, the hinterland can be brought to the towns through farmers markets and local produce being sold in the food and beverage outlets of the Clarence.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Work with industry on sustainability issues that effect the long term health of the river catchment.
- Put the Clarence region on the map as a regional food powerhouse by promoting a Paddock to Plate program and working with local suppliers and producers to improve continuity of supply.
- Tell the sugar cane story through interpretation, and retain cane land under productive agricultural use.
- Continue to support the Yamba Farmers Markets and Grafton Twilight Markets as a showcase of local produce.
- Support farm owners wishing to diversify into agritourism.
- Leverage opportunities to connect to primary producers via specialist marketing advisors such as “Straight to the Source”.
- Make it easier for visitors to discover the food and produce of the Clarence through online platforms such as www.northernriversfood.org/harvest-food-trail



6. CONNECT TO THE WILDERNESS ARC



To the west of the Clarence region on the high country along the Great Dividing Range is an arc of National Parks and World Heritage Rainforest areas, forming the edge of the catchment.

Washpool National Park and Guy Fawkes River National Park are described as peaceful places of steep gorges, clear waters and magnificent tracts of undisturbed ancient rainforest.

There are opportunities to draw visitors from the coast through the Clarence region to wilderness arc. Walks can be supplemented with overnight stays in the various national park campgrounds. National Parks now have pre-booking for their campsites, offering confirmation of places and helping to manage popularity during peak times

OPPORTUNITIES

- Engage with National Parks & Wildlife Services and Traditional Owners for improved accessibility particularly off main highway routes to these areas.
- Promote the Clarence region as a launching pad for day trips to the national parks.
- Develop investment options for commercial development opportunities in National Park areas.
- Develop education and interpretation programs that highlight wild landscape and riverine interdependence and integration.



7. CAPITALISE ON YAMBA'S AND ILUKA'S SUCCESS



The beaches at Yamba and its boating facilities have established it as one of the main tourism centres of the region. Yamba and Iluka - in their different character but complementing locations - should capitalise on the coastal entrance to the Clarence, encouraging tourism dispersal from the coastline to upriver.

Attractions and experiences like the Yamba Farmers and Producers Market is a prime opportunity to promote the wider offering of The Clarence to visitors and reinforce support for local producers.

Capitalising on Yamba's existing tourism popularity, port infrastructure and market awareness can have a halo effect further upstream.

As part of an eastern seaboard regional harbour network, Yamba has the potential to attract regional boating. This needs to be carefully managed to ensure visitor boats and cruises are of an appropriate scale and capacity for the Clarence region.



OPPORTUNITIES

- Promote and develop the port facilities as part of a regional harbour network. Maintain the port as a boutique port.
- Provide opportunities for the mini cruise market and develop the boutique port to facilitate regional and international boats with immigration /customs facilities.
- Expand regional shipbuilding and repair facilities at Yamba by facilitating investment, and promoting the development of a marine industry based cluster.
- Maximise visibility of the water from entry roads and the town centre along the visual corridors formed by road reserves down to the waters edge.
- Improve sense of arrival into town through DCP controls and street tree planting on Yamba Road from Osprey Drive to the CBD.
- Provide continuous pedestrian and cycle waterfront pathways.
- Retain and protect the natural saltmarsh, wetlands and mangroves which form a spectacular natural gateway into Yamba from Palmers Island.
- Build upon the presentation of the shops and business in town for maximum returns from key visitor markets.
- Continue to promote events that raise awareness of and celebrate the port activities and the river network.

8. PROMOTE THE YURAYGIR AND BUNDJALUNG COAST



The Yuraygir Coast is the longest stretch of protected coastline in NSW. On the ocean side is the Solitary Islands Marine Park and islands. The Yuraygir Coastal Walk is on Gymbaynggirr country (in the south) and Yaegl country (in the north). The walk passes along beaches and rock platforms, campgrounds and through the villages of Brooms Head, Minnie Water and Woolli.

Bundjalung National Park north of the Clarence River is a mosaic of river landscapes, beach and freshwater lagoons. Both the Yuraygir and Bundjalung National Parks should be seen as the coastal edge to the wider Clarence region.

As a continuous wild coast and nature reserve, these landscapes complement the high wilderness arc bounding the west catchment. Together they endorse and characterise The Clarence as a whole place of rich, natural diversity, productivity, culture and experience.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Capitalise on the Yuraygir walk and position as a defining quality of the Clarence coast.
- Work to create a continuous connection between the Yuraygir Coastal Walk with Bundjalung National Park.
- Work with Traditional Owners to develop guided tours and walks on country, promoted through platforms such as welcometocountry.com.au.
- Tell the Gymbaynggirr, Bundjalung and Yaegl story through interpretation along popular areas on the coast.
- Work with National Parks and Wildlife Services for the investment in visitor facilities and the promotion and marketing of the Marine Park.
- Cross-promote the tourism activities on the coast with complementary activities further inland eg fishing, kayaking, bushwalking and camping.



9. LEVERAGE THE REGIONAL TOURING ROUTES



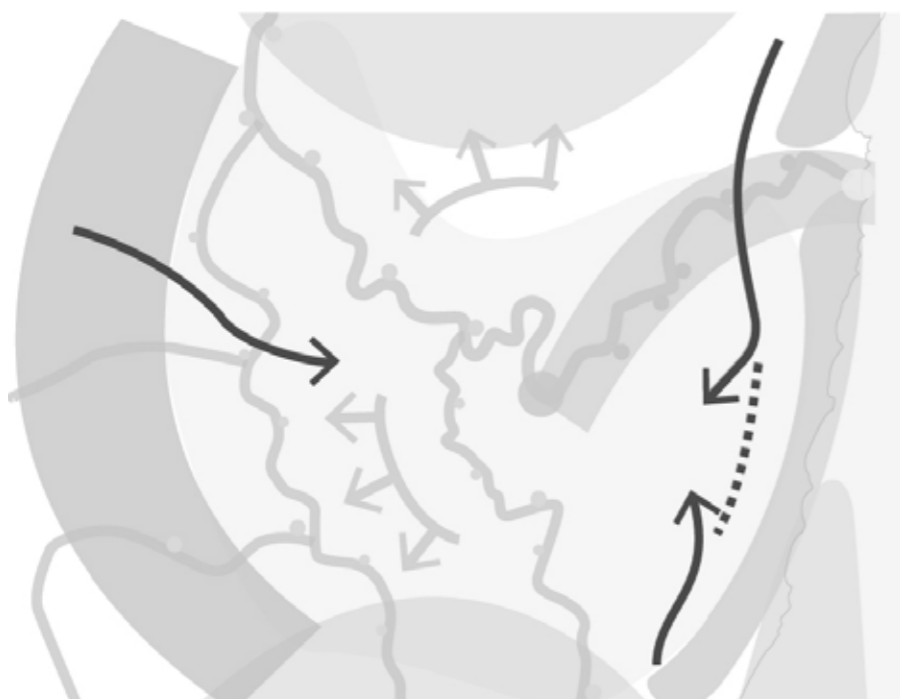
Road travel is the primary way that visitors arrive in the region, and visitors tend to know The Clarence by its relationship to the Pacific Highway (Clarence Valley Economic Recover Strategy 2021). There is therefore a significant opportunity to capture and capitalise on visitors via the Pacific Hwy, Gwydir Hwy and Summerland Way touring routes.

The upgraded and diverted Pacific Highway has increased interstate connectivity between NSW and Qld, and increased local connectivity between.

Importantly, the new bridges at Harwood and Grafton provide access to sailing boats up the Clarence River.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Leverage new and existing road infrastructure to the tourism assets of the Clarence.
- Provide information points about The Clarence at highway rest stops both within and on approaches to the region.
- Ensure highway entry and exit points are well sign posted on feeder routes.
- Promote small tours, local services and points of interest as a linked network, building a touring region.
- Work with Destination NSW and Tourism Australia to develop, link and promote self-drive itineraries.



10. PROMOTE THE CLARENCE REGION TO COMPLEMENT NEARBY REGIONS



The Clarence is well equipped to thrive as a tourist region in competition with and complementing other nearby tourist drawcards. There are opportunities to support and gain leverage from other allied attractions such as the Northern Rivers or Dorrigo/Bellingen/Waterfall Way, extending visitor stays as mutual benefit.

There is an opportunity to promote The Clarence as a diverse playground for the SE Queensland market, particularly given the proximity and reduced travel times via the new Pacific Highway.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Promote the Clarence region with its coastal, riverine and hinterland amenity.
- Continue to support the consistent brand for The Clarence, basing the river at its heart.
- Promote links to adjacent regional assets and activities through Destination North Coast.





A. THE IDENTITY OF “THE CLARENCE”



How is the Clarence region perceived, how do visitors find out about the river, valley, hinterland and coast, and how does it fit within an extremely busy and competitive regional tourism marketplace?

SUMMARY ISSUES

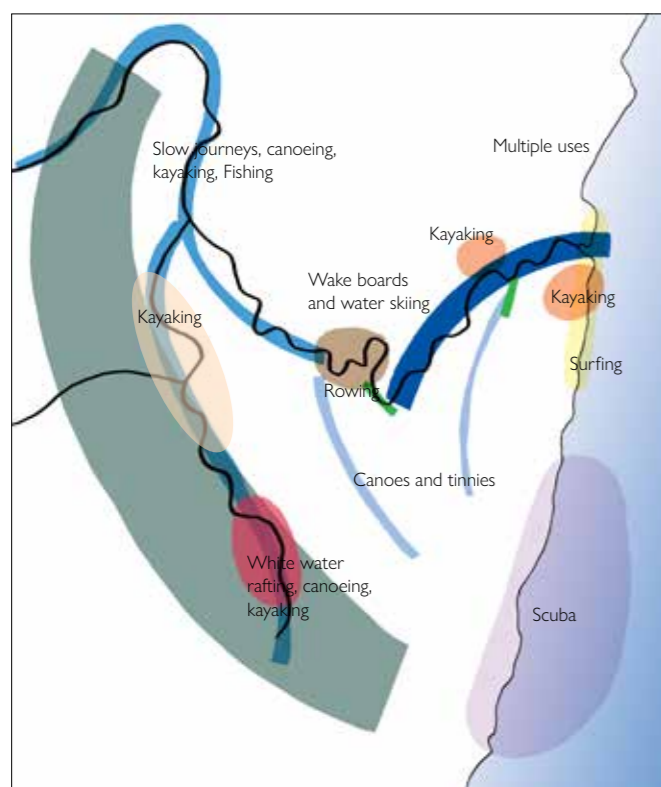
The Clarence River is one of the great waterways of Australia and its scale is unrivalled in the region. It forms the core of the region's identity and provides the opportunity to leverage its appeal to the greater region.

