



Case Study – Derby Visitor Centre

Summary Report November 2015



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This summary is prepared by Hyde Park Media and based on the case study '*Derby Visitor Centre*' by Nous Group.

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How Royalties for Regions helped fund Derby's new visitors' centre

The Royalties for Regions program provided \$200,000 to the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley to help build the new Derby Visitors' Centre in WA's Kimberley region.

The new centre is now located with the Shire's administrative offices and provides tourist information, coach and accommodation bookings, and sells souvenirs and tourism-related merchandise.

The project has contributed to the capacity of the Shire to upgrade its administrative offices and to develop the local economy.

It was a key component in the major redevelopment plan for the Shire to collocate three separate administrative offices in Derby.

The new visitors' centre is easier to find, is a more energy efficient building with lower maintenance and utility costs, and is expected to free up funds for other tourism projects.

Community benefits are likely to include additional opportunities as a result of an expected growth in tourism for Derby and surrounds.

What does the project involve?

Tourism is seen as an important part of developing the region's economy, with Derby the gateway to some of the region's biggest tourist drawcards such as the Fitzroy Rive, Gibb River Road and Buccaneer Archipelago.

But there were several problems with the old visitors' centre.

It was based in a former car workshop and was poorly suited to provide tourism services. It also resulted in high maintenance and utility costs.

In addition, the previous visitors' centre was poorly located. It was off the main strip and separated from the Shire's offices, which was counterintuitive for visiting tourists and thus reduced the number of people who would use the centre.

The total cost of the new visitors' centre was \$3,250,927.

Royalties for Regions provided \$200,000 and the balance was provided by:

- Department of Regional Australia: \$1,250,000
- Shire of Derby West Kimberley: \$1,000,927
- Kimberley Development Commission: \$500,000
- Derby Visitors' Centre: \$300,000

The new Derby Visitors' Centre is located in front of the Shire's administration offices in Loch Street. It was completed in 2011.

The Shire sold the previous building that housed the visitors' centre and re-invested the proceeds of the sale to help fund the new facility.

The Shire owns the new facility which it now leases to the Derby Visitors' Centre—a separate not-for-profit organisation—at a nominal rent.

The project has contributed to the Shire's capacity to develop the local economy. The project has achieved this in the following ways:

- The project has provided the Shire with a greater understanding of the economic potential of tourism, with enhanced Shire and community interest in tourism as a key priority area for the town and region.
- The reduced ongoing costs of the new visitors' centre have released funds for the Shire to invest in strategic tourism projects.

What is the feedback?

Relocating the visitors' centre to the town's main strip has built community awareness of the importance of tourism to the local economy and the opportunities it brings.

With the new visitors' centre clearly visible to Shire staff, local businesses and community members, there is renewed interest in tourism and in maximising the potential it can bring to the region.

A higher profile of tourism for the community has resulted in this sector of the economy being a key focus within the Shire's strategic plan.

Typical feedback from those involved in the project include:

"If the visitor centre didn't go forward, we are unlikely to have been able to undertake the future expansion of the (Shire's) offices."

Shire CEO

"We are looking at a much more diversified economy and tourism is a big part of it. Because of the higher profile of tourism through the centre, it has built a momentum building exercise—people drive past and the locals see the car park full and they think that's great—it's a snowball effect. It makes it visible for the community."

Shire CEO

"The Shire is starting to think more about getting the place physically suited for visitors and their needs and to improve the facilities and ambience."

Derby Visitors' Centre Manager

"It's a more energy efficient building. The old building (visitors' centre) was a car sales workshop so it wasn't suited for this use."

Shire CEO



“We don't have to spend the grant money on keeping the visitor centre doors open – we can spend the money on more value adding activity. So there is greater flexibility for expenditure on other more strategic and potentially valuable areas.”

Shire CEO