

Minutes of the Tourist Attraction Signposting Assessment Committee

**John Murray Room, Lightning Ridge District Bowling Club,
1 Agate St, Lightning Ridge**

Members

David Douglas	Regional Coordinator TASAC and Drive, Destination NSW
Sharon Grierson	Roads & Maritime Services (RMS)
Tom Urban	TASAC Secretariat

Also present

Alana Copelin	Walgett Shire Council
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Apologies

AGENDA ITEMS

1. PRESENTATIONS AND REGIONAL SIGNPOSTING ISSUES

1.1 Members' Report On-Site Inspections

Prior to the meeting, committee members drove from Dubbo to Lightning Ridge and visited a number of attractions and places of interest.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) Visitor Experience in Dubbo was visited. Although still under construction, it is due to open in 2-3 months and is approaching completion. The experience was approved for signage by TASAC in March 2019. The attraction was of a very high quality and offered a range of informative and interactive installations. The committee noted that the attraction will likely be a large drawcard for Dubbo and applauded the efforts of the RFDS to create such an excellent experience.

A number of brown signs were identified on route and were found to be of sound design and were directing visitors to previously approved attractions. This included several signs for Warrumbungle National Park on the Castlereagh Highway north of Gilgandra. Gallery Two Eight Two Eight in Gulargambone, also signposted, was visited and found to be closed. The opening hours displayed outside showed that the gallery still conforms to TASAC opening hour guidelines despite being closed on Tuesdays.

A historic site several kilometres out from Lightning Ridge was also visited. The site includes a plaque explaining the story of how Lightning Ridge got its name from events that transpired at that location. It also serves as a roadside rest area. Directly across the road from this location is a large metal bird sculpture several stories high which has been named 'Stanley'. Currently visitors need to cross the road from the historic site in order to read about Stanley. One suggestion made to council was that the installation of additional interpretive materials about Stanley be included at the historic site as the sculpture is highly visible from this location and it would remove the need for visitors to cross the highway. Current signposting is limited to blue rest area signage and a single small brown sign to state the presence of a historic site. This small sign does not appear to conform to RMS standards and is insufficient for motorists

travelling at the speed limit. Council were recommended to apply to TASAC for the site to be signposted.

Lightning Ridge currently has brown signs on the Castlereagh Highway consistent with those used for regional tourist centres. The signs include a suite of blue symbols and general statements of tourist points of interest available in town. The format of the signs was found to be outdated and the northern sign also appears to have faded. Council were advised that the signs may be in need of replacement. This would allow for an update of the wording on the sign and would allow for one of the blue symbols to be replaced with an italicised 'i' to indicate the presence of an accredited Visitor Information Centre in Lightning Ridge.

Brown signage to the active opal fields in Grawin was also noted as potentially needing improvement. The biggest concern was the lack of a distance to indicate how far the opal fields were from the signposted turnoff. The lack of a distance led committee members to assume that the fields were only a short distance away from the sign. In actual fact, the fields are over 50km away. This could be confusing and frustrating to motorists and require current signage to be amended.

Committee members also visited the Lightning Ridge Visitor Information Centre (VIC). The staff at the centre were found to be very knowledgeable and helpful. They were able to provide multiple maps and resources to guide us, and were also able to advise on the road conditions along different routes.

1.2 Local Signposting Issues

Council advised on a number of tourism signage related matters relevant to Lightning Ridge and the broader council region. Of significant interest was a signage audit that council is currently planning to undertake across the Walgett Shire. The audit will inform a signage strategy and may result in future points of discussion for TASAC. The audit is due to take place in the second half of 2019.

The road between Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri is currently being sealed. At present the road is difficult to drive, particularly for vehicles not suited to travelling off road. This will offer motorists a much more direct route and will significantly reduce the time required to travel between the two towns. Visitors travelling to Lightning Ridge from the east stand to benefit the most. It was, however, noted that some residents of Walgett are opposed to this plan as this may also reduce the number of visitors passing through town. Walgett currently sits just off the less direct (but currently paved) route between Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri.

