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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Vision

The Master Planning process for the Mon Repos Gateway Visitor Centre is an exciting opportunity being led by the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing (NPRS) to consolidate the future of this site as an iconic encounter with nature and world class turtle conservation centre. Mon Repos supports the largest concentration of nesting loggerhead turtles on the eastern Australian mainland and south Pacific and over 30,000 visitors travel to the site each year to participate in the Ranger led turtle encounter experience.

The objectives articulated by NPRS for Mon Repos included an new and re-imagined Visitor Centre, a centre of excellence for turtle conservation, research and interpretation; a world class ‘encounter with turtles’ experience, year round tourism offerings and commercial opportunities for local tourism businesses – all aspects with the potential to catalyse jobs and economic growth for the Bundaberg region.

These objectives are encapsulated in the following vision for the site: “By 2020 the Mon Repos turtle encounter will be famous as the world’s best practice turtle experience and turtle conservation movement.” Mon Repos intends to provide significant benefit to turtle conservation, regional tourism and ecotourism experiences in Queensland. Long term investment in the future of the site is expected to:

- Consolidate the position of Mon Repos as an iconic wildlife experience and world leader in the interpretation and presentation of encounters with marine turtles.
- Deliver on a key tourism priority identified by regional tourism organisations that investment in Mon Repos is key to the region’s tourism success.
- Attract resources and partners to grow research and conservation efforts to protect this endangered species and the State’s natural assets.

The Need for Change

There are currently significant challenges facing Mon Repos. The loggerhead turtle rookery is at significant risk of continuous decline unless direct and concerted action is taken to protect their nesting habitat and reduce threats on their migratory journeys. Supporting the work of Rangers, researchers and volunteers at Mon Repos, increased revenue and profile is needed to protect the long term viability of this internationally important site.

Based on the market, site constraints and existing business review, the Concept Master Plan has identified that to support and consolidate the excellent work being undertaken by dedicated and passionate Rangers, researchers and volunteers at Mon Repos a re-imagining of current activities, Visitor Centre governance, built facilities and site layout is required to deliver the vision for the site.

The Concept Master Plan

The Long View Group consortium and Project Steering Committee developed a Master Plan Concept that (i) protects the integrity of the turtle encounter experience and the research and interpretation activities currently undertaken at the site (ii) provides a unique strategy for generating year round visitation and (iii) supports reinvestment of ecotourism and sponsorship revenue into the conservation of marine turtles.

The core components of this are:

A New Visitor Centre is pivotal to the Turtle Encounter experience and provides an opportunity for visitors to learn about marine turtles through interpretive displays within the Centre and presentations by Rangers in the open air amphitheatre before turtle viewing on the beach. Relocation of the research and Ranger operations and facilities within the Visitor Centre is also proposed to provide integration of research, conservation and education. Any development of the site would need to be sensitively undertaken and not compromise the ecological integrity of the turtle rookery. Marine turtles are highly vulnerable to human encroachment on their nesting grounds.

Mon Repos has untapped potential for creating year round visitation. A key opportunity to catalyse this is the concept of a hatching nursery located within the Visitor Centre for the benefit of research, conservation and the visitor experience. Such a year round attraction would be supported by an upgraded Visitor Centre with improved interpretation and educational facilities and a café as well as other potential activities that could be offered year round.

The establishment of partnerships with universities and other research organisations is also an opportunity proposed to be supported by moving and upgrading the existing EHP research facilities into the heart of the Visitor Centre. This would provide opportunities for viewing and interacting with ‘behind the scenes’ research and monitoring activities for visitors both in the turtle season and potentially year round. There are also opportunities to more clearly link research outcomes with the visitor experience.

The hatching nursery proposal requires further detailed investigation but early thoughts are it would comprise 30-50 hatching turtles in suitable facilities until they are large enough to tag and release for ongoing monitoring and research purposes.

Year round operations are essential for establishing the centre as world class for ecotourism and research, but also for supporting the economic and tourism objectives of the region including as a gateway to the Southern Great Barrier Reef. Mon Repos could be part of a number of year round experiences that involve guided tours, cross-selling of ecotourism experiences and a new Visitor Centre for the region.

The site has the potential to generate increased revenue from year greater round visitation and new ecotourism products to be reinvested for the purposes of site management, research and conservation. It is anticipated that visitation to the site from target markets could be doubled by 2020 through opening up of year round experiences located in the new Centre.

A new business and governance model is recommended for Mon Repos and intended to focus on generating profit for the defined purpose of creating meaningful visitor experiences and environmental education which support and increase the marine turtle population. The outreach and impact of the conservation effort should grow as the profile and revenue generated by Mon Repos expands. The proposed components of the new business and governance model include a more entrepreneurial and business-like approach to operating the...
Centre that invests in branding and marketing of Mon Repos to key target audiences; implementation of a Recreation Area to enable a changed approach to governance that provides the opportunity for revenue reinvestment in the Centre and integration of commercially minded Centre management; and partnering with private organisations to operate key aspects of the Centre. The proposed reinvestment model has been successfully employed by wildlife ecotourism operations in Australia and worldwide. The establishment of a Turtle Foundation for private donation and sponsorship would be fundamental to further the long term, research, conservation and sustainability of the turtle population at Mon Repos.

The draft Concept Master Plan for Mon Repos was published in December 2013 and was released for community and stakeholder consultation for two months. Community and stakeholder input has been key to the delivery of the Concept Master Plan. Overwhelmingly there was community and stakeholder support for the project and the belief that the new Visitor Centre would improve the visitor experience. The consultation has positively influenced and refined the Concept Master Plan.

### Opportunities for Mon Repos

- Improve the current visitor experience through environmentally sensitive re-design of the existing Visitor Centre and improved resources for interpretation and education.
- Improve and expand the Ranger led Turtle Encounter experience for visitors.
- Attract commercial partners and provide multiple new and diverse revenue streams for the Centre to increase its financial viability.
- Generate economic growth and jobs for the Bundaberg / North Burnett Region through activities such as construction of the new Visitor Centre, operation of new tours and activities and running of the café.
- Implement a new governance and business approach that enables the site to reduce its reliance on the taxpayer and reinvest in its long term future.
- Create year round visitation to the site through a turtle hatchery with multiple economic, conservation and tourism benefits.
- Re-locate the research facilities into the Centre to reinforce and support the serious conservation agenda of Mon Repos and provide visitors with a reason to visit the centre outside of turtle season.
- Partner with local, state and Commonwealth agencies and research organisations such as universities, to develop integrated programs for Mon Repos and turtle conservation.
- Fund turtle research and conservation through a dedicated Turtle Foundation that can attract sponsors to ensure that direct and concerted action is taken to protect the site as a significant loggerhead turtle rookery into the future.

### Delivering the Vision

The Concept Master Plan sets out a vision, objectives and opportunities for the re-imagination of Mon Repos. Implementation will be driven by annual business plans, which will identify priorities, timelines, resources and partners, subject to prevailing circumstances. As a live document it is anticipated that the vision commitment and objectives will remain constant, but the final design and offerings may differ as they will require further refinement based on the outcomes of detailed investigations, planning and approvals.

Staging recommendations have been developed which outline next steps required to realise the vision. This includes early deliverables for a cover over the amphitheatre and new entry signage, new tourism offerings and Ranger training and the establishment of new governance structure, all of which is proposed to be funded through existing budgets.

Specifically, the following is proposed in the short term to improve the visitor experience:

- Implement new tourism products to generate revenue from the smaller more engaged group offering;
- Develop new movie and visual products for visitors waiting at the Visitor Centre for the turtle encounter;
- Identify and undertake staff resourcing and training to deliver the enhanced tourism product;
- Design and construct a new high quality landscaped entry feature, with integrated and illuminated signage, at the Mon Repos Road site access;
- Design and construct a tensile or insulated roof over the existing amphitheatre for increased visitor amenity.

