

The BUSINESS

JOURNAL
VOLUME 12



TOOWOOMBA
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE



Special Tourism Edition

FIND OUT ABOUT

Tourism stats
and data

REVEALED

Our new
tourism map

GET TO KNOW

Indigenous
tourism

plus

people, projects,
produce and
lots more

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Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands, the Jagera, Giabal and Jarowair people. We extend that respect to the elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the cultures and the hopes of Australia's First Peoples.

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VOLUME 12

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Send your story ideas and submissions to
communications@toowoombachamber.com.au



**TOOWOOMBA
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE**

ON THE COVER

Toowoomba Chamber has commissioned local artist Anna Battle to design an illustrated tourism map for the region. The map will be used on souvenir tea towels and other merchandise. See story on page 8.

TOOWOOMBA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

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Office Hours:
8:30am - 4:30pm
Monday to Friday



The Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce is one of Queensland's largest regional Chambers. Together we represent a significant voice and as a group we can make a positive difference for our local business community. Contact our Chamber team today to learn more on how we can help you. We work for business. **Email:** admin@toowoombachamber.com.au

PRESIDENT'S *message*

Although 2022 has not begun the way we had hoped it would, we are confident we will see an enormous amount of opportunity and potential over the next few months. If you ask Google (clearly the fount of all wisdom!), there are many pros to be found in our beautiful Darling Downs! After all, who could not want to be part of a tree-lined city, 700m above sea level, with a budding coffee and dining scene and street art that competes with Melbourne (Jamie Donovan from lawns.com.au).

In the face of FOGO (Fear of Going Out) seen in the early part of this year and experienced by many of our businesses, Toowoomba Chamber has been working hard to reassure our community that there are ways of going out safely and supporting our members. We are wanting to affirm, model and encourage local leadership that demonstrates strong support and planning for a thriving Toowoomba in years to come!

In this edition of our Business Journal, we are highlighting tourism which goes hand-in-hand with local business. To build successful collaborations we need to begin at the beginning: with awareness.

It is vital that local businesses are AWARE of what's going on in the city. That means making an effort to follow the big drawcards like the Empire Theatre, Carnival of Flowers, conferences and sporting events. We have many boarding schools in town and when the schools have events, boarder families come to stay and enjoy time together. So, for example, cafes and bars might want to take advantage of extra customers at these times.

By the same token, tourist operators also need to be AWARE of Toowoomba's local business offerings. Where are our favourite cocktail bars and restaurants? Do we have designer boutiques? Would you recommend a drive to Crows Nest? By working together and being aware of our collective strengths we have a greater chance of sharing success all round.

Having lived in the Garden City now for almost eight years, we

are even more convinced that it is the best place in the world to call home and for our young adult children, it's a fab place to visit from their Brisbane households.

So, I hope the next couple of months are ones that see businesses bounce while people get out and enjoy the many beautiful features of our region.

KATE VENABLES

President Toowoomba Chamber



TOOWOOMBA CHAMBER *Board*

Welcome to new and returning members



**President,
Kate Venables**

Executive Director, CatholicCare
Social Services Southwest.



**Vice President,
Chris Black**

Founder Fortress Financial Solutions
Chair Momentum Mental Health,
Board of St Savior's Primary School



**Vice President,
Sam Wright**

Partner at Ambrosiussen



**Treasurer,
Myf Rigby**

Director at Accession3
Business Advisers

Board Members



Jenni Butler

Executive Director
Studies at TAFE
Queensland Southwest



Matt Gregg

Manager Community
Engagement, Lifeline
Darling Downs & South
West Queensland Ltd



Gordon Grover

Founding Director of
Specialised Property
Consulting (SPC)



Jenni Rix

Director, People
Leader and Coach



Naomi Wilson

Founding Director of
Focus HR, Managing
Director of Toowoomba
Stairs and Timberwork
Director of TalentSpring



Rouz Fard

Employability Coordinator,
Student Success and
Wellbeing, USQ Board Member
Regional Development
Australia DDSW

See full bios on the Chamber website www.toowoombachamber.com.au

NEVER MISS A CHAMBER *Event*

Bookings are easier than ever...

You'll find a calendar of Chamber
events listed on our new website.

To book your tickets, visit: toowoombachamber.com.au



MOVERS & shakers

Join us in congratulating the following appointments:

Chris BLACK

**Chairman of the Board,
Momentum Health**

Toowoomba Chamber's Vice President, Chris Black, has been appointed Chair of Momentum Health.

Chris holds a double Bachelor Degree in Business and Commerce, he is also a graduate of the AICD. Chris is a qualified financial adviser and founded Fortress Financial Solutions in August 2013 after eight years in the financial services industry. He is noted as one of the most influential advisers in Australia according to the Financial Standard, and he is focused on building ongoing relationships based on trust, great financial outcomes together with a good dose of fun.

In his spare time, Chris enjoys giving back to the community and keeping fit doing triathlons, park-runs and riding his pushy. He also loves cricket, football and racing cars with his brother.

Chris is father to three boys, married to a clinical psychologist and is passionate about changing the conversation with, and removing any stigma around, mental health



John DEBENHAM

Chair Toowoomba Hospital Foundation Board

John comes from a strong background in senior executive roles and has previously held leadership positions with Suncorp Bank, National Australia Bank and ANZ Bank. He has also served as Director and Chair of Foodbank Queensland for nearly 20 years.

In addition to John's experience in finance and leadership, he also has a passion for fundraising and helped raise millions of dollars as founding director of the charity bike rides Ks 4 Aussie Farmers and Ks 4 Country Kids in support of farming and rural communities.

Grant SIMPSON

**CEO Lifeline Darling Downs
SWQ (LDDSWQ)**

With more than 30 years' experience in the corporate and not-for-profit sectors, Grant is responsible for LDDSWQ's strategic plan and overall performance ensuring the organisation's vision and mission are being delivered. Grant works closely with the LDDSWQ Board to monitor the performance of the strategic plan against the vision set by the Board. He also works with Lifeline Australia to share best practice and support LDDSWQ as part of the Lifeline federated body.

Grant is a Non-Executive Director of Westhaven, a leading NDIS service

provider in regional NSW. He is also a Committee Member of the Excelsior Fund which is an innovative specialised disability accommodation real estate investment trust.

Grant holds a Communications Degree from Griffith University and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD).

He enjoys spending time with his family including his two teenage daughters. He has served as a volunteer for charitable and sporting associations including surf lifesaving. He is a keen swimmer and hiker.





Jo SHEPPARD

CEO Queensland Farmers Federation

Jo Sheppard was CEO of Toowoomba Chamber from 2017 to 2019. She then joined USQ's executive team as Director of Stakeholder Engagement. Jo was appointed Chair of Eco Markets Australia having served on the board for some years prior. Jo has also been a director of Sunwater and Mayor of Paroo Shire Council.

Jo is looking forward to supporting and striving for a better deal for Queensland farmers to strengthen their productivity and profitability into the future.



If you'd like to share the news of your recent recruits, please send us a photo and a little information about them.

Harrison HUMPHRIES

Managing Partner CG Law

Immediate Past President of the Toowoomba Chamber, Harrison Humphries, joins Amanda Tolson, Danny Clifford and Ben Gouldson as director and owner of Clifford Gouldson Lawyers.

Harrison joined CGLaw in 2013 and has been the Head of the firm's Litigation and Dispute Resolution team since 2015.

Hailing from Moree in New South Wales, Harrison attended Toowoomba Grammar School where he was Senior Prefect (School Captain) in his final year. He is now a member of the Toowoomba Grammar Board of Trustees. Harrison has a long association with the University Cricket Club in Toowoomba and Toowoomba Cricket generally. He currently heads Toowoomba Cricket's judiciary as its Commissioner.



PIZZA Guardians



At Pizza Guardians, ever since we opened in 2019, we've valued excellence, quality, and a strong local connection. Like other locals, we care about the work we do: Supporting jobs, giving back to the community, and of course, serving **delicious pizzas** every day of the week!

