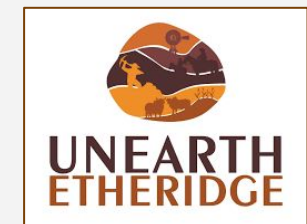




UNEARTHING ETHERIDGE: THE MASTER PLAN



CONTACT



Ken Timms CEO
Ken.Timms@etheridge.qld.gov.au
M 0439 414 711



Professor Karine Dupre
Master Plan Leader
k.dupre@griffith.edu.au
M 0403 591 902

A/Prof Brent Moyle
Sustainable Tourism Adviser
b.moyle@griffith.edu.au
M 0407 745 388

Disclaimer

While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of this data, Griffith University makes no representations or warranties about its accuracy, reliability, completeness suitability for any particular purpose. Griffith University disclaims all responsibility and all liability (including without limitation, liability in negligence) for all expenses, losses, damages (including indirect or consequential damage) and costs which you might incur as a result of the data being inaccurate or incomplete in any way for any reason. June 2022.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the people who are the Traditional Custodians of the Land on which this project stands. We pay respect to the Elders, past, present and emerging, and extends that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

THE DESIGN TEAM



From top to bottom and left to right:
Bruce Robertson, Miyuki Suzuki,
Ahmad Alwan, Eliza Campbell, Karine Dupre
Jack Wright, Stefan Vrbanjac

To cite this work

Dupre K., Alwan A., Campbell E., Robertson B., Suzuki M., Wright J., Rufas Abenzoza M., Möller M., Vrbanjac S., (2022) *Unearth Etheridge: the Master Plan*, Etheridge Shire.

GU Ref No: 2021/895

Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. If potential participants have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the research project they should contact the Manager, Research Ethics on 373 54375 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary	p. 2
2. Methods	p. 3
3. Shire Overview	p. 4
3.1 Natural resources	p. 5
3.2 Cultural resources	p. 7
3.3 Infrastructure & workforce	p. 9
3.4 Summary of opportunities	p. 11
4. Master Plan	p. 12
4.1 Vision & Design objectives	p. 12
4.2 Concept & Timeline	p. 13
4.3 Phase I	p. 14
4.4 Phase II	p. 16
4.5 Phase III	p. 17
4.6 Summary (building-based actions)	p. 18
5. Key Projects	p. 19
5.1 Signage & landmarks	p. 20
5.2 Georgetown strengthening	p. 26
5.3 Cumberland bird hide & boardwalk	p. 29
5.4 Charleston Dam activation	p. 34
5.5 Einasleigh activation	p. 39
6. Conclusion	p. 46
7. References	p. 47

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Unearthing Etheridge: The Master Plan is a 10-year strategic planning document for Etheridge Shire which aims to position the Shire as a unique destination for domestic and international visitors seeking memorable experiences in the Australian outback. This project also aims to assist Etheridge Shire in positioning tourism as a key pillar of the regional economy.

In collaboration with Etheridge Shire Council, Griffith University researchers co-designed a process of community consultation to understand residents' aspirations for tourism development in the region. Analysis of the collected data, combined with archives research and site visits have informed the vision for this document.

Unearthing Etheridge: The Master Plan aims to

- set a vision to guide growth and development, while reflecting community's aspirations and feedback
- outline design principles based on identified opportunities that are interesting, accessible and unique
- provide a planning approach that can inform major strategic investments and means to respond to challenges and opportunities

24 actions and **5** key projects

have been identified to contribute to the realisation of the design objectives (consolidation, place activation, heritage conservation, co-creation), besides the overarching development of four core foundation strategies. These 5 projects are the unfolding of new signages and landmarks throughout the Shire with emphasis on the landscape diversity; the strengthening of Georgetown as a tourism hub; the construction of a Bird Hide and boardwalk at Cumberland Lagoon; Charleston Dam activation and the activation and extension of Einasleigh offering.

Community consultation and participation are strongly recommended for these projects as they will increase engagement, empowerment, ownership and facilitate the good use of these facilities. It will also increase chances for funding.

2.METHODS

Aligned with and supplementary to the **Tourism Directions Paper** (Moyle et al. 2022), this Master Plan is based on a structured and evidence-based analysis stemming from a combination of methods that aimed to identify

- the Shire tourism resources
- current opportunities and challenges
- list of priorities

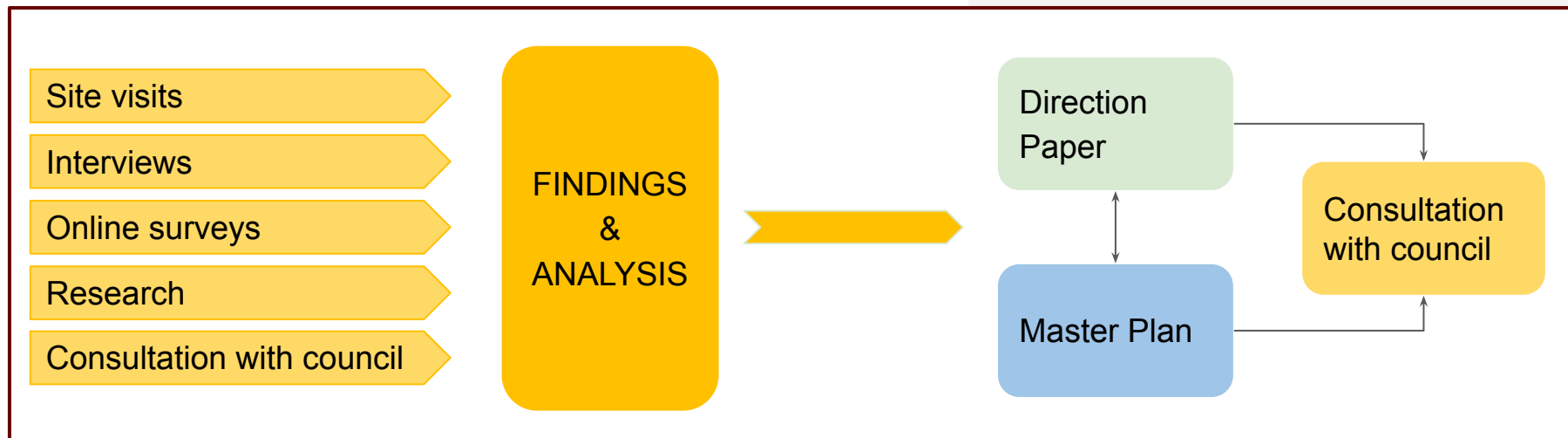
Tourism resources were categorised into 3 categories as follows:

- natural resources (climate, environment, ecosystems),
- cultural resources (heritage, arts, traditions, archaeological and science values, etc.)
- infrastructures (transport, accommodation, catering, information, etc.) and workforce

Methods (Figure 1) included

- **several site visits** across the shire to quantitatively and qualitatively assess places, infrastructures, experiences and current tourism offerings;
- **online surveys and interviews** with key stakeholders and community members to get their feedback on current tourism activities and future development;
- **research** to collect data and precedents;
- **consultations** with council to discuss findings and refine first ideas

Figure 1: Methodological process



3. SHIRE OVERVIEW

Etheridge Shire lies in the heart of the Savannah Gulf region, Far North Queensland at the base of Cape York Peninsula, covering a vast area of 38,850 km² (Map 1). Situated 5 hours drive west of Cairns, the Shire is classified as 'very remote' by the Australian Standard Geographical Classifications with currently 794 residents (ABS, 2020) dispersed across outlying farming properties and 4 main townships (Einasleigh, Forsayth, Georgetown, Mount Surprise). Employment rate in 2016 was 94.9%, with 47.3% of the residents working in beef cattle farming, 14.4% in the local government administration and 8.3% in accommodation.

Cattle farming is the primary industry since 1900s, however, relics of the gold rush days can still be found throughout Etheridge Shire, particularly in Mount Surprise, Einasleigh, Forsayth, and Georgetown, which remain active places for fossickers. Today's prospectors still search for specimens such as coloured topaz, agates, sapphires, smoky quartz and other precious stones, as well as gold nuggets.

The steady growth in tourism, from 33,000 domestic overnight visitors in 2016 to 79,000 during 2021 (TRA, 2022) gave the incentive for the Council to position the Shire as a unique destination. The following pages summarise the current tourism resources.

Map 1: Location of Etheridge Shire,
© MapInfo Australia Pty Ltd



3.1 Natural resources

Etheridge Shire is classified under savanna tropical climate (Koppen classification), with hot humid summers, heavy rainfalls, and potential cyclones and flooding. This also means that there is a restricted tourism season (around April- November).

Regarding the natural environment, Etheridge Shire is characterised by a rich diversity of landscapes, including 3 main rivers (Gilbert, Einasleigh, Etheridge), a network of smaller waterways and lagoons, with rich ecosystems that attract a variety of birds and fish.

Lava tubes, gorges, hot springs, mounts, plateau and different soil composition with precious stones and minerals are some interesting geological features of the Shire.



Picture Series 1: Undara Lava tube (right) and examples of landscape variety (top) © Dupre

Overall, the Shire clearly has some natural assets and several have been already transformed into iconic tourism attractions, such as Undara lava tubes, Cobbold Gorge, Talaroo Hot Springs and Agate Creek to name but a few.

However, several elements prevent the full appreciation and even acknowledgement of the natural richness present in the Shire, as follows:

1. **Accessibility:** mostly hindered by discontinuous sealed roads, the long distances to travel from one attraction to the other and the sparsely populated territory.
2. **Communication:** the lack of signage and information being displayed to pinpoint scenery or element of interest throughout the Shire.
3. **Natural risks:** visitors are not necessary well prepared to travel in the Shire, while weather events strain tourism operators.