- The “My Clarence Valley” brand has established a clear identity for the region. The co-ordinated suite of marketing material and brochures makes it easy for visitors to choose places to go and things to do in the Clarence region.
- Much has been done to deliver infrastructure to support these opportunities over the last decade, such as pontoons, jetties, and primitive river camping. There is now the opportunity to further build upon these assets, and extend into the regions.
- The Clarence River should be seen and promoted as one of the Nations Great River experiences
- Despite all its qualities, if you search “River holidays Australia” six out of the top 10 searches are for the ‘Mighty Murray River”, some for the Hawkesbury River, and none for the Clarence River. Despite all the opportunity, there are only three houseboats on the River.
- Grafton is a key potential tourism hub located in the heart of the Clarence region, but still has a poor identity as a tourist destination.
- There is a need to improve the wider attractions and precincts of the Clarence region into a network of experiences, dispersing visitors from the key attractions of Yamba and the lower river.
- Changes in the way accommodation is searched and booked means there are promotion opportunities with owners of accommodation promoted through online holiday letting and online campsite providers.

CLARENCE RIVER IDENTITY - OBJECTIVES

- A1 To reinforce the Clarence River and its catchment as a distinctive place on the northern coast of NSW and Australia**
- A2 Build upon and simplify the regions identity to “The Clarence”**

A1. To reinforce the Clarence River and its catchment as a distinctive place on the northern coast of NSW and Australia



A1.1. Promote the Clarence River as one of the nations “Great River Experiences”

Continue to develop and promote all of the key river activities of the Clarence River to make it seen as **the** place for:

- World class white water rafting/ canoeing and still water canoeing / kayaking.
- Competitive rowing.
- Premier waterskiing and wakeboarding.
- River fishing including Bass.
- Riverside activities, dining events and festivals.
- River sailing and cruising.
- House boating.
- Unique river based tours and activities.
- Promote allied activities including surfing and scuba diving.



A1.2 Extend the region’s wider appeal and disperse visitors

- Develop the Clarence attractions to better distribute visitor’s throughout the Clarence.
- Prioritise the geographic development of areas as outlined in the 10 point plan of strategic intent.
- Develop itineraries for attractions similar to that of www.seqfoodtrails.com.au.



A1.3 Encourage packaged local experiences

- Continue networking and linking of like products and complimentary services.
- Develop and expand Clarence tourism and hospitality clusters
- Encourage businesses to promote deals on accommodation recreation and tourism options.
- Work with the wider range of operators in tourism industry, including online accommodation platforms



A1.4 Improve regional cross-selling

- Consider Highway rest stop information booths and maps at critical locations
- Foster regional cross promotion.
- Continue to work with Destination NSW to promote the activities in The Clarence and ensure up to date information is available. For example on the Coast To Country Road trip. <https://www.visitnsw.com/things-to-do/drives-and-road-trips/coast-to-country>.
- Work with Destination NSW and Tourism Australia for cross promotional opportunities.

A2. Simplify and promote the regions identity as “The Clarence”



A2.1 Continue to refine the brand identity for “The Clarence”

- Build upon the single brand established for the “My Clarence Valley” and consider simplifying it to “The Clarence”
- Undertake ongoing brand management for long-term maintenance/brand integrity.
- Continue to build upon marketing campaigns centred around “The Clarence” including, the Jacaranda campaign, My Clarence Valley, Guide to happy camping, Yaraygir Coastal walk etc.
- Continue to update the quality marketing collateral tailored to identified visitor markets and linked to attractions in “The Clarence”.

- Continue to ensure consistent placement at Ballina and Coffs Harbour Airports, local hotels, motels, B&B
- Co-ordinate the naming terminology and branding of “The Clarence” in partnership with Visit NSW.
- Develop a resource and training package for tourism industry operators.

A2.3 Develop “The Clarence” as a domestic/international market ready product.

- Target and work with accommodation owners to provide printed marketing collateral for guests.
- Work with regional and local tourism entities to establish an efficient and coordinated marketing approach
- Leverage off Angourie and Yamba as established destinations with market awareness and growing profile.

A2.4 Coordinate long term planning and destination management for the region.

- Focus planning, development and management effort and resources to build on existing strengths and drive significant competitive improvement, positioning and visitation to the Clarence.
- Facilitate private sector buy in for the region.

B. WHAT TO SEE AND DO - ATTRACTIONS AND DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT



What attracts visitors to the region and what is there to do in the Clarence Valley? There are wide ranging attractions including the rivers, the coast and mountain hinterland. There are also a wealth of cultural assets, regional events calendar, as well as activities and experiences available.

SUMMARY ISSUES

- The region has great natural assets, with 400km of wild natural river supporting a huge variety of birdlife, wilderness and world heritage areas, marine parks and beaches.
- The health of the river is important given its intended role as a key destination driver, so this resource needs to be protected
- There are strong cultural assets in terms of the visual and performing arts, artists, galleries, libraries and museums, recently improved with the extension of the Grafton Regional Gallery.
- There are a large number of events and potentially too many small events, lacking co-ordination, and with some popular events in need of substantial redevelopment.
- There is a strong history of active use of the river, including boating and industry linkages to build upon. There are visible timber derricks remaining on the river and 59 known shipwrecks in the river. [NSW Government Heritage office. 1996. Shipwreck heritage of the Clarence River].
- Strong Aboriginal culture and a desire of Aboriginal people to be part of the way forward.
- While the river should be the key promotional driver, there are also non river related activities and attractions including the National Parks, World heritage areas, historic railway and timber related activity that can contribute to visitor opportunities once on the ground in the Clarence.

Attraction and destination development - objectives

- B1 Establish the river as the foundation asset in the Clarence region.**
- B2 Build upon the whole catchment including mountains, hinterland and coast.**
- B3 Promote cultural tourism that links to the river and reflects a sense of place.**
- B4 Build upon Aboriginal cultural tourism.**
- B5 Reinforce the river towns that are the key tourism and service hubs for “The Clarence”**

B1 Establish the river as the foundation asset in the Clarence.



B1.1 Protect the resource.

- Protect the resource and the health of the river and fish habitat by adopting an holistic approach to the river management and its competing uses through integrated catchment management.
- Build upon existing river management, estuary management and riverbank management plans
- Refer also to actions listed in objective E2.



B1.2 Identify river related investment opportunities.

- Determine feasibility of
 - River based hotel/pub tours like Grafton Ulmarra, Maclean, Brushgrove, Harwood, Lawrence, Yamba and return.
 - Mixed use commercial opportunities such as restaurants / bars/ cafes/ retail.
 - Riverside accommodation such as farm stays and camping/glamping
 - Water based transport options including river taxi, river ferry and, float plane services
- River cruise and/or paddle steamer tours (possible restored or replica industrial heritage boat).
- Emission friendly transport hire such as bikes, ebikes and scooters.
- Specialist cruise boats.
- Historic timber boats / boat building facilities.
- Boat hire options including kayaks and house boats.
- Equestrian trails.
- Re-establishing the white water course in Nymbodia.



B1.3 Encourage river use and appreciation.

- Develop resident awareness, ownership and stewardship through community river festival and arts projects.
- Encourage water based activities from boating through to fishing and link to a healthy lifestyle, recreational and relocation programmes.
- Promote interpretive opportunities that tell the stories of the river through the proposed themes.

B2 Build upon the whole catchment including mountains, hinterland and coast



B2.1 Improve access to remote areas.

- Identify “must see and do natural attractions” particularly in the upper catchment, that have market appeal and act as a draw card into upper catchment.
- Develop opportunities to extend the existing range of walks within National Parks and Reserves. Provide opportunities that cater for short walks, day walks and overnight walks.
- Promote provision of accessible short walks that have wider appeal than specialised long treks.
- Work with NPWS to improve access to existing parkland that is presently limited or has locked access.
- Improve visitor facilities including picnic tables, toilets, lookouts, boardwalks, signage and interpretation in key National Parks and regionally significant sites.
- Improve visitor information systems and monitoring.
- Facilitate the development of commercial nature based tourism operations within National Parks. Operations should be low impact, low scale and not rely on extensive infrastructure assets to operate.
- Develop a series of ‘iconic’ mountain bike tracks linked to visitor infrastructure hubs and accommodation.
- Encourage assessment of establishing low impact, low key, high yielding, commercially run nature based tours in World Heritage and National Park areas. Such facilities might be akin to the Bay of Fires Lodge in Tasmania, which is accessible by walking only.
- Develop and promote the bird watching potential of the Clarence.
- Promote the recreational fishing potential of the River and upper reaches. See also item B 1.1
- Promote the “wilderness arc” surrounding the valley through awareness and greater access.
- Investigate the options for viewing and interpreting the Platypus population on the upper reaches of the river.
- Provide additional riverside access facilities for the upper reaches as outlined in C2. Promote the region as the premier still water and white water rafting, canoeing and kayaking destination in Australia.

B2 Build upon the whole catchment including mountains, hinterland and coast



B2.2 Improve understanding of the mountain, hinterland and coastal relationship to the river.

- Link the river through experiences and stories using the themes for interpretation and information. For example timber from the hinterland played an important part in the rivers development from ship building to wharfs.



B 2.3 Promote the Yuraygir and Bundjalung Coast

- Ensure the Yuraygir and Bundjalung National Parks are seen as the coastal edge to the wider Clarence region.
- Work to create a continuous connection between the Yuraygir Coastal Walk with Bundjalung National Park.

B3 Promote cultural tourism that links to the river and reflects a sense of place



B3.1 Develop an events action plan

- Develop and promote a festival that celebrates and focuses upon the Clarence and its waterway network.
- Reviews major events and the yearly calendar to streamline and maximise the regional value and leverage provided by events.
- Include a river based activity on the programme for events to provide a link to the river and reinforce the Clarence region as a river destination.
- Develop appropriate events outdoors that make use of the climate.



