

Cunderdin Museum



STRATEGIC PLAN

2024/28

It's one of the best- come in and C.Y

CUNDERDIN MUSEUM

No.3 Pump Station



Developed by Cunderdin Museum Committee in conjunction with Museum Manager, Michelle Samson.

Cunderdin Museum
Forrest Street, Cunderdin, Western Australia
Open 10am to 4pm Daily
PH (08) 9635 1291

Version 1, June 9th 2024

The Cunderdin Museum is the central visitor experience and tourist attraction in the Shire of Cunderdin. Located along the east west national route, the Great Eastern Hwy, it is home to the former No 3 Steam Pumping Station for the Golden Pipeline, which was the World's premier engineering feat in the early 1900's. The Museum's value and uniqueness includes the following:

- The Museum is housed in the original number 3 Pump Station of the Goldfields Pipeline
- It has a 40m high brick chimney, an outstanding piece of purpose built industrial architecture that can be seen for miles and which you can walk into to see the sky from inside
- An expanding military display.
- Household, agricultural and industrial artefacts from the turn of the century are on display
- Extensive vintage tractor and agricultural implement display outside
- A 1903 Railway Dining Car
- An interactive Earthquake House
- It has strong volunteer support

The Museum is part of the Golden Pipeline Heritage Trail and has local and national significance.

In 2007 the Museum underwent an upgrade with new exhibitions and displays and is supported by the Shire of Cunderdin, volunteers and the National Trust. The Museum provides important local heritage support, education programs and special events.

The purpose of this Action Plan is to develop activities around marketing the experience of the Cunderdin Museum. This is to achieve the stipulations required by the Shire of

Cunderdin of increasing visitor numbers and therefore increasing revenue and lessening costs required to be expended by the Shire.

The Museum has established unique and informative displays and activities of a high standard. There is an opportunity to develop activities around marketing the Museum experience and making each visitor a walking and talking ambassador for the Cunderdin Museum.

This Action Plan addresses objectives of the Museum, current visitor demographics, recent workshop findings, goals and outcomes, actions and evaluation techniques.



Contents

Summary.....	2
1. Current Market Groups.....	5
2. New Directions.....	5
2.1 Development of a Strategic Plan	5
SWOT ANALYSIS	6
WEAKNESSES.....	6
3. Goals and Outcomes	9
4. 2024/ 28 Action Plan.....	10
5. Key Performance Indicators – Staff and Museum Committee	13
6. Evaluation	14

1. Current Market Groups

The Cunderdin Museum currently sees approximately 3,000 visitors annually. These visitors are broadly broken up into the following groups:

- Interstate travellers, usually 'grey nomads' in caravans, camper homes or passenger vehicles
- Intrastate travellers including 'grey nomads' in caravans, camper homes or passenger vehicles, day trippers to the Wheatbelt, visitors en-route to a destination further afield e.g. Kalgoorlie, Norseman, northwest of Western Australia
- International visitors en-route to a destination further afield and travelling in a caravan, camper home or passenger vehicle
- Local visitors and their friends and family
- Primary and secondary students

Interestingly, when comparing Cunderdin Museum visitor numbers to National Trust properties across the state, including No.1 Pump station in Mundaring and Strawberry Hill farm in Albany, the National Trust rates the visitor numbers of the Cunderdin Museum as greater.

2. New Directions

Towards the end of 2023, the Cunderdin Shire Council completed a Museum Case Study in which they explored the potential benefits of reducing the opening hours of the Museum to optimise operational expenses whilst strategically refocussing efforts on increasing community and tourist interest.

On being made aware of the creation of the case study, members of the museum committee met with the Shire President and CEO to seek clarification of what was required.

It was resolved that commencing 2024, with a newly appointed committee and the museum manager returning from long service leave, the committee would develop a strategic plan that would:

1. Increase visitor numbers
2. Therefore, increase revenue
3. And therefore, create a reduction in costs for the Shire.

In March 2024 the Shire Council announced that the museum would be closed on public holidays or solely manned by volunteers only.