The proposed reinvestment model has been subject to detailed design and costing.

- Announce the creation of a new Recreation Area - under the RAM Act; and
- Commence action to create a Turtle Foundation.

Subject to funding, the longer term vision for design and construction of the new Visitor Centre will be realised. The design and construction of the newly expanded and upgraded Visitor Centre is intended to be delivered at the one time and not in stages. Key elements of the proposed Mon Repos Turtle Centre include:

- New interpretive centre;
- Year round turtle hatching nursery;
- Relocated and upgraded research facilities;
- Improved NPRSR staff facilities;
- A café and dining area;
- Retail and merchandising; and
- Upgraded car park.

Given the sensitivity of the site, the new Gateway Visitor Centre would be delivered to the highest levels of environmentally sustainable design and construction.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The Queensland Government vision for the Mon Repos Gateway Visitor Centre is to create a world class turtle research and conservation centre and a ‘must do’ ecotourism attraction in the Bundaberg region. The Queensland Government is committed to growing the tourism industry in Queensland and doubling overnight visitor expenditure to $30 billion by 2020 (DestinationQ). The Queensland Ecotourism Plan 2013 – 2020 sets the strategic direction for achieving the 2020 vision of establishing Queensland as a world class ecotourism destination through facilitating the development of new and unique ecotourism experiences and reinvigorating existing ecotourism experiences to attract emerging growth markets.

The Mon Repos Gateway Visitor Centre Master Planning project (the Project) being led by the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing (NPRSR) is ideally positioned to align with this vision. To date this project has provided the catalyst to re-imagine the existing Mon Repos Visitor Centre and its future potential.

The Project has opened up opportunities to consider new tourism products and year round attractions to generate greater revenue, build new partnerships around conservation, as well as attract commercial operations at the site. In addition, it has identified the need for re-investment in the site through a different approach to governance and business that would support the long term regional tourism goals of the Bundaberg North Burnett region and the Southern Great Barrier Reef and the long term conservation of the turtle species that are the reason Mon Repos exists.

The Project also supports and integrates the vision held by the local tourism organisation, Bundaberg North Burnett Tourism (BNBT) which has developed ‘Hero Experiences’ to deliver the region’s 2020 tourism vision and brand promise. The vision is that: “By 2020 the Bundaberg and North Burnett Region will be globally recognised as the place visitors go to immerse themselves in a world class turtle conservation experience.”

Between August 2013 and December 2013 a draft Concept Master Plan for Mon Repos was developed based on detailed site and context analysis undertaken by The Long View Group consortium (comprising LAT27, Hierophant, The Possible Group and Inspired by Marketing) and engagement with a project steering committee to assess and refine various options and opportunities for the site. The draft Concept Master Plan was published in December 2013.

The Draft Concept Master Plan was presented to the community for comment over a two month period ending in February 2014. During that period workshops and meetings were held with key stakeholders and the community and a survey was provided to enable feedback on all aspects of the draft Plan.

1.2. How to use the Master Plan

This Concept Master Plan report supplements the draft Concept Master Plan report (December 2013) and should be read in conjunction with it as it provides important background and contextual information behind the strategic direction and intent set out in this document.

Implementation will be driven by NPRSR annual business plans, which will identify priorities, timelines, resources and partners, subject to prevailing circumstances. As a live document it is anticipated that the vision, commitment and objectives will remain constant, but the final design and offerings may differ as they will require further refinement based on the outcomes of detailed investigations, planning and approvals.

This Concept Master Plan report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 - describes the project vision and objectives and key aspects of the master plan delivery.
- Chapter 3 - details the approach taken during consultation and summarises the key themes raised by the community and key stakeholders from their feedback and provide a considered response and proposed actions to address consultation feedback; and
- Chapter 4 - presents the Concept Master Plan for Mon Repos noting any changes resulting from NPRSR taking on board feedback from the community and a recommended staging roadmap.

1.3. Mon Repos

Mon Repos is located approximately 14 km from Bundaberg in the township of Bargara on the Woongarra Coast. The area includes 45 hectares of beach and coastal vegetation and the tenure is classified as Regional Park under
the Nature Conservation Act, 1992. Mon Repos is also identified as a conservation park in the Marine Parks (Great Sandy) Zoning Plan, 2006 with designations for turtle monitoring and protection.

Mon Repos supports the largest concentration of nesting loggerhead turtles on the eastern Australian mainland and south Pacific. Successful breeding is critical for the survival of this endangered species. There are a number of ecological reasons why Mon Repos provides suitable habitat for nesting turtles. Protecting this habitat through rehabilitation following extreme weather events, re-establishment of coastal vegetation, and minimising light spill and other impacts from encroaching development are all critically important to the long term viability of the rookery.

The Mon Repos Visitor Centre is managed by NPRSR. The Department of Environment Heritage and Protection (EHP) Queensland Turtle Conservation Project has been running for over 40 years from the Mon Repos site. The project provides critical data to guide policy and management planning with a focus on index beaches for each genetic stock species in Queensland, marine turtle feeding population grounds along the Queensland coast and threats impacting freshwater turtle species in Queensland. During turtle season EHP researchers, NPRSR Rangers and volunteers protect nesting and hatching marine turtles and carry out research, data collection, training and monitoring. The Rangers also maintain and rehabilitate the site throughout the year and raise public awareness through guided tours for visitors, school education and campaigns such as ‘Cut the Glow’.

The NPRSR ‘Turtle Encounter - Connect with Nature’ experience attracts many domestic and international visitors. The experience is offered during turtle nesting and hatching season (November - March). Visitors are taken to the beach to view turtles at night under guidance of NPRSR Rangers and volunteers. The education and interpretation experience currently involves NPRSR staff on the beach explaining the egg-laying process of marine turtles and hatching behaviour. The Mon Repos Visitor Centre is also part of the interpretative experience. The centre provides an opportunity for visitors to learn about marine turtles through interpretive displays and presentations by Rangers in the open air amphitheatre before turtle viewing on the beach.

Land-use adjoining Mon Repos include conservation areas to the north and south, the Great Sandy Marine Park to the east and the Barolin Nature Reserve to the south-west. Directly adjacent to the Mon Repos site to the west is caneland, to the south a caravan park and to the north, peri-urban residential development. The Barolin Nature Reserve to the south west includes over 300 hectares of natural bushland, grassy plains and wetlands and is managed by the Bundaberg Regional Council. Council has provided over four kilometres of paths for walking and bike riding within the reserve that links Mon Repos to Bargarra and Burnett Heads via the Turtle Trail. Figure 1.1 provides the context for the Mon Repos site.

1.3.1 Marine Turtles

Mon Repos supports the largest concentration of nesting marine turtles on the eastern Australian mainland which is estimated at between 300 – 400 nesting loggerhead turtles. It is the most significant loggerhead turtle nesting population in the South Pacific Ocean region. A smaller population of green turtles and flat back turtles also nest at the rookery. The loggerhead turtle species (Caretta caretta) is listed as endangered in Queensland (Nature Conservation Act 1992) and endangered nationally (Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999). Marine turtles are also protected by a Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia (2003) currently being revised.

Primarily due to the activities of humans, turtles are threatened with continuous decline and for some species, potential extinction. Marine turtles are highly vulnerable from the following:

- Predation by feral and native predators;
- Reduced hatching emergence success as a result of changed water table conditions on beaches from activities such as land drainage;
- Changed light horizons due to light spill;
- Climate change and climate variability, for example, extreme cyclones cause erosion of nesting beaches and excessive loss of incubating eggs (in the 2012-2013 season 60% of egg production was lost due to Cyclone Oswald);
- Bycatch in fisheries; and
- Entangled in or ingesting marine debris such as plastics.