Picture 1: Example of unsealed roads towards Cobble Gorge with one of the rare signs showing distance information © Dupre

Picture 2: Cattle on the road, a dangerous experience at night time © Dupre

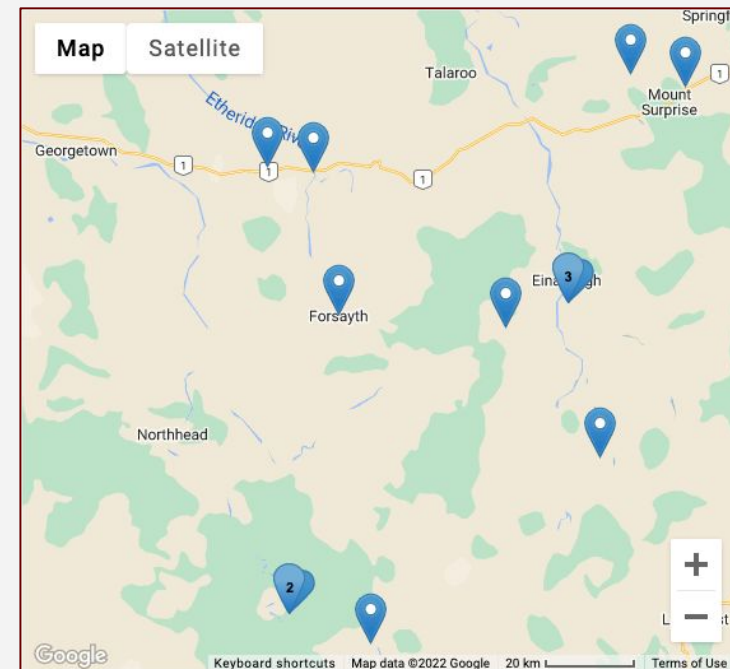
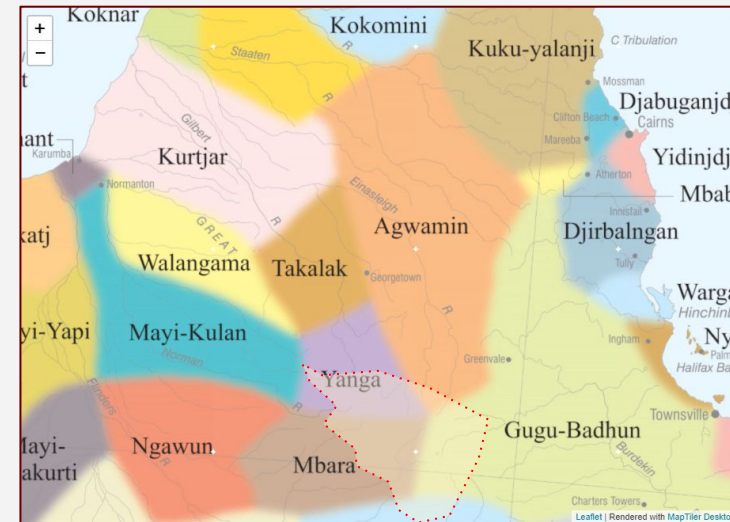
3.2 Cultural resources

Although the Queensland map of Traditional Owners (map 2) shows at least 3 main groups (Agwamin, Takalak and Yanga) in Etheridge Shire and despite several rock paintings disseminated on properties, **there are only few tourism activities that are related to Aboriginal People heritage and/or culture.** One is the Talaroo Hot Springs.

The white settlement history -and specifically its mining period- has left tangible traces with artifacts disseminated throughout the Shire, such as the chimney at Cumberland. However, although research in archives and discussion with community members show that **there seem to be more mining and agricultural heritage -both tangible and intangible, this has not been fully exploited to this day.** Community also strongly expressed their worries that this heritage is actually getting lost.

Similarly, **Etheridge Shire comprises 10 properties listed in the Queensland Heritage Register (Map 3), but only few have been developed into a tourism attraction or are mentioned on the tourism map.** The 10 listed properties are the Antbed house, Aspasia Mine and Battery, Einasleigh Copper Mine and Smelter and hotel, the Etheridge railway, Kidston State Battery & Township, the Station Master's Residences in Forsayth and Einasleigh; Mount Moran Battery, Ortona Mine and Battery, Quartz Hill Coach Change Station Site and Cemetery, and the RDF Station in Mt Surprise.

Map 2: Extract of the map of Indigenous Australia, © AIATSIS



Map 3: Location of the listed properties © Queensland Heritage Register

Georgetown has currently three displays of interest: an outdoor street trail with signage explaining historic buildings, the Ted Elliott Mineral Collection with over 4,500 specimen and the recent Unearth Etheridge exhibition. However, the street trail and the Mineral Collection are really tired. The same apply to the river walk and old memorial signage.

On a positive side, the Hollywood-like sign at the entrance of Georgetown is memorable, while the free swimming pool and sport complex are great new additions to the town displaying good architecture quality.



Pictures 3 & 4 (top):
Examples of tired
signage © Dupre

Pictures 5 & 6
(down): Examples
of positive assets
© Dupre

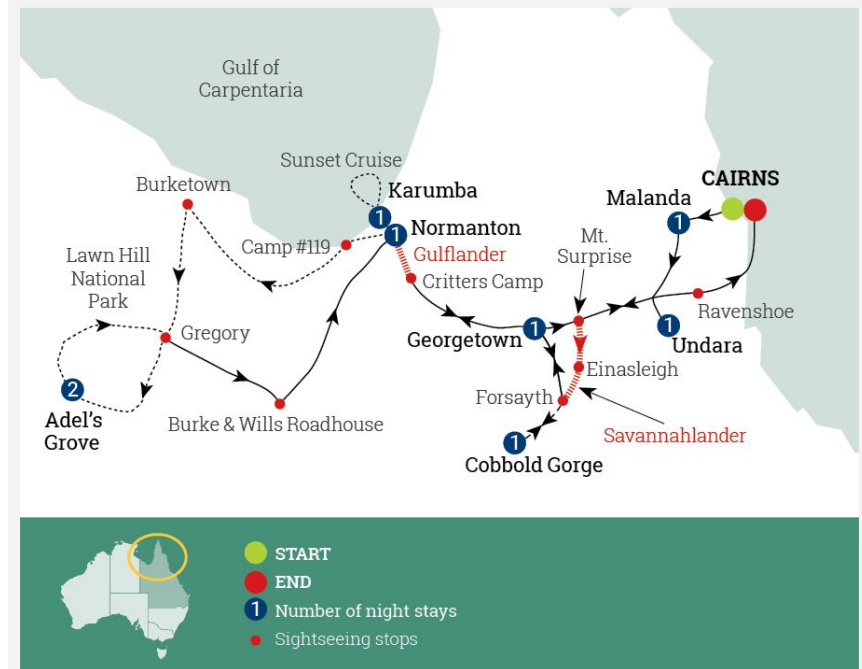
3.3 Infrastructures & workforce

Etheridge Shire has 2 main assets regarding the infrastructure: it is part of the famous Savannah Way, crossing the northern part of Australia from Cairns to Broome (map 4); and it is part of the Savannahlander journey, with several train stops further south the Shire (map 5). This means there is already a strong steady flow of different types of visitor, with visitation extended beyond the main road.

However, **all the road network is not entirely sealed and that is a major concern both for visitors and tourism providers** who are losing potential guests because of this situation. The second consequence is the number of incidents on unsealed roads from unprepared tourists that also take a toll both for local communities and the reputation of the Shire.

The 4 existing airports/airstrips in the Shire (Georgetown, Mount Surprise, Einasleigh and Forsayth) are not serviced by commercial airlines, but can be used by private pilots upon permission and RFDS for emergencies. The existence of medical facilities/services in the 4 main townships could also become an increased drawcard for grey nomads specifically, if there was reliable opening hours or a reliable digital communication strategy to inform visitors of the opening hours.

Map 4: Savannah Way,
© <https://aussieredbacktours.com.au>



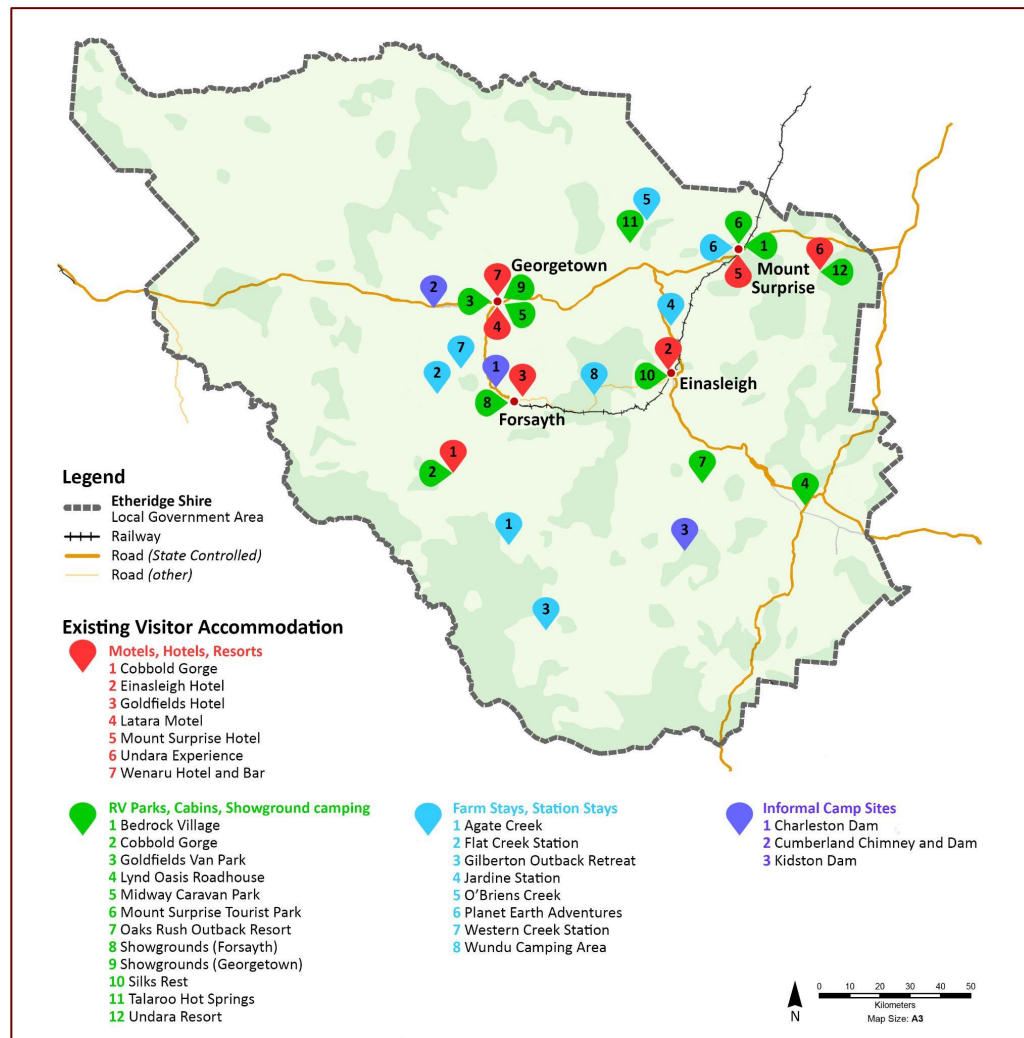
Map 5: Savannahlander journey,
© <https://almatravelcentre.com.au>

Regarding accommodation and catering, Etheridge Shire currently proposes a modest range of offering with varied quality. With the recent increase in tourism, emerging issues are the overflow of tourists in peak season and the difficulty to attract and retain seasonal staff. Another issue is the training of service and tourism providers that is not necessarily up-to-date (e.g. welcoming attitude, digital skills, etc.).

Overall, there is also improvement to be made regarding communication, both for signage (lack of branding consistency, the existing ones are often tired) and internet/phone access.

Map 6: Map of the existing accommodations in the Shire © M. Moller

Picture Series 2: Examples of signage showing a lack of consistency even in one location (Cumberland) © Dupre

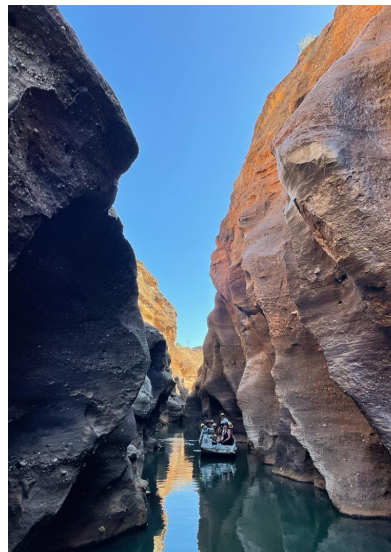


3.4 Summary of opportunities

Most of the current key tourist attractions rely on natural resources, therefore there is still lot of opportunities to develop new ones that would bring either new focus of interest or new perspectives.