2.1 Development of a Strategic Plan

The Committee and Staff were asked to reflect on the successes and challenges of the Cunderdin Museum by completing a SWOT analysis prior to attending a workshop.

Each attendee combined their thoughts and discussed what they saw as priorities both in new installations or exhibitions and also physical changes and upgrades necessary to make a visit to the museum a better experience for patrons.

It will be important to reflect annually on successes and challenges of the Museum to assist in continuous improvement. Responses from attendees of the workshop and those sent in by committee members who could not attend included:

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- What we have is unique
- Considered one of the best museums in the state.
- The museum is our heritage.
- Expertise and knowledge of the Museum Manager, a dedicated curator.
- Location – on the highway -2 hours from Perth- great number of vehicles passing daily – near the newly refurbished O'Connor Park.
- Has a passionate committee.
- The Earthquake House is a drawcard.
- Supportive volunteers.
- Top displays, a great collection of history from the district, which we can showcase.
- As far as possible, open 7 days a week.
- Only Goldfields Water Scheme site open to the public.
- Becoming more recognised as a school excursion destination, both Primary and Secondary students from Perth and surrounding districts.
- Has unique stories.

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of interest shown from the Shire Council and CEO in progressing forward.
- Lack of volunteer numbers in keeping the museum open every day.
- A regular annual maintenance program for displays and machinery.
- Lack of knowledge by some committee members in how to use social media/advertising to best advantage.
- Visitors think it is just tractors, or water pumping so, often, women remain in the car.
- Not being included on any 'trail'
- Lack of easy access to public toilets.
- Lack of a functional kitchen to cater for events.
- Lack of external funding.
- External signage is poor.
- Accessing funds to protect our assets.
- Upkeep of grounds and external machinery.
- No comprehensive display plans.
- Disability access.

OPPORTUNITIES

- More displays in areas of specific interest e.g. Local military history, migrant camp history.
- More direct and clear signage.
- Partnership with tourist and community groups.
- Link with Shire or other interest groups to develop history boards in Main St.
- Airfield history and tourism project.
- Revenue stream opportunities – talks, tours, research.
- Networks – Museums Australia, AMAGA, Wheatbelt Chapters.
- Engage in discussion with Lloyd Bacon and Fiona Harris re -permanent access to Hodgson Rock.
- Partnership with PSA schools re- Yr 11 and 12 studies. (see Geoff Kay. Santa Maria College)

- Develop water story/ walk drive trail.
- Develop a relationship with local radio.
- External sources- other museums.
- Functions with interest groups e.g. Gliding Club.
- Engage and encourage: younger generation
Staff and students from WA College of Agriculture for upkeep and maintenance as part of their training.
- Men's Shed engagement.

THREATS

- Cunderdin Shire – funding and support
- Maintenance funding/maintenance program
- Shire not willing to spend money to make money.
- Project funding.
- Number of volunteers.
- No succession planning.
- Consistent or regular opening hours.
- Reliance on shire funding to fund maintaining facilities.
- Volunteer availability.
- Tourism maps don't mention Cunderdin.
- Not on 'The Wheatbelt Way' sends message that there is nothing to see here.
- Hope that the improvement in volunteer hours isn't seen by Shire as a reason to lessen manager hours.
- Competition with Town Teams for funding.



During the workshop, attendees were asked to participate in a walk-through of the museum looking at it through the eyes of a visitor. The purpose of doing this activity was to remind and re-engage with the unique and varied experiences and information that is on offer to visitors, but that sometimes 'goes under the radar' when promoting the Museum. It also encouraged the attendees to see the place and its' values with 'fresh eyes'.

Individually they were then asked to prioritise what needed to be focussed on in the way of upgrades and maintenance, and themes or events that could be featured at the Museum. They were asked to share their ideas with another group member and prioritise their combined list. This was done until the whole group had one prioritised list, on which to focus on, in the future.