Marine turtles are highly migratory. Species that breed in Australia travel to many other countries in the Indian and Pacific oceans. Loggerhead turtles breeding at Mon Repos travel to New Caledonia, the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. Therefore international cooperation is needed to enhance the effectiveness of any domestic conservation efforts.

During turtle season, researchers, Rangers and volunteers protect turtle nests and eggs from predation, carry out essential research and monitoring and raise public awareness through guided tours for visitors. Dr Col Limpus estimates that each nesting season in South-East Queensland more than 50,000 extra loggerhead hatchlings are protected by staff and trained volunteers rescuing doomed eggs and protecting nests from erosion and fox and dog predation.

![Figure 1.1 Site Context](image-url)
2. VISION FOR MON REPOS

2.1. The Vision

The vision for Mon Repos, defined through the master planning process and in consultation with stakeholders, is as follows:

“By 2020 the Mon Repos turtle encounter will be famous as the world’s best practice turtle experience and turtle conservation movement.”

NPRSR’s vision for the Mon Repos Gateway Visitor Centre is to create a world-class turtle conservation Visitor Centre and a ‘must do’ tourism attraction in the Bundaberg/North Burnett Region. The Plan reiterates NPRSR’s objectives for a ‘gateway’ redevelopment of Mon Repos that considered the needs for:

- World class turtle conservation and research;
- Facilities to reinforce or expand the research training and potential partnerships with tertiary institutions;
- ‘Year round’ experiences and activities;
- An expanded range of opportunities for visitors to have natural encounters during peak season that educates visitors on the importance of conservation through hands-on learning experiences; and
- Incorporating commercial opportunities (including but not limited to retail, food outlet and overnight eco-accommodation) and/or links to other regional commercial tourism/accommodation business.

2.2. The Opportunity at Mon Repos

Mon Repos presents a unique opportunity to provide the community and visitors with a world’s best practice ecotourism experience and further position the region as a must visit tourism destination. While already well-regarded and respected for its Ranger-led guided tours and on-site research and volunteer program, Mon Repos’ full potential has yet to be realised. The following summarises the key opportunities at Mon Repos:

- **Increased Revenue**: The site has the potential to generate increased revenue from year-round visitation and new ecotourism products to reinvest for the purposes of site management, research and conservation. The proposed reinvestment model has been successfully employed by wildlife ecotourism operations in Australia and worldwide. The establishment of a Turtle Foundation for private donation and sponsorship would be fundamental to further the long-term conservation and sustainability of the turtle population at Mon Repos.

- **Domestic and International Tourism**: Current visitation to the Bundaberg North Burnett Region and Southern Great Barrier Reef is split between day trippers 64%, domestic overnight 30% and international 3% (Tourism and Events Queensland). Domestic and International tourism is seen as the primary visitation markets for Mon Repos with a particular focus on drive tourism (families and couples), wildlife tourism and voluntourism. Target markets for Mon Repos include voluntourism (people making a difference through real contribution), connectors (families who want to connect and share experiences) and wildlife enthusiasts (people seeking personal, authentic, informed experiences). It is anticipated that visitation to the site could be doubled by 2020 through opening up of year-round experiences (see below).

- **A New Visitor Centre** is pivotal to the Turtle Encounter experience and provides an opportunity for visitors to learn about marine turtles through interpretive displays within the Centre and presentations by Rangers in the open-air amphitheatre before turtle viewing on the beach. Relocation of the research and Ranger operations and facilities within the Visitor Centre is also proposed to provide integration of research, conservation and education. Any development of the site would need to be sensitively undertaken and not compromise the ecological integrity of the turtle rookery. Marine turtles are highly vulnerable to human encroachment on their nesting grounds.

- **Mon Repos** has untapped potential for creating **year-round visitation**. A key opportunity to catalyse this is the concept of a hatching nursery located within the Visitor Centre for the benefit of research, conservation and the visitor experience. Such a year-round attraction would be supported by an upgraded Visitor Centre with improved interpretation and educational facilities and a café as well as other potential activities that could be offered year-round. The hatching nursery proposal (i.e. such as a Headstarting program) requires further detailed investigation but early thoughts are that it would comprise 30-50 hatching turtles in suitable facilities until they are large enough to tag and release for ongoing monitoring and research purposes.

Year-round operations are essential for establishing the centre as world-class for ecotourism and research, but also for supporting the economic and tourism objectives of the region including as a gateway to the Southern Great Barrier Reef. Mon Repos could be part of a number of year-round experiences that involve guided tours, cross-selling of ecotourism experiences and a new Visitor Centre for the region.

2.3. Key Aspects of Master Plan Delivery

To realise the vision and opportunities described above, the draft Concept Master Plan identified the three key elements required for delivery:

1. A re-imagined new Visitor Centre that provides suitable cover, comfort and amenity during night and day and incorporates the researchers, training and Rangers facilities and activities;
2. Year-round experiences provided through an on-site turtle nursery that supports the critical conservation role of Mon Repos; and
3. A business, governance and fundraising model where revenue can be reinvested into conservation, research, education and training at the Visitor Centre.
The visitor experience at Mon Repos exceeds expectations in terms of the unique and iconic natural phenomena that is being witnessed and the interpretation and education activities undertaken in support of this experience. However there are a number of significant facility design and infrastructure factors that limit the visitor experience from achieving world class outcomes. Key considerations include:

- Food and beverages supply are limited and not provided under cover.
- The entry statement to the site is not adequate with lack of signage.
- The interpretive experience is compromised in wet or humid weather with the outdoor amphitheatre not being covered and cooling not provided.
- The need for on-site experiences to reduce potential boredom and discomfort for families with young children and others associated with long waiting times for the turtle viewing, particularly in shoulder season or for later groups in the viewing list.

See Chapter 4 for details of the proposed new Visitor Centre.

2.3.2. Year Round Opportunities

The commercial success of Mon Repos is highly dependent on the ability to attract a significant number of visitors during the day in peak season and throughout the year. Various ideas were explored to provide this year round draw card.

There is an immediate opportunity to position Mon Repos as a gateway to national parks and iconic natural experiences in Bundaberg/North Burnett and the broader Southern Great Barrier Reef (SGBR). Mon Repos could be part of a number of year round experiences that involve guided tours, cross-selling of ecotourism experiences and a new Visitor Centre to the region. This could create the year round experience for the broader SGBR by linking in with the turtles at Mon Repos, manta rays of Lady Musgrave and Lady Elliot Island and the whales in Hervey Bay. There is an opportunity for cross selling of tourism attractions of protected species.

Developing partnerships with universities and other research organisations to establish a year round research and training facility in the heart of the Visitor Centre, is essential. An opportunity that has been suggested is a turtle nursery located within the Visitor Centre which would comprise 30-50 hatching turtles in suitable facilities until they are large enough to tag and release for ongoing monitoring and research purposes. While further investigation into the viability of a proposed Headstarting research program is required (including scientific value, university partners, costs, ethics approvals, animal husbandry), it is possible that the Turtle Foundation and associated corporate sponsorship could assist to fund this research program.

An active research program involving short term holding of hatched turtles (ie 9-18 months) provides a number of ecotourism benefits particularly opportunities for behind the scenes activities, training and educational programs, commercial viability of the café and any potential future onsite accommodation, live satellite monitoring of tagged turtles, and volunteer involvement. The costs associated with the construction and operation of such a Headstarting research component are to be determined in subsequent phases of the project (see also Chapter 4 for more detail).