Opportunities exist to

- Improve connectivity between the different attractions throughout the Shire and within each township
- Develop Aboriginal-based attractions
- Develop children-friendly attractions
- Consolidate and extend existing offering
- Innovate



Pictures 7 & 8:
Copperfield Gorge (left)
© Dupre
Cobbold Gorge (right)
© Moyle

Undara Lava Tubes

Cobbold Gorge

Copperfield Gorge

**TerrEstrial Visitor
Information Centre
and Ted Elliott
Mineral Collection**

**Talaroo Hot
Mineral Springs
and Station**

**Cumberland
Lagoon**

**Agate Creek
Mineral Reserve**

**O'Briens Creek
Gemfields**

**Western Creek
Gold panning area**

**Charleston Dam
Recreation Area**

Table 1: list of the main attractions in Etheridge Shire

4.MASTER PLAN

4.1 Vision & design objectives

This Master Plan aims to position Etheridge Shire as a unique destination for domestic and international visitors seeking memorable experiences in the Australian periphery. This document also aims to assist Etheridge Shire in positioning tourism as a key pillar of the regional economy, which could also facilitate demographic growth and retention, diversify the existing employment sectors and support connectedness in both tangible and intangible ways (e.g. new technologies).

Therefore, four goals have been identified to achieve this vision:

1. **The strengthening of the tourism industry:** by developing a several-stage flexible tourism strategy over the 20 years with clear milestones, evaluations and benchmarks to assess progress, success and potential roadblocks
2. **The growth of engaged and resilient communities:** by implementing tourism activities that will foster co-creation, connectedness and a variety of employments in the Shire
3. **The implementation of a Dual Mode system:** by systematically developing and managing tourism operations as community assets and/or active in off season
4. **The strengthening of innovative thinking:** by developing global and local actions and targets

DESIGN OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Consolidation

Enhance the existing tourism services and facilities with clear visible branding and spatial quality

Objective 2: Place Activation

Create a network of 'hotspots' to combat the vastness and sparseness of the Shire

Objective 3: Heritage conservation

Improve existing resources and collect new data to establish a more complete heritage-based offering and increase community pride

Objective 4: Co-creation

Develop new attractions/ products that empower and engage communities while bringing innovation

4.2 Concept & timeline

Aligned with the recent *Unearth Etheridge* digital marketing for the Shire, this Master Plan has adopted the same tagline for its main concept. This will serve as a guiding principle for any consolidation, activation, conservation and co-creation. In the same way, the second guiding principle is the Dual Mode system. Concretely, it means that for each intervention, the two following questions need to be answered

- How is this tourism project/operation/service/offering participating to/ aligning with the *Unearth Etheridge* branding?
- When there are no tourists, what is the other role/function of this tourism project/operation/service/offering?

The 10-year timeline is divided into 3 main phases that slightly overlap and constitute a whole, as each phase is interdependent with the other. Most importantly, Phase 1 will be setting the foundation strategies, and as such will remain as a continuous thread over the 10-year period.

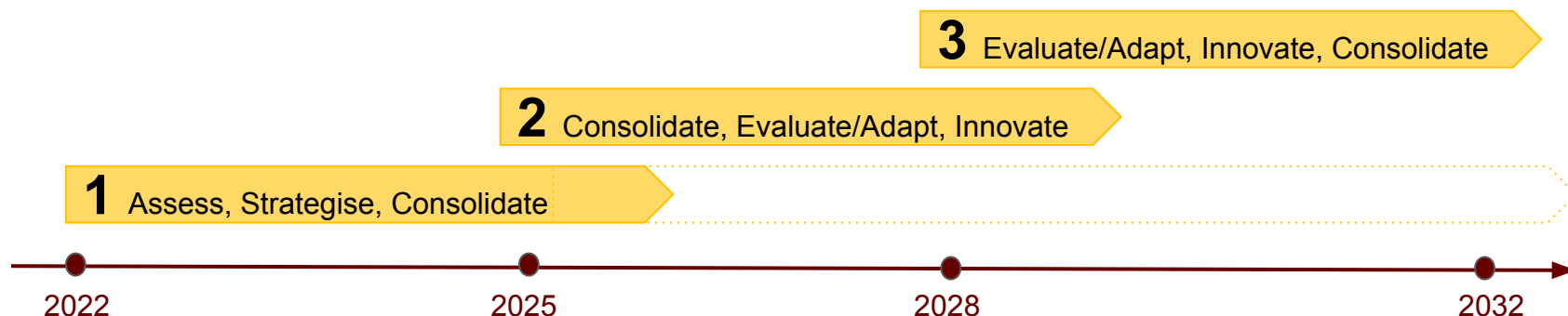
Strategise means the development of a specific strategy for an identified purpose.

Consolidate means either improving, extending or activating an existing tourism product, place or service.

Evaluate means the evidence-based assessment of the success or failure of a tourism product or strategy.

Adapt is the reactive change undertaken following the results of an evaluation.

Figure 2: Master Plan Timeline

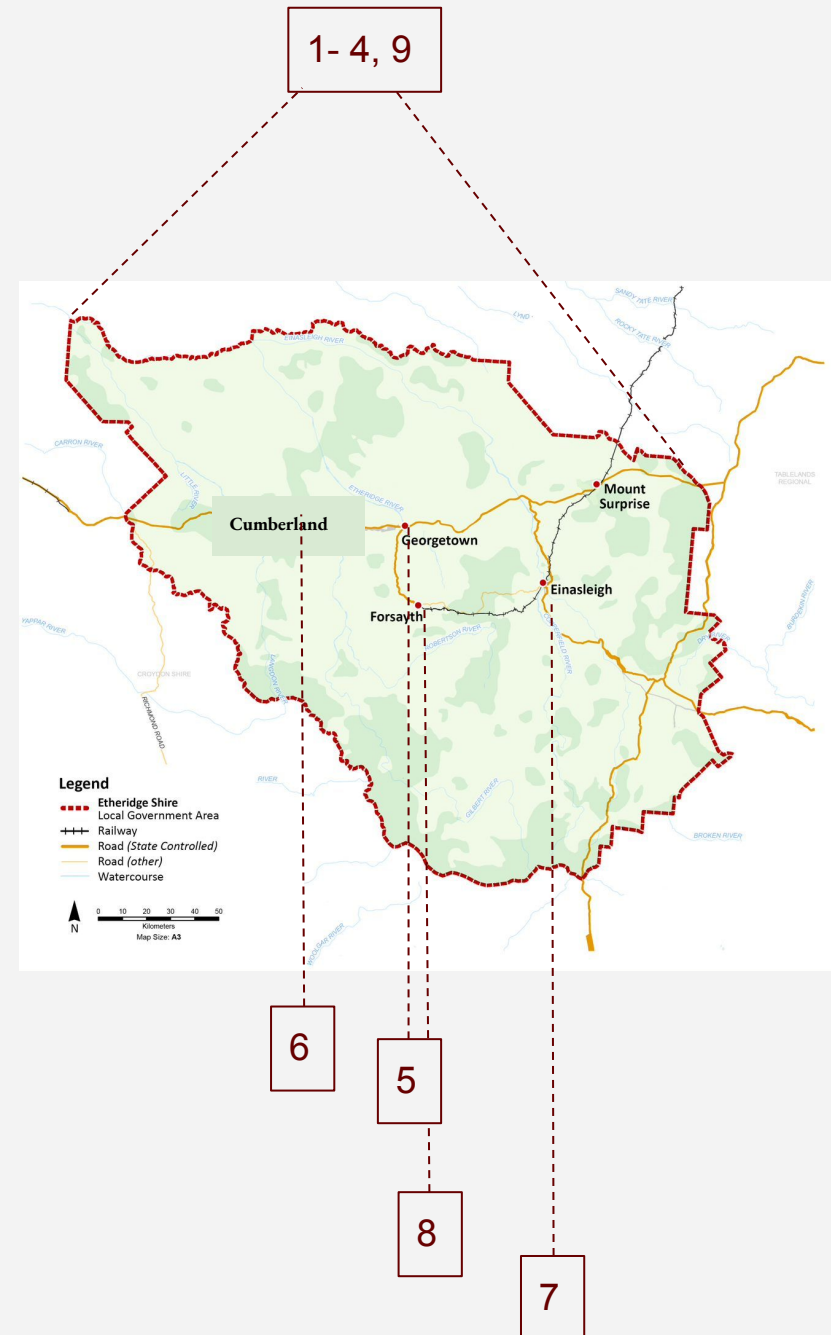


4.3 Phase I

Following the comprehensive assessment undertaken with the Directions Paper, Phase I (0-3 years) lays the foundation to this Master Plan and includes 9 main actions that are grouped into 2 distinct directions. The first is to strategise before actioning, and the second is to consolidate existing assets.

Strategise (AMOH):

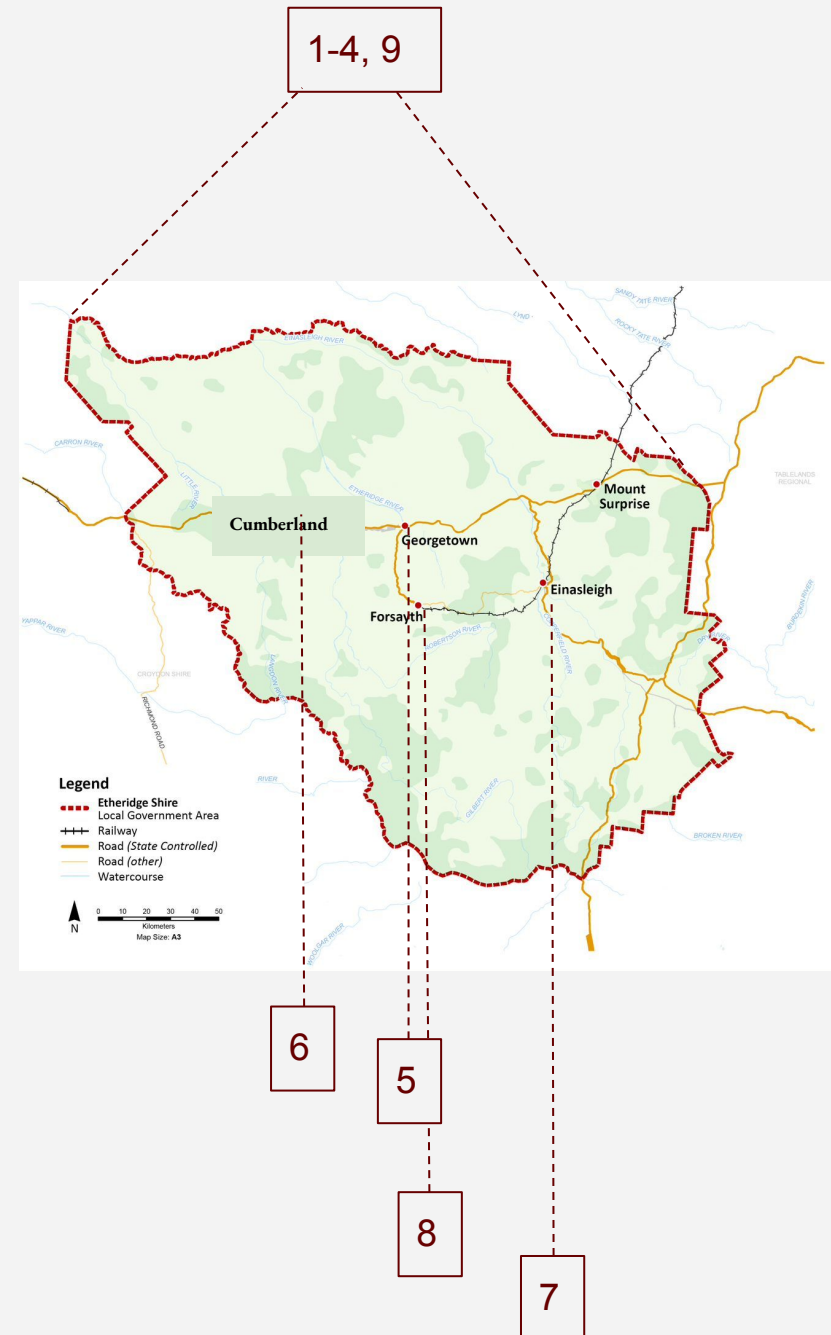
1. **Elaborate an Access strategy for road and IT networks** to improve existing conditions AND implement.
2. **Elaborate a flexible Marketing strategy** that will improve communication and the easy inclusion of new or changed products and services. It includes tangibles outputs such as new signages and landmarks to activate places and landscapes
3. **Elaborate a Off-season strategy & taskforce** that will allow providers to work together for the next season to evaluate, adapt, train and grow. This should be an ongoing basis and acknowledging less commitment during the peak season until there is possibility to fund a taskforce manager.
4. **Elaborate a Heritage strategy.** This should deliver guidelines to collect, document and transform into tourism resources, while identifying points of differences.