Also, we're proud to say that we now have two locations: **Newtown**, and **Kearney's Spring**. For your next meeting, celebration, or get-together, why not give us a ring and let us cater for your event! **We're a guaranteed crowd pleaser**, and a proud local business.

Visit www.pizzaguardians.com.au

Newtown 131 Anzac Avenue 4580 4292

Kearney's Spring 798 Ruthven Street 4616 8188





It's about the Vibe!

Bright, beautiful and full of energy, it's our very own illustrated tourist map.



The whole idea behind an illustrated map is to provide a unique lens through which visitors see the region. It has to tell a story, convey a vibe as well as provide a directional gist.

When it comes to good vibes, local artist (and Chamber member) Anna Battle is renowned for colour and energy. On walls, fabric, murals, shower curtains and wallpaper her fun style is instantly uplifting.

Toowoomba Chamber commissioned Anna to tell the Toowoomba story via an illustrated map of the region and the result is stunning! CEO, Todd Rohl, said the map would be used in merchandise to promote the region.

"Chamber has an important role in helping to promote the region for the local business community," he said.

"Anna's illustrated map will be perfect on souvenir tea towels, brochures and maybe even on garments."

A limited number of tea towels will be produced to sell through local businesses and tourist information centres. Please direct all enquiries to Toowoomba Chamber.

A Bit About Anna

Like many contemporary artists, Anna has navigated her way into a successful digital business for original art and online classes. She also designs wallpaper, fabric and commercial art projects, has authored a book, "Painting Party", and hosts the Art Fit Podcast.

After years working in marketing, Anna started her business Shiny Happy Art selling handbags, art

and homewares at local markets in 2003, the business evolved and she pioneered Paint Along classes in Toowoomba in 2011. They were a huge success which led her to develop her first online class in 2015.

She started the Shiny Happy Art Club in January 2019. This was timely and during the first COVID lockdown in 2020, Anna had over 2000 people around the world join her facebook group to enjoy her regular 'Drink and Draw' sessions. Through the online Club she continues to offer a brand new Paint Along and Demonstration Collection every month.

Anna has recently moved her private painting studio to Botanica Rose Farm in Cabarlah with plans to be inspired by the location to paint many more originals this year.

Tourism in Toowoomba

- IS YOUR BUSINESS MAKING THE MOST OF IT?

Toowoomba Chamber caught up with Southern Queensland Country Tourism CEO Peter Homan for a little Q & A. SQCT sure has some data and it's fascinating to learn how tourism in the region is evolving. It's also useful stuff for building your business strategy.

1 What are Toowoomba's tourism strengths and weaknesses?

Toowoomba has many strengths:

- beautiful parks and gardens, great national parks with walking and mountain bike tracks
- Size of the accommodation market
- international-ready airport and the potential to entice many different source markets
- Proximity to a large population base
- Museums, galleries, theatre offerings. Toowoomba's history and heritage attracts many people into the region
- Home to quality, diverse wedding venue market
- Scenic drives
- Abundant and glorious local produce
- Strong educational tourism sector bringing numerous families into region
- Soft adventure sector has been growing with more mountain biking and hiking trails becoming key reasons to visit

Weaknesses

- Lack of 4- and 5-star accommodation
- Lack of hero experience – such as the Quarry Gardens
- Need more 'branding'/ exposure so that Toowoomba is easily identifiable in the minds of the travelling public
- Need more bookable product online

2 What is the future of Tourism in the Toowoomba region?

Tourism has a very strong future in Toowoomba. We are perfectly positioned to capture the domestic market over the next ten years both drive and fly-in as well as international visitors. Research indicates that since the onset of the pandemic both domestic and international markets are making their holiday choices based on the following two factors: Safety and Outdoor activities. Toowoomba is strong in both those areas with low case numbers and plenty of outdoor activities available.

3 How can businesses support the local tourist industry?

Easy to say but hard to do.

- Have opening hours that match tourist/visitor needs.
- Set up systems for online bookings
- Stay informed about what is going on in the region and share with your guests/clients to cross-promote businesses in the area. The Toowoomba Visitor Information Centre (located 82-86 James Street) is a great source of knowledge on activities for visitors. It is also beneficial to update Visitor Information Centre staff about your business and other local knowledge so that everyone is an ambassador for the region.
- Additionally, www.sqct.com.au is a good source of information that is regularly updated.

4 How can the tourist industry support local business?

- By promoting the region to key source markets and by assisting with product development (building itineraries, blogs/ articles, videos and imagery)
- Helping businesses get on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) - Australia's online marketplace for tourism information where tourism product is distributed across a wide and expanding network
- Be bookable online, selling through trade distribution channels and upskilling operators and staff
- By engaging better with industry to understand our region and why visitors come here

5 How have tourism trends changed?

- Trends have changed in many ways. But the biggest change recently is the increase in self-drive tourism over shorter journeys
- There are definitely more people travelling with pets these days
- People are booking directly with accommodation providers rather than through online travel agents such as booking.com
- Adventure Tourism has seen an upward trend over the past ten years and although New Zealand and Tasmania have featured prominently in this space, SQCT has been working with Adventure Queensland to take advantage of this upward trend

6 Does Toowoomba do enough to support visitors with special needs?

We can never do enough and it's a segment of the market that continues to travel more. The more we understand about visitors with special needs the more we can cater to this section of the market.

7 Weddings and Events

Toowoomba is in a class of its own with stunning and unique wedding venues, the perfect climate for getting married and numerous locations for beautiful imagery. It's the silent sector of tourism that drives massive economic impact to this region. Attendees at weddings are more likely to revisit so it's the gift that keeps on giving.

The best way to support the wedding industry is to let them know what you/your business offers so they can include you on their contact lists. Engage with groups and find out what they need and what drives the industry.

8 Does Toowoomba have enough diversity in special events? Do we have the infrastructure to be competitive in this area such as sports complexes?

I don't believe so, in saying this sports/sporting events currently drive a lot of visitations into the region. Toowoomba Regional Council has a good plan for a multisport facility at Charlton which will be the vehicle for hosting both state and national championships in many different sporting disciplines. Look out for the Western Clydesdales representing the Queensland Cup in 2023 and hosting teams from all over Queensland and Papua New Guinea! We may not have enough time to build the necessary infrastructure to host some of the 2032 Olympic sports, however we are heading in the right direction to leave a long-term legacy for the sporting public in Toowoomba.



9 How will the Quarry Gardens benefit Toowoomba – especially businesses?

Having a hero experience in our area will benefit the entire region. Consider destinations around the world that are known for their hero experiences: Paris with the Eiffel Tower, Sydney with the Opera House etc. Not only will the Quarry Gardens provide a reason for visitation, but it will benefit local businesses, suppliers and contractors as well.

Visitors will disperse throughout the region exploring all that is on offer, enjoying coffee shops, restaurants, hotels and more. The Quarry Gardens will require product and services from local suppliers and contractors.

The Quarry Gardens will continue to cement Toowoomba being known as the 'garden city' and once it is contracted with the tourism trade industry and widely distributed, every travel agent and on-seller will have the ability to sell tickets to the gardens increasing exposure across Australia and the world.



TOURISM

statistics:

VISITOR NUMBERS 2021:

928,000 Domestic people visited Toowoomba and stayed overnight in the 2021 Calendar year and spent \$352 per person.

Another **2.1 million visitors** were day trippers to Toowoomba which includes business trips.

✦ **Based on mobile phone data, where do most visitors go in Toowoomba?**

The majority of visitors to Toowoomba visit the CBD area and Queens Park.

Southern Queensland Country Tourism uses mobile app data to track visitation into areas. We can geofence any area to ascertain visitor information. We can then look at their behavioural profiles and source markets to build content to market to their 'look-a-likes'.

ACCOMMODATION OCCUPANCY FIGURES FOR TOOWOOMBA.

Occupancy across the Toowoomba region ran on average at 66% during 2021.