2.3.3 A New Business and Governance Model

The business and governance model recommended for Mon Repos is intended to focus on generating profit for the defined purpose of creating meaningful visitor experiences and environmental education which support and increase the marine turtle population. The outreach and impact of the conservation effort should grow as the profile and revenue generated by Mon Repos expands.
The proposed components of the new business and governance model are as follows:

- A more entrepreneurial and business-like approach to operating the Centre that invests in branding and marketing of Mon Repos to key target audiences;
- Implementation of a Recreation Area to enable a changed approach to governance to enable revenue reinvestment in the Centre and integration of commercially minded Centre management;
- Partnering with private organisations to operate key aspects of the Centre; and
- A Turtle Foundation for the sole purpose of turtle conservation.

2.3.3.1 A Renewed Business Model

To increase the likelihood that the new vision and opportunities for Mon Repos would be realised, both in the short and longer-term, it is recommended that a new business model is adopted for the management of the new Centre at Mon Repos. The new model could include the following:

- Retaining NPRSR control over the operation of the site through ownership of assets and branding of the visitor experience, but partnering with commercial operators where appropriate to facilitate the customer relationship and experience;
- The ability to re-invest in the site over the long term for the benefit of the recreational activities at the site and the ability to allow such investment to be utilised for activities that support the objectives of all Mon Repos stakeholders i.e. co-marketing of the site that benefits NPRSR and commercial operators;
- Retaining the role of Rangers as a visible and engaging component of the visitor experience and part of the marketing strategy for the Centre;
- Flexible fee structure for NPRSR products that is able to respond to market demands and allow for packaging and wholesaling e.g. Ranger guided tours;
- The ability to recruit a centre manager with a skill set that includes marketing, commercial management empowered to pro-actively anticipate and respond to market needs;
- The ability for a Centre Board to engage and manage operators, events and sponsorships (appoint new operators);
- Incentivised lease arrangements to attract commercial operators for some key activities and attractions e.g. café operation;
- Creating and managing a Mon Repos brand that is aligned NPRSR master brand requiring commercial operators align with this brand;
- The ability to allocate sufficient budget and resources to proactively position and market the centre;
- Governance arrangements put in place to manage the existing reserve e.g. using the Recreation Area Management Act (see Section 2.3.3.2). This would provide the ability to re-invest in the site over the long term for the benefit of the activities at the site; and
- The ability to establish an independent foundation or trust to fund conservation activities and issue grants to researchers and conservation groups (see Section 2.3.3.4).

2.3.3.2 Creation of a Recreation Area

NPRSR is developing a state-wide framework to achieve a more integrated and coordinated approach to providing outdoor recreation opportunities. The framework will help to make it easier to participate in outdoor recreation activities and events in areas that cross multiple forms of tenure (e.g. dams, state land, national parks) through broader use of the Recreation Areas Management Act, 2006 (RAM Act). This framework if implemented would also encourage collaboration across departments and with key stakeholders to ensure consistent and streamlined marketing and promotion to encourage increased participation and greater use of government land and facilities. Such a framework once implemented would be highly beneficial in supporting the delivery of the vision for the new Visitor Centre at Mon Repos.

It is proposed to implement a coordinating statutory layer that is provided by the RAM Act at Mon Repos. A RAM declaration over the site would provide a number of specific benefits for the project including:

- Creation of an Advisory Board or Centre Manager that oversees management of the site with all the accompanying governance arrangements;
- Streamline the permitting system across tenures for commercial operators;
- Regulate commercial operations; and most importantly
- Enable reinvestment in the site over the long term for the benefit of the activities at the site.

2.3.3.3 Public and Private Partnerships

The Mon Repos Turtle Conservation Centre would primarily be managed by NPRSR in partnership with EHP for the research component. Rangers would be a large and integral element of the day to day operation of the site. NPRSR would implement strict standards and training for any commercial operator that has involvement with the public and or turtle related activities. There are a number of opportunities for public-private partnerships and commercial involvement in the site including but not limited to:

- Operation of food and beverage facilities;
- Opportunities to fund or sponsor the construction of the Centre through Corporate Sponsorship;
- Corporate and private individual donations to the Turtle Foundation;
- Operation of any tours or activities that are outside the scope or operations of Rangers or Researchers; and
- Centre management for the new Visitor Centre.

2.3.3.4 Turtle Foundation

A Turtle Foundation (also known as charitable trust or philanthropic foundation) is proposed as an initiative to tap into the intrinsic desire of people to want to make a difference. Donations will be presented as the opportunity to become personally involved in helping protect marine turtles so they can be enjoyed by current and future generations. As a legal vehicle, the Foundation would enable the transfer of donations or gifts from individuals, families and corporations to the fund. The purpose of the foundation may be broad or it may be directed to specific organisations, purposes or locations.
For Mon Repos there are a number of features that would be required by the Foundation:

- Focus solely on turtle conservation and be guided by a Conservation Roadmap;
- Enable individual and corporate entities to make donations;
- Use revenue generated by the fund to support activities undertaken on site as well as provide grants for research and advocacy for turtle conservation; and
- Governance by an appropriately qualified advisory board, with representation from the RAM governance board to ensure consistency in conservation priorities and outcomes.
3. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

3.1. Introduction

The community consultation period for the draft Concept Master Plan for Mon Repos was from 20th December 2013 to 21st February 2014. NPRSR commissioned the Flinders Group to provide independent facilitation of the community consultation workshops and collate the results of the community consultation process. The draft Concept Master Plan (December 2013), Discussion Paper and on-line survey were released for public comment on 20th December 2013.

This Chapter of the report outlines the consultation methodology, key themes that emerged from the consultation process (taken from the Flinders Group report, March 2014) and responses to the issues raised by the community and key stakeholders.

3.2. Consultation Methodology

The consultation methods were designed to meet the NPRSR objectives of ensuring all views, concerns and ideas of the community are both heard and captured.

Consultation methods are generally qualitative or quantitative and these used together, are complementary. To maximise exposure and participation in the consultation, a combination of these methods were adopted.

The following opportunities were devised and implemented to allow people to present their views in person and/or for people to participate from remote locations:

- Survey: Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected around each of the priority areas for feedback within the Discussion Papers via an online survey using the Queensland Government’s “Get Involved” website.
- Workshops: Provided the opportunity for detailed presentation of the Master Plan and open discussion. The workshops captured quantitative data.

While the open workshops provided the opportunity for the large variety of views to be evident in one room, they were designed to also capture the quieter views of the community members who were not comfortable with asking questions in public. The survey provided the opportunity for everyone to have their say no matter their location, and directed them to specific areas of interest as outlined in the Discussion Paper.

In addition to the community workshops, NPRSR have undertaken a detailed schedule of consultation with other key government departments, Bundaberg Regional Council, and key stakeholders who have an interest in the site. The feedback of consultation with these stakeholder groups has also informed the Concept Master Plan.

The input of key stakeholders, user groups and the community was vital to the successful delivery of a Concept Master Plan for each site by 30 June 2014. This engagement means this Concept Master Plan is relevant and based on real-world user requirements and perspectives, and that there is a high degree of stakeholder and community ownership of the outcomes.

NPRSR identified the need for two rounds of workshops – the first to introduce the draft Concept Master Plan and the second to provide feedback on the ideas of the community and the opportunity for any comment and clarification prior to the release of the Concept Master Plan.

- The round one workshop provided an overview at NPRSR gateway Visitor Centre Master Plan project and included a 30 minute powerpoint presentation describing the draft Concept Master Plan.
- The round two workshop occurred after the consultation period closed on 21 February 2014 and provided an overview of the feedback received to date from both the online survey and Round One workshop, a recap of the objectives of the Concept Master Plan project and discussions on the priority areas raised in the consultation.

