

Tourism Investment and Funding

Pre-Budget Submission for WA
State Budget 2024



Tourism Council WA Pre-Budget Submission 2024

Introduction

Tourism Council WA directly represents more than 1,700 private and public sector members across the tourism industry, including businesses in the aviation, accommodation, venue, hospitality, tours, attractions and events sectors. The Council is the peak body for Western Australian regional and industry tourism associations.

The following Tourism Council WA proposals are for State Government consideration for the 2024 State Budget and forward estimates.

1. Planning and Approval

This pre-budget submission focuses on funding priorities and initiatives, particularly for investment in demand-driving attractions and accommodation. Tourism Council WA contends that this funding should be considered in tandem with reforms to enable the development and approval of State Significant tourism assets including assets located on public land. The key reforms proposed by Tourism Council WA are:

- Enabling legislation for the Office of Coordinator General to include “State Significant” tourism proposals (including small-scale, high-value proposals) within the jurisdiction of the Coordinator General.
- Enabling legislation for the Office of Coordinator General to include the granting of leases to operate on public land (e.g. by DBCA) when consolidating approvals for “State Significant” tourism proposals.
- Amending the Western Australian Tourism Commission legislation to enable the Minister for Tourism to establish statutory plans to maintain and develop “State Significant” tourism assets including public assets or assets on public land.

2. Infrastructure

The following funding proposals are designed to increase private and public investment in “State Significant” demand-driving attractions and accommodation.

2.1 Perth Convention & Exhibition Centre (\$TBD)

Coordinator General | Tourism

Investment in enhanced capacity and competitive capability in the PCEC including an additional 4,500 seat theatre to be used for entertainment events when not programmed for large conventions or for concurrent business events.

2.2 Tourism Investment Pipeline Fund (\$20M over 4 years)

Coordinator General | Tourism | Environment | Culture & Arts | Regional Development | Tourism

This fund would be used for feasibility studies, business case development and investment attraction for private investment in “State Significant” demand-driving attractions and accommodation on public and private land. Suitable proposals would be approved through the Office of Coordinator General, including lease terms on public land. Proposals could be market-led, identified by expression of interest or initiated by the State Government.

2.3 Public Attractions Fund (\$200M over 4 years)

Environment | Culture & Arts | Regional Development | Tourism

The Public Attractions Fund would be used to maintain, develop, and recycle “State Significant” public attractions on public land. These attractions may be managed by commercial tourism operators to improve the maintenance and development of the visitor experience. Example of potential “State Significant” tourism assets include the Gloucester Tree and replacement attraction for Penguin Island.

2.4 EV Touring Network Fund (\$2.5M over 4 years)

Climate Action | Transport | Regional Development | Tourism

This fund would be used to install a network of approximately 30 EV chargers suitable for vehicles with up to 13 seats at accredited Visitor Centres and public attractions. The chargers would primarily be used by self-drive domestic visitors and would attract and retain visitors to regional towns.

The EV chargers should be ‘bookable’ in advance by tour operators, to enable EV tour itineraries which can be marketed and delivered to intrastate, interstate and international visitors.

3. Product Development

The following funding proposals are designed to enhance the quality, sustainability and accessibility of tourism experiences across Western Australia.

3.1 Accessibility and Sustainability Grants (\$7M over 4 years)

Climate Action | Disability | Environment | Culture & Arts | Regional Development | Tourism

Grants of up to \$3,000 for small and medium tourism businesses to invest in enhancing their accessibility and/or sustainability. Businesses must have completed an accessibility assessment and/or emissions estimation and reduction plan. Grants to be spent on equipment and technology to reduce emissions and waste, enhance sustainability and/or enhance accessibility for guests.

3.2 Visitor Centre Grants (\$1.2M over 4 years)

Climate Action | Disability | Environment | Culture & Arts | Regional Development | Tourism

Grants of up to \$20,000 for accredited Visitor Centres to develop the visitor experience including facility, sustainability and accessibility upgrades and co-located attractions, experiences and hospitality offerings.

3.3 WA Ambassador Program (\$400K over 4 years)

Workforce Development | Regional Development | Tourism

One-off partnership funding for Tourism Council WA to develop and maintain an online training program for staff and volunteers new to a WA tourism town. New staff (or volunteers) would learn about the local heritage, environment, culture, attractions, facilities and features of 60 WA tourism towns. The training would also provide the fundamentals of visitor service.

The purpose of the program is to provide new seasonal, casual and permanent staff with the knowledge and skills to be ambassadors for their local destination. Staff could be working in accommodation, hospitality, attractions, visitor centres and other tourism businesses. Approximately 60 tourism town versions of the online training would be developed focusing on towns with an accredited Visitor Centre.

4. Tourism WA Budget Funding

The following proposals are for consistent annual budget funding lines for Tourism WA. The purpose of the funding is to attract visitors and visitor expenditure to WA and return to the 2016 level of tourism generated employment of 119,000 FTE.

4.1 Destination Marketing Funding (\$85M p.a.)

Increase recurrent Destination Marketing funding to \$85 million per annum to maintain and increase market share of international and interstate visitors. Funding to focus on converting brand investment into bookings through:

- tactical trade campaigns;
- higher conversion of digital and content marketing into referrals to tourism businesses;
- long-term promotion of 'Best of WA' and key bookable attractions, tours, experiences, and recurring events;
- targeting international Working Holiday Maker and youth markets;
- attracting regional business events; and
- overhauling Perth, regional and local destination marketing.

4.2 Major Event Funding (\$100M p.a.)

Increase recurrent Major Event funding to \$100 million per annum to maintain existing events and grow the events calendar. Funding to focus on:

- securing Australian exclusive and high-return entertainment and sporting events at major venues such as Perth Stadium and RAC Arena;
- events that attract longer-stay visitors for post-event regional touring;
- establishing a Metropolitan Events Scheme to develop events in key metropolitan destinations that target tourism growth such as Perth CBD, Swan Valley, Fremantle / Rottneest Island, Sunset Coast and Mandurah & Rockingham; and
- expanding the Regional Events Scheme with a focus on extending tourism seasons in regional towns with business and leisure events in shoulder periods.

The Metropolitan and Regional Event Schemes should target events in destinations where the local planning authority is proactively planning and approving investment in tourism accommodation, attractions and visitor growth.

4.3 Aviation Development Funding (\$15M p.a.)

Establish recurring aviation development funding of \$15 million per annum following the completion of recovery funding. The ongoing funding will be used to develop:

- new strategic inbound international routes e.g., India-Perth, Frankfurt-Perth and Singapore-Broome.
- increased international capacity from inbound leisure markets especially from Europe.
- new inbound interstate leisure routes e.g., Newcastle-Perth, Brisbane-Busselton, Melbourne-Kununurra and Adelaide-Broome.
- extend periods of seasonal routes e.g. Sydney-Broome.
- regional aviation leisure services connecting Perth with regional WA leisure destinations.