UPGRADES AND MAINTENANCE

- Update map of town and local activities.
- Museum page on Shire Website needs to be more user friendly for patrons and easily updated by museum personnel, both staff and volunteers.
- Bigger and better signage at the museum that can be seen from the road.
- Message on signage to encourage women to visit museum, and not remain in the car.
- Improved signage on items on display in museum, especially items outside.
- Signage advertising museum 1-2km from town on 4 major entries. GE Highway East and West, Cunderdin/Quairading Rd. Cunderdin/Wyalkatchem Rd.
- Improved lighting in all galleries. LED lighting, the design in keeping with age and style of building.
- Lay gravel path from edge of gantry down to Lifestyle Pavillion with offshoot to railway carriage ramp, to prevent boggy, wet passage between galleries.
- Members of the committee to undertake PD/Training in marketing/ public relations for tourism centres.

THEMES AND EVENTS

- When the upgrade of the railway carriage is completed, invite members of the community to view the new installations and enjoy a High Tea (morning and afternoon sessions) in the dining car.
- Continue to develop and expand the local military display, including modern day conflicts. Possibly tie-in a 're-opening' of the area with Remembrance or ANZAC Days.
- Develop a permanent installation telling the history of the Migrant Camp, focussing on the stories behind the families that stayed there. Become a venue for hosting reunions and gatherings.
- Research the family names on the road signs in the Cunderdin Shire. Celebrate with a gathering of those families, setting up a temporary display of artifacts. Investigate the possibility of a guest speaker e.g. How to research your family tree or how to safely store and save artifacts housed at home or what the museum might be happy to receive.
- Increase interpretation at each of the one teacher school sites and develop a user-friendly drive yourself trail to visit each site.
- Indigenous interaction with the local area.
- Be aware of any travelling displays that could be a temporary installation that would attract locals to revisit museum.
- Create events that are based on local history which would attract locals to revisit museum.

3. Goals and Outcomes

The following goals and outcomes were developed after the workshop. These goals will be incorporated into the activities of the Museum over the next four years.

Goals are to	Goal Outcomes
Enhance the visitor experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors have a positive experience that is relevant and meaningful • Experiences are diverse • Experiences are communicated through marketing material • Visitors will want to recommend the experience to others
Generate greater local and public support for the Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers, students and those visiting the site for professional development or learning report having a positive response to the Museum • Local residents and stakeholders say positive things about the Museum or report having a positive image of it
Increase the profile of the Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online presence is increased and can be easily accessed • There is greater awareness of the Museum by local and regional media • The physical location of the Museum is promoted
Enhance interpretation of local history	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of new or improved installations is ongoing

4. 2024/ 28 Action Plan

The following Action Plan was developed following the workshop and focuses on marketing the experiences of the Cunderdin Museum. It should also be noted that the majority of these activities do not require substantial resources.

The 2024/28 Action Plan will be monitored at each Cunderdin Museum Committee meeting.

Area	Objectives	Activity	Resources	Responsibility	Priority
Engagement	To be a must visit Museum along GEH and in Australia's Golden Outback	PLACE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a new design of signage for erection/display throughout the Shire and major routes. Develop bigger and better signage adjacent to museum that can be seen from the road. Message on signage to encourage women to visit museum, and not remain in the car. Improved and strategically placed signage on exhibits. 	Thompson Signs Main Roads Shire Council	Michelle Trevor T Jan	HIGH HIGH Medium HIGH
		PROMOTION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a media release template for the Museum Develop a media and tourism contact list Develop a relationship with local radio and ABC Regional Radio. Create a partnership with tourist and community groups. 	Midwest & Wheatbelt Radio Shire Team Town Teams CDN Photoclub	Michelle	Medium Medium Medium Medium
Visitors	To extend reach and audience	WEBSITE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Shire to develop a more user-friendly museum page on the Shire website that is easily updated by Shire/museum personnel, both staff and volunteers. Establish a dedicated website with appropriate language, great pictures and stories 	Shire Team Cdn Photoclub	Michelle Jan	HIGH