B 3.2 Coordinate heritage assets

- Identify, document and manage cultural landscapes within the region, from significant to local importance.
- Review heritage and value of local sheds.
- Manage the quality of historic townships such as Ulmarra and Maclean through appropriate planning controls. Development should be sympathetic to the character of place.
- Manage and enhance built fabric assets in Grafton, through a main street programme.
- Manage and protect the ferry crossings for their local and tourist value.



B3.3 Encourage sports tourism focused and in harmony with the river

- Ensure that sporting events have some element of the programme that reinforces the river themes
- Manage user conflicts and environmental conflicts through balanced planning and management.



B 3.4 Support the creative sector

- Encourage river arts trail through regional art galleries
- Investigate the feasibility of implementing a river sculpture programme.
- Investigate a curated programme like "Sculpture by the Clarence" that provides a seasonal arts attraction.
- Examine the feasibility of a river stage.
- Support creative commercial practitioners to establish the Clarence region as a creative hub.
- Revisit the Clarence Cultural Program.

B4 Build upon Aboriginal cultural tourism



CONNECTING TO COUNTRY

Constant change requires us to continuously re-imagine our way of living. And this way of thinking about renewal and change requires leadership and willingness to challenge business-as-usual practices within government.

- By working within a designing with country framework there is a commitment to helping support the health and wellbeing of Country by valuing, respecting, and being guided by Aboriginal people, who know that if we care for Country – it will care for us.

B 4.1 Develop Aboriginal cultural tourism as a continuous culture related to the river.

- Work with Traditional Owners to discuss river and water cultural management opportunities for lands under native title. Promote the idea of a river with 100 islands.
- Develop options around Ulgundahi Island and market garden.
- Care for country with protection of significant sites.
- Train through TAFE for interpretation delivery.
- Examine feasibility of safari camps, integrated tours with a bush tucker meal food options.

Artwork: Francis Belle Parker: River to Sea exhibition. Grafton Regional Gallery Acrylic on Linen.

B 4.2 Ensure Aboriginal culture is a vehicle for community and economic development.

- Promote the Lower Clarence Aboriginal Tourist Site Drive highlighting sites of significance to the Yaegl people.
- Build upon the Yaraygir Coastal walk as an attraction. Promote stay and walk opportunities.
- Assist in the development and promotion of more market-ready Aboriginal cultural tourism products in “The Clarence” which provide enriching experiences for visitors.
- Examine feasibility of integrated Aboriginal tours using a platform such as welcometocountry.com.au

- Investigate feasibility of carbon trading reforestation projects focused on the river.
- Liaise with local Aboriginal communities of the Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr and Yaegl people to promote arts, interpretation and storytelling of the river.
- Investigate Aboriginal cultural burning
-

Image source: <https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/resources/ga/media/files/ga/discussion-papers/draft-connecting-with-country-framework-2020-11-12.pdf>

Image source Visit NSW: <https://www.visitnsw.com/things-to-do/aboriginal-culture>

B5 Reinforce the river towns that are characteristic tourism and service hubs for “The Clarence” - YAMBA / ILUKA

Build upon Yamba and Iluka’s success as the coastal and port hub for the Clarence region.



River edge revitalisation

- Maintain marine / pontoon infrastructure within close proximity of the town centre, River Street and Yamba Street.
- Provide continuous pedestrian waterfront pathways.
- Promote events that raise awareness of the port and the river.



Industry development / marine cluster

- Promote and develop the port facilities as part of a regional harbour network. C1. Maintain as a boutique port.
- Provide opportunities for the development of the mini cruise market.
- Continue to Promote the “Clarence Marine Precinct” as regional shipbuilding and repair facilities at Yamba as part of a marine industry cluster.
- Explore opportunities to expand the marina precinct to include mixed use commercial and retail opportunities (restaurants/bars/cafes/retail),



First impressions

- Improve sense of arrival into town through DCP controls and street tree planting on Yamba Road from Osprey Drive to the CBD.
- Retain and protect the scenic qualities of the natural saltmarsh, wetlands and mangroves which form a beautiful arrival approach into Yamba from Palmers Island.
- Maximise visibility of the water from local roads. Develop water based access from road reserves.



Quality of product and service delivery (see D1.2 and D1.3)

- Build upon the presentation of the shops and business in town.
- Undertake a streetscape upgrade program in line with previous recommendations to enhance pedestrian accessibility, between the river beaches and accommodation and CBD.
- Promote water based recreation options and packages.
- Promote the successful cafe culture of Yamba and Angourie.
- Support the Yamba Farmers and Producers Markets

Image source: <https://www.clarence.nsw.gov.au/page.asp?f=RES-DRZ-38-52-53>

Image credit: <https://thebrownpaperbag.com.au/eat-here-leche-cafe-yamba/>

B5 Reinforce the river towns that are characteristic tourism and service hubs for “The Clarence” - YAMBA / ILUKA



Events, culture and activities

- Extend cycle/walkways/boardwalks – linking Yamba Port to Angourie Beach.
- Examine the feasibility of permanent outdoor and river based events infrastructure within Ford Park.
- Install public art and interpretation to tell stories of the river and links to the coast.
- Investigate the feasibility of establishing a biennial outdoor public art and sculpture festival. Possible locations (Yamba to Angourie Beach, Yamba to Maclean).
- Work with local surfing industry to identify culturally appropriate opportunities for tourism development around the Angourie National Surfing Reserve.

ILUKA



River edge revitalisation

- Upgrade the public domain and setting to the existing marina.
- Investigate opportunities for marina development linking working fishing port, fishermans co-operative and commercial related uses and an improved quality of setting to the precinct.
- Further develop the coastal walk from the ferry terminus to Moriarites Wall.

Streetscape revitalisation

- Undertake a street tree planting programme.
- Promote development in a manner that reflects local character and scale.

First impressions

- Protect the quality of the bushland arrival drive into Iluka. Open up the vista to the water at the end of Owen Street through limited strategic canopy lifting or tree removal. Upgrade the road reserve public open space that forms the end of Owen Street.

B5 Reinforce the river towns that are characteristic tourism and service hubs for “The Clarence” - GRAFTON

Reposition Grafton as the “River City” – a tourism destination in its own right.



Focus on the Clarence River

- Any redevelopment or new development should recognise the river as a key asset and focus upon the river.
- Re orient the city to the river, including both Grafton and South Grafton.
- Upgrade the riverfront with Implementation the recommendations of the Grafton Waterfront Precinct Plan.
- Investigate opportunities to integrate civic, public, education and religious institution building infrastructure to facilitate public use of waterfront.
- Look at options for development of the State Rail Authority land on the rivers edge as public parkland.
- Examine options for Susan Island trips/ walks. Consider also bat colony watching/interpretive opportunities.



Riverfront boulevard

- Provide a continuous pedestrian access on the riverfront consistent with Grafton Waterfront Precinct Plan. Seek to extend those links east and west of the city centre.
- Ensure clarity to users that this is publicly accessible land.
- Council to work towards waterfront acquisition or public access rights of water front land to ensure continuous pedestrian connections, including the residences on Fitzroy Street.
- Provide rest stops, seats, tree canopy cover and lighting in accordance with the Grafton Waterfront Precinct Masterplan
- Provide access points to physically get to the water at regular points along the riverside walkway, including fixed wharfs and pontoons consistent with the Grafton Waterfront Precinct Plan.
- Provide a small pontoon facility down stream of the Grafton bridge on the northern side, to facilitate easy short term embarking /disembarking access for several boats to encourage visitation to Grafton attractions.



Memorial Park

- Upgrade Memorial Park consistent with the Grafton Waterfront Precinct Plan.
- Remove clutter associate with levee, provide new access point and seating platforms down to the river.
- Incorporate interpretive stories about the river.
- Prioritise community or riverfront activation purposes for ongoing use or leases for 1 Duke Street.



Streetscape revitalisation

- Develop a mainstreet programme to build upon the city’s strong heritage architectural fabric.
- Simplify and rationalise streetscape elements – reduce clutter, reduce shrub planting and embrace simple materials.
- Upgrade the main waterfront arrival on Prince street.
- Improve street tree links and physical access down to the water on Prince Street, Villiers Street and Clarence Street, consistent with the Grafton Waterfront Precinct Plan.
- Develop a street tree planting programme for city gateway streets.

B5 Reinforce the river towns that are characteristic tourism and service hubs for “The Clarence” - GRAFTON



Cultural revitalisation

- Establish Grafton as the heritage, arts and cultural hub of the Clarence.
- Use the extended Grafton Regional Gallery as a key arts focal point.
- Promote art through community engagement, and the existing artist in residence programme.
- Investigate options for higher end uses of Council and Government owned land on the Riverfront, that complement and focus upon “The Clarence”
- Consider a curated annual “Sculpture by the River” arts festival similar to the successful Sydney and Perth “Sculpture by the Sea” show as part of an ongoing series of events.
- Include Aboriginal cultural heritage and arts in these programmes.



Improve visitors first impressions with city gateway and arrival improvements

- Improve the arrival gateway impressions into Grafton from South Grafton, with clutter reduction, street tree planting.
- Extend street tree avenue planting to main town entries.
- Reinforce tree planting along the new bridge arrival into Grafton to improve the arrival experience.
- Investigate the feasibility and any heritage constraints to improve visibility across the Old Grafton bridge from road level to improve its gateway quality by removing masonry components and extending the lattice metal work.



Extend the range of accommodation options product and service standards

- See strategies D1.2 and 1.3
- Promote outdoor dining through streetside and riverside cafes.
- Extended opening hours to meet visitor expectations.
- Improved levels of service and business presentation through training and awareness.



Grafton and surrounds

- Investigate feasibility of establishing active Watersports Precinct at Seelands to build and facilitate the establishment of Grafton as a major active watersports destination (ie waterskiing, wake boarding).
- Work with Grafton Racing Club to build on and promote the Racing Carnival as the premier Northern NSW Regional Racing Carnival.
- Work with the Jacaranda Festival Organising Committee to look at options to add river based activities to the program of events.

B5 Reinforce the river towns that are characteristic tourism and service hubs for “The Clarence” - MACLEAN

Establish Maclean as a ‘must see’ river town – a destination in its own right.