4.3 Phase I

Consolidate

5. **Continue the retrofitting of the TerrEstrial Centre** with a central cafe and a new exhibition display for the Ted Elliott Mineral Collection
6. **Activate Cumberland** with a new bird hide & boardwalk
7. Activate the new concrete footpath at Einasleigh with shading, seating and interpretive signage
8. **Activate the access to Charleston Dam** with shading, seating and interpretive signage
9. **Implement heritage data collection** and visitor feedback through interactive pavilions across the Shire



4.4 Phase II

Phase II (3-6 years) is a consolidating phase to make sure the foundation strategies hit their mark and first successes are recorded. Therefore, the collection of evidences and time for critical reflection are crucial.

Consolidate

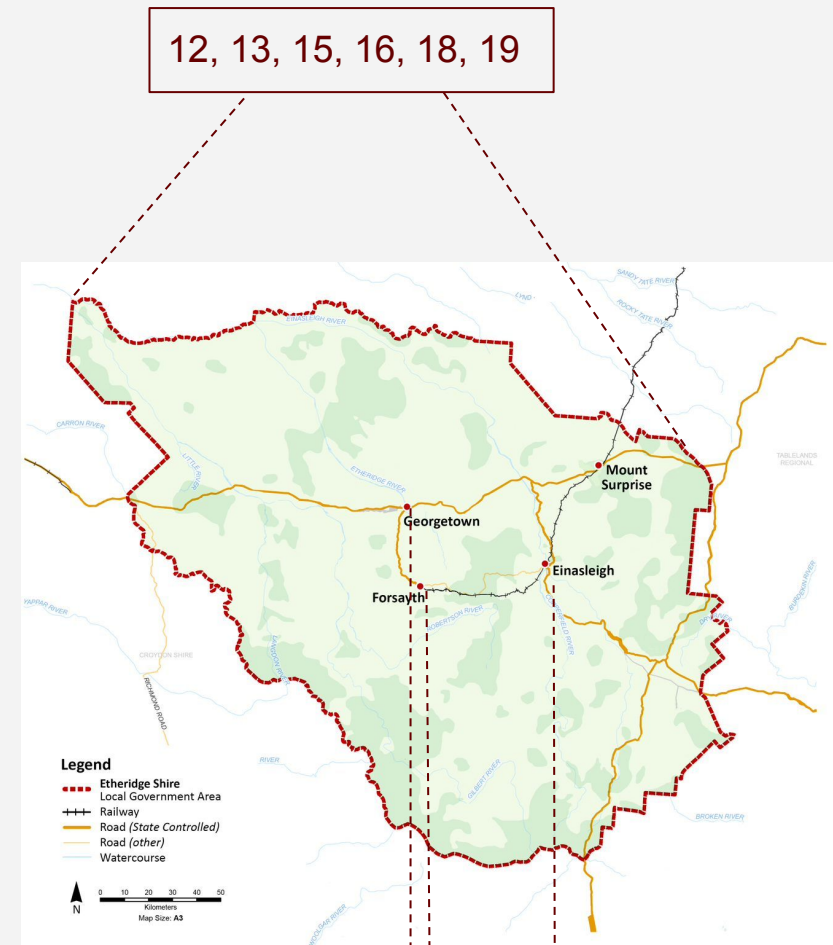
10. **Extend Georgetown central hub** with a beautification scheme and more accommodations
11. **Extend the offering at Einasleigh with a new museum**

Evaluate & Adapt

12. **Review the main strategies**, critically reflect AND adapt
13. **Review the success** of actions 4 to 7 from Phase I, critically reflect AND adapt

Innovate

14. **Co-create the Etheridge Museum/** disaster refuge
15. **Co-create high tech heritage experience** using QR code, virtual reality and/or augmented reality throughout the Shire based on the data collected (action #8)
16. **Develop a waste strategy** that could provide a new type of tourism experience
17. **Develop hiking and biking trails** around Charleston Dam and other suitable areas
18. **Interactive pavilions across the Shire as landmarks**
19. **Call for private investors** for a new type of disaster-proof tourism accommodations



4.5 Phase III

Phase III (6-10 years) should see the completion of most of the actions identified in the Master Plan and be the time to scale up the tourism economic growth to other markets.

Evaluate & Adapt

20. **Review all actions** from the 2 previous phases, critically reflect AND adapt

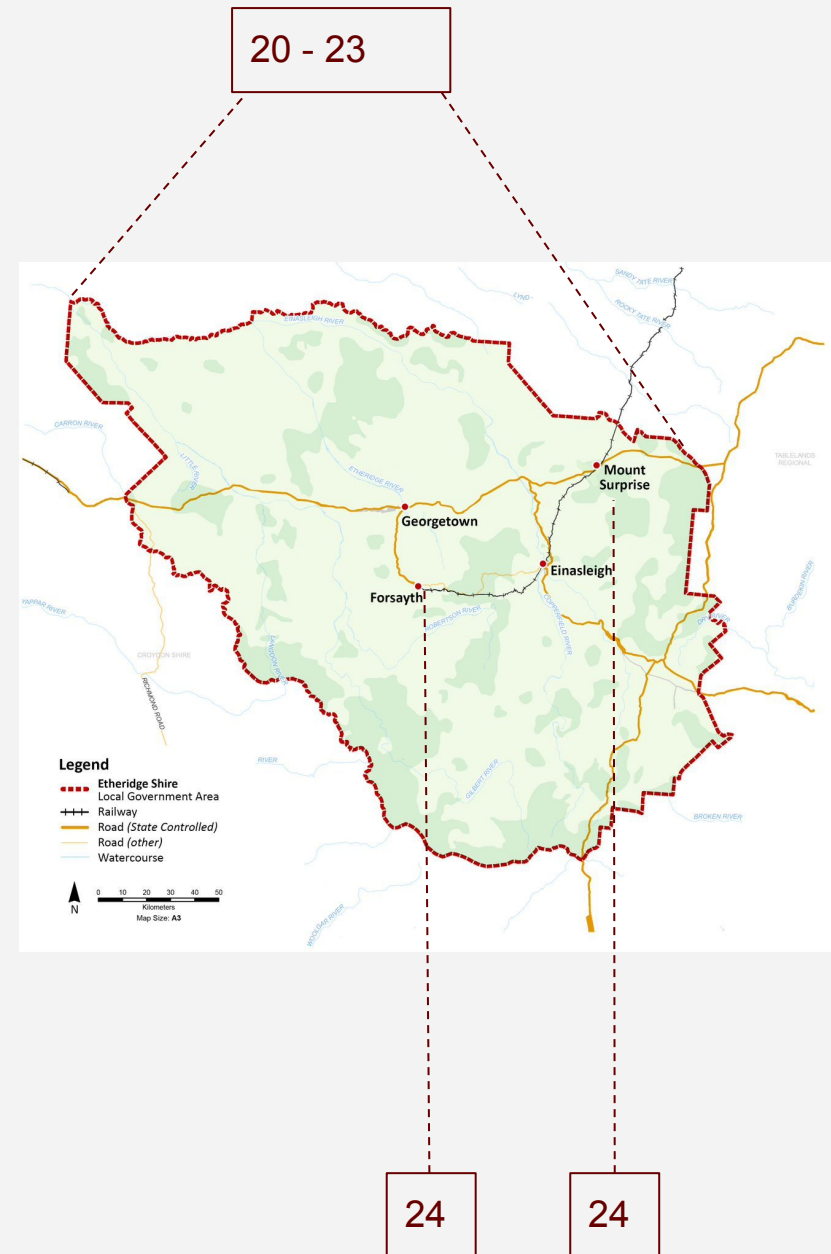
Innovate

21. **Develop an aged-care strategy** that could provide a new type of tourism experience for the Asian market
22. **Develop a regional education and training hub** for tourism providers and FIFO workers