![Consultation Methodology Diagram](image)

**Figure 3.2: Consultation Methodology**

3.3. Participation

Participation in the community consultation for Mon Repos was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mon Repos</th>
<th>Completed Surveys</th>
<th>Workshop Attendees: Round 1</th>
<th>Workshop Attendees: Round 2</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Reference Group Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>136</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4. Key Themes from the Consultation

The following key themes were identified through the consultation process including the on-line surveys, workshops and submissions. A key theme is defined as a common discussion point or central discussion amongst the majority of those participating. There were many ideas identified by individual members of the public as
being opportunities for the site and these were captured and detailed in the remainder of the Flinders Group (March, 2014) report and taken into consideration for drafting the Concept Master Plan.

**General**

- Improve the existing facilities to provide a world class attraction to both domestic and international guests whilst maintaining the unique charm and attractiveness of the site.
- Enable access to the centre all year round and provide educational opportunities during this time.
- Access to the site needs to be improved including consideration of the one way road, the signage and improvement to the car park as well as improved pedestrian foot and cycle access.
- Provision of a café was supported with consideration being given to competitors in the area, possibility of small meals only and the use of environmentally friendly packaging.
- The overwhelming majority supported the changes with a caveat on minimising impacts to the environment and the turtles.
- Concern was raised about the surrounding environment including any increased light in the area as a result of the upgraded centre, and the need for revegetation of the area.
- Concern was raised on the potential effect of development particularly in relation to the proposed adjacent Bundaberg Sugar site.
- There was support for renaming the centre to include Turtle in the title and possibly conservation.
- There is a belief this project has the ability to increase education and awareness of the conservation of the turtle whilst being key to tourism growth in the Bundaberg Region.

**Ecotourism**

- Support was given to the proposal of ecotourism activities so long as there was no impact to the turtles and local environment.
- Strong support for year round visitor experience as this is viewed as currently having major potential for the site.
- There was mixed support for onsite camping and accommodation.
- There was support for the inclusion of local tour operators only if QPWS maintain overall operation of the site, the turtle encounters and regulate their involvement.

**Outdoor Recreation**

- Community support for other activities in the area supported passive activities in the main which aimed at education and awareness of the site, the turtles and other parks whilst maintaining the natural amenity of the area.
- Comments focused on the need to concentrate on turtle conservation and keep attractions to a minimum.
- Improving the facilities such as the amphitheatre, the interpretive signage, the café, and the “edutainment” for waiting tourists was seen as key to ensuring the ongoing success of the centre.

**Environmental Education and Community Use**

- Overwhelming support for the inclusion of school groups in the future planning and the opportunity for a gathering area or training room for groups (community, schools, TAFE, Universities).
- Strong belief the plan would improve the visitor experience particularly with year round access, improvement of facilities such as the amphitheatre, café, films and the dated information displays, inclusion of a hatchery, tagging and ‘follow a turtle’ opportunities.
- Inclusion and/or enlisting volunteers to be involved in activities such as the revegetation of the area, tours and research and as champions or advocates of the success or attraction of the centre.
- Overwhelming support for educational opportunities for children.
- Some mentioned the need for local businesses to be included in any tendering opportunities and the opportunity for provision of local jobs as a result of this.
- Continual communication with the local community on the plan and any progress or opportunity to input.
- A need was identified to understand the existing research undertaken on site and to communicate the results and findings to the visitor to continue to educate on the conservation of the turtle.

**Wildlife Experiences**

- The majority supported the opportunity for ‘behind the scenes’ experiences as a standard offering amongst other similar world class facilities.
- Commentary focused on maintaining the existing experience, managing the size of the groups and not having any further contact or possible intrusion for the turtles habitat.
- The introduction of a hatchery was supported by many with a focus on the opportunity for year round visitation, sponsoring and insight into the research currently undertaken. However, some voiced concern for how this was undertaken, impacts on the turtles and the need for further information.
- There is concern amongst many that the main attraction of Mon Repos will no longer be there should the focus not be extended to cutting the light pollution in the area, addressing the development issues around the beach and addressing the need for revegetation of the dune.
- Expansion of the education materials to include the other animals in the area and aspects of the reef.

3.5. Responses to Matters Raised in Consultation

The response to matters raised by the community, key stakeholders and the Project Reference Group during the formal consultation period is provided below. In consultation with NPRSR, the following process was applied to develop the responses:

1. Identify Key Response Areas (KRAs) based on groupings of the key themes raised by the community. These groupings were developed through identifying issues that cut across the key themes presented in section 3.3 and which would logically be able to be presented as a group (see Appendix A of this report). These groupings were also presented to the community in the Feedback Workshop held on 15th March 2014 in Bundaberg. Nine KRAs have been identified as listed in Table 3.5 below.

2. Summarise matters raised by the community. The key themes raised by the community that related to a particular KRA have been listed to ensure all views are considered.
3. Outline responses to the issues raised in consultation. This has been carried out for each KRA by referring to information already presented in the draft Concept Master Plan as well as relevant new information from subsequent investigations and discussions with NPRSR and other key stakeholders.

4. Make appropriate recommendations to NPRSR. Certain matters have been raised in consultation that are considered to benefit and supplement the work undertaken to date in the draft Concept Master Plan and are provided for consideration by NPRSR to be included in subsequent stages of the project.

Table 3.5: Key Areas Identified for formal Response in the Concept Master Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Response Areas</th>
<th>Key Response Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong> Name of Mon Repos Visitor Centre&lt;br&gt;Support to rename the Centre including ‘Turtle’ in the name.</td>
<td><strong>2</strong> Sustainable Design of the Centre&lt;br&gt;Support to upgrade the facilities sustainably to a high standard to benefit the visitor experience and with minimal impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong> Adjacent Development&lt;br&gt;Need to consider the impacts of adjacent and other development on Mon Repos.</td>
<td><strong>4</strong> Re-vegetation of the Mon Repos Regional Park&lt;br&gt;The need to rehabilitate the site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong> Partnering with Local Tourism Groups&lt;br&gt;Support for year round visitor facilities and partnering with local tourism groups and operators.</td>
<td><strong>6</strong> Camping Accommodation&lt;br&gt;Review the user needs for camping on site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong> Education Programs and Volunteering&lt;br&gt;Support for improved education and interpretation opportunities at Mon Repos.</td>
<td><strong>8</strong> Turtle Research and Monitoring ‘Behind the Scenes Activities’&lt;br&gt;Support for behind the scenes activities and linking research outcomes to visitor experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9</strong> Turtle Hatchery&lt;br&gt;Support for all year round activity such as a turtle hatchery.</td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Design of the Centre

Key Themes Raised in Consultation

- The overwhelming majority supported the changes with a caveat on minimising impacts to the environment and the turtles.
- Improve the existing facilities to provide a world class attraction to both domestic and international guests whilst maintaining the unique charm and attractiveness of the site.
- Support was given to the proposal of ecotourism activities so long as there was no impact to the turtles and local environment.
- Overwhelming support for the inclusion of school groups in the future planning and the opportunity for a gathering area or training room for groups (community, schools, TAFE, Universities).
- Feedback provided by the project Reference Group requested a user group review of the internal layout of the proposed new Gateway Visitor Centre, in particular to review the flow of visitors through the Centre and explore the relationship between the interpretive centre and the amphitheatre/corraling area before seeing the turtles. In addition, a review of the car park layout to ensure buses can be adequately accommodated was requested.