Facilities development / river edge revitalisation

- Work towards completion of the Maclean Riverside Precinct Plan including:
 - Establishment of view corridors and no build zones to provide visual access to the river.
 - Create a Riverside public square waterfront public events space.
 - Maximise pedestrian connectivity, including a continuous waterfront boardwalk, by extending the existing waterfront walkways.
 - Provide for a river recreation focus including potential provision of kayak hire, public jetty, and day marina.
 - Build upon the main street character and built form heritage.
 - Investigate the highest and best use for sites such as the RSL, hardware store and fisheries sites.



Riverside development

- Plan for the long term redevelopment of the waterfront to activate its potential in keeping with the Maclean Riverside Precinct Plan including
 - Mixed use commercial - restaurants/bars/cafes/retail
 - Marina, boating and passive water sports/activities infrastructure
 - Public open space, wet and dry play and family areas
 - Cycle/walkways/boardwalks
 - Outdoor and river based events infrastructure; and
 - Develop walking/biking infrastructure.
 - Provide additional public access, open space and visitor amenities on the waterfront.
- Consider long term impacts of climate change and sea level rise



First impressions / gateway improvements

- Retain and conserve Macfarlane Bridge as a gateway entry point to Maclean.
- Improve the sense of arrival into town with a gateway street tree planting on the northern approach to Maclean.
- Capitalise on the new Pacific Highway to improve pedestrian amenity along River Street.
- Draw people in from Pacific Highway and Brushgrove / Lawrence through signage and information
- Improve pedestrian and bike connections to Harwood.



Cultural heritage

- Maintain and enhance heritage character, and scale through Development Control Plans and other planning frameworks.
- Investigate opportunities for Public art and interpretation to tell stories of the industrial river and Maclean.
- Promote the continuous Aboriginal culture of the site through engagement and stories

B5 Reinforce the river towns that are characteristic tourism and service hubs for “The Clarence” - ULMARRA AND HARWOOD

ULMARRA



Main street and riverfront upgrades

- Complete the Ulmarra Riverfront Precinct Plan including:
 - Development of the Village Heart through widened footpaths and shade tree amenity.
 - Provide new riverfront access opportunities / riverside boardwalk.
 - Improve Memorial Park with additional seating and lawn terraces,
 - Improve the Pacific Hwy Intersection.
 - Improve Bailey Park relocate the toilets to provide for a playground and views to the river
 - Provide gateway and street tree canopy to the showground.
 - Review options for Recreation Vehicle (RV) campground including power and water and primitive RV camping

Cultural heritage and activity

- Investigate feasibility of establishing a new maritime heritage museum. Consider options to co-locate with maritime business located in the old Butter Factory. Capitalise on “living and interactive” content opportunities.
- Enhance the visitor experience on the Ulmarra Car Ferry. Consider safe options to allow pedestrians and cyclists and allow passengers to move out of their vehicles.
- Work with the Aboriginal community to develop cultural opportunities, storytelling and attractions.
- Encourage further private sector investment in accommodation and tourism retail product including antiques, clothes boutiques, fine arts and craft, giftware, and high quality and family orientated food and beverage.
- Establish planning instruments to protect heritage character of township and facilitates appropriate private sector investment and development

HARWOOD



Riverfront upgrades

- Complete the Harwood Riverfront Precinct Plan including:
 - Creating a strong sense of arrival
 - Connect to the river with improved physical and visual access to the waters edge, and launching and mooring facilities.
 - Create new riverfront parklands, including rationalising waterfront parklands consistent with the precinct plan.
 - Construct a consolidated car and trailer parking under the new Harwood bridge to free up the waterfront parkland.
 - Mountain bike / pump track / skate opportunities under bridge

Cultural / heritage development

- Tell the Yaegl story of the area.
- Reveal and leverage European cultural heritage including the sugar mill, canefields
- Establish an Harwood heritage trail and walk.

B5 Reinforce the river towns that are characteristic tourism and service hubs for “The Clarence” - REGIONAL TOWNS



Nymboidia

- Re-establish Nymbodia as an internationally renowned white water destination to capitalise upon the previous 40,000 visitors a year. [24]
- Work with the state government owners to investigate feasibility to repair and re-open the Nymboidia hydroelectric site for multiple benefits:
 - To provide carbon neutral energy for the local region in line with the NSW Government Net Zero emissions plan by 2050 [16]
 - To provide waterflows and controlled management for a local and international white water rafting attraction.
- Include Aboriginal cultural heritage and arts programmes.
- Undertake a street tree planting and townscape upgrade program to improve the presentation of the town
- Investigate Platypus viewing options/tours



Companhurst

- Improve the arrival impressions into town with street tree avenue planting into town and on the main town centre road. Reduce pavement widths where appropriate.
- Investigate opportunities for farmstay and agribusiness camping and other opportunities
- Promote riverfront access to the Clarence for kayaking and canoeing.
- Investigate primitive river camping and RV and kayaks opportunities
- Provide interpretive opportunities.
- Improve tree canopy and amenity of the garden, toilet, playground and skate park, as a child friendly stop off point.
- Investigate opportunities for agritourism eg farm stays



Glenreagh

- Extend street tree avenue planting on the main town centre road.
- Reduce road pavement widths where appropriate to enable more tree planting.
- Improve the appearance and presentation of the picnic sites, swimming pool, and waterfront.
- Capitalise upon the showgrounds for camping.
- Investigate options for improving the amenity of the Glenreagh train heritage



Jackadgery

- Continue to promote Jackadgery as a key access point for the Mann River canoe and Kayak trail.
- Improve camping experience on the river.
- Provide a gateway tree avenue planting into town to herald arrival to the town and river.
- Investigate opportunity for a Dark Sky Park.

C. GETTING AROUND

How easy is it to get to The Clarence, and once here, how easy is it to find your way around and how easily accessible are its attractions including the river?

GETTING AROUND - ISSUES SUMMARY

- Air arrival visits to the Clarence are impacted by the distance from the two major regional airport requiring car hire.
- Arrival by road accounts for a very large proportion of visitor arrivals. With the upgraded Pacific Highway being the primary route.
- Future planning should build upon this existing travel pattern as well as investigating options to develop east / west linkages from the New England Highway.
- There is a poor sense of visitor arrival into most of the townships.
- The arrival into Grafton on the old bridge through South Grafton is particularly confusing and unappealing as a gateway, and needs to be improved and simplified.
- The quality of road and interpretive signage was relatively poor
- Access to the river is a critical issue and while a number of pontoons and jetties have been built, there is still opportunity greater physical connections to and from the river, including marinas, pontoons, jetties, ramps, mooring, and beach landing access for Kayaks and canoes.
- There needs to be better visibility of the river and information about the river.
- Policing overstays on waterborne moorings and jetties has been a management and resourcing issue for Transport for NSW. The ever changing nature of the river makes marking for navigation difficult.
- There are opportunities for cycling networks given the gentle terrain in many locations in the valley.
- Riverside access and walkways by there nature need to be close to the water and therefore need to consider flooding.

GETTING AROUND - OBJECTIVES

- C1 Improve regional access to The Clarence**
- C2 Improve physical access and visual linkages to the river and understanding of the river.**
- C3 Improve ability to easily move around The Clarence.**



C1 Improve regional access to The Clarence



C1.1 Bring visitors off the highways into The Clarence.

- Ensure that there is clear signage off the New Pacific Highway to advise visitors of entry and exit points into The Clarence.
- Work with the TfNSW to continue to improve link roads to the New England Highway and Grafton.
- Work with Destination NSW and Tourism Australia to develop, link and promote self-drive itineraries.



C1.2 Improve ability for arrivals via air, rail and water.

- Continue to work with regional airports and airlines to ensure adequate air capacity both into the regional airports at Ballina and Coffs Harbour, and into Grafton.
- Work with Rail Authorities to promote regional access and tourism through train arrivals where there is strategic campaign fit with target markets for The Clarence.



C1.3 Promote and develop the boutique ports of Yamba/Iluka.

- Work with Visit NSW and other State government agencies to promote and develop Yamba and Iluka as a key part of the regional harbour network for the east coast.
- Provide and develop physical facilities that facilitate this goal.
- Maintain the port as a working boutique port.
- Any mini cruise market needs to target the off season when there is capacity and not overload an existing saturated peak destination.

C2 Improve physical access to the river



C2.1 Upgrade existing waterfront and other road reserves to be more clearly identified as public open space.

- Provide public waterfront access through road reserves, by maintaining vistas and improved pathways, access points and parkland facilities.
- Make water front reserve land more visibly “public” with management, signage, and physical works such as access stairs and ramps down to the waters edge.



C 2.2 Provide continuous pedestrian and cycle waterfront pathways.

- Aim to provide public waterfront walkways where ever possible and link to facilities and access points.
- Where waterfront land is re-developed, aim to have continuous water front access provided as part of development consent, through development control plans and other measures and incentives.
- Look at opportunities to link key public open spaces with river side boardwalks.
- Review opportunities to purchase strategic riverfront land for public use, particularly in town centres.



C2.3 Greatly extend river access points along the lower river reaches including:

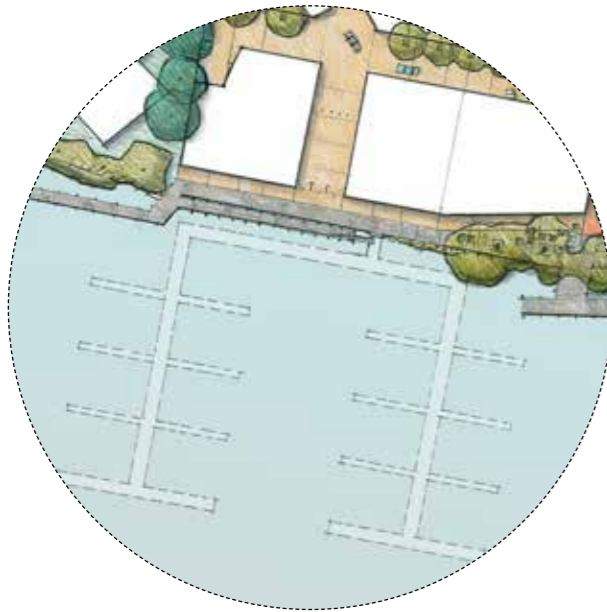
- Pull-in rest stop bays with water views / rest stop/picnic facilities
- Upgrading existing boat ramps and car parking access points.
- Soft launching sites for canoes / kayaks associated with picnic facilities / parkland.
- Access wharfs and pontoons. Developed to provide easy short term access for people to embark/disembark from boats to encourage visitation to land based facilities and attractions. They should be with in easy walking distance of key land based attractions and should not have water and power that encourage long stays.
- Day moorings. Consideration given to a limited number of day moorings, although preference should be for identifying suitable anchorage areas.