The Australian Opal Centre was identified as a significant new/redeveloped attraction for Lightning Ridge which is expected to open up in the next few years. The current small and dated centre will be redeveloped into a large-scale attraction that will also feature accommodation. Funding has been secured for the development of the building foundations (identified as phase one of three). The new centre is expected to be a significant boost for the town and is likely to be eligible for tourist signposting under TASAC.

A new Visitor Information Centre (VIC) is also planned for the town. Construction of the new centre is due to take place in two years' time and be located directly adjacent to the existing centre. It was noted that improved signage for the VIC including that raised in section 1.1 would

be appropriate for a new centre. Additional signage on local roads travelling through Lightning Ridge was also suggested.

Burren Junction Bore Baths were also identified as a point of interest within the council region and a potential candidate for signposting. The seasonal opening of Bore Baths (both in Lightning Ridge and Burren Junction) would need to be considered before any application was submitted to TASAC, however, local council may choose to signpost their own roads with these attractions.

2. NEW TOURIST SIGNPOSTING APPLICATIONS

2.1 Eurobodalla Botanic Gardens

Eurobodalla Botanic Gardens submitted an application at the request of TASAC. Signs in the area of the gardens were being reviewed at the time and it was noted that their eligibility had lapsed (approval was last granted more than five years ago).

The Eurobodalla Botanic Gardens offer a natural experience over forty-two hectares and include a forest and a wide variety of native plants, most of which are signposted. The gardens are involved in various scientific programs and include a herbarium which plays an active role in plant monitoring and recording.

The application was noted as being of a high standard. Comprehensive information on all requested areas was provided by the applicant. A review of this information suggests that all TASAC criteria has been met and that the gardens are a quality regional attraction. A site inspection still needs to be conducted; however, the committee have elected to approve the application subject to this inspection being successful.

Decision: Application is approved pending a successful site inspection.

Action: **TASAC Secretariat to arrange site inspection and send relevant correspondence.**

2.2 The William Inglis Hotel, Warwick Farm

This application was submitted to TASAC without any prior discussion via phone or email. The applicant was advised prior to the meeting (via email) that accommodation facilities are ineligible for signage, however, no formal notice to withdraw the application was provided and so it has been presented to the committee for consideration.

The committee reviewed the supporting materials and concluded that the hotel constitutes accommodation only and does not offer a tourist experience that could be considered as an attraction. The application was therefore denied on the grounds that accommodation facilities are not eligible for brown signposting under current TASAC guidelines.

Decision: Application is declined.

Action: **TASAC Secretariat to send relevant correspondence.**

2.3 Early Start Discovery Space, Wollongong

The application for the Early Start Discovery Space was submitted to TASAC on a 'Museums' form. Previous discussion with the applicant draws parallels with the Questacon science attraction in Canberra (which sits outside TASAC jurisdiction as it is not located in NSW).

The proposed attraction is situated on the University of Wollongong campus which is currently signposted in its own right. It features a wide variety of interactive exhibits for young children, an active events calendar and school-based excursion programs.

Museums and Galleries NSW (MGNSW) were consulted on the application and due to a number of anomalies have elected not to endorse the request for signposting. It was noted by MGNSW that "*they have interactive exhibits but don't appear to have a collection, hence the absence of a collection policy*". The committee agreed with this perspective and noted that the Early Start Discovery Space appears closer to a children's educational facility as opposed to a museum. It is therefore not eligible for signposting in the 'Museums' category.

The attraction's eligibility for signposting was also considered under different categories with the 'Other' category being flagged as the most appropriate. Following some discussion and a thorough review of the application, the general consensus was that this attraction is closer to an early learning facility/centre than it is to a tourist attraction. For this reason, the committee have decided that Early Start Discovery Space is not suitable for signposting and have elected to decline the application. The fact that this business is located at Wollongong University which is already clearly signposted was also noted with visitors able to follow existing signs and still locate this business.