Responses to issues raised in consultation

- Master Plan proposals including the upgrade of the Visitor Centre will be subject to funding.
- If funding for the Visitor Centre is forthcoming the design of the Centre would be in accordance with best practice sustainable design principles and would not compromise the particular sensitivities of the rookery site and Regional Park.
- All appropriate environmental and planning approvals (local, state and Commonwealth) would be undertaken in advance of the development (detailed design phase of Stage 2). Plans would also outline any development constraints, requirements and mitigation strategies.
- A wide range of key factors would be addressed in the Stage 2 detailed design process for the Centre. Some examples include:
  - Not impacting on dune hydrology / beach drainage;
  - Adaptive re-use of the existing facility where appropriate;
  - Use of appropriate and sustainable/locally sourced materials;
  - Best practice turtle friendly lighting to minimise light spill; and
  - Minimal impact of construction (i.e. undertaken out of turtle season).

Recommendations

- It is recommended that:
  - NPRSR implements the Department’s own Best Practice Ecotourism Development Guidelines, 2014 on this project to ensure sustainability principles are integrated throughout the design, construction and operation of the centre.
  - As part of the design brief and functional specification for the Centre, should it be funded, NPRSR will undertake a user group review of the internal layout of the Centre led by the lead architect responsible for the design of the centre and that this user group includes groups such as Bundaberg North Burnett Tourism (BNBT), EHP, Tourism Events Queensland (TEQ), Rangers, NPRSR and other technical experts.
### 3. Adjacent Development

#### Key Themes raised in consultation
- Concern was raised on the potential effect of development particularly in relation to the proposed adjacent Bundaberg Sugar site.
- There is concern amongst many that the main attraction of Mon Repos will no longer be there should the focus not be extended to cutting the light pollution in the area, addressing the development issues around the beach and addressing the need for revegetation of the dune.

#### Responses to issues raised in consultation
- Land adjacent to the Mon Repos Regional Park includes a former wetland (now drained) located on land owned by Bundaberg Sugar. Information provided by EHP, Rangers and local volunteers indicates that maintenance of a wetland in this location is critical to maintain water flow through the dune to the beach to maintain the conditions suitable for nesting turtles. The act of draining the wetland is considered to be having negative impacts on water flow through the dune by reducing the water table.
- Development proposals on adjacent land by other proponents would be expected to have consideration to the following to enable the integrity and long term sustainability of the rookery at Mon Repos to be maintained for future generations:
  - Consideration of approvals requirements including if a Referral is required under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999 (EPBC Act) and all necessary state and local planning approvals;
  - The need for significant buffers planted with appropriate native vegetation that supports the concept of ‘cut the glow’;
  - Limiting access to the Regional Park and the beach to existing access points; and
  - The nature of adjacent development (if approved by regulatory authorities) is at a scale appropriate for a proximal use to such an internationally sensitive site and which is designed in line with the principles of sustainable development with consideration of a set-backs such that noise and lighting pollution does not intrude into Mon Repos.

#### Recommendations
- It is recommended that:
  - NPRSR encourage Bundaberg Sugar to consider re-instatement of the wetland on their land for the benefit of the turtle rookery in the long term and work with EHP to ensure that the reinstatement of the wetland is appropriately designed and delivered to achieve the most positive benefit to the rookery.
  - NPRSR continue to work with other Federal and State Departments (DoE, DSDP, EHP) and Bundaberg Regional Council in relation to mitigation and controls that would need to be applied to any proposed adjacent development to ensure the long term sustainability of the rookery.

### 4. Re-vegetation of the Site

#### Key Themes raised in consultation
- There is concern amongst many that the main attraction of Mon Repos will no longer be there should the focus not be extended to cutting the light pollution in the area, addressing the development issues around the beach and addressing the need for revegetation of the dune.
- Concern was raised about the surrounding environment including any increased light in the area as a result of the upgraded centre, and the need for revegetation of the area.
- Inclusion and/or enlistig volunteers to be involved in activities such as the revegetation of the area, tours and research and as champions or advocates of the success or attraction of the centre.

#### Responses to issues raised in consultation
- Vegetation within the Mon Repos Regional Park is characterised by mature coastal Casuarina located primarily on the dune. Vegetation has been damaged through severe weather and storm surge events and dieback and weeds are common. There is also limited sub-canopy which causes light spill to the beach.
- Adequate vegetation cover on the dune is essential for ensuring drainage of the site and maintaining the critical ecological processes of the rookery.
- The consultation process identified that an initial concerted and then on-going rehabilitation effort is required to re-establish native vegetation within the Mon Repos Regional Park. Such a rehabilitation program would also increase biodiversity and over time improve corridor linkages to adjacent sites.

#### Recommendations
- It is recommended that NPRSR seek funding, resources and partnerships to develop and implement a Vegetation Rehabilitation Management Plan in accordance with appropriate legislation and policy guidance for the Mon Repos Regional Park. This management plan should include but not be limited to:
  - Assessment of the existing vegetation within the Regional Park, with a specific focus on the dune;
  - An understanding of the key past issues (i.e. severe weather events, weeds and pests, resourcing, dieback, drainage);
  - A review of likely future threats to the success of a rehabilitation program;
  - Staff and resourcing requirements and potential sources of funding;
  - Schedule of works to maximise success of rehabilitation and to minimise impacts on the rookery;
  - Potential opportunities for on-going involvement by volunteers once established;
  - Management of weeds and pests; and
  - Monitoring program.
### 5. Partnering with Local Tourism Groups

- There is a belief this project has the ability to increase education and awareness of the conservation of the turtle whilst being key to tourism growth in the Bundaberg Region.
- Support was given to the proposal of ecotourism activities so long as there was no impact to the turtles and local environment.
- Strong support for year round visitor experience as this is viewed as currently having major potential for the site.
- There was support for the inclusion of local tour operators only if QPWS maintain overall operation of the site, the turtle encounters and regulate their involvement.
- Community support for other activities in the area supported passive activities in the main which aimed at education and awareness of the site, the turtles and other parks whilst maintaining the natural amenity of the area.
- Comments focused on the need to concentrate on turtle conservation and keep attractions to a minimum.
- Improving the facilities such as the amphitheatre, the interpretive signage, the café, and the edutainment for waiting tourists was seen as key to ensuring the ongoing success of the centre.
- Strong belief the plan would improve the visitor experience particularly with year round access, improvement of facilities such as the amphitheatre, café, films and the dated information displays, inclusion of a hatchery, tagging and ‘follow a turtle’ opportunities.
- Inclusion and/or enlisting volunteers to be involved in activities such as the revegetation of the area, tours and research and as champions or advocates of the success or attraction of the centre.
- Some mentioned the need for local businesses to be included in any tendering opportunities and the opportunity for provision of local jobs as a result of this.
- A need was identified to understand the existing research undertaken on site and to communicate the results and findings to the visitor to continue to educate on the conservation of the turtle.
- The majority supported the opportunity for ‘behind the scenes’ experiences as a standard offering amongst other similar world class facilities.
- Commentary focused on maintaining the existing experience, managing the size of the groups and not having any further contact or possible intrusion for the turtles habitat.