• C2.4 Greatly extend river access points along the upper river reaches including:

- Continue to promote the development of The Clarence Canoe and kayak trail.
- Clearly identifiable soft launching/ landing sites for canoes / kayaks in the upper reaches with managed primitive camping facilities. These could be sited on public land such as road reserves or by agreement with private landholders. Progressively develop sites along the river. Primitive camping sites might include kayak storage areas, camp sites, fire pits and pit or composting toilets.
- Encourage development of a limited number of higher end permanent tented sites on the upper reaches for guided kayak day/camping tours.

C2 Improve physical access to the river



C2.4 Encourage marina development.

- To provide the greatest flexibility to boating river users, encourage development of small marinas where appropriate. Possible locations include Grafton and Maclean. Specialised facilities such as fuel, pump outs, water and electricity should be provided at marinas where they can be supervised, and managed. Marinas should be encouraged to provide short term mooring and drop off facilities and tender services for busy periods.



C2.5 Develop integrated river hub stops.

- Develop integrated river hub stops by co-locating water based access with, or very close to land based attractions where possible. Larger and more complex facilities such as pontoons, wharfs, and marinas should be located as close to the town centres as possible to encourage patronage of town facilities and improve security. Hub stops should provide places for parking vessels, cars, bikes, and be accessible on public footpaths.



C2.6 Improve the visual connection to the river.

- For road reserves that lead to the water consider opening up vistas to the river at the waterfront end of the reservation. This should be applied where opportunities exist through selective and limited tree removal and under pruning, not wholesale tree removal. See diagram following.
- Provide roadside rest stops with river views.
- Utilise openable flood gates like those used at Maclean Riverfront park.
- Undertake a weed management programme to remove weeds that block views to the waterfront. Particularly along the Pacific Highway between Grafton and Yamba.



C2.7 Improve information about the river.

- Develop interpretive programmes that tell the story of the river and The Clarence.
- Develop interpretive training for operators and service providers to deliver quality interpretation and experiences.

C2 Improve physical access to the river

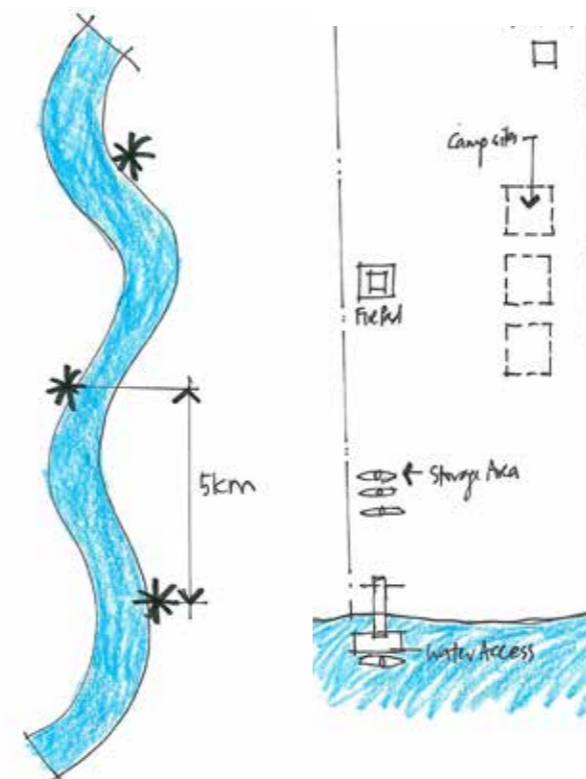


C2.8 Provision for equitable access.

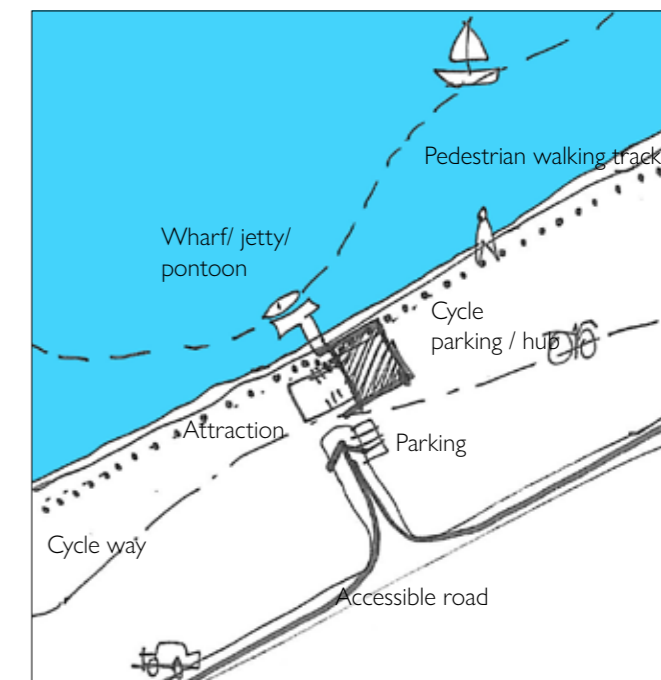
- In developing infrastructure and access to facilities, consideration shall be given to provision of universal access to improve access for people of all abilities.

C2.9 Consider sea level rise / flooding.

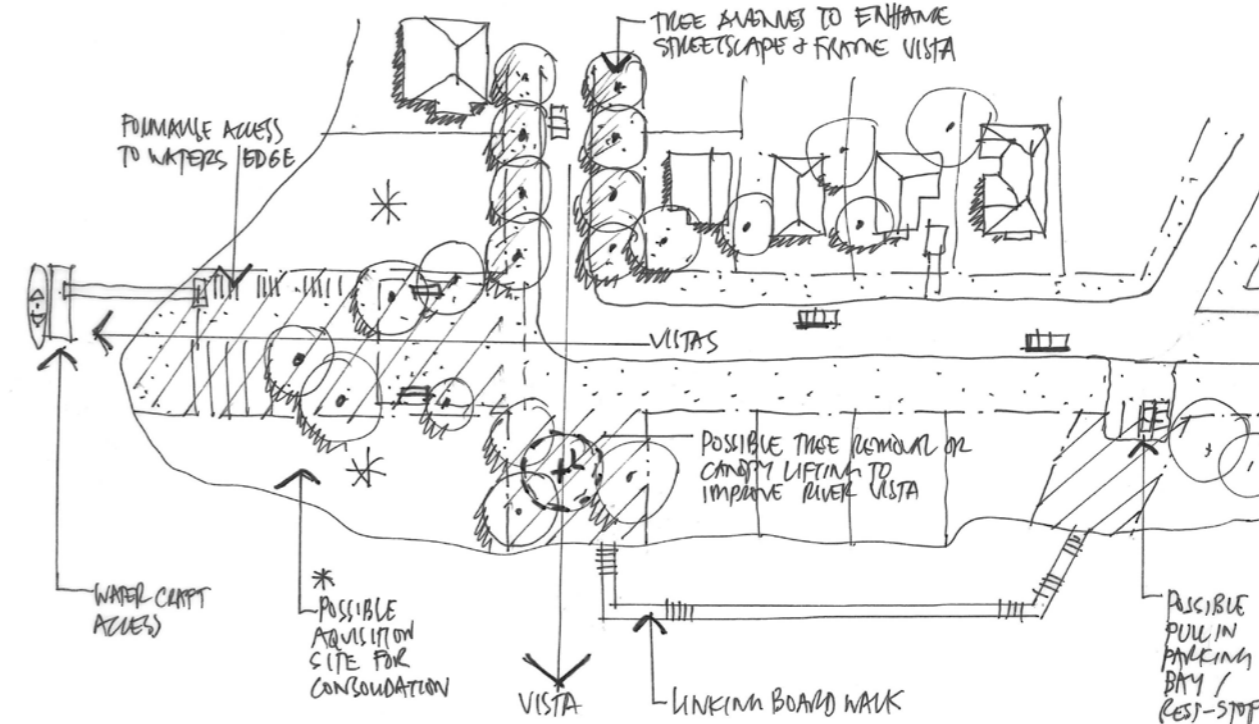
- Consider potential impacts of predicted mean 900mm 2100 sea level rise on fixed level waterside infrastructure with a life span of greater than 50 years. [6]
- Ensure riverside infrastructure, particularly those at or near the river level, is robust and designed for periodic flooding.



C2.4 Provide Primitive camping



C2.5 River based hubs - diagram



C2.1 and C 2.6 Typical examples of road reservation opportunities

C3 Improve ability to easily move around The Clarence.



C 3.1 Make it easier to navigate and find your way around The Clarence

- Provide improved information, mapping, and signage.
- Simplify the number of drive route choices removing current confusion.
- Provide clear and simple tourism signage for key destinations. Investigate future GPS based options.



C3.2 Improve bike, bridal and foot trails and access

- Focus upon pedestrian linkages that provide access to key attractions and/or create critical linkages.
- Develop cycle-based touring options including examining the feasibility of a commercial cycle system, similar to those currently in use in Amsterdam, Copenhagen and Paris.
- Work with relevant bike touring peak bodies and road management agencies to establish requirements and needs for guided and self guided bike touring along key tourist routes.
- Encourage private investment in a series of bike hire, pick-up and drop off points at key attractions, townships and activity hubs..



C3.3 Consider “The Clarence” as an integrated touring region

- Continue to develop and promote a range of self drive opportunities such as the “4 Classic Clarence Valley Drives” that group key townships, villages and attractions. Regularly update printed material.
- Co-ordinate with VisitNSW to ensure Clarence Road trips include up to date information and promotion.
- Upgrade street signage to ensure key turn offs and roads are clearly named and signposted.
- Consider web based / GPS based routes that can be used by visitors.



C3.4 Provision for safe navigation on the river.

- Where currents and conditions allow, provide additional navigation marks.
- Investigate safe navigation issues for entry into Yamba around Dart Island.
- As recreational boating use increases, consider placing limited identification / name signage visible from the water for towns and villages, jetties and pontoons for those cruising the river.
- Investigate additional boat ramps and small scale infrastructure for commercial fishing vessels.

D. THE QUALITY OF VISITOR EXPERIENCE

What is on offer to the visitor by way of accommodation, infrastructure and support facilities, service delivery, and what do visitors learn or take away from the experience? Will they come back again and tell their friends?