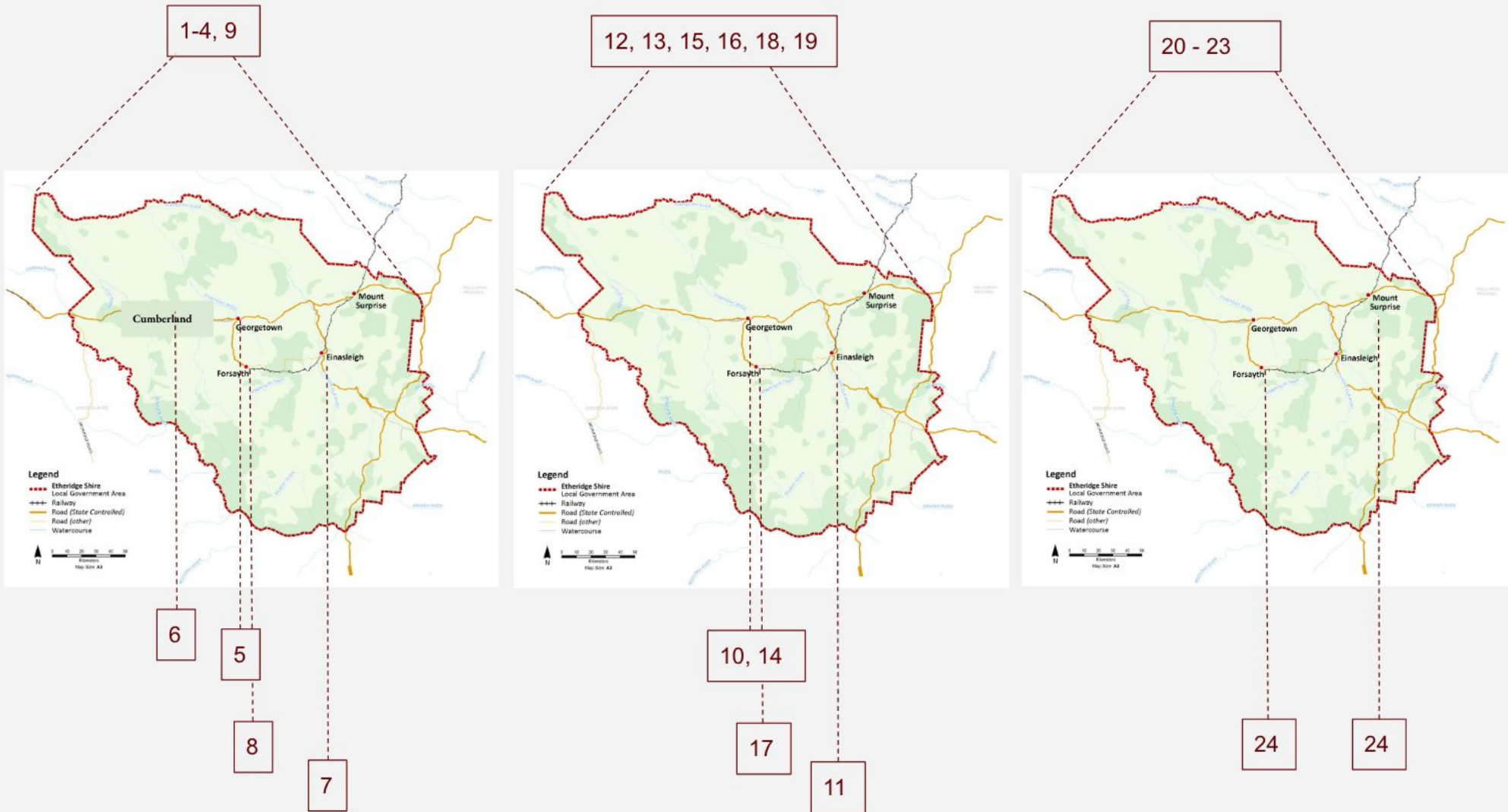
Consolidate

23. **Retrofit ageing attractions** and complete new buildings
24. **Beautification scheme for Forsayth & Mount Surprise**

It will be the time to review the core strategies and develop new ones if necessary.



4.6 Summary (building-based actions)



1. Shire: new signages and landmarks
3. Shire: road sealing
4. New Ted Elliott Mineral Collection, new cafe
5. Cumberland: new bird hide & boardwalk
6. Einasleigh: shading, seating and interpretive signage
7. Charleston Dam: shading, seating and interpretive signage

10. Einasleigh people museum
13. Etheridge museum
(location to be determined)
15. Waste facility
17. Shire: interactive pavilions

5. KEY PROJECTS

This Master Plan identifies **five key** projects that contribute to the realisation of the design objectives. **These projects are the new signage and landmark campaign, the beautification of Georgetown, the Cumberland bird hide and boardwalk, the Charleston Dam activation and Einasleigh activation.**

Another key project could be the building of a new Etheridge Museum in a strategic location, but this can only be further discussed once the heritage strategy has been developed and a sound evaluation of what could be the content has been discussed with the community.

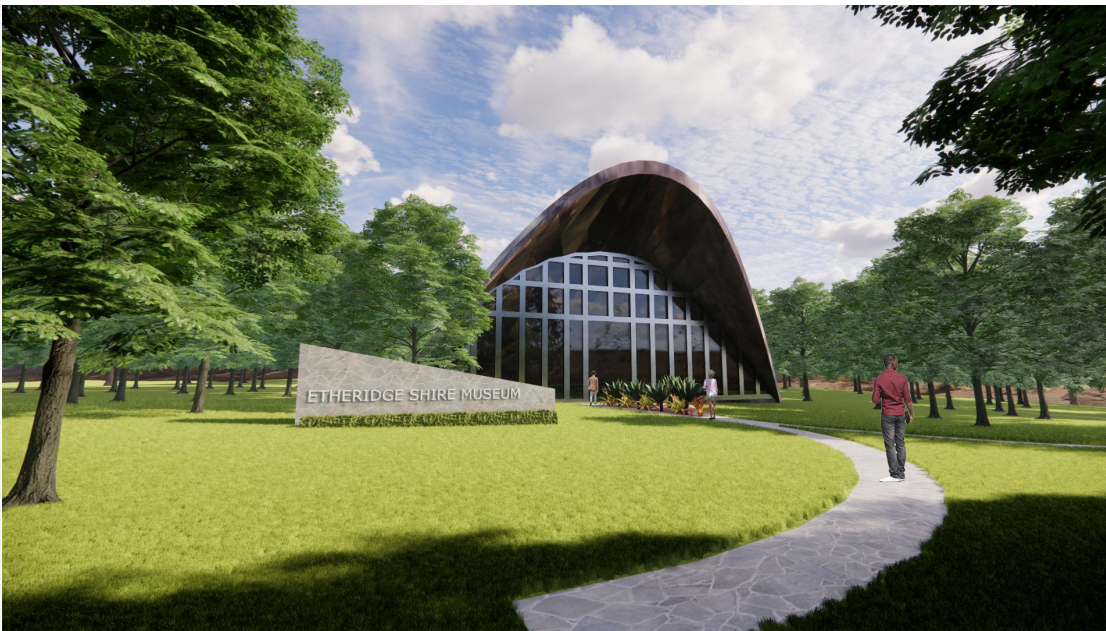


Figure 3: Artist impression of the entrance to the new Etheridge Museum @Vrbanjac

The following pages present some design ideas at the conceptual level. As per the requirements under the Building Act 1975, building approval is required when a structure is proposed to be built or altered to ensure it will be structurally safe and located appropriately. As such, at this stage, there cannot be any liability for the information provided.

5.1 Signage & landmarks

Although the Shire displays some signage, there is a lack of consistency throughout the Shire and some signs are ageing or already too old. The new branding is an opportunity to think anew the signage. Four levels of signage have been identified:

1. **On the road:** signs for wayfinding and to highlight some specific landscapes
2. **Township:** sign to mark the entry/exit to townships
3. **In Town:** interpretive signs & storyboards to explain specific elements, e.g. the butcher house, the dam, etc.
4. **On trails:** interpretive & wayfinding signage for walking and cycling trails

Several examples are presented in the following pages but **further investigations and participation with the community will greatly benefit a final design**. In the same way, within the Shire, places and landscapes of interest could be further highlighted with pavilions that could display some information, map or hide a toilet block. The look of these structures could also greatly benefit from a community consultation to increase engagement with, pride, surveillance and maintenance. Further, some of these pavilions could serve a double purpose in collecting stories from residents and feedback from visitors. This would be another way to collect evidences.

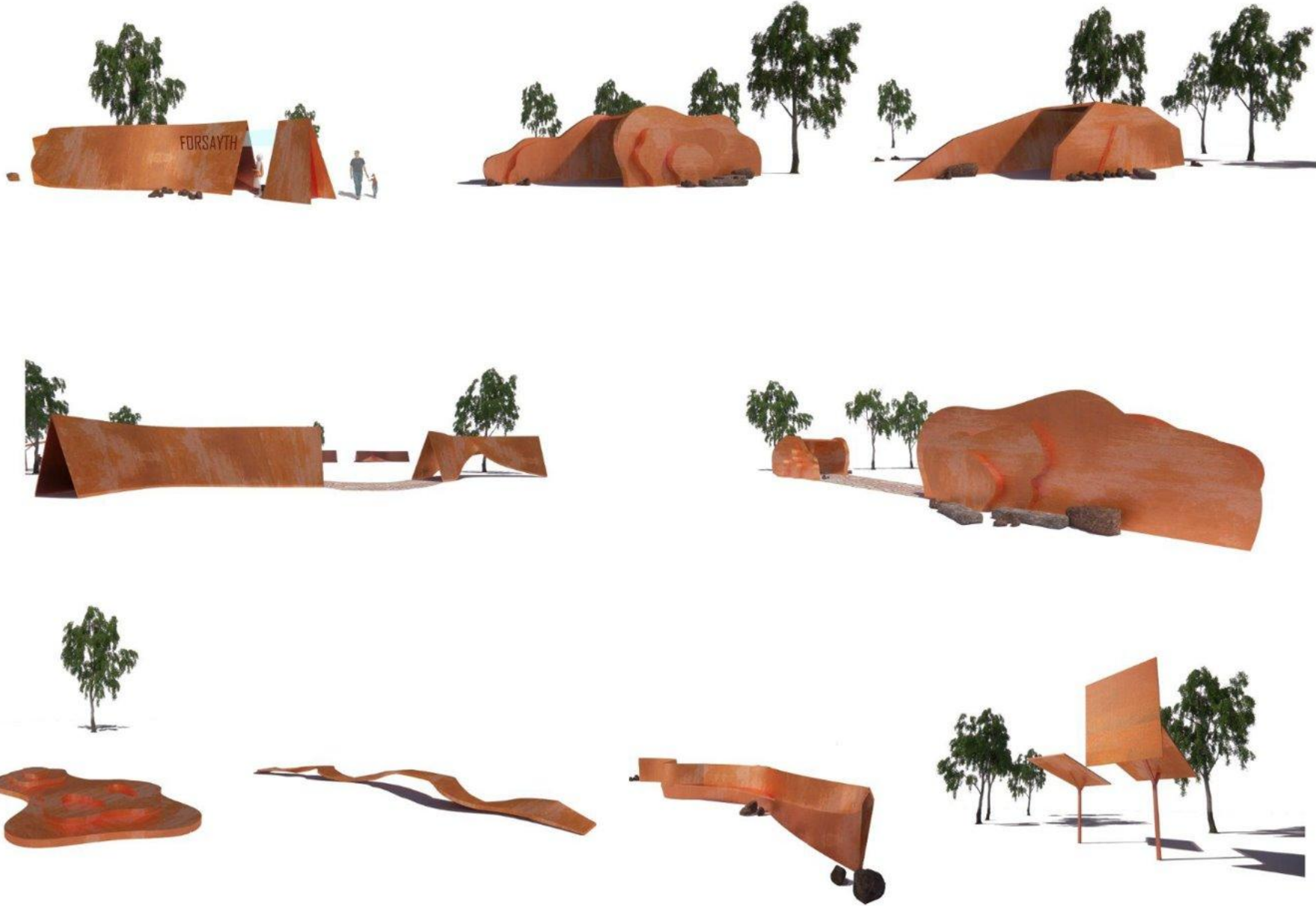


Figure 4: Example of new signage @ Alwan

Picture Series 3: Examples of new signage @ Alwan



Picture Series 4: Examples of new signage @ Wright



Picture Series 5: Examples of landmark pavilions
@ Alwan & Dupre



Each pavilion could tell a story, alert the visitor of a place of interest and interact with the visitors with low-tech items that could collect feedback and data.