### Key Themes Raised in Consultation

- Any additional tourism activities at Mon Repos would individually and cumulatively be required to maintain the integrity of the Turtle Encounter experience and not impact on the turtles and the local environment as a core principal.
- It is anticipated that NPRSR would maintain the overall operation of the site and its activities. A proposed new governance model could achieve a business focused approach to management of the new Centre with the declaration of a Recreational Area to enable reinvestment over the long term for the benefit of the activities at the site. This would be supported by a Foundation for Turtles that can receive sponsorship. This will allow more visitor expenditure to be invested into the Centre and its conservation activities.
- Rangers would still be a large and important part of the Turtle Encounter program. If the new Gateway Visitor Centre is funded, new business, centre management and tourism skills would need to be employed for the running of the Centre.
- Key activities that are proposed to be explored in consultation with local tourism groups and other stakeholders relate to:
  - Exploring the opportunity for flexible fee structures for NPRSR products to respond to market demands and allow for packaging and wholesaling e.g. Ranger guided tours.
  - The opportunity for voluntourism at Mon Repos.
  - Improving the range of activities that could provide additional business opportunities for operators outside of the turtle season such as bush tours, bird watching, star gazing.
  - The opportunity for partnering more fully with Bundaberg Regional Council and co-branding of initiatives.
  - Working with the local cultural heritage and Indigenous Groups and the Gidarjil Development Corporation to integrate cultural content for the interpretation centre and the introductory movie and consider opportunities for tours, voluntourism and education.

### Recommendations

- It is recommended that NPRSR work with BNBT and TEQ and other key stakeholders to develop a joint strategy on building ecotourism opportunities and positive outcomes for turtle conservation. It is expected that this joint strategy should include but is not limited to:
  - Maintaining the integrity of the Turtle Encounter experience as a core principle.
  - Keeping tours affordable and primarily delivered by Rangers, researchers and volunteers.
  - Maintain caps on visitor numbers (to remain as 300 per night in the ‘peak’).
  - Provide training to Rangers and volunteers delivering the experience to improve the offering to visitors. This is linked with working closely with EHP to find mechanisms to improve ‘real time’ information exchange with respect to the monitoring program and how this can be more effectively woven into ‘storytelling’ on the beach.
  - Develop requirements for tour operators to meet certain quality and training standards and for interaction with the public and turtles.
  - Provide opportunities for local operators and other partners such as an additional...
### 6. Camping

**Key Themes Raised in Consultation**
- There was mixed support for onsite camping and accommodation.

**Responses to issues raised in consultation**
- The proposal for ‘glamping’ identified in the Draft Concept Master Plan received mixed support and was perceived to not address the needs of volunteers.
- The consultation process highlighted that there are existing or future opportunities for accommodation at adjacent sites in the area.

**Recommendations**
- It is recommended that prior to any changes to the current onsite volunteer camping area, NPRSR review user needs and options for onsite and offsite accommodation. This should include, but not be limited to:
  - Consultation with EHP and other user groups (e.g. turtle researchers, volunteers, voluntourists) to better understand on-site access and facilities, capacity of the existing site, length of stay and the costs involved;
  - Consultation with other accommodation providers and adjacent site owners including the owners of the caravan park and the Girl Guides Queensland Elouera Campground;
  - Consultation with local staff at Mon Repos to understand any concerns with the existing site and its operation;
  - Research into best practice approaches for accommodating researchers, trainees, volunteers and voluntourists; and
  - Development of ecotourism and health and safety standards for any existing or future accommodation proposed on or adjacent to the site.

### 7. Educational Programs & Volunteering

**Key Themes Raised in Consultation**
- Enable access to the centre all year round and provide educational opportunities during this time.
- Community support for other activities in the area supported passive activities in the main which aimed at education and awareness of the site, the turtles and other parks whilst maintaining the natural amenity of the area.
- Overwhelming support for the inclusion of school groups in the future planning and the opportunity for a gathering area or training room for groups (community, schools, TAFE, Universities).
- Strong belief the plan would improve the visitor experience particularly with year round access, improvement of facilities such as the amphitheatre, café, films and the dated information displays, inclusion of a hatchery, tagging and ‘follow a turtle’ opportunities.
- Inclusion and/or enlisting volunteers to be involved in activities such as the revegetation of the area, tours and research and as champions or advocates of the success or attraction of the centre.
- Overwhelming support for educational opportunities for children.
- A need was identified to understand the existing research undertaken on site and to communicate the results and findings to the visitor to continue to educate on the conservation of the turtle.
- The introduction of a hatchery was supported by many with a focus on the opportunity for year round visitation, sponsoring and insight into the research currently undertaken. However, some voiced concern for how this was undertaken, impacts on the turtles and the need for further information.
- Expansion of the education materials to include the other animals in the area and aspects of the reef.

**Responses to issues raised in consultation**
- The draft Concept Master Plan states that in the design and operation of the new Visitor Centre, research, conservation and education are integrated and integral to the visitor experience.
- With the redevelopment of the Visitor Centre there is considerable opportunity for contemporary interpretive aspects, incorporating newer technology and animation as appropriate. The draft Concept Master Plan outlined that in the following stage of the project (funding permitting) a Thematic Interpretation Strategy would be developed.
- A considerable amount of educational benefit is already provided to a range of groups by Rangers and QPWS volunteers through the Turtle Encounter program and EHP (through the seasonal monitoring program). EHP currently provides high quality, direct training to local, national and international tertiary students, volunteers and Indigenous groups.
- The intent is that over time as the monitoring and research programs will become more...
### 7. Educational Programs & Volunteering

**Integrated with the visitor experience at the Centre, the educational outcomes and visitor experience will benefit from this.**

As stated in the draft Concept Master Plan, the development of education, volunteer and training programs associated with Mon Repos requires further investigation. This would continue in Stages 1 and 2 and NPRSR would seek to work with EHP and other partners.

The dedicated volunteer program will continue to be a key factor in the turtle encounters program with the potential for the volunteers to become more involved in turtle conservation and monitoring in future.

**Recommendations**

No additional recommendations are proposed over and above that already outlined in the Concept Master Plan reports (as described above).

### 8. Turtle Research and Monitoring (‘Behind the Scenes Activities ’)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Themes Raised in Consultation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A need was identified to understand the existing research undertaken on site and to communicate the results and findings to the visitor to continue to educate on the conservation of the turtle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The majority supported the opportunity for ‘behind the scenes’ experiences as a standard offering amongst other similar world class facilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Themes Raised in Consultation**

Building on the design and educational approaches outlined in the draft Concept Master Plan, NPRSR are committed to investigating innovative approaches for making the ‘behind the scenes’ research offering of the site work.

This type of experience is recognised as standard for world class conservation facilities and would be undertaken in line with the same conservation philosophy as the existing Turtle Encounter experience.

Key elements considered for the behind the scenes research activities in the Concept Master Plan include but are not limited to:

- Upgrading the research facilities including:
  - an office for the lead researcher;
  - data entry stations;
  - a work area; and
  - a wet lab.

- During the turtle season, researchers and volunteers involved in monitoring activities will be located within the Visitor Centre. Activities such as weighing, measuring, incubating turtles would be able to be observed by visitors through display windows with blinds (for privacy if required from time to time).

- Improved and real time flow of information between the Rangers and volunteers running the Turtle Encounter and the researchers. In future this could involve use of a hand held device with an application that provides basic information about nesting turtles (based on their tag number). This could include the name, age of the turtle, how many times they’ve returned to the beach in the season and other information.

- A key link to the visitor experience is translating the outcomes of the monitoring activities and research (by Rangers, researchers and/or volunteers) into a story which describes the conservation challenges facing marine turtles and actions that visitors can take in support.

- Dependent on the arrangements for researchers, other research could be located in the Visitor Centre outside of the turtle season e.g. associated with freshwater turtles.

It is intended that the long term objective that research focus and outcomes would be funded by the proposed Turtle Foundation (which will be able to attract external sponsorship). Strategic research outcomes would be determined by NPRSR in
### 8. Turtle Research and Monitoring (‘Behind the Scenes Activities’)

Consultation with EHP and a research partner (such as a university) and delivered through a Conservation Roadmap.