Decision: Application is declined.

Action: **TASAC Secretariat to send relevant correspondence.**

2.4 Firescreek Winery, Holgate

Firescreek Winery is a wine production facility and cellar door located on the NSW Central Coast. The winery's primary product is fruit wines made from a wide variety of fruits that does not include grapes as per most wines. The facility offers visitors the chance to sample their products and view the production process. Fruit for the wines is also grown on site and tours are available.

The attraction is currently signposted on the Central Coast Highway; however, the eligibility period of five years has lapsed and so a new application is required. The applicant indicated that their motivation for re-applying was to seek additional signage from the Pacific Highway in Lisarow. The provision of additional signage does not conform to RMS guidelines which stipulate that signage for non-state significant attractions should be from the nearest state road only. The applicant made the point that visitors coming from the North and exiting the M1 motorway at the Ourimbah interchange will not come across signage for the winery as they would not be driving on the Central Coast Highway. They report that numerous visitors coming from the North have complained about the difficulty in locating the attraction. The committee reviewed the location of the winery on a map and noted that this does appear to be a

reasonable point, however, signage locations are not decided by TASAC and instead at the discretion of RMS alone.

The application itself and the attraction were both deemed to be of good quality. The winery does appear to meet TASAC guidelines and conform to all relevant criteria in the wineries category. A site inspection will need to be conducted; however, the committee have elected to approve the application subject to the site inspection being successful. All matters relating to signage placement can then be taken up with the designated RMS contact.

Decision: Application is approved pending a successful site inspection.

Action: TASAC Secretariat to arrange site inspection and send relevant correspondence.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF 12 JUNE 2019

The minutes of TASAC's meeting of Wednesday 12 June 2019 in Dungog were confirmed by the committee. All relevant actions have been completed.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 Royal Flying Doctor Service, Broken Hill

An application for the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Broken Hill was submitted to TASAC for consideration at the meeting in April 2019. The attraction was approved for signposting subject to their opening hours being extended over the weekend to meet TASAC requirements. TASAC was informed at the end of June 2019 that the opening hour amendments had now been made. The committee have requested that photographic evidence be provided of the opening hours sign at the attraction to confirm this statement.

Further to this, the applicant has requested that the signage say "Royal Flying Doctor Outback Experience" or "Flying Doctor Outback Experience". The committee discussed this matter and concluded that the preferred option would be "Royal Flying Doctor Experience". This matter should be discussed further with the applicant prior the approval letter being sent out.

Decision: Application is approved pending the submission of photographic evidence.

Action: TASAC Secretariat to liaise with applicant and send relevant correspondence.

5. INQUIRIES RECEIVED SINCE LAST MEETING

- 5.1 Shoalhaven Tourist Signs (Sussex inlet)
- 5.2 Tumut River Brewing Company
- 5.3 Scone Bypass Signage
- 5.4 Jindera Pioneer Museum Signage

6. POLICY ISSUES

6.2 RMS Signage Tracker Update

An updated version of the RMS signage tracker document was not received prior to this meeting. The list of attractions where signposting has been installed will be provided at a subsequent meeting.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 TASAC Meeting Schedule

TASAC has agreed that the next meeting for the Western region due to take place in March 2019 will be tentatively scheduled for Mudgee.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is currently scheduled to take place in Sydney on the 21 August 2019.

The meeting concluded at 12.15 pm.

Attachment 1 – TASAC Meeting Schedule

Region	Location	Date
Western	Lightning Ridge	3 July, 2019
n/a	Sydney	21 August, 2019
Northern	Kempsey	18 September, 2019
South West	Corowa	16 October, 2019
Hunter	Newcastle	20 November, 2019
Southern	Goulburn	11 December, 2019
Sydney	Sydney	15 January, 2020
Northern	TBC	19 February, 2020
Western	Mudgee	18 March, 2020