Area	Objectives	Activity	Resources	Responsibility	Priority
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish regular updates on Museum Facebook site 	Social Media		Medium
		ONLINE LINKS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link to self- drive routes in the Wheatbelt e.g. Wheatbelt Way, Granite Way, Wildflower Way, Pathways to Wave Rock Ask visitors and locals to contribute reviews on Trip Advisor- provide a museum visitor's card with relevant details Monitor reviews on Trip Advisor 	Shire Team		Medium
			Social Media	Museum Volunteers	Medium
			Google	Michelle	Medium
		DIRECT MARKETING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with networks – Museums Australia, AMAGA, Wheatbelt Chapters. Package up information about the Museum and send to WA and interstate Caravan Clubs and Motorhome Associations Approach tour bus companies to include the Museum in their itinerary Approach Wheatbelt Regional Education Office with packaged information about the Museum 		Michelle	Medium
			Travel Groups	Brenda	Medium
			Tour bus companies	Michelle	Medium
			School Network Groups	Jan	Medium HIGH (Term1 annually only)
Interpretation	To develop new or improved displays throughout museum.	DISPLAYS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a permanent display area in entrance passage, with rotating themes, to entice visitors, especially women, to enter museum Create distinct brochures for purchase at low cost, discussing in greater detail a particular aspect of the museum displays Consider Discovery Drawers for children Improve lighting in all galleries Develop more displays in areas of specific interest eg. Local military history, migrant camp history 		Michelle Jan	HIGH
				Museum Research Volunteers Leanne, Susan, Diane	Medium
				Michelle	Low
				Museum Committee	HIGH HIGH

Area	Objectives	Activity	Resources	Responsibility	Priority
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse the existing collection to develop themed displays Be aware of any travelling displays that could be a temporary installation that would attract locals to revisit museum Create events based on local history which would attract locals to revisit museum 		Michelle Jan Museum Committee Museum Committee	HIGH Low Medium

5. Key Performance Indicators – Staff and Museum Committee

It is important to track performance by Staff and Museum Committee members of the Cunderdin Museum to create a culture of continuous improvement, to allocate resources efficiently, to manage risk, to gain a return on investment and it aids in future development of the Museum. The following Key Performance Indicators have been developed in response to the workshop and 2024/28 Action Plan.

Area	Activity	Evaluation
Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade website as per Action Plan 2013/15 • Continue to gather visitor statistics at the Museum (numbers, post codes etc) • Collect and evaluate visitor feedback at the Museum and online 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website upgraded and appropriate links in place • Online reviews and recommendations are positive (majority) Negative reviews are responded to • Visitor data for review by the Shire and Committee is detailed and relevant
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the assistance of an educator, three levels of educational programs and experiences are developed for the Cunderdin Museum • External signage and brochures are used to promote the Museum as per the Action Plan 2024/2028 • Monthly media release to local, regional and metropolitan media and tourism contacts • Members of committee to undertake PD/Training in marketing /public relations for tourism centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One rural or metropolitan school group visits the Cunderdin Museum and partakes in the formal educational program • Increased awareness of the Museum through placement of signage and brochures, measured through a list of venues • Increase in Museum news stories being published or followed up by media and tourism contacts • Attendance at one professional development workshop/course within 12-18months
Interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newly installed entrance display encourages female visitors to visit museum • With the assistance of the volunteer research team develop brochures with more in-depth information about certain displays • Develop one new permanent display bi-annually • Upgrade one permanent display annually • Create three temporary displays annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in number of female visitors remaining in car whilst partners view displays. • Increased interest and uptake in purchasing low cost brochures or pamphlets • Development and/or upgrade of displays occur in a timely fashion

Key Performance Indicators are to be reported upon at each Committee meeting

6. Evaluation

It is important to evaluate activities and ascertain if tactics have been successful. This can be done by

- Collecting daily visitor numbers
- Collecting postcodes
- Revenue
- Feedback from visitors (either in guest book, online or feedback box)
- Monitoring press and social media – number of stories published, number of engagements on Facebook, online reviews etc

Committee to implement methods of evaluation and Museum Manager to report upon these at regular intervals.

This Action Plan to be formally reviewed by the Shire of Cunderdin, Committee and Staff in 2026 and 2028 with development of new plan to be commenced in 2028