Most popular days of the week are Friday and the weekend although these days will change when business travel gets back to normal and the flights return to Sydney from Wellcamp.

Average length of stay is 2.7 days.

The average reservation window was 21 days and falling as people book closer to their date of travel.

Most prevalent source markets were Brisbane, Moreton Bay and the Lockyer Valley. The two top behavioural profiles visiting Toowoomba are the 'Flourishing Professional' and the 'Urban Affluencer' which

are the two wealthiest cameo segmentation categories.

✦ **How many types of accommodation does Toowoomba have i.e. how many 5,4,3,2 star hotels/motels, camp sites, Airbnb's.**

We have a total of 1,681 rooms

- **350 Airbnb's listed in the region** - however this number can be confusing as many of the accommodation operators put their discounted rooms on Airbnb. We estimate the number of Airbnb listings to be about 100.
- **29 Camp sites**
- **58 Motels/Apartments/Hotels** - out of which 25 are 4 star; 30 are 3 star and 3 are 2 star

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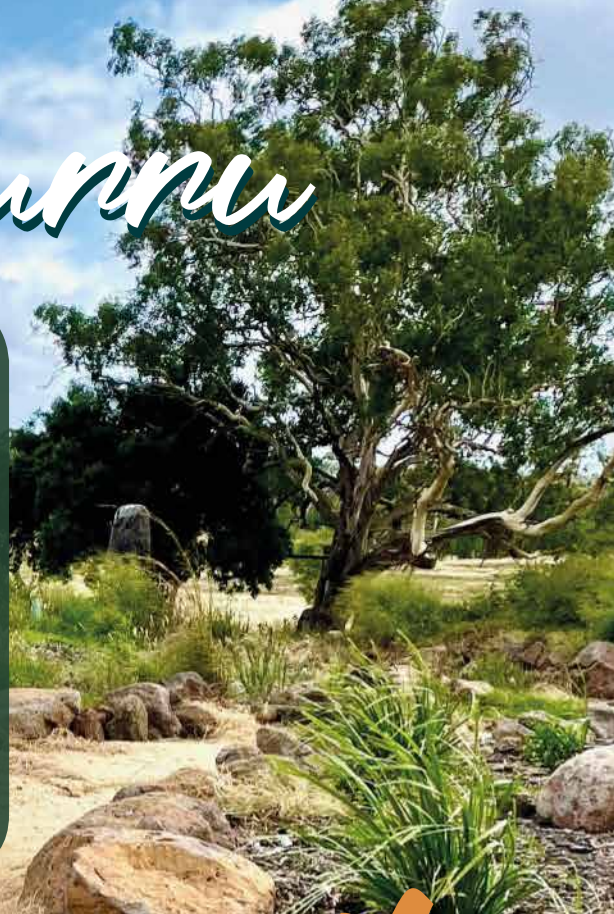


Gummingurru



Gummingurru is an aboriginal ceremonial site featuring a Bora Ring and several stone arrangements or “totems” depicting animals including emu, snake and turtle.

The 3.5ha site is believed to have been used for male initiation ceremonies as well as a meeting place for groups travelling to the Bunya Nut Festival. The site was used regularly for around 4000 years up until 1890 when local indigenous people were removed to missions around the state. The site was rediscovered by land-owner Ben Gilbert who learned about its importance from Wakka Wakka elder, Uncle Bunda. Ben gave the land to the Gummingurru Aboriginal Corporation as custodians.



What will you experience here:

Guided tours of the Banda Cultural Centre with artefacts and incredible hand-hewn table, bush tucker garden and plant nursery, Bora Ring and initiation ground, totems, yarning circle.

Location: 148 Old Homebush Road, Meringandan

Visit: by appointment only.
Contact Wakka Wakka custodian
Conrad Bauwens on 0417 163 781

www.gummingurru.com.au

The Vision SO MUCH POTENTIAL...

The future plan for Gummingurru is visually spectacular and culturally transformative: a smaller version of the Dreamtime Cultural Centre in Rockhampton and Australia Zoo combined. The master plan includes landscaping and infrastructure to create an immersive experience for visitors – think food, events, song-lines. But Wakka Wakka custodian, Conrad Bauwens, also sees the site continuing its original purpose of passing on knowledge about kinship, community, environment, health and responsibility to younger generations.

“Gummingurru has potential to become a place to create true reconciliation,” he said. “I’d like to see it build a bridge for all cultures as we teach people how to look after country and look after each other.”

The Gummingurru Aboriginal Corporation intends to apply for funding such as tourism grants to keep the master plan on track. In the meantime, it is always seeking assistance from interested parties.

How to Help:

“Businesses around Toowoomba can help us in many ways,” said Conrad.

“Firstly, by enacting their Reconciliation Action Plans. Secondly, by bringing staff out here to engage in an educational journey that will inspire by a developing a deeper understanding of our customs and traditions, increasing the promotion of awareness and appreciation of our culture”

“We want to share the incredible history of the wider Bunya story and its significances to us and the many visitors from other mobs and the connections to this exceptional cultural asset”.

“And also through investment: investment of materials, time and skills in building infrastructure. All contributions are valued, we really do run this place on the smell of an oily rag, so any help is greatly appreciated. It all goes towards the ongoing conservation of this place. Volunteers can also assist with the nursery and general maintenance “

“We are open to collaboration for special days, workshops, tours and so on. We greatly appreciate assistance in all forms.”



INDIGENOUS *Culture*

Toowoomba offers several opportunities to celebrate the spirit of Australia while learning about our ancient cultures. These include an Australian native garden, a gallery and a ceremonial site.

But are there opportunities for more?

CEO of Toowoomba Chamber, Todd Rohl, believes that Toowoomba businesses would benefit by understanding more about local indigenous history and cultures.

"Again, it comes back to awareness," he said. "The more we educate ourselves the better experiences we will offer. Our Indigenous experiences in Toowoomba are fantastic - we just need more of them!"

"It would be great to see more businesses incorporating local Indigenous art into their workplaces, native plants into their gardens and of course we'd love to see bush tucker on our menus."



Gumbi Gumbi Gardens

USQ, 487 West Street – adjacent to the main driveway

The 2ha Gumbi Gumbi Gardens Cultural site was designed in close partnership with the respected historical Elders from Toowoomba and Elders of the Jarowair people. Featuring more than 100 plant species used by Aboriginal communities, the gardens are a place for coming together and walking together. Download the free App.

Lockyer Lookout

J.E. Duggan Park, Leslie Street Rangeville

Mount Tabletop (Meewah) is the backdrop to a large information panel that tells the story of the Battle of One Tree Hill, in September 1843.



Amaroo Environmental Education Centre

90 Kleinton School Road, Kleinton

Located in the old Kleinton State School campus, Amaroo is owned and operated by Education Queensland. It is a beautiful site offering life-changing programs.

www.amarooeec.eq.edu.au

Doolamai Designs

*28 Taylor Street Toowoomba City
www.doolamaidesigns.com*

A contemporary indigenous art gallery founded by father-daughter duo Cara Green and Domi Doolamai.



City Murals *Murals in Neil Street Toowoomba*





NATIVE OZ *Bushfoods*

Explore unique Australian bush flavours ... and put them on Toowoomba menus!

Have you had the “Mountain Pepper Berry Experience”? Those who have will know what I’m talking about and those who haven’t, well ... you’ll just have to find out for yourselves!

You can buy Mountain Pepper Berry and lots of other bushfoods from local business, Native Oz Bushfoods. Technically, Native Oz Bushfoods is at Ropeley in the Lockyer Valley which is a fantastic place for growing bush foods. But founders Doug and Tracey Goebel are very much part of the Toowoomba fresh produce scene and you’ll find them at markets and events around town.

Native Oz Bushfoods’ product range includes jams, salt mixes and sauces as well as dried and fresh leaf, nuts and fruits. And yes, they have lots of recipes for all products too.

“We founded Native Oz Bushfoods because we love quality native foods. Using our knowledge, we have created a seasonal selection for our customers to enjoy,” said Doug.

