

## THE GOLD COAST TOURISM VISIONING PROJECT

### GOLD COAST TOURIST FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE AUDIT

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Facilities and infrastructure are essential ingredients of a tourist destination. International and domestic competitiveness as a tourist destination depends upon the quality variety and quantity of its accommodation, transport and recreational infrastructure and facilities.

The objectives of this study were to identify, characterise and thematically map all currently existing accommodation, theme parks, nightclubs, golf courses, tour operators, and vehicle hire businesses on the Gold Coast.

#### Accommodation

Most of the accommodation on the Gold Coast is located close to the ocean and Broadwater beaches (more than 88%). According to ABS data, at the time of the research, occupancy rates on average were at 50% in the city.

In the late 1990s, building development concentrated on the older areas of Southport/Laborador and Coolangatta. Recently, the areas of Main Beach and Broadbeach have been the focus of development.

The study found that a number of potential black spots have developed from a concentration of high-rise accommodation of similar age both north and south of the Surfers Paradise core.

Refurbishment or replacement of buildings in these areas is constrained by mixed ownership coupled with potentially unrealistic expectations regarding capital appreciation. In the study it is suggested that these problems need to be addressed through research and strategic planning.

#### Profitless volume

There is a substantial high volume, low yield ('profitless volume') problem for Gold Coast accommodation infrastructure. The over-reliance on inclusive tour markets and the erosion of margins have been the key factors that have contributed to this problem.

#### Shopping Facilities

Most of the shopping centres on the Gold Coast were built along the coastal strip during the real estate booms of the 1980s.

Although the interior of the tourism shops is regularly upgraded, the principal design and architecture remains. These factors need to be considered in the context of sustaining a competitive edge as a tourist destination.

#### Theme and Wildlife Parks

The Gold Coast has the greatest variety of theme and wildlife parks in Australia. How the Gold Coast's theme parks compare with international competitors needs to be considered.



## Golf Courses

Twenty-eight golf courses operate within boundaries of Gold Coast City Council in 1999.

The size of these courses range from 9 hole short courses to 36 hole international courses.

The majority of golf courses operate below maximum capacity.



## Implication

The abundance of established and newly developed golf courses and the unused capacity of existing courses suggests that additional golf course development is not required as a means to enhance the attractiveness of the Gold Coast as a tourist (golfing) destination.



## Beaches and waterways

The city's beaches and waterways are central to the image of the Gold Coast. The audit revealed that there were 22 surf life saving clubs and 16 stand-alone surf life saving towers on the Gold Coast in 1999.

The beaches and waterways are well utilised by tourists and residents alike, and therefore represent value to both groups of users. The upgrade of the Pacific Motorway between the

Gold Coast and Brisbane has made Gold Coast beaches and waterways increasingly accessible to Brisbane residents. It is expected that this development will promote an increase in day-trips to the Gold Coast and its beaches.

## Parking and traffic management

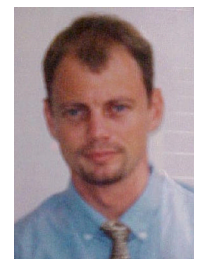
The combined effects of tourism and population growth, and urban and infrastructure development has resulted in two key issues affecting the Gold Coast's beaches and waterways: (1) lack of car parking capacity along swimming beaches, particularly on popular beaches; and (2) increasing traffic congestion on Gold Coast waterways.



Traffic congestion is a critical issue for the Gold Coast. Congestion increases markedly along the beach sections of the Gold Coast Highway, particularly during the peak seasons (i.e., school holidays) and during special events (for example, Schoolies Week and the Gold Coast Honda Indy 300). The Gold Coast City Council has developed the Gold Coast Traffic Management Plan to address these issues.

## RESEARCHER PROFILE

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## Gold Coast Tourism Visioning Project

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