In this mining pavilion, one side of the wall shows some facts about mining history while the other side has an embedded camera that will record people willing to answer the questions.



Figure 5: The mining pavilion and its inside display
@ Alwan & Dupre

This pavilion could collect 'secrets' from the Shire that could then be used to feed a larger exhibition in a museum.

Figure 6: The Opal pavilion at night @ Alwan



5.2 Georgetown strengthening

Georgetown clearly positions itself as a tourism hub due to its strategic location on the Savannah Way and the existence of several primary services (fuel, food, accommodation, Visitor Information Center), as well as tourism attractions such as Ted Elliott Mineral collection, free swimming pool, etc. However, this position could still be strengthened and thus increase length of stay and expenses of the visitors. Three elements have been identified that could promote strengthening as follows:

1. **Enhancing the Terrestrial Centre:** at the moment, the building does not look finished from the outside; the mineral collection wing and the back facade need to be improved. We propose a mirror extension that could shelter the Elliott Mineral Collection and, at the same time, contribute to the densification of the area that will emphasise the park. An additional cafe could be also created in the middle of the building, that would benefit both visitors and locals in activating the park.



Pictures 9 & 10: Side and back facades of the Terrestrial Centre © Dupre

Figure 7: Extending the Terrestrial centre @ Alwan

The cafe can open independently from the centre and is directly connected to the centre with a deck, and to the park, with outdoor seating and stair steps to further link the two spaces. The ramp for disabled access is located on the main street. Inside the cafe, the design takes inspiration from the natural geological sites seen through the shire. For example, curved timber beams reflect the shape and feel of the lava tubes at Undara and will create a rounded and warm interior; the tinted windows symbolise the various colours of crystals and minerals found in the Shire, while the use of red hue reminds of the termite mounds.



Figures 8 & 9: The new cafe at the Terrestrial Centre, view from inside (top) and outside (bottom) @ Campbell

2. Densification of the ‘tourism strip’: as this is not currently enough enhanced. New buildings would contribute to signal that there is something interesting to see from the main road and that could include a new frontage on North and Low streets with new accommodation, emergency services, etc. Importantly, it is recommended to multi-purpose every new building to maximise cost/benefit and use.

Figure 10: Planning intention for the ‘tourism strip’



Figure 11: A disaster & resilience centre could be located on the corner of High St & National HWY. The design is inspired by the cyclone shelters recently built in Northern Queensland. With a cost of \$6 millions, it can shelter up to 800 people @ Alwan



Figure 12: Quartz hotel on Low Street, an innovative underground accommodation that can double as shelter @ Alwan

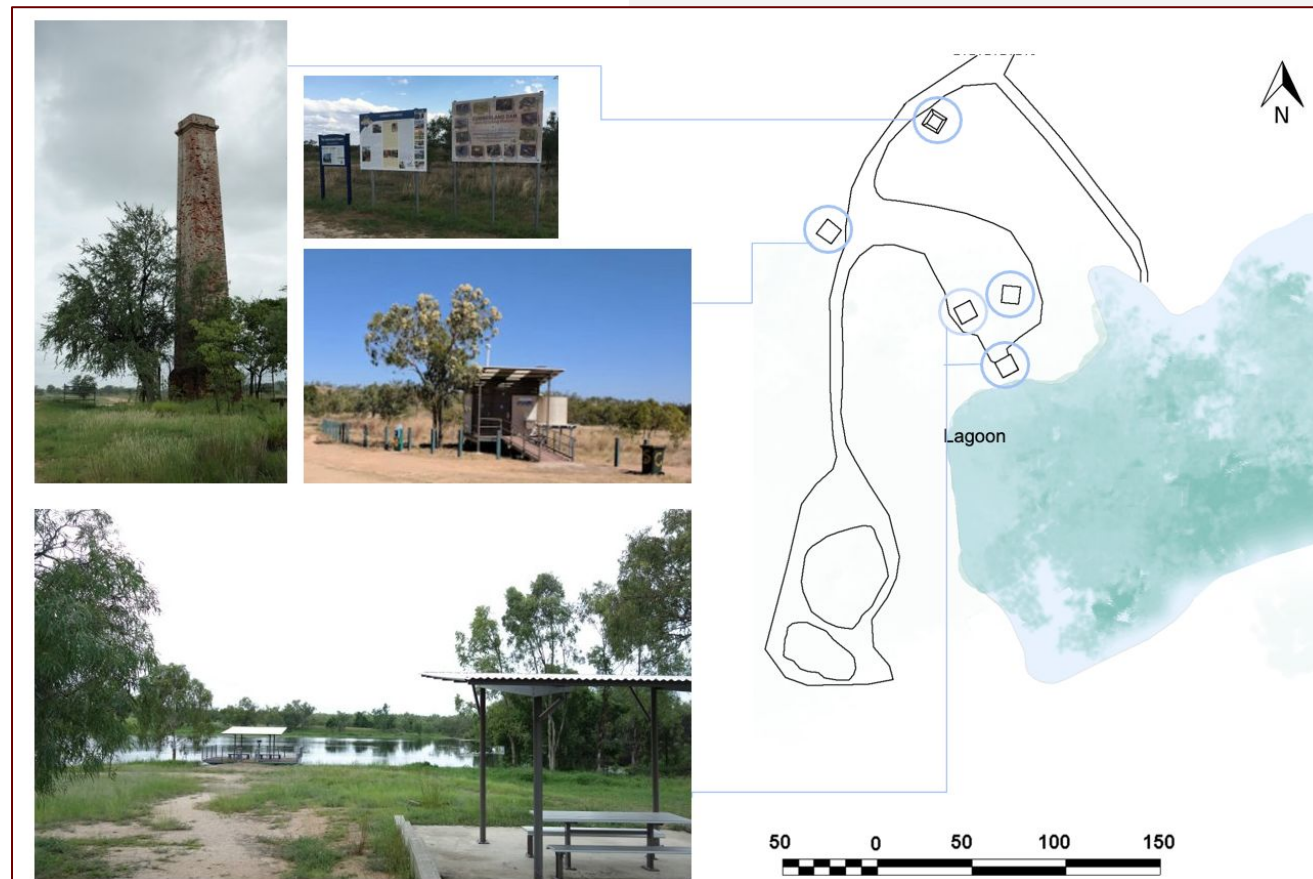
5.3 Cumberland bird hide & boardwalk

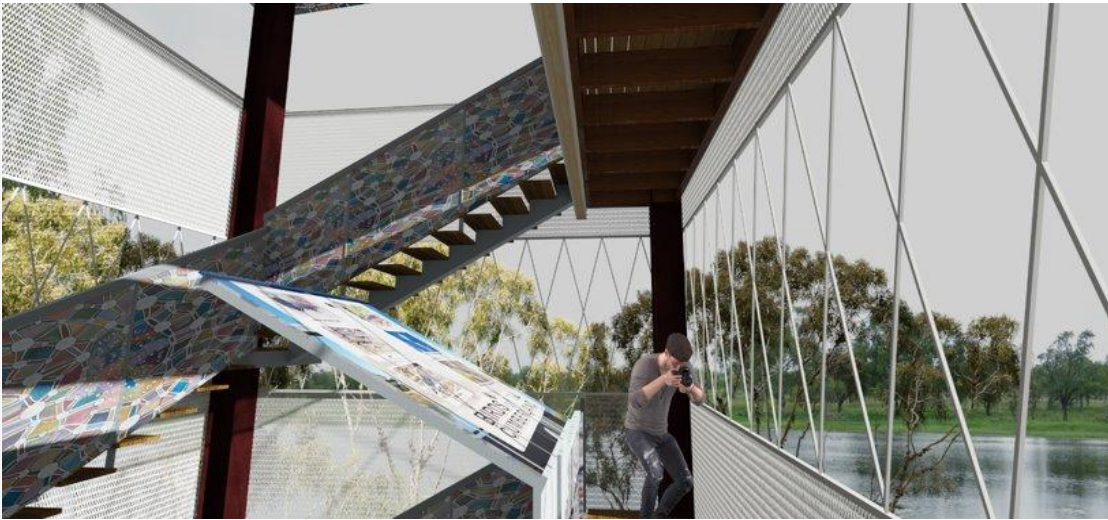
Cumberland Lagoon is an area well known to Bird Watchers and used as an overnight camping facility by caravaners and campers travelling the Savannah Highway.

The existing infrastructure comprises the heritage chimney, a composting toilet, a small bird hide, 2 covered picnic tables and several signages about birds and history of the place.

From a camping facility perspective, the place assessment shows that there are opportunities to increase the effective management of the site and propose further development since the overflow of tourists needs to be addressed.

It also shows that enhancement could be added from a bird watching perspective.





Cumberland lagoon currently offers a fantastic venue for bird watching but more infrastructure could promote the area further. We propose

- A new elevated boardwalk along the edge of the lagoon
- Two new Bird Hides that would offer new views out to the lagoon and that will dialogue with the existing heritage chimney (the location has been confirmed with one member of the Bird Society)
- Consistent signage for the full area

The industrial look of the bird hides is created with a stainless steel structure and structural metal mesh to acknowledge the Gold mining history of the site, while the timber staircase creates a more sustainable contrast. To recognise the traditional owners of the land, a call for local Aboriginal artists could be made to decorate the ceiling and handrails of the bird hides. This engagement with the community will have a positive influence on grant application to fund the construction. Three-storey high, the bird hides will become a new landmark for the area.

Figure 14 & 15: The new Bird Hide, top view and general view @ Robertson & Dupre



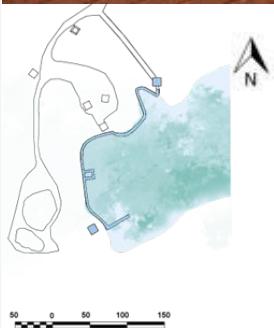


Figure 16: The new boardwalk and bird hide at Cumberland lagoon @ Robertson & Alwan

The 1st stage regarded the enhancement of bird hide activities; the following 3 stages concern the development of the campsite capacity from an average size to a maximum development of the campsite.

Stage 2 shows the addition of 26 new campsites south of the current toilet block. It could also be envisaged to build a new bbq area. In parallel, we propose to concentrate any eventual parking in the area between the new toilet block and the picnic tables. 40 campsites are created for stage 3 with 2 new toilet blocks to comply with the N.C.C. 2022 to meet this capacity.

At last, the final stage is showing a capacity of 100 campsites, with the addition of a new 'Camp-Kitchen' with barbecue and cleaning up facilities, that would use the same style of the bird hide to ensure a consistent aesthetic.

One could even consider a dedicated Solar-Powered facility along with water filtration and supply, using the lagoon's water along with rain-water harvesting, to enhance the sustainability of the site.