Already the Goebel’s farm has 400 plants from 40 different varieties of edible bushfoods but they’re planting around one thousand more. The farm will be open to the public for Touch & Taste Tours from April, 2022. The tours include smoking ceremony, welcome to country, educational talks and bushfood inspired morning tea.

Visit the website to find out where you can buy Native Oz Bushfoods and start incorporating them into your menus.

www.nativeozbushfoods.com.au





Wedding Industry

UNITED AND FUTURE FOCUSED

Local businesses supporting the Toowoomba wedding industry are focused on a bright future beyond the challenges of the past couple of years.

Kim Cahill, ToowoombaDarlingDowns.com.au

Building on the 2021 collaboration with Australian Bridal Industry Academy Managing Director, Natasha O'Meara, local businesses voiced the need for a future focus as a united industry.

The breadth of businesses allied to weddings is huge for the Toowoomba region and varies from large organisations to artisanal workshops. There's accommodation, flowers, cakes, catering, clothing, entertainment, venues, photography, printers, hair stylists and more.

The impact of highs and lows over the past two years has been enormous. But there's a feeling that by joining forces, now is the time to build more highs. Together we can create Toowoomba the Top of the Range Regional Wedding Destination Package and attract more wedding parties with the aim of keeping guests in the region for longer.

From agreeing to collaborate to the action of collaborating.

A wedding directory is a great place to start.

People seeking the perfect wedding need a central Toowoomba wedding businesses directory to go to where they can find everything, they need in the one place. As an interim, Kim Cahill has created a Wedding Page on her platform www.toowoombadarlingdowns.com.au which supports local businesses posting for FREE in a central location.

All local regional wedding industry related businesses are invited to post their offerings where they will be warmly supported by Kim.

The team that created the ABIA partnership and brought the attention of key local, state, and federal

decision-makers together is led by Ian Wickham from In the Booth. This group is all about lifting spirits and rebuilding business strength and it is ready to join forces with the Toowoomba Chamber and other interested parties to springboard into action.

The 2022/23 wedding seasons are looking bright with local, state and international travel becoming easier. This gives confidence to couples seeking to lock in a date.

The reality of building a nationally recognised wedding destination package is not far away and it is underpinned by our existing assets: fresh produce, great eateries, wonderful venues, plentiful accommodation and abundant choice for all budgets and tastes.



TOOWOOMBA CHAMBER'S *Regional Alliance*

The Toowoomba Chamber is in the process of developing regional alliances as a basis for collaboration between chambers, progress associations and the like across the Toowoomba Regional Council area.

The aim of these alliances is to:

- work together to coordinate policy and advocacy and training
- create joint networking opportunities
- promote business activities of both organisations.

Crows Nest District Tourist and Progress Association Inc.

A "Deed" has been entered into with Crows Nest District Tourism & Progress Association to develop tourism within the Crows Nest district and to promote and encourage progress within the district.

What They Do:

- promote business and lifestyle opportunities

- publicise tourist destinations and activities
- run the Progress Crows Nest and Mountain Bike Mecca websites to promote the Crows Nest District
- maintain and implement a Community Growth Action Plan which is updated annually

Meetings of the Crows Nest District Tourist and Progress Association Inc. are held at 6pm, fourth Tuesday of every second month, commencing in February at the QCWA Hall, New England Highway, Crows Nest.

To find out more about Toowoomba Chamber's Regional Alliances visit the website www.toowoombachamber.com.au



Nolan's Block CROWS NEST

Myrtile Bistro and My Little Blueberry

At the time of printing, celebrated local chef Amanda Hinds' new venture, Myrtile Bistro, is just days from opening. It is one of several new businesses in the beautifully restored Nolan's Block building in Crows Nest.

If you haven't visited Crows Nest in a while, you really should! There are some fabulous new businesses mingling with your old favourites.

Other businesses at Nolan's Block:

- Garden and produce shop
- Homewares and gifts
- Antiques
- High-end whiskey bar and coffee merchant



** Why did the mysterious Madame Myrtile come to the High Country from Paris nearly 100 years ago? And what is the connection with elderflower gin? Call in to Pechey Gin or Myrtile Bistro to find out.*



GET TO KNOW *Boho Cartel*

Suzannah Miller dreamed of a new life during the Sydney lockdown of 2021. So she sold her home and purchased 78 acres at Crows Nest, sight unseen. Her dream is taking shape and it's going to be an incredible asset to the region.

The idea for Boho Cartel had been brewing for a while and then during lockdown Suzannah began creating small, beautifully styled, dreamy picnics – just for herself, her fiancé and friends. The idea became a passion. With her background in media, advertising and recruitment, Suzannah began planning a full-time business. But how did the idea of moving to Crows Nest come about? According to Suzannah it was a happy accident.

"I knew I wanted to set up a glamping site and, armed with that passion and my life savings, I set about looking for the dream parcel of land – online only. I must have looked at thousands of

properties and then one day, I was half watching a movie, half flicking through properties when I saw THE ONE.

"It ticked all my (many) boxes! Crows Nest has amazing natural beauty and bucket loads of charm plus there is lots to do in the area. I can direct my guests to the local winery and distillery, craft and farmers markets, National Park, swimming holes, mountain bike trails, horse riding, fresh produce, gorgeous cafes, and exciting new businesses coming to the area.

"I researched my new town and fell in love with Crows Nest. I am also blown away by how friendly and welcoming everyone has been since we moved here."





What exactly is Boho Cartel?


We have several businesses under the Boho Cartel brand that complement each other.

- Boho inspired events - including picnics, weddings, celebrations, corporate events – you name it, we can do it!
- Olive - our vintage caravan bar
- Glamping tent/sites
- Resort style pool – under construction
- Boho Cartel Boutique – stocking boho inspired products so customers can recreate my looks at home

Collaboration

We have already styled a picnic and wine tasting in collaboration with Holland Wines and a local paint and sip business on Valentine's Day which was a huge success! We are hoping to do many more collaborations including yoga and wellness, retreats, workshops, - I'm super excited to see who we can work with and how.

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Crows Nest, 4355

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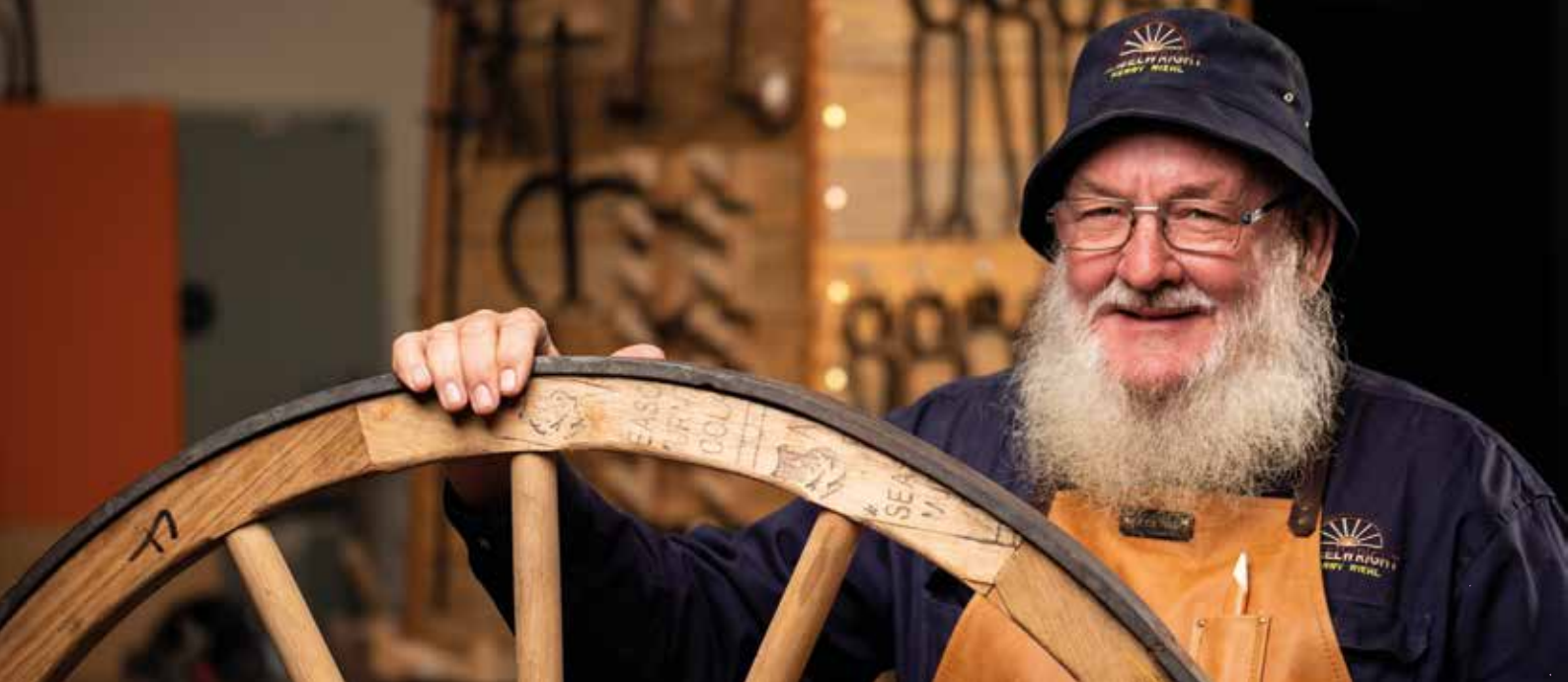
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COBB+CO Museum

