



Visitor Information Centre – Review of Operations

As part of the Council's community engagement initiative, we are seeking community feedback on the proposed Super Visitor Information Outlet concept.

Yorke Peninsula Council has embarked on a series of service level reviews to identify appropriate levels and service and organisational efficiencies. As part of this project, the operations of the existing accredited Visitor Information Centre (VIC) located in Minlaton has been reviewed.

The VIC gained accreditation from the South Australian Tourism Commission in 2001. Previously the accreditation system provided many benefits (including financial), however these benefits have waned over the past few years and the obligations, and subsequent costs, to maintain accreditation has increased.

The cost of running the VIC has been continually increasing due to utility prices, staff costs, accreditation requirements and software licencing. Therefore in September 2016 Council commenced a review of the operations of the VIC.

Over the past 12 months many models of operations were developed by staff and subsequently discounted as they would not deliver any significant improvements.

The overriding principles when looking at all of these models was 1) what will improve the visitor experience 2) how can our local towns benefit and 3) what financial savings can we find for our ratepayers.

Therefore, the preferred model is the concept of "Super Visitor Information Outlets".

The Yorke Peninsula Council district currently has seven Visitor Information Outlets (VIOs) operating at various levels. In this model, Council would cease to run its own accredited VIC and instead retain approximately one staff member to focus developing a stronger digital presence on behalf of all VIOs and on supporting the VIOs.

This support includes ensuring that all VIOS are equipped to deliver the full range of information services e.g. brochure development, reviews and distribution, obtaining online permits and booking accommodation etc.

For this model to be successful, it is estimated that another four VIOs may need to set up along the west coast of the Peninsula. As part of this consultation process, discussions will be held directly with these communities.

The greatest benefits of this model are: easier for visitors to physically access a Visitor Information Provider regardless of where they are staying and giving more towns an opportunity to generate some income. This model would also generate anticipated savings of approximately \$87k per annum.

We know the economic benefits derived from good visitor information services are incredibly high. Studies conducted by the South Australian Tourism Commission and Tourism Research Australia calculated that the Minlaton VIC influences an additional \$2.3m spend in our region each year. By Council ceasing to run its own Centre we can instead focus on supporting the Visitor Information Outlets across the Peninsula to increase these economic benefits.

Submissions close 5.00pm Thursday 16th November 2017