THE QUALITY OF VISITOR EXPERIENCE - ISSUES SUMMARY

- There is a lack of sense of arrival into most Clarence townships and villages.
- Apart from Yamba, the quality of presentation of retail and commercial areas for tourism is below market expectations and is a constraint to future growth.
- Development of lower and higher end accommodation options in key hub locations is required in the short to medium term.
- There is a lack of quality service delivery for visitors.
- Lack of high and medium quality restaurants, cafes and bistros in river townships, and limited operational hours in the evenings, and on public holidays and Sundays.
- Need to retain the attraction of the relaxed atmosphere and village quality.
- Lack of local produce suppliers and sellers network to boost awareness and use of local produce in restaurants/cafes.
- Distinct lack of interpretation, value adding and packaging throughout the River.
- The development of human capital is an important element in delivering a quality tourism product. There is a need for skills development and capacity building throughout the catchment.

The quality of experience - objectives

- D1 Improve the presentation of the destination.**
- D2 Manage development 'in keeping' with current qualities/target market expectations.**
- D3 Extend and develop the range of accommodation, food/beverage, and entertainment.**
- D4 Integrate interpretation and storytelling into tourism products.**



D1 Improve the presentation of the destination



D1.1 Improve the sense of arrival into all townships and villages

- Develop gateway signage to all townships and villages in key node areas.
- Undertake an extensive program of street tree planting and gateway planting to enhance overall amenity of built up areas.
- Reduce impact of industrial lands, bulky goods stores and other commercial activities adjacent to main roads and tourism routes.



D1.2 Improve the presentation of retail and commercial areas for tourism and the broader community

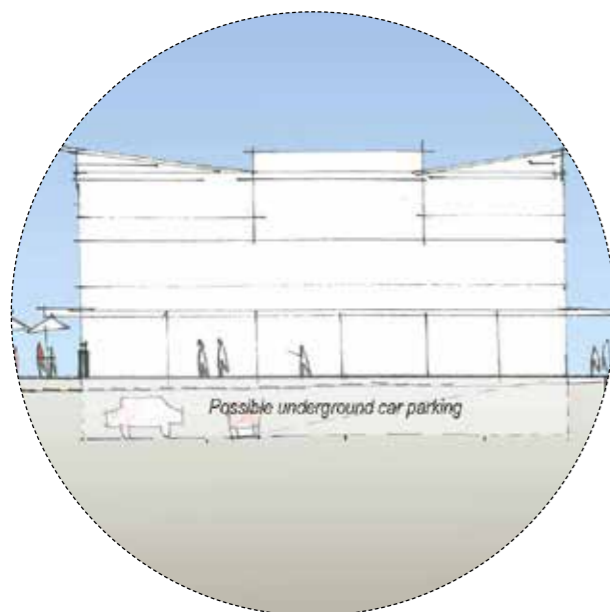
- Develop training, excellence awards and incentive program to encourage commercial/retail investment in presentation.
- Ensure adequate maintenance and upkeep to improve attractiveness of towns and riverfront assets.



D1.3 Improve service delivery and standards through education and training

- Develop and run a series training packages for Continued Professional Development of tourism operators and businesses aimed at service delivery and presentation.

D2 Manage development 'in keeping' with current qualities/target market expectations



D2.1 Review development control plans to reflect tourism priorities

- Ensure suitable controls on height and character of development to maintain local character and environmental values.
- Include river re-focus such that buildings / development facing the river are encouraged within the region's broader planning framework.
- Include provision in development controls for new development to provide for public foreshore access to the river front.

D3 Extend and develop the range of accommodation, food/beverage, and entertainment



D3.1 Encourage development of budget accommodation

- Develop medium quality and lower cost accommodation for family/events market (particularly in Grafton and Yamba).
- Provide backpacker accommodation initially at Yamba and over time with Grafton as more product gains momentum.
- Develop or formalise camp grounds and van parking options along the river edge, particularly in the upper reaches.



D3.2 Encourage development of 4-5 star accommodation

- Develop medium scale eco-lodge/eco retreats/day spa-wellness retreats in locations making best use of spectacular hinterland bushland and river based settings.
- Encourage private sector development of higher end facilities in key river town locations.
- Examine possibilities of longer term development of conference facilities with accommodation.
- Encourage private sector investment in house boating as water side facilities and infrastructure are developed.



D3.3 Co-ordinate with the wide range of holiday letting

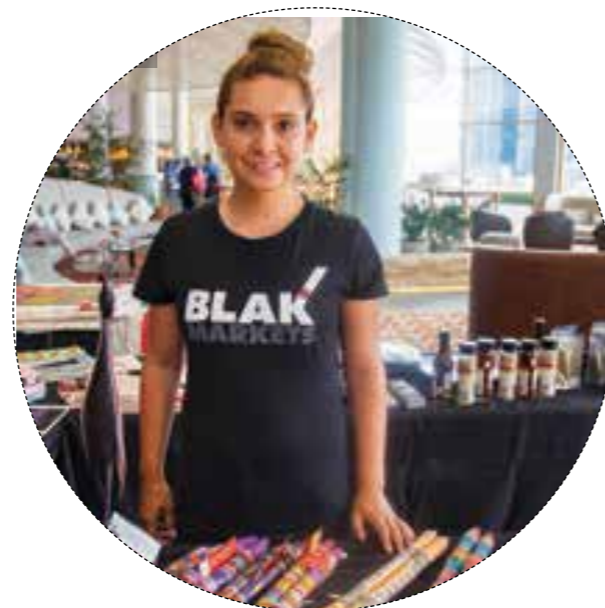
- Work with private holiday letting providers to improve market accessibility and market awareness to make it easier for visitors to find accommodation on line or through an agency.



D3.4 Promote and improve local table to plate produce.

- Work with local hospitality industry to improve the local produce content and quality of local restaurants/cafes.
- Build upon the success of the Yamba Growers market.
- Develop networks and linkages between local growers and sellers for local agribusiness.
- Develop support and grow the agricultural sector in line with priority 13 of the Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement. 2020. [25]
- Work with producers to improve consistency of supply.
- Ensure the providence of local produce is integrated in Restaurant/Café service delivery.
- Work with local education providers to develop industry training and incentive packages to improve quality and service standards.

D4 Integrate interpretation and storytelling into tourism products



D4.1 Develop an integrated approach to interpretation throughout the region through Placemaking

- Develop Priority 1 of the Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement. 2020. to take a proactive 'place making' approach to create great places to live, work and play, suitable to our climate.
- Prepare a co-ordinated interpretive strategy based upon the Clarence themes. A range of interpretive methods should be utilised to gain maximum exposure to target markets. These might include:
 - Interpretive signage.
 - Interpretive tours.
 - Self guided interpretation.
 - Maps / brochures / satellite navigation / audio tours.
 - Events.
 - Tour operator training.

<https://friendsofgreatswamp.org/site/guided-interpretive-walks-for-groups/>

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D4.2 Encourage businesses to have an experience focus in its delivery to visitors

- Develop industry toolkits to assist business to understand and implement experience based product development.
- Undertake professional development series to build capacity of the industry to deliver interpretation aligned with the Clarence core appeals and themes.
- Work with individual businesses to improve and develop new experience and interpretation within their operations.
- Actively support the establishment of new experience based businesses.

Image source: Aboriginal tourism plan

E - MANAGEMENT / ADMINISTRATION AND REGIONAL LINKAGES

The Clarence River and its catchment represents a large physical area. There are a number of government agencies involved in managing the river, catchment and public lands associated with the river. The integration of the river as a tourism resource involves a number industries and issues and needs to be seen at a catchment wide level, with a level of focus, appreciation and entrepreneurial attitude.

MANAGEMENT / ADMINISTRATION AND REGIONAL LINKAGES ISSUES SUMMARY

- A strategic co-ordinated whole of government approach is critical to the success of “The Clarence”
- There are thousands of parcels of land that are either open space or unused road reserves, which could be used to deliver on the themes and objectives of The Clarence.
- Regional industry sustainability and work practices can effect the health of the river and by default the appeal of the river for tourism, but also provide opportunities for the development of new attractions and experiences.
- The river valley provides employment and produce including the Yamba prawn oysters, sugar and other value-added products.
- There is a need for government to engage the community, show leadership and initiative and facilitate private sector investment.
- There are opportunities to work more productively as a region for tourism purposes. These endeavours should be managed catchment wide, where the River is always brought into focus.
- Entrepreneurial support will be essential to the long term success of The Clarence programme.
- Linkages with regional tourism partners need to be established with clearly defined outcomes, roles and expectations.

MANAGEMENT / ADMINISTRATION AND REGIONAL LINKAGES- OBJECTIVES

- E1 Foster community and regional industry engagement, information, understanding and appreciation of the Clarence River values.**
- E2 Provide a co-ordinated and integrated approach to planning and management of the river.**
- E3 Foster and encourage private and public sector investment.**



E1 Foster community and regional industry engagement, information, understanding and appreciation of The Clarence values



E1.1 Provide a framework for regional engagement for The Clarence values

- Establish an industry wide research framework to capture market focused information, related to: purchase decisions, emerging trends and associated product for key target markets.
- Work with regional and local tourism associations to ensure market information is distributed and understood by stakeholders.
- Ensure tourism databases accurately reflect the depth of the tourism industry.



E1.2 Develop industry partnerships to support tourism

- In partnership with key stakeholders, establish land management, finance and planning systems to support the tourism industry in developing infrastructure and product that meet evolving consumer demand
- Ensure that Local Environmental plans facilitates nature based tourism development in upper catchment.
- Manage development in keeping with scale and character through appropriate planning controls.
- Increase awareness and understanding of the outcomes of The Clarence - River Way Master Plan II amongst key finance and government funding partners, with the aim of establishing finance and funding options responsive to investor needs.



E1.3 Work with allied industries

- Identify appropriate representative bodies for allied industries linked to the river (food producers and agriculture, fisheries, forestry), build networks and assist these groups to maximise their potential and contribution to The Clarence.



E1.4 Work with regional industry towards sustainable agribusiness outcomes

- Work with regional industry including timber, sugarcane, commercial fishing, and farming towards ensuring a healthy river to support river tourism outcomes.
- Encourage farmstays, gate to plate and local produce opportunities, sustainable urban growth, sustainable fishing, farming and land management practices.
- Provide training, workshops and resources for farm owners wishing to diversify into agritourism
- Help in the promotion of farm stays and agribusiness in The Clarence.
- Work towards provision of mini-bus service to regional destinations.