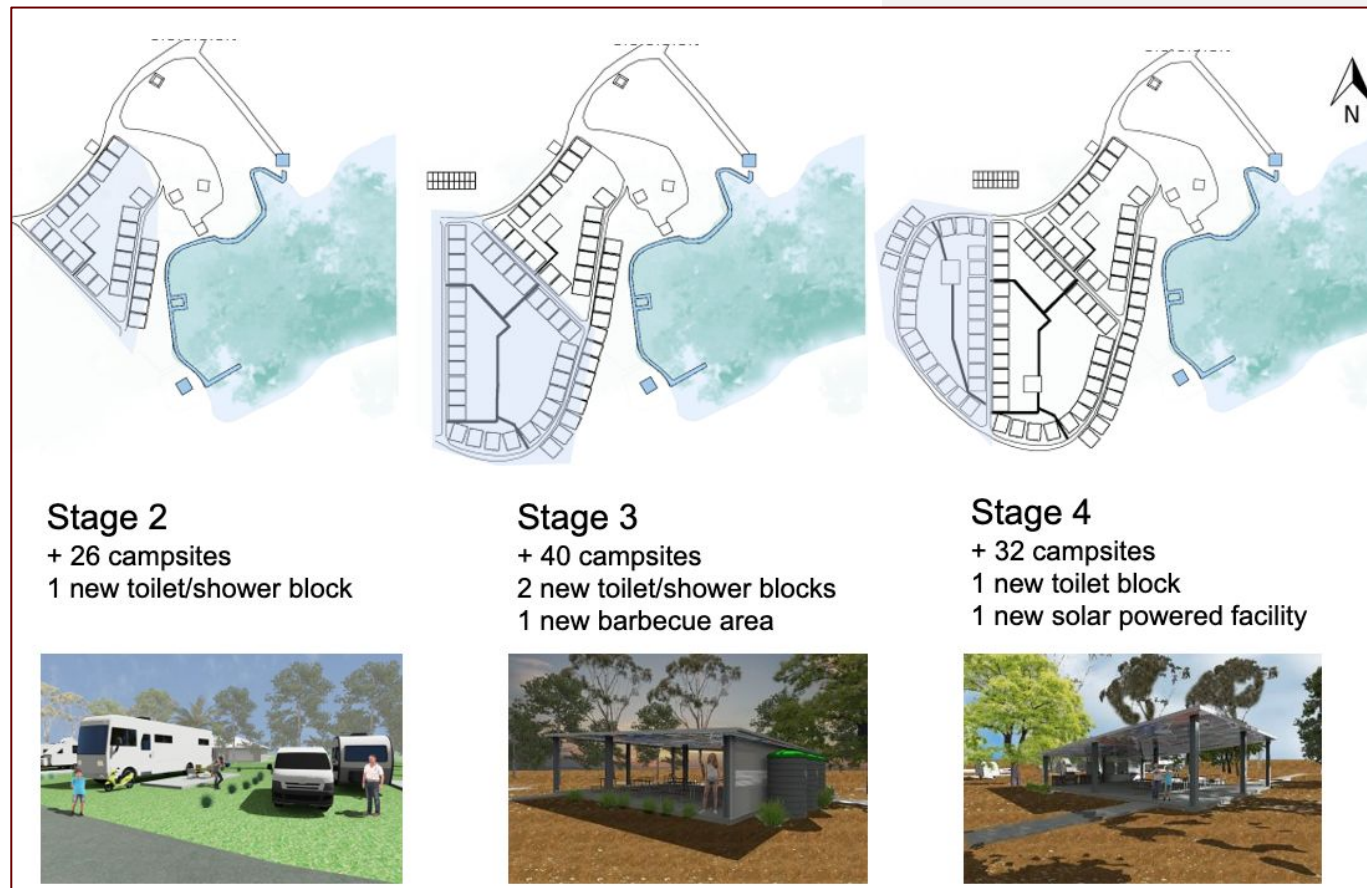


Figure 17: Extension of the camping ground at Cumberland lagoon @ Robertson



Figure 18: The kitchen at Cumberland lagoon @ Robertson

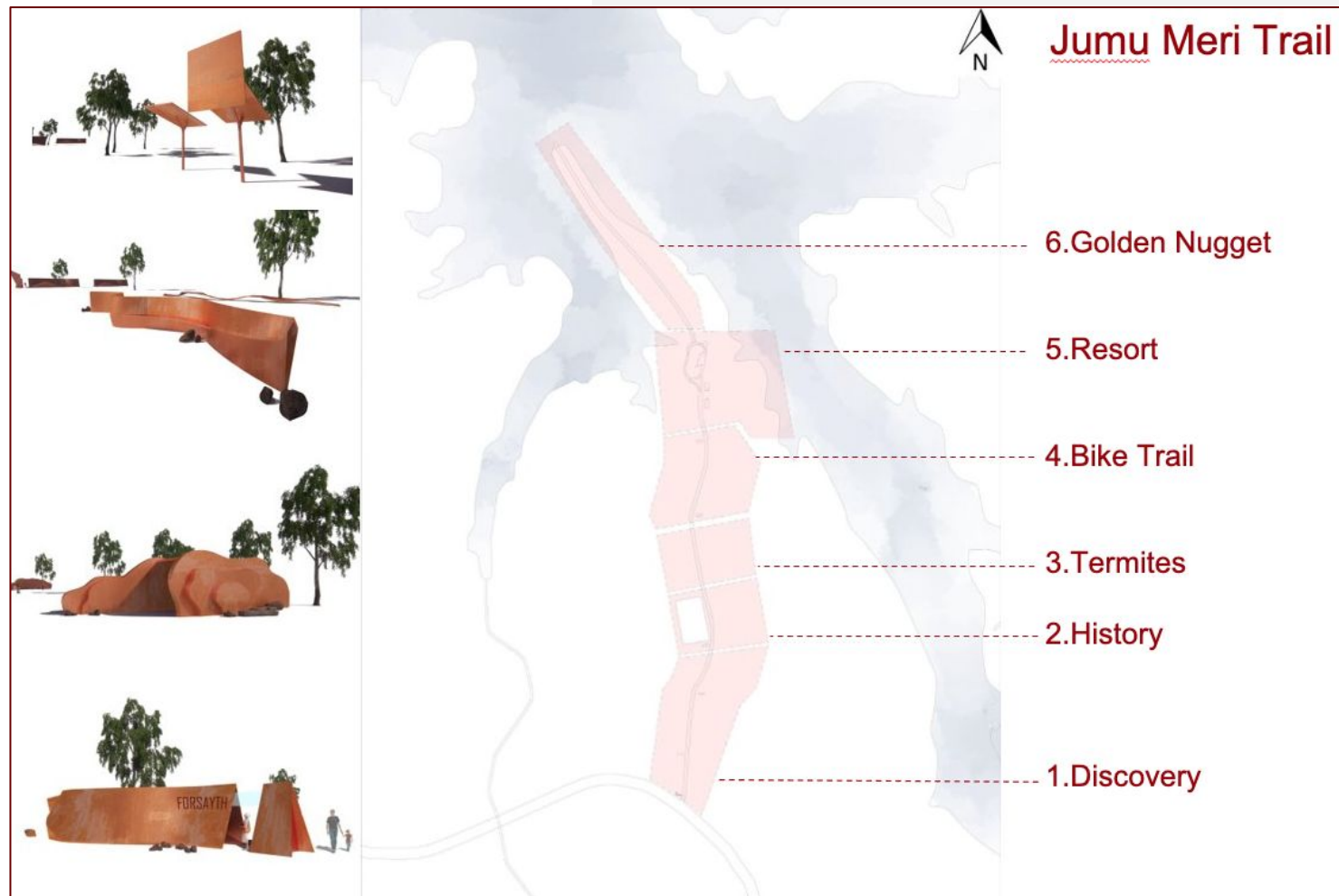
5.4 Charleston Dam activation

Now that the road is completed, it is time to think about its activation and the way the resort area could look like.

On this 1.5km trail, we have identified 6 main sequences, from the moment we turn onto the cemetery road to its end, that creates a journey that we titled the Jumu Meri Trail, jumu meaning 'seasonal water' and meri 'plenty of water', both as a symbol of what the dam is now representing.

Using the gold rush metaphor, the first sequence is about the moment you are discovering a site for the first time. The second sequence, starting with the cemetery, is about knowing a bit more the history of the place, while the third sequence talks about digging, tunnels, deserted shafts and collapse with the termites.

The fourth sequence is when your energy gets high for the big effort and this is where we proposed the bike trail. The 2 last sequences are the gold nuggets in themselves, with the resort area and the tip of the land, opening to the water which is one of the most important resources not only for life but also for the Shire.



Map 7: Charleston Dam sequence map @ Wright

The first activation of the road is made through a corten steel structure situated at the entrance that acts both as giant signage and information display for the visitors. For example, it can explain the history of the dam, the geographical context, as well as provide a map of the trail.

Figure 19: Entry signage to Charleston Dam @ Wright



Discovery



History



Termites

Onwards, we propose to have several other structures all along the Jumu Meri Trail. These structures will provide shades but also landmarks of interest for all ages. In this picture, you can see the cemetery on the left and the series of shading structures that can also hold information. On the left, organic shapes of different sizes punctuate the Jumu Meri Trail.

Figures 20 & 21: Examples of structure to activate the road to Charleston Dam @ Wright

A tunnel-like structure takes inspiration from termites mount and guides the visitor towards the termites trail that will explain a bit more about the termites life and mounts, taking advantage of the real existing mounts on site. Inside the structure, information is displayed to know about the termites.



Bike trail



Resort

For those who don't want to go inside, seating areas can still provide the resting place and the view to the termites, before continuing the journey, which sees another trail, the bike trail, on the right.

At last, at the end of the road, and before the boulders, we can find a pontoon near the boat ramp that marks the edge of the resort area. Using the same material, corten steel, it provides another contrasting landmark and a safe area for fishing.

At night, LED lights provide the minimum for safety and the place can become a nice spot for fishing.

In conclusion, these structures give an identity to the Jumu Meri trail and provide place-making to the area, while they can be duplicated in other parts of the Shire.

Figure 24: Pontoon by night @ Wright



5.5 Einasleigh activation

Besides the famous Races and Rodeo, Einasleigh definitely offers some highlights, such as the relative proximity to other tourism attractions (only 2h drive from Cobbold Gorge), the existence of the authentic Einasleigh hotel and the famous Copperfield Gorge, free to enter, pet friendly and welcoming for a swim.



However, the existing facilities are a bit minimal. The new parking lot and concrete footpaths are lacking shade, there are no seating, toilets or bins that would help the tourists to enjoy the site for a longer time. In the same way, the existing lookouts and access to the Gorge and railway station could be further optimised to enhance the experience and improve health and safety.

It is the reason why we propose to develop a bit further 3 main areas, which are the pedestrian footpath, the access to the Gorge and the co-creation of a new small attraction, the Einasleigh People Museum.

The following pages detail each of this proposal.

Map 8: Einasleigh sequence map @ Suzuki

Footpath enhancement

The current concrete footpath allows visitors to reach 4 picnic tables along the way to the entry to the Gorge. However, there is not enough shading and seating, and a lack of information and signage. We propose to transform that with a series of small structures that will punctuate the journey from the railway station to the Gorge.

Using the same shading devices proposed for the Charleston Dam to keep a consistency throughout the Shire, native flower beds will also be planted and maintained with the rainwater collected in new water tanks. These water tanks also contribute to the outback feeling and picturesque appeal of the place.