Cobb+Co Museum, which is part of the Queensland Museum Network, opened in 1987 originally to house the National Carriage Collection- Australia's finest exhibition of horse drawn vehicles. Since then, the museum has grown to also house several other permanent exhibitions and it is also host to travelling exhibitions from around Australia and the world.

COVID

While museum doors closed temporarily across the world in 2020, the team at Cobb+Co Museum switched focus on how they could engage with their visitors and bring the collection to them in ways they'd not yet explored.

Teams across the network worked to create Museum at Home, a virtual collection of accessible experiences to ensure the network met their commitment to not only store, preserve and manage the collections, but to deliver high quality research, and compelling and relevant experiences for the community.

During this time the museum released a podcast interviewing museum curators and collection managers, filmed various series for YouTube including Couch Curator, Little Learners and others, it made collections, exhibitions and learning resources available online and it designed at-home activities for families.

The temporary closure also sparked the need for Cobb+Co Museum to preserve heritage trades not only through the popular Hands-on Workshops, but also through filming and interviewing our artisans to ensure the preservation of their skills and processes for years to come.

Post COVID

Since reopening, the museum continues to welcome people of all ages and interests to explore extensive displays on the natural and cultural history of Topwoomba and the Darling Downs.

- The Binangar Centre celebrates centuries of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and people.
- Megafauna features real remains of giant mammals and marsupials who roamed the Darling Downs 10,000+ years ago.
- Kids can unleash their inner scientists in the Sciencentre and discover history through play in The Coach Stop and Harry's Hideout.



On Now!

Colour: See the world in a new light - An exhibition by Questacon, is currently on at the museum until 22 May. Explore a series of upcoming events related to the exhibition, as well as our Hands-on Workshops schedule and special events for the school holidays and Mother's Day.

The museum is also home to the popular Cobb's Coffee Shop and is available for venue hire.

Visit the museum website for more information at cobbandco.qm.qld.gov.au

Chamber members

- TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY SECTOR

Collaborations, partnerships, supply and networking - the sky's the limit when you work with our local tourism and hospitality members.



Photo credit: Tall Timber Studio

* Hospitality

4Brothers Brewing
Bodega Bar
Café Guitar
Toowoomba Golf Club
Middle Ridge
Club Toowoomba
Copper Bench
The Rock Pub
The Spotted Cow
Vapiano Italian Restaurant
Pizza Guardians
Parisi-Ann Patisserie
OMG Decadent Donuts
Encores at the Empire
Norville Hotel
Muller Brothers
Rosalie House Cellar Door
The Met Hotel
The Downs Club
The Finch Café
Fitzzy's
Six of One Coffee Roasters
The Grazier's Daughter
Hampers

* Food Producers

Hammy's Cupcakes
Darling Fresh
Smoke Haus
Metiisto Chocolate
Twin Pines Limes
Wearing Memories

* Accommodation

Burke & Wills Hotel
Platinum International Motel
Quest Hotel Toowoomba
Oaks Hotel
Central Plaza

* Destinations

Southern Qld Country Tourism
High Country Hamlets
Willowvale Cooking School
Empire Theatre
Cobb+Co Museum
Gummingurru
Crows Nest Tourism

* Events & Catering

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Success - HOW THE EMPIRE THEATRE BRINGS OPPORTUNITY

With annual audiences of around 100,000 pre-COVID and 60,000 during COVID, the Empire Theatre is one of the region's top tourism drivers. It's a drawcard like no other and it's a consistent one too. Hardly surprising then, with pandemic restrictions easing, the future is looking bright. The question is, can businesses swing on its coat tails?

Empire Theatre GM, Kerry Saul, believes businesses can and should take advantage of the Theatre's growing audience numbers. But it starts with awareness.

"We bring hundreds of people to Toowoomba's CBD each performance so just being aware of what shows are on is a good start," he said. "Audiences often want to kick on after a show – or have a nice meal on the way to the Empire. Whether it's a Tuesday night, or a Saturday night, I'd suggest

rostering staff on and staying open to take advantage of the crowds."

Where exactly are the crowds coming from?

Kerry says the Empire Theatre draws its audiences from Toowoomba first, then the Lockyer Valley, then from out west, followed by Brisbane, the Gold and Sunshine coasts.

"We find that school boarder families will come from out west, visit the kids and catch a show while they're in town. I know that Toowoomba's savviest restaurants and bars work in with us and it's proving successful for them."

If ticket sales in February are any indication, there's some great business opportunities on the way. The Theatre currently has 50 shows on sale and recently sold \$15,000 worth of tickets on a single day.

"We're also selling lots of gift vouchers," said Kerry. "Which shows confidence in the arts in our community."

The Empire Theatre function spaces are also enjoying renewed success.

"We have bookings for weddings, parties, corporate events and two big conferences this year; one in April and one in September," said Kerry. "Again, local business can leverage these events if they're aware of them. There will be hundreds of visitors wandering around town and looking for things to do during breaks and after hours – maybe looking for a haircut, or to do a little shopping."

For more information about what's on at the Empire Theatre go to www.empiretheatre.com.au

WHAT'S COMING AT THE EMPIRE THEATRE

Up



18 – 26 March

Empire Theatre's production
of **We Will Rock You**

—

31 March

Anh Do
The Happiest Refugee

—

1 and 2 April

Curious Arts Festival

—

22 April

Isaac Butterfield
The New Normal

—

11 May

The King and Guy with Teddy
Tahu Rhodes and Guy Noble

—

22 June

Ross Noble
On the Go

—



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Recipe for success

Dine Darling Downs takes you on a journey of Toowoomba's best places to dine, play and stay. It's also proudly powered by the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce.

Dine Darling Downs (DDD) has long been the region's number one digital platform for dining and foodie experiences. So, it makes sense that DDD and Toowoomba Chamber are now working together to support even more local businesses in the hospitality sector.

Founder and owner of DDD, Kristen O'Brien is a self-confessed foodie with a background in media, marketing and public relations so she knows a thing or two about appealing to hunter gathering locals and visitors.