E2 Provide a co-ordinated and integrated approach to planning and management of the river



E2.1 Establish an integrated and co-ordinated approach to information planning and management across agencies in the catchment

- Co-ordinate policy and management issues to achieve balanced solutions. For example blanket riparian zones are often in direct conflict with many of the recommendations in the masterplan for waterfront pedestrian access and uses.
- Consider and balance the impact or potential opportunities for the Clarence of catchment wide issues from natural resource management to sustainable urban growth, flood plain management, riparian and estuarine ecosystems, to sustainable fishing and farming practices.
- Work to resolve use and accessibility of waterfront lands.
- Undertake mapping of all publicly owned assets resources for review of their potential in the Clarence.

E 2.2 Develop a centralised point of management for river based activities. The suggested approach here is to establish a Clarence Coordinator interagency chaired by CVC

- Ideally the Clarence will have a dedicated co-ordinator and advocate to elevate the River's profile in all management decisions and related development throughout the region.
- The position of "The Clarence" - River Way II co-ordinator will be a high visibility, advocacy role establishing a 'Minder' or 'Go To' identity for the River. Employing entrepreneurial strategies along with coordination of all existing agencies, always adopting the most effective means for achieving The Clarence Program's vision and objectives.
- The aim is to encourage responsibility from across the public, private and academic sectors and promote partnerships between all river-related interest groups.

E3 Foster and encourage private and public sector investment



E3.1 Engagement of the private and public sector in development of river related tourism

- Develop investment prospectus and packages that identify key infrastructure gaps and opportunities, identifies pathways for investment, possible incentives and partnership opportunities to test viability.
- Develop linkages and partnerships with tourism related industries to ensure sound communication and shared understanding of The Clarence's core appeals, brand and market development needs.
- Encourage private investment in new business and investment opportunities for the private sector – health resorts/ day spas wellness centre, glamping, farmstays and Bed and Breakfast, restaurants, cafes and bistros, farm gates.
- Work with local food and beverage producers to integrate offerings with the Clarence brand identity.
- Identify possible options and encourage private sector investment in specific Clarence River branded product that has national and international distribution potential.
- Encourage financial and management support for Aboriginal business enterprises and cultural development through all available sources.
- Provide support to existing businesses in developing tourism product through training and other opportunities.



PRIORITIES



Implementation priorities

A set of guiding principles help frame and act as decision filters for the recommended master plan. .

The masterplan:

- Takes a long-term and sustainable approach to destination development
- Focuses on key tourism precincts/clusters and associated touring opportunities
- Builds on existing strengths and leverages off established product; and
- Drives significant competitive improvement, positioning and visitation.

In redressing the focus of the river as a tourism asset, the sequence of investment needs to follow key priorities.



Priority 1 PLANNING, MANAGEMENT AND CO-ORDINATION, SUPPORT FOR INNOVATION AND INVESTMENT

The first priority is management to co-ordinate and facilitate development of the Clarence River Way Master Plan.

Build upon strong relationships with earlier Clarence River Way interagency.

Co-ordinate through whole of government approach.

Provide support for private sector innovation and investment



Priority 2 INFRASTRUCTURE, ACCESS AND TRAINING

In order to build the destination, investment is required in infrastructure to provide the catalyst for private development / entrepreneur investment.

This includes river-based assets and physical construction such as boardwalks, jetties, launching areas and places to see the water.

Allied to this is investment in training for the tourism industry to meet target market expectation. Infrastructure works should be prioritised starting at the river / land interface followed by works beyond the river.



Priority 3 PROMOTION

It is essential that destinations and attractions meet the promoted expectation.

Now that a degree of physical infrastructure is in place, and destinations like Yamba, are up to market expectation The Clarence has some good assets.

When additional training is undertaken it will be time to further consolidate by promotion through marketing and brand development. This will ensure that the destination meets the expectations reflected in its marketing promise.

While the strategies and actions are the Clarence River Way Master Plan II , a suggested priority action plan that is staged over a 10 year planning horizon is included. This is presented geographically in the strategic intent chapter and in terms of implementation on the following bar chart.

PRIORITIES



MONITORING AND REVIEW

Given the project timeframe, it is suggested that ongoing monitoring and review be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the project implementation and delivery on a yearly basis. The research undertaken for the masterplan has established a baseline set of data which can be utilised to measure and assist the review process.

It is recommended that a set of indices are developed that can be used to best measure the effectiveness of the master plan. The outcomes of these measurements should be published on an annual basis to inform the community and stakeholders of the progress of the master plan delivery. It is suggested that after 5 years the master plan be reviewed and updated based upon the ongoing monitoring to keep it current.



PROGRAMME

The Clarence Riverway II - Implementation strategy and priorities

Strategic Intent	Objective / Actions	Task	Develop / Recurrence	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
MANAGEMENT AND CO-ORDINATION														
All	E1.1	Refresh and continue with "The Clarence" Interagency whole of government approach	Quarterly	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
All	B4	Connection to country engagement and ongoing liaison	2022-2023											
1 to 5	C2.1	Audit and review road reserve opportunities for riverfront access	2022											
1,3	C2	Ongoing design of water front access points from Recreational waterways plan	Annually											
3	B5	Ongoing design and planning for lower reaches Riverfront towns	2021-2022											
4	B5	Design and planning for regional up River towns	2022-2024											
4	B5	Negotiation and investigation into reopening Nymbodia Hydroelectric powerhouse	2021											
4	C 2.4	Upriver design and planning - Primitive camping opportunities	Progressively											
5	E1.2, E1.4	Agribusiness development / Table to plate opportunities	Progressively											
8	B2.1, B 2.3	Planning and design development for the Yuraygir and Bundjalung coast												
All	All	Investigate climate change risks for adaptation and mitigation, and low carbon economic	2022											
All	E1, E3	Develop industry incentives and investment prospectuses	Progressively											
All	B3	Ongoing community / arts engagement strategy and implementation	Annually											
All	B3, C3	Ongoing event management and implementation	Annually											
6	B2, C3, D3	Planning and design development of wilderness arc opportunities	2023											
All	D3	Accommodation development / co-ordination and incentives	2022											
All	E1.2	Develop industry support and partnerships	2022											
All	E3.1	Private sector engagement	2023											
All	D2.1	Review and update development controls	2023											
All	All	Ongoing Visitor / tourism analysis and reviews	Annually											
All	All	Review "The Clarence" masterplan II	Every 5 years											
PRIORITY 1														
INFRASTRUCTURE, ACCESS AND TRAINING														
Clarence wide														
3	C2.3	Implement / construct river based access points, wharfs, pontoons	Annually											
2,3,4	D1.1	Street tree planting programmes / gateway planting programme	Annually											
3	C2.2	Progressively construct riverside waterway pathways and cycleways	Annually											
4,6,8	C3.2	Progressively develop mountain bike access in upper reaches	Annually											
Lower Reaches - river hub developments														
2	B5	Grafton Waterfront precinct	2021-2022											
3	B5	Ulmarra Riverfront precinct	2021-2023											
3	B5	Illuka Waterfront precinct	2022											
3	B5	Harwood Waterfront precinct	2023											
3	B5	Maclean Waterfront precinct Stage 2	2023											
3	B5	Yamba waterfront precinct opportunities	2024											
	B5	Other towns	2024											
Yuragiri and Bundjalung Coast														
8	B2.1, B 2.3	Progressive infrastructure improvements, pathways accommodation etc	2021-2024											
Upper reaches - Townships and wild rivers														
4	B5	Township upgrades - Nymbodia / Copmanhurst / Glenreagh / Jackagery	2022-2024											
4	C2.4	Primitive camping access points and facility development	Annual											
Training														
All	D1, D3, D4	Presentation / Service delivery training and incentives / industry toolkits	Annually											
All	D4.1	Interpretation and placemaking	Annually											
PRIORITY 2														
PROMOTION														
1,3,4	A 1.1	Promote the Clarence as one of the Nations Great River experiences	Ongoing											
All	A2	Reposition "My Clarence Valley" brand to "The Clarence" incremental rollout	2021											
All	A1	Ongoing social media and web presence marketing	Annually											
All	A1	Annual upgrade / refresh of brochures and packs associated with "The Clarence"	Annually											
All	A1, A2	Co-ordination with VisitNSW	Quarterly	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
All	B1 - B5	Ongoing Destination development and promotion as assets are developed	Annually											
PRIORITY 3														

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Issue A - 11/05/2021 - CVC review draft
Issue B - 13/05/2021 - CVC update for consultation
Issue C - 02/07/2021 - Update following public exhibition

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CONSULTATION FEEDBACK
CLARENCE RIVER WAY MASTER PLAN II
FOR CLARENCE VALLEY COUNCIL

S19-0028
02 /07/21

CLOUSTON associates

THE CLARENCE RIVER WAY MASTER PLAN II



The Clarence Riverway Master Plan is an integrated market driven tourism destination initiative. Originally developed by CLOUSTON Associated in 2009, the master plan sought to position the Clarence River as one of the nation's great river experiences.

Ten years on, Clarence Valley Council and CLOUSTON Associates are reviewing, evaluating and updating the Clarence River Way Master Plan II to ensure it remains a relevant reference document and strategic action plan.



The Clarence - River Way Master Plan II provides an up-to-date strategic action plan to guide tourism policy and investment in the region. The project scope is the boundaries of the Clarence Valley Council, as well as important linkages and viewpoints in the surrounding areas.

The project has been underpinned by ongoing community council and industry consultation. Focus groups were conducted with various Council members, industry and community stakeholders and government agencies. Face to face meetings have been held with tourism operators whilst surveying the hinterland and townships along the Clarence River.



The Grafton Ngerrie Land Council and Yaegl Traditional Owners have been engaged and asked to comment.

In addition to the current consultation for The Clarence – River Way Master Plan II, significant community consultation and liaison has occurred throughout the past ten years of implementing initiatives throughout the catchment.

This report outlines the feedback received during the public exhibition period from 31 May - 28 June 2021.