Figure 25: Path enhancement
@ Suzuki & Dupre



Access to the Gorge

To improve the experience of the visitors in the Copperfield Gorge and reduce their impact on this unique environment, we propose to create a low-impact handrail and position few posts at regular intervals to go down the Gorge. This will also comply with health and safety regulations.

Figure 26: Gorge handrail
@ Suzuki & Dupre



Einasleigh People Museum

Einasleigh currently benefits from the Savannahlander stopping and dropping tourists for a short visit and lunch at the historic Einasleigh hotel and pub. However, the experience could be greatly promoted with a newer attraction that could also increase the incentive for driving tourists to push their visit until Einasleigh.

Council and Railways recently agreed about the donation of a shed building (Figure ?) currently located at the old Einasleigh railway station to be moved to the fire station block.

Meanwhile, Bianca Cawood, local pub owner and stories digger, has undertaken some research to unearth the stories of the people buried at Einasleigh cemetery. Her fantastic work has unveiled some great stories from the white settlement onward, telling about friendship, war and crimes. With more research to add some Indigenous contributions for example and strengthen the relation to the mine history, these stories present a fantastic opportunity for a new interactive museum that would add value to the visitor experience and might generate 1 new employment.

The Einasleigh People Museum would become part of the heritage trail and tell the stories of the people who became the river, starts and earth of Einasleigh. This could be developed as a great co-creation project with the Einasleigh community that would take ownership and pride in this building.

Picture 11: Railway shed @ Dupre

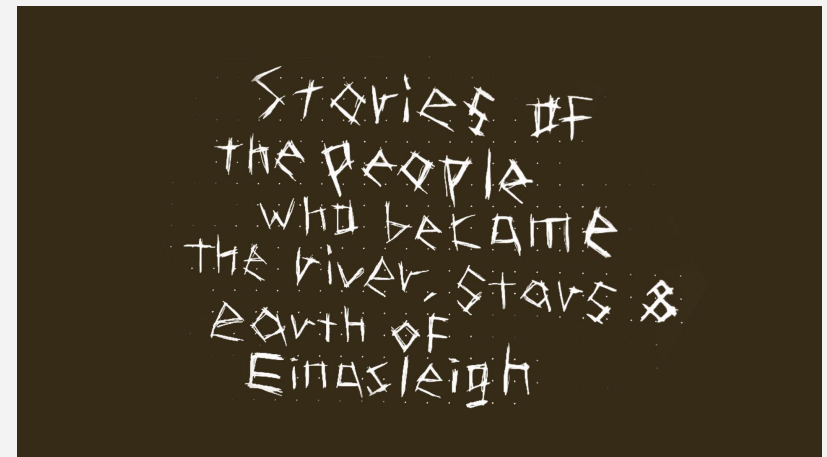


Figure 27: Concept idea for the Einasleigh People Museum @ Suzuki

The museum will consist of 3 main areas:

- **An entry** that would reproduce the inside of a settler house and display the name of Einasleigh people
- **An inside free-plan space** that would propose interactive displays telling the stories of Einasleigh people
- **An outside verandah** to gaze at stars and with a gabion wall for tourists to fill with a stone on which they can write their name



Figure 28: Entrance to the museum @ Suzuki

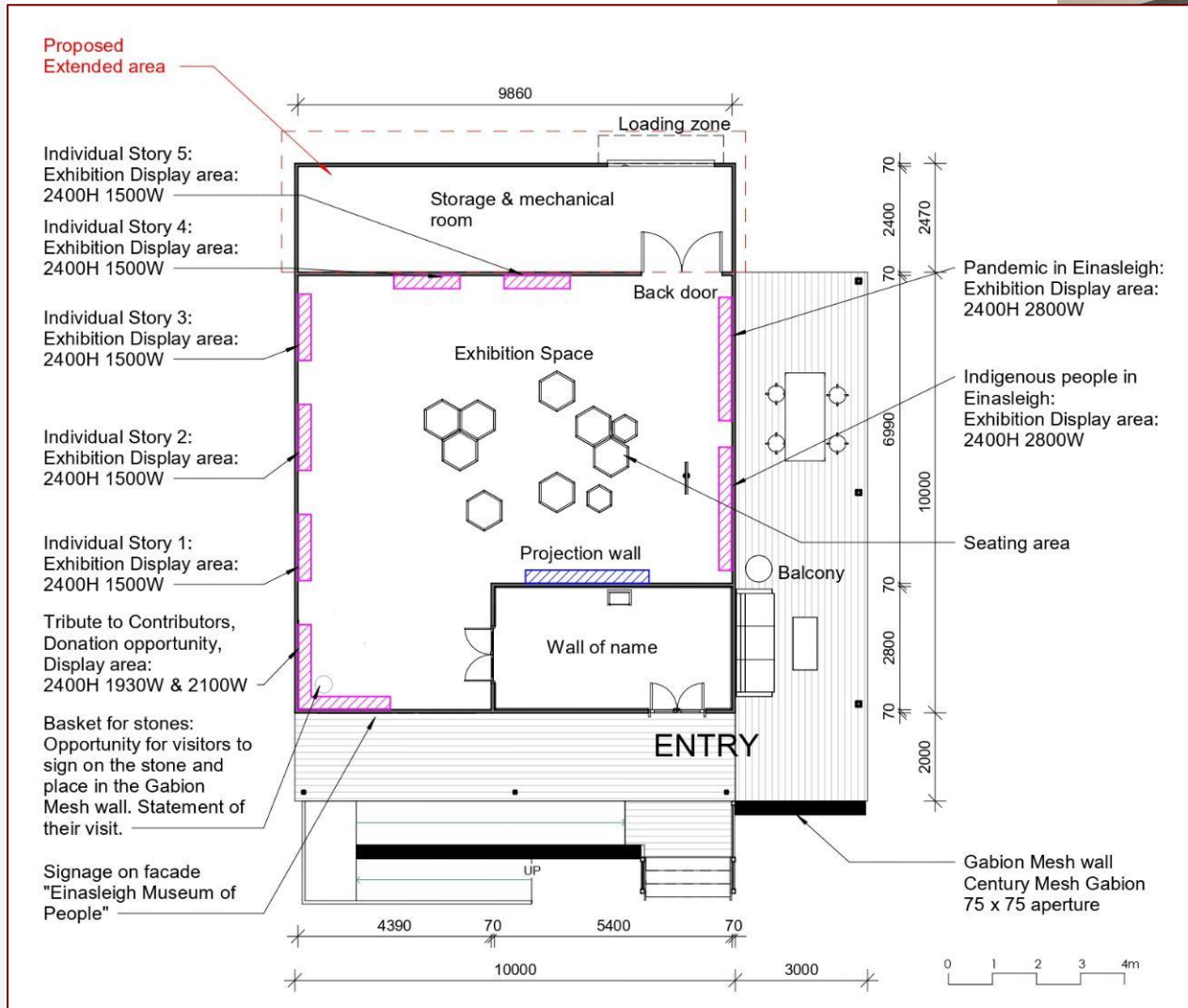
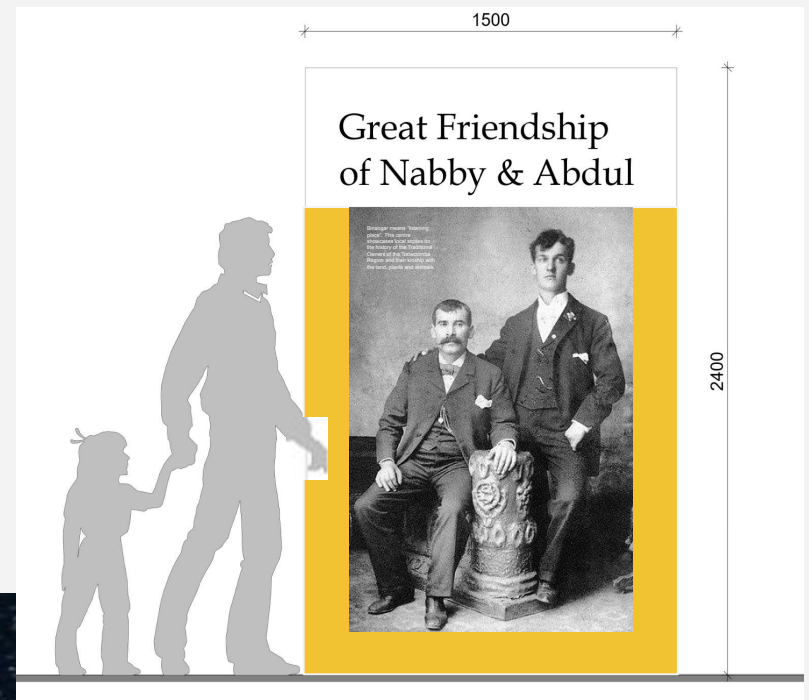


Figure 29: Museum floor plan @ Suzuki



At this stage, the proposed technologies could include interactive floor and wall projectors, sensor lighting, touch tables and ipads.

Air-conditioning or a good ventilation system should be installed to create a comfortable inside space, while the retrofitting of the outside look of the shed (e.g. with timber slats) would add a layer of insulation to prevent overheating.



Figures 30 & 31: Museum exhibition display @ Suzuki & Dupre

Figure 32: Outside view of the Museum @ Suzuki



CONCLUSION

A Master Plan is a non-statutory document that outlines a vision to guide growth and development of the site over a given period. The Master Plan delivers a project vision and design principles based on identified opportunities that are interesting, accessible, and unique, and a planning approach that integrates them into a coherent and successful tourism products. It includes an action agenda that outlines the necessary short-term and medium-term actions to implement the plan.

But before everything else, this is a co-creation process that involves the community and all the stakeholders interested in developing further tourism in Etheridge Shire. So it is why participation, consultation, feedback, evaluation and flexibility are needed to have this Master Plan progressing in the right direction.

The Master Plan is adaptive and this way can mitigate disruptions such as COVID, but also adapt to new successes.

THANK YOU

The involvement of stakeholders is crucial during the development of the project to ensure its relevance and to make sure that the expected outcomes are achieved.

We would like to thank warmly all the persons who welcomed us very openly in the Etheridge Shire, residents and staff who answered our questions, and the Etheridge Shire Council for its appetite for knowledge and new ideas.

7. REFERENCES

Moyle, B., Dupre, K., Peake, S., Le, T.H., Kralj, A., Yang, E., Abreu Novais, M., & Lamont, M. (2022). *Unearthing Etheridge: Tourism Directions Paper*. Report commissioned by Etheridge Shire Council. Griffith University, Queensland, Australia.

Etheridge Shire Census data 2016

<https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2016>

Map of Indigenous Australia

<https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia>

Queensland Heritage Register

<https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/map/>

Tourism Research Australia (2021). TRA Online.

<https://www.tra.gov.au/>

Tourism Research Australia. (2021a). National Visitor Survey Results March 2021.

<https://www.tra.gov.au/data-and-research/reports/national-visitor-survey-results-march-2021/national-visitor-survey-results-march-2021>

Cover picture @ Dupre



Prepared and written by
Professor Karine Dupre
11th of June 2022