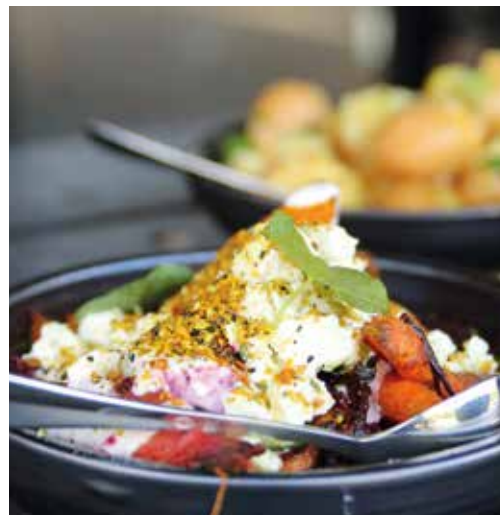
"Toowoomba is a destination that's high on the radar for Foodies in the

South East at the moment," she said. "We have so much to offer here from cosy café's, trendy laneway bars and eateries, to top quality restaurants and historic pubs."

With nearly 11 000 followers on Facebook and Instagram, DDD regularly creates posts with engagement in the tens of thousands – reaching up to 150,000 impressions in a single month.

The daily posts include everything to tempt your taste buds from where to grab that first coffee in the morning to the perfect steak for dinner and everything in between. Add to this





the Dine Darling Downs website, www.dinedarlingdowns.com.au which has a growing Directory you can access 24/7 to help you find the perfect place to eat or catch up with friends for a drink. The website also offers a list of accommodation options for visitors wishing to dine and stay in our region.

The popularity of the DDD hasn't happened overnight, Kristen says it has been an eight-year labour

of love during which time she has seen both exciting and positive additions to our hospitality scene and also witnessed times of great hardship for family run businesses during the COVID pandemic.

"The pandemic and even recent rain events created very trying times for our local businesses. We want to help them rebuild and more importantly we want them to prosper!"

Toowoomba Chamber CEO Todd Rohl said that after a successful first year, Chamber's sponsorship of DDD would continue.

"It's a no brainer! We love being part of DDD and seeing the success it brings to our hospitality sector. DDD has been a godsend throughout COVID, particularly as a vehicle to encourage locals to support locals, imagine what we can do when business is back to normal"



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AND HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF IT



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PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS ON OUR DIRECTORY

To get the most out of your Chamber membership, get in touch with our membership officer memberships@toowoombachamber.com.au

Future Focussed

WITH QUEST TOOWOOMBA OWNERS TONY AND JENNY O'REILLY

If you want some positive energy and inspiration talk to Tony and Jenny O'Reilly, franchisees of Quest Toowoomba. Sure, they have encountered a few setbacks since opening in 2015, but they are excited as they look ahead to a brighter future.

Tony and Jenny O'Reilly were looking for a business in Toowoomba and when the chance to buy the Quest franchise appeared they jumped at it and opened for business in July 2015. Two years later a fire at Amigo's next door meant closing again for nine months and reopening in February 2018. Everything was going swimmingly until ... COVID.

How was Quest's occupancy prior to COVID?

Occupancy was strong and we had fully recovered from the closure caused by the Amigos fire.

Government restrictions created a very challenging environment for hospitality. The enforced restrictions changed constantly with short notice – it was an exhausting and unstable two years.

How is business looking now?

It is wonderfully refreshing to see the return of confidence in travel. We are seeing stronger forward booking – for corporate clients and visitors - which makes us feel really positive about the future. It has been lovely to welcome back our "regulars". There is a definite trend for companies wanting to do business in person and projects that were on hold are now back on track which is exciting. Weddings are back in full swing too which is fantastic.

Who are your customers and where do they come from?

Our clientele is mostly corporate, people from interstate here for work. Our self-contained apartments are popular with guests working on long-term projects. Everything

changes on weekends when we welcome visitors who love our CBD location, so close to restaurants, Empire Theatre and Grand Central.

What is special about the Quest experience?

We take pride in delivering exceptional service and quality products. Our regular guests treat Quest like a home away from home – which we love. You really can't beat our location in the heart of the city, across from Queens Park, with secure undercover parking.

Our lead-in Studio Room features king size bed, kitchen, beautiful bathroom and views. While our one, two and three bedroom apartments have separate bedrooms, full-sized kitchen, dining/lounge area, laundry and balcony. We offer housekeeping and food and beverage options including deals with neighbouring restaurants.

Do you collaborate with local business?

We work closely with many local businesses and are always on the look for ways we can support likeminded businesses in our neighbourhood.

We encourage any local business that could enhance visitor experience to get in touch with us and look at how we can work together.

Wherever possible we use local suppliers for our business. As we don't have our own restaurant, we call on local catering businesses for onsite catering and recommend local restaurants to guests. One of our major costs is linen so we are pleased to support Vanguard Laundry for our laundry services.



We also working local charities to support their causes by providing accommodation vouchers.

A word about staff

With business improving we are looking to expand our current wonderful team and have upcoming roles in both housekeeping and front office. We empower our staff by providing ongoing professional development, and internal growth opportunities. We always employ on personality rather than experience and love seeing team members flourish.

What's coming up for Quest?

We are off to Melbourne to connect with fellow Quest franchisees and the team at Quest corporate office. We will celebrate again being honoured as a regional finalist at the QLD/NT Franchise of the Year Awards 2021. We are also proud to support our Business Development Executive, Kristy Elliott who is receiving the QLD/NT Regional Salesperson of the Year (we are hoping to bring home the national award too!).



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Toowoomba Region **TRAILS, CAMPING SITES ATTRACT ADVENTURE SEEKERS, NATURE ENTHUSIASTS**

With thanks to Toowoomba Regional Council

Adventure seekers, nature enthusiasts and foodies looking for unique experiences are spoilt for choice when visiting the Toowoomba Region.

Toowoomba Region Mayor Paul Antonio said many of the Region's 'hidden gems' had been discovered by more people in the past two years with travel restrictions forcing Queenslanders to explore new corners of their home state.

"Many parts of regional Queensland have seen a rise in visitor numbers with various state and overseas borders closed due to the Coronavirus pandemic," Mayor Antonio said.

"The Toowoomba Region spans 13,000km² across southern Queensland, featuring some of the most fertile and picturesque agricultural land in the country.

"Topping this is the exquisite beauty of The Great Dividing Range that skirts the Region's eastern edge, offering yet more recreational pursuits.

"There are many options for adventure seekers along the length of The Range in national parks and Council's expanding trail network.

"Council's 2020 Walks and Trails of Toowoomba Region guide lists 78 nature excursions graded for novice trekkers through to experienced outdoor enthusiasts.

"The guide features multi-day riding or walking options on the 160km Brisbane Valley Rail Trail, stretching from the hills of Yarraman in our Region's north to Wulkuraka near Ipswich, or shorter walks for people of all abilities.

"Council's Toowoomba Escarpment Parks Master Plan will guide the development and upgrades of our trails network, with state government support.

"Our plans will ensure we have an inter-connected series of escarpment trails that will allow us to add more outdoor recreation activities to our events calendar. Attracting more visitors also has flow-on benefits for accommodation and restaurant operators.

"We know residents regularly use our parks and recreation areas and there is an opportunity to draw more visitors to use our escarpment trails."

Toowoomba Regional Council Parks and Recreation Services portfolio leader Cr Tim McMahon said the Region was progressing with plans to be a nationally significant

mountain biking destination, guided by the Toowoomba and Lockyer Valley Escarpment Mountain Bike Masterplan 2019 -26.

"Council has worked in collaboration with the Lockyer Valley Regional Council (LVRC), with support from the Queensland Government, to develop a master plan that sets the future direction of mountain bike activities along The Range escarpment," Cr McMahon said

"Council is finalising detailed environmental and cultural heritage assessments ahead of further community consultation.

"The trails are important natural assets and appropriate, unobtrusive upgrading or the establishment of new multi-use trails (for walking, running, bike riding and horse

riding) will expand recreation options for residents and visitors.

"Council is mindful of protecting the environmental significance of escarpment bushland parks and any future works will be subject to environmental assessment. The beauty of the natural environment is the key aspect of the experience that we want to preserve for all users.