CLOUSTON associates

CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

THEME	COMMENT	FROM	IMPLICATION/RESPONSE
EVENTS	Can Council please consider how they charge event organisers that run events on this river. The people that travel to the valley individually spend thousands whilst they are here and it is a massive economic boost for the valleys businesses. Of late I have heard from event organisers that CVC is very expensive compared to other councils. Its great to the put the infrastructure in but if we can showcase it due to red tape costs then why are we doing it? Might as well put another sculpture up in Maclean that has no relevance for anyone	Mick (Community member)	For Council consideration as part of objective B3 - <i>Promote cultural tourism that links to the river and reflect a sense of place.</i>
PUBLIC ACCESS	One of the problems with Clarence is the amount of freehold land extending to the waters edge. This prevents any kind of public access corridor along the river say from town central to Corcoran Park, and also restoration and revegetation works. It would be hopeful to expect private property owners with "river frontage" to give it up. It makes their properties quite valuable, even though its actually of limited use and probably a mowing nightmare. Still, it may be good to have an ideal plan to aim for. With enough funding you could have a buyback, or come to some sort of lease arrangement. There are very few places where the public can access the river for along way up and down. This is one of the problems, along with the clearing and mowing mindset, which has resulted in catastrophic biodiversity decline here. One day these ideals will be accepted without question, as we do with hygiene and kerbing and guttering. Lets hope we still have some wildlife left by then.	Roger Norman Fryer (Community member)	Noted, and incorporated as part of objective C2 - <i>Improve physical access to the river.</i>

CLOUSTON associates

THE CLARENCE RIVER WAY MASTER PLAN II

THEME	COMMENT	FROM	IMPLICATION/RESPONSE
BOATING	I would love to see an area for boats to come up from the Yamba and moor somewhere accessible to the main street of Grafton. This would have to be on the south side of the bridge due to the height of the bridge. Such a beautiful river. Lets make it more popular than the Murray River: Note: I have canoed from Lillydale to Yamba taking various times of the years to do it and saw very few boats utilizing this wonderful river	Tricia Wicks (Community member)	Noted. Incorporated as part of objective B1 - <i>Establish the river as the foundation asset in the Clarence.</i>
BOATING	I'm in support of sustainable tourism with an end goal, to control potential over crowding of our national parks, beaches and waterways. I'm not in support of any more large vessels on our river: Particularly any commercial cruise vessels large or small. We need to protect the Clarence River. Reduce dredging and consult with the Traditional Owners.	Jeremy Short (Community member)	Noted. As outlined in Strategic Intent 7 - <i>Capitalise on Yamba's success - regional boating needs to be carefully managed to ensure visitor boats and cruises are of an appropriate scale and capacity for the Clarence region.</i>
BOATING	<p>Appropriate and easy of use of boat ramps. Boat ramps need be built to allow ease of launching boats, jet ski's and have appropriate soft landing sides to park craft while parking or retrieving trailers.</p> <p>Most of the boat ramps around Grafton & South Grafton do not have appropriate parking nearby for trailers. Consider the need for boat trailer parking and manoeuvrability.</p> <p>I personally have safety & security concerns around boat ramps and pontoons especially in the South Grafton areas. This limits me to using Corcoran Park which is quite often over crowded. Consider relocating the South Grafton Pontoon. Install CCTV and have regular security/ranger/police patrols. Installation of Lighting.</p>	Nigel Longstaff (Clarence Valley Council)	Noted. Incorporated as part of objective C2.3 - <i>Greatly extend river access points along the lower reaches including upgrading existing boat ramps and car parking access points.</i>

CLOUSTON associates

CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

THEME	COMMENT	FROM	IMPLICATION/RESPONSE
BOATING	Why instead of throwing so much money and time towards this project look at fixing up goolgang creek and nymbodia canoe centre. opening up the creek to whitewater would draw over 1000 kayaks and canoes a month. Push those that need to train back to the area and would see a increase of activities along nymbodia and down through grafton. It's a sore point to the community and those like me that train and have to drive hours to Penrith and out of the community when we have one of the best courses here in the area that Simply needs water flowing and some minor works to the river bank to make it world class.. i appreciate the council wants to improve the area and make money but doing improvement away from where it really matters wont help.	Andrew Greenwood (Community member)	Noted. Incorporated as part of Objective B5 Nymbodia - <i>Re-establish Nymbodia as an internationally renowned white water destination to capitalise upon the previous 40,000 visitors a year</i> Page 29 updated to incorporate investigating re-establishing the white water course at Nymbodia.
HIKING	Submission to promote the hiking trail along the Yuraygir coast - suggestion for consideration is to construct a pedestrian-only footbridge from Woolli to Station Creek crossing over the WoolliWoolli River; have to be upriver a way so as not to interfere with boat access in and out of the breakwall, possibly near the PO, and track continue above dune on the Western Side of the river	Katherine Carleton (Community member)	Noted. For consideration as part of Strategic Intent 8 - <i>Promote the Yuraygir Coast.</i>

CLOUSTON associates

THE CLARENCE RIVER WAY MASTER PLAN II

THEME	COMMENT	FROM	IMPLICATION/RESPONSE
COMMERCIAL/ CULTURAL ACTIVITY	We have been running commercial canoeing expeditions of the Clarence, Nymoida and Mann rivers for the last 30 years. The Clarence river extends another 90km upstream from the Clarence Valley LGA boundary. No mention has been made in the draft of collaboration with the adjoining LGA's of Kyogle and Tenterfield which I think is important if you are looking at a whole of river approach to recreation. Also your maps of the river system don't include the Clarence river north of its confluence with the Mann river which there is about 60km of in the Clarence Valley shire	Stephan Ross (Journey Outdoors in Nature - JOIN)	Noted. Incorporated as part of objective E2 - <i>Provide a co-ordinated and integrated approach to planning and management of the river.</i>
COMMERCIAL/ CULTURAL ACTIVITY	Development controls over riverfront properties especially in the urban city areas Control business purposes to ensure urban river front business add value to the location, providing Restaurants, Cafés, Micro Brewery, Leisure Craft Rentals, Tours, Riverside Markets, Mobile Cafe's, Art. Examples of poor controls 1 Duke Street, The old bowling club, doctor clinics, schools. Target & support river front properties to assist with development of businesses and up keep. Assist with ideas, lodging approvals, obtaining licences etc. Audit potential properties. Contact and assist.	Nigel Longstaff (Clarence Valley Council)	Noted. Incorporated as part of objective D2.1 - <i>Review development control plans to reflect tourism priorities.</i>

CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

THEME	COMMENT	FROM	IMPLICATION/RESPONSE
COMMERCIAL/ CULTURAL ACTIVITY	<p>Encourage private operators to consider bike hire and kayak hire attractions as a means of exploring the town and its river. this should be something for Grafton & Maclean.</p> <p>Co-ordinate promotion and interpretation of points of interest in the lower reaches eg local museums, galleries. Libraries are cultural points of interest for tourist and should be included here as well.</p> <p>There are strong cultural assets in terms of the visual and performing arts, artists, galleries and museums, recently improved with the extension of the Grafton Regional Gallery. We should also include our libraries as part of the cultural assets of the Valley.</p>	Kathryn Breward (Clarence Valley Council)	<p>Noted. Page 38 updated to include potential kayak hire in Maclean.</p> <p>Noted. Page 16 and 28 updated to include libraries.</p>
AMENITY AND MAINTENANCE	<p>Upkeep and attractiveness of the towns and riverfront assets and properties. Be proactive in encouraging high levels of maintenance and pride of place to lift the beauty and cleanliness of the Towns and surrounds. Find alternatives to the annual household waste service which all residents should be ashamed of. We seem to encourage this mess for a prolonged period of time. Cleanliness & quality of toilet facilities and surrounds near boat ramps. This should include appropriate garbage bins, scheduled cleaning of all assets and rubbish removal.</p>	Nigel Longstaff (Clarence Valley Council)	Noted. Page 48 updated to include adequate upkeep and attractiveness of towns and riverfront assets.
AMENITY AND MAINTENANCE	<p>Where it says "Improve the presentation of retail and commercial areas for tourism." we need to ensure this occurs for council buildings as well. For example Grafton Library outside foyer space needs a more frequent painting/cleaning program to keep it looking fresh.</p>	Kathryn Breward (Clarence Valley Council)	Noted. Page 15 updated to incorporate civic buildings.

CLOUSTON associates

THE CLARENCE RIVER WAY MASTER PLAN II

THEME	COMMENT	FROM	IMPLICATION/RESPONSE
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM	<p>What I don't see in this plan is a clear plan for sustainable growth of tourism in the Clarence. I'd like to see embedded in this plan a clear indication of how much tourism we want in the Clarence. What's our goal for growth? How we measure this – I'm not sure. Is there a level of beds per night where we acknowledge we've reached capacity? Is it just endless promotion and growth of tourism or do we have a cap on how much is enough and then a plan to manage that? I think this is something we need to consider now. It's also something I'm hearing more and more in community from the coast to the hinterland. I know tourism plans are focused on tourists because they bring the money in, but I think community should also be a focus. We need to keep them on side and promote to them too for better public relations and support of CVCs vision and plan. After all it's community who are cleaning up rubbish from campers at Copmanhurst and complaining about getting a carpark in Yamba. Thanks.</p>	<p>Erin Brady (Clarence Valley Council)</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
FISHING	<p>Fishing is a huge family sporting activity that has the potential to bring a lot of tourists to the area if they know that they are going to catch good quality and quantities. Review the health of the river from top to bottom including fish habitats and stock. I remember when I was young there was plenty of good fish to be caught around Grafton. This is not the case now. I am also concerned about the amount of rubbish that is dumped in the river that does not appear to get monitored and subsequently cleaned up. Audit of all potential inflows of pollution e.g Sewer, Chemicals, Rubbish and clear policies on repercussions</p>	<p>Nigel Longstaff (Clarence Valley Council)</p>	<p>Noted. Page 29 updated to include fish habitats as part of <i>Objective B1.1 Protect the resource.</i></p>

CLOUSTON associates

CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

THEME	COMMENT	FROM	IMPLICATION/RESPONSE
BRANDING	Build upon the single brand established for the "My Clarence Valley" and consider simplifying it to "The Clarence". "The Clarence", I feel doesn't have the warm fuzzy feel of the "My Clarence Valley" - its not as welcoming. I would prefer to leave as is as it can be everyones Clarence Valley when we say "My"	Kathryn Breward (Clarence Valley Council)	Noted.