"Further afield, there are free family camping options at places like Apex Park (on the banks of the Condamine River off Toowoomba-Cecil Plains Road), Boodua Reserve, Bowenville Reserve, Passmore Reserve at Ellangowan, Swinging Bridge Park at Cooyar and Yarramalong Reserve near Millmerran."

For more camping options, visit www.tr.qld.gov.au/camping



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Toowoomba Trails

Outdoor adventure tourism is increasing in popularity all over the world. While Toowoomba's offering is limited by nature, Toowoomba Regional Council is working with what we have. Our network of trails is certainly growing and that's great news for our hikers, mountain bikers and bird watchers. Council is also promoting country drives.

Toowoomba Regional Council Environment and Community Services Committee chair Cr James O'Shea said Council was actively involved in promotional activities with Southern Queensland Country Tourism, including the recent 'Mother of All Nature' campaign that highlighted nature and adventure tourism across the region over the summer months.

"Council's Tourism and Events team works with Drive Inland promoting travel via inland routes. Agritourism options along the New England Highway will be promoted in a new Taste Australia's Country Way video in coming months," Cr O'Shea said.

"We've also participated in a video featuring our region's cafes and restaurants that is part of the South-East Queensland Council of Mayors' Food Trail initiative. Our fresh produce, boutique wineries and distilleries offer tempting and unique experiences that appeal to residents and visitors.

"These venues will be a key attraction for visitors to our second month-long Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers in September."



FOR BIRD WATCHERS:

Cr O'Shea said that Council released a new Toowoomba Birdwatching Guide last year in response to visitor demand, highlighting niche activities that draw visitors from all points of the country."

The Walks and Trails of Toowoomba Region Guide can be viewed at www.tr.qld.gov.au/walkingtrails



FOR HIKERS AND MOUNTAIN BIKERS:

Mt Peel Bushland Park, near Drayton

Features 7km of beginner trails and bushwalks.

Jubilee Park at Redwood

Here you will find 28km of professionally designed trail networks to test your skills.

Stenner Street Skills Park, Middle Ridge

With five dirt jump tracks from beginners to experts, this is the place to hone your skills. Tracks include tabletops, gap doubles, rollers and berms.

Mountain Bike Mecca, Hampton and Crows Nest

Features mapped off road trails that will take you through pine forests, grass tree groves and bush tracks. www.mountainbikemecca.com

Brisbane Valley Rail Trail

If you have some time on your hands, head to Yarraman in our region's north and the start (or finish) of the 160km Brisbane Valley Rail Trail. The trail will take you through Toogoolawah, Esk, Fernvale and into Ipswich.

Please note, some of Council's escarpment trails will be closed indefinitely following extensive damage caused in the February 2022 rain event. Please check individual listings on the website.

MOUNTAIN BIKING – WHAT’S IN IT FOR BUSINESS?

Mountain biking is one of the most popular sports in Australia. What does Toowoomba have to offer the market and what’s in it for local business?

Let’s start with getting to know each other first! If you want to capture some of this growing market then get to know the players, the stakeholders and the participants. A good place to begin would be Toowoomba Mountain Bike Club, local bike shops and local trails.

ACCOMMODATION

Mountain bikers from out of town appreciate a hot shower and a comfy bed after a day of riding the trails. Mountain biking is a family affair for some so they’ll be looking for beds for tired kids too. Accommodation that has somewhere to wash and store bikes will be the first choice.

THEY’RE STARVING

Don’t just assume mountain bikers are bringing their own food! Sure,

they’ll bring energy snacks, but many will still appreciate a meal or a coffee at a local café – especially if it’s not too far from the trails.

SPONSORSHIP

Mountain biking events draw big crowds and offer plenty of opportunity for mutually beneficial sponsorship agreements.



DESIGN, REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE OF TRAILS

Can your business assist with trails? All of Toowoomba’s mountain bike trails are owned by Toowoomba Regional Council but maintained by volunteers from the Toowoomba Mountain Bike Club. Maybe your business can create a partnership to help?

CGLAW WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR

Current Directors, Amanda Tolson, Danny Clifford and Ben Gouldson are pleased to announce that Harrison Humphries has joined them as a Director and owner of Clifford Gouldson Lawyers effective from 1 January 2022.

Harrison joined CGLaw in 2013 and has been the Head of our Litigation + Dispute Resolution team since 2015. He has more than 16 years of legal experience – primarily in dealing with legal disputes involving businesses and individuals.

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HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM DRIVING *Business Growth*

A popular destination for the day-trip, friends and family and short-stay markets, the Toowoomba, Darling Downs and Ipswich and Scenic Rim regions' hospitality industries are bouncing back, with the demand for skilled front and back of house workers increasing.

After finishing school Blake Royle tried his hand a few different jobs, but a love of cooking, and fond memories of working in hospitality as a teenager, lured him back into the kitchen to pursue a career as a chef.

Now Blake is 26 years old and well on the way to living his dream after accessing JobTrainer funding to study a Certificate II in Kitchen Operations (SIT20416).

"When I was in school I was doing a school-based traineeship and worked in various places in Brisbane, then other things came up but now I'm really enjoying getting back into the hospitality industry, mainly in the back-of-house kitchens and stuff," Blake said.

"I've previously completed a certificate in baking and the bar and barista course with TAFE Queensland so it was an easy decision to study with TAFE again."

As the state's leading provider of vocational training and education, TAFE Queensland is proud to be able to offer students the skills and opportunities they need for the jobs of the future. TAFE Queensland

engages with industry to deliver the training packages required, to meet the skill needs of communities.

"I've loved learning new things that I didn't really know about, like how to sous-vide the different types of meats and fish and everything — also getting into the aspect of the service environment," Blake said.

Blake thrives on the opportunity to train in industry-standard facilities.

"If you love cooking then it's a great place to come and learn and possibly have yourself a future in the hospitality industry. Whether it's front of house doing coffees and bar, or whether it's back of house doing cooking and you're serving food to customers — you will learn it all," he said.

Blake was able to kick start his career by accessing JobTrainer funding which enables eligible Queenslanders to complete selected qualifications for free or at low cost. With a range of apprenticeship, traineeship and mixed model delivery options available, TAFE Queensland is ready to help your get ready for business. Find out more at tafeqld.edu.au/ready-for-business.



Events

Events bring people to town and that means more potential customers for local business.

We should all be aware of upcoming events and find out how to collaborate or leverage for branding, sales and networking. Here's a short list of events that will bring people to the region:

MARCH

- 16 - 26 We Will Rock You
Empire Theatre
- 25 - 27 Grammar Art Show
Toowoomba Grammar School
- 25 - 27 Royal Toowoomba Show
- 31 Anh Do
Empire Theatre

MAY

- 3 - 4 Shen Yung Dance
Empire Theatre
- 15 Hampton Food Festival
Chapman Park Hampton
- 22 Rotary Run the Range

JUNE

- 7 - 9 Farmfest
- 12 Glennie Fair
Glennie School
- 22 Ross Nobel
Empire Theatre

JULY

O'Callaghan Cup
between TGS & Downslands

AUGUST

Languages and Cultures
Festival

SEPTEMBER

- 1 - 30 Toowoomba Carnival of
Flowers
- 24 Weetwood Handicap
Clifford Park Racecourse
- Downlands Art Exhibition

OCTOBER

- 15 Focus HR Business
Excellence Awards
- Fairholme College
Spring Fair

NOVEMBER

Jacaranda Day
Goombungee

DECEMBER

Bush Christmas
Christmas Wonderland of
Lights *Queens Park*

CHAMBER'S NEW WEBSITE

Have a good look around!

You'll find all the information you need to get the best value from your membership:

- Member listings
- Member offers
- Events and booking details
- Webinars
- Latest Media Releases and News
- Digital Business Journal

Visit: toowoombachamber.com.au



Future Leaders in Toowoomba are in for an exciting year in 2022. The Future Leaders Advisory Group (FLAG) have been busy at work planning and co-ordinating some fantastic opportunities for the under 35 entrepreneurs, business owners and employees to get involved in.

The Future Leaders Mentor Program, proudly sponsored by CatholicCare, has continued into 2022 with the first workshop for mentees being run by Naomi Wilson from Focus HR providing a great insight into “People Management” and leadership development for the Mentor Program participants.

The Power Tynan Professional Development Series has also kicked off the year strong with our own Peter Rowe from Power Tynan facilitating the first workshop of the year on Strategic Planning.

The workshops as a part of these two Future Leaders programs have been a first of its kind for Future Leaders and has proven to drive some excellent value through to the attendees and in turn their respective businesses.

Some of the recent feedback from the CatholicCare Future Leaders Mentor Program has highlighted this. One Mentee noted that the workshops have been one of the highlights of the program and has enabled mentees to connect with like-minded people in the Toowoomba business community.

The first flagship Future Leaders event for 2022 is our Mental Health in our Young Workforce event, proudly sponsored by NRG Services and JRS Manufacturing Group. We’re excited



to hear from Edward Ross, Director of TradeMutt and TIACS as well as local business representatives, to share the ways they are supporting mental health in the workplace, and to listen to shared experiences from those individuals progressing through their own personal mental health journey. The FLAG is proud to announce that proceeds from this event will go towards the delivery of This Is A Conversation Starter services.

Jacob Carlile
Director, Qld Hot Property
Future Leaders Advisory
Group Representative

TOOWOOMBA Conferences

Toowoomba Conferences was established as the region's bureau connecting event organisers and suppliers, as well as showcasing the unique benefits and opportunities available within our region.

Through the continued development and promotion of this sector, we aim to support local venues, accommodation providers, associated vendors and suppliers, as well as

many other businesses; through the potential economic benefit such events could bring to the region as a MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Events) destination.

With resurgence in the events industry combined with the business community continuing to strengthen, there is fantastic potential to expand the Toowoomba Conferences' offering and drive real connection between not only vendors, but prospective clientele as well.

From the desk of Toowoomba Conferences, over the forthcoming year the wider community will see an increased presence of the brand through and new collaborative initiatives with the local networks, to communicate to a wider audience just what can be experienced on our doorstep.

Just some of the exciting initiatives already planned include an online supplier listing portal, quarterly industry networking functions, a new marketing campaign and an industry survey.



TOOWOOMBA CONFERENCES

meet
SOMEWHERE
FRESH

Collaborate WITH TOOWOOMBA CONFERENCES

Let's work together to build industry recognition of the Toowoomba region as an ideal destination choice for meetings and events.

All operators in the events industry are invited to collaborate with Toowoomba Conferences bureau. Check out the exciting initiatives planned for the year ahead by clicking on the QR code.



SCAN ME

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JOBS TASKFORCE

The Jobs Taskforce has realigned from a focus on youth to a focus on skills shortfall.

On 3 November 2021, Chamber hosted the Skills Shortage Business Breakfast. With the help of facilitator, Naomi Wilson and panellists, the Toowoomba Chamber and the wider business community identified seven key issues that need to be addressed to resolve this matter:

- Toowoomba's reputation as a place to work
- promoting Toowoomba and region
- housing and accommodation
- depletion of the talent pool
- rethink the offer
- competition across industries
- competition across locations
- availability of labor

At our first meeting for 2022, held in January, the Jobs Taskforce decided to undertake a survey of businesses to determine why people call Toowoomba home. It will also engage with the Federal Government Local Jobs Taskforce to include a priority that focusses on and funds local business education. The Jobs Taskforce is also planning to create a video to promote the region called Why Toowoomba which will be distributed through our networks and to members.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT REVITALISATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Central Business District Revitalisation Advisory Committee (CBD-RAC) engaged with relevant Toowoomba Regional Council (TRC) officers and managers to cover off on major priorities as outlined by CBD-RAC. The outcomes of the report include several matters for TRC to consider such as developing a guide for hosting events in Toowoomba, investigating the repurposing of laneways and circulating the parking strategy. From this report, CBD-RAC responsibilities include the What's On platform, encouraging businesses to activate laneways and working with businesses to understand their level of service to meet their needs. The CBD-RAC continues to work on its identified responsibilities.

This year the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the CBD-RAC brought back Christmas to the CBD. The intent to get people to come into our CBD, get into the Christmas spirit and admire the displays, with the hope that people will visit businesses, stop in for a meal and do some Christmas shopping! Congratulations to all participated in the event and to the Overall Winner, Vintage Pear. We look forward to adding more businesses in 2022.



FOOD & AGRI
NETWORK

FOOD ADVISORY GROUP

Dine Darling Downs, now powered by the Toowoomba Chamber continues to drive outreach and engage through our digital media. This strong collaboration, an initiative of the Toowoomba Chamber's Food and Agri Network, with Kristen O'Brien @DineDarling Downs is a perfect opportunity to celebrate and promote the region locally, nationally, and internationally as a foodie destination. With its outreach regularly achieving over 100 000 impressions monthly on Facebook and Instagram, any foodie business would be mad not to join this collaboration's growing foodie network and influence. What to get involved? Contact the Toowoomba Chamber.

The planned Produce Showcase for Friday 25 February 2022 was rescheduled for later in the year, It is designed to support local farmers by offering guests farm tours and a delectable local produce feast in the form of a grazing dinner.

FAN continues to support local food and beverage operators with our Locals4Locals events. The Summer produce showcase on Friday 18 February was a fun and successful event featuring a delicious line up of wonderful local businesses that tantalized the tastebuds.

A greener future

with Cr Nancy Sommerfield

Is your business 'wasting' opportunities? Don't forget to assess ALL your waste before disposal.

Council continues to solidly invest in waste and this is highlighted through the recent delivery of the Kleinton Waste Management Facility (WMF). The \$18m project incorporates a new transfer station designed for a 25-year life with expansion options built in to cater for the next 50 years. It won The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia Qld 2021 Environment & Sustainability Category and was nominated as one of the top five projects of the year.

The new facility assists in achieving Council's goal to minimise environmental impacts, divert reusable materials from landfill, improve community amenity and enhance public health outcomes

in waste disposal. In the first six months of opening, it saved Council \$87,000 in waste levy payments due to increased diversion. This saving should send a clear message to small business the importance of reassessing ALL your waste before disposal.

The facility is designed to be both water and power self-sufficient with 20 kilowatts of solar power, 320 kilolitres of rainwaters tanks, 24 megalitres of stormwater capture dams and an onsite bore system.

The new WMF is the first step in a suite of solutions addressing more globally concerning issues, such as atmospheric carbon/climate

change, consumption of non-renewable resources, international trade challenges and rebuilding Australia's national manufacturing capability - such a transformation from the legacy landfill model.

We are bringing customers on a journey of individual behaviour changes, by engaging residents to move away from the 'use it and throw it' model that the world must avoid.

As a Councillor involved in the Water & Waste Portfolio since 2012, I am proud of Council's strong investment in the waste sector.

#Don'tbeatosser
#reuserecyclerepurpose



Share your Business Greening tips with Toowoomba Chamber.

CHAMBER UPCOMING EVENTS

March

24 Slater & Gordon: COVID Compliance Breakfast
Oaks Hotel

31 RSM Federal Budget Breakfast
Oaks Hotel

April

20 B&D at USQ

To see all Chamber's upcoming events, visit the website: www.toowoombachamber.com.au

We LOVE Green Business Ideas

Fuji Business Centre Toowoomba

'Fuji Business Centre Toowoomba with FujiFilm Australia has a longstanding commitment to environmentally responsible product design, industry leading print management services and solutions, and an end-of-life resource recovery program that is second to none.'

At Fuji Business Centre Toowoomba with FujiFilm Australia we are addressing sustainability at every step of the value chain: from parts procurement through an extensive supply chain, to their development and manufacturing operations, and customer use and disposal of their products at end-of-life.'

Carmen Traise – Sales and Marketing Manager
– Fuji Business Centre Toowoomba



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