At a recent United Nations Environment Program Technical Meeting attended by EHP in Brisbane a Draft Single Species Action Plan for the loggerhead turtle was presented and discussed. This is expected to be endorsed at the Conference of Parties meeting in November 2014. At this stage no funding has been committed to the Action Plan by either the Commonwealth or Queensland governments. The Draft Action Plan may also assist in directing the focus of research undertaken at Mon Repos.

**Recommendations**

- It is recommended that as part of the process for integrating turtle research and monitoring into new Visitor Centre, NPRSR should consult with relevant stakeholders such as EHP and universities to explore the following:
  - That the research facilities proposed in the Visitor Centre meet the needs of researchers and all ethical approvals requirements.
  - Through the process of constitution of the Turtle Foundation, research priorities are identified and agreed. This would be strongly linked with the Foundation’s sourcing of funding.
  - Better define the opportunity and process to take research/monitoring/hatchery outcomes and integrate into storytelling in the Turtle Encounter experience(s) to improve the visitor’s experience and awareness.
  - That ‘behind the scenes’ activities (including the hatchery) in which visitors can either observe or participate are identified for inclusion in marketing and tourism offerings.

### 9. Turtle Nursery

- Enable access to the centre all year round and provide educational opportunities during this time.
- The overwhelming majority supported the changes with a caveat on minimising impacts to the environment and the turtles.
- Support was given to the proposal of ecotourism activities so long as there was no impact to the turtles and local environment.
- Strong support for year round visitor experience as this is viewed as currently having major potential for the site.
- Strong belief the plan would improve the visitor experience particularly with year round access, improvement of facilities such as the amphitheatre, café, films and the dated information displays, inclusion of a hatchery, tagging and ‘follow a turtle’ opportunities.
- The introduction of a hatchery was supported by many with a focus on the opportunity for year round visitation, sponsoring and insight into the research currently undertaken. However, some voiced concern for how this was undertaken, impacts on the turtles and the need for further information.

**Key Themes Raised in Consultation**

- A key opportunity to catalyse year round activities at Mon Repos is the concept of hatchling research facilities. Such a year round attraction would be supported by an upgraded Visitor Centre with improved interpretation and a café as well as other potential activities that could be offered year round.

As part of the turtle nursery considerations, NPRSR would work with EHP and other stakeholders to better understand the requirements to implement a Marine Turtle Headstarting Program in the Centre, its longevity and ethics approval requirements.

Headstarting refers to hatching and rearing a small number of hatchling turtles until they are large enough to be released and in a small way helps reduce the high mortality risks associated with predation. Such a program could involve keeping a small number of hatchlings (30-50) in the Centre for nine – eighteen months and then tagging, releasing and monitoring them (for more information on Headstarting see Box 1 below).

The purpose of keeping hatchlings at Mon Repos would be for research and conservation outcomes and would enable the conservation message to be continued year round. Any research undertaken at Mon Repos should not impact on the environment or the long term sustainability of the turtle population.

Other related opportunities that could be considered in future stages of the project include:

- Range of research programs related to the headstarted hatchlings including diet, physiology, disease, genetic imprinting.
- Emergency holding of sick and injured turtles prior to transferring to partner centres with appropriate hospital and rehabilitation facilities (such as Australia

**Responses to issues raised in consultation**

A headstarting program could involve keeping a small number of hatchlings (30-50) in the Centre for nine – eighteen months and then tagging, releasing and monitoring them (for more information on Headstarting see Box 1 below). The purpose of keeping hatchlings at Mon Repos would be for research and conservation outcomes and would enable the conservation message to be continued year round. Any research undertaken at Mon Repos should not impact on the environment or the long term sustainability of the turtle population.
9. Turtle Nursery

- Keeping locally native freshwater turtle species (with appropriate ethics approvals and supported by research).
- Tagging and release of hatchlings which provides a year round activity and enables sponsorship to generate revenue for reinvestment in the Centre’s activities and enable further research and education.
- The monitoring of tagged turtles has research potential, education and sponsorship benefits.

A requirement of any such a program involving hatchlings will be to ensure that research activities and findings are used in awareness raising, interpretation, training, education and storytelling for visitors.

It is recommended that NPRSR continue to work with EHP and other key stakeholders such as interested universities to undertake more detailed planning for the inclusion of a turtle nursery and associated research program at Mon Repos. This investigation should consider, but not be limited to:

- Governance, funding and research partners;
- Research focus and longevity;
- Ethics and other approvals and resources needed to manage such a facility; and
- Functional design requirements.

Discussions should commence in Stage 1 on the understanding that construction of such a facility in Stage 2 is subject to funding for the Visitor Centre becoming available.

Recommendations

Box 1: Headstarting as a Conservation Tool: A Brief Overview of the Scientific Evidence

- The practice of rearing hatchlings (with or without egg incubation) and releasing for conservation purposes is called ‘headstarting’ and has been undertaken around the world on a range of marine and fresh water turtle species. There is limited evidence available on how effective headstarting is in increasing endangered marine turtle populations. However, when combined with a range of research and conservation programs, the benefits of headstarting may be maximised. The key findings of the available research suggest:
  - That turtles grown in captivity can survive and have been shown to migrate as ‘normal’ after release, meaning that genetic imprinting may not be affected.
  - While headstarting as a conservation tool is not well researched, there are studies available that demonstrate that turtles from these programs can forage, breed and survive for many years.
  - Headstarting programs should include direct comparisons with wild hatchlings to monitor similarities or differences in behaviour.
  - Headstarting programs should use innovative ‘living tags’ that can be attached to yearlings and be visible throughout their long lifetimes.

The effectiveness of headstarting for population increase may only be possible if implemented alongside programs that reduce threats the other faced by marine turtles throughout their lifecycle (see section 1.3.1).

- A range of research programs have been integrated into headstarting programs including research into diet, physiology, behaviour, genetic imprinting and tagging and monitoring.


4. MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

4.1. Introduction

The proposal for the re-design of the new Mon Repos Visitor Centre outlined in the draft Concept Master Plan report (Dec, 2013) included the following features:

- A series of pavilions that stack behind the existing Visitor Centre to minimise the extent of beach frontage, environmental disturbance and reduce the potential for light spill;
- Adaptive reuse of existing buildings and infrastructure to the greatest extent;
- Maintaining the two existing beach access paths;
- Moving the EHP researchers facilities from the current location into the heart of the Visitor Centre;
- A new interpretive centre with high quality interpretive displays (e.g., live satellite tracking of tagged turtles);
- A new café and public toilets as well as covered dining area;
- New Ranger accommodation facilities and toilets;
- Covered access way from the car park into the Visitor Centre;
- Approximately 124 car parking spaces including People With Disability (PWD) spaces provided;
- Services access for food and beverage and research related services;
- The delivery of greater year round interaction with turtles through the integration of publicly accessible Research Facilities within the Centre and the creation of the hatching pools and viewing decks and creation of a range of covered areas/breakout spaces for visitors waiting at night;
- Refurbishment of and cover over the Amphitheatre;
- New entry feature on Mon Repos Road; and
- A new commercial accommodation offer on site – ‘Glamping’.

It was also recognised that the delivery of Mon Repos Turtle Centre and associated opportunities would be dependent on available Government funding and potential future private investment.

4.2. Community Feedback

This Concept Master Plan is based on consideration of community and stakeholder feedback received on the draft Concept Master Plan report (Dec 2013).

As described in Chapter 3 there are a number of areas the Concept Master Plan would be reviewed and amended in response to community feedback. These include:

- Naming of the Mon Repos Visitor Centre – proposed to be changed to Mon Repos Turtle Conservation or Mon Repos Turtle Centre;
- The nature of the camping accommodation provided at the site – to be reviewed but likely downgraded from ‘Glamping’ as previously proposed;
- The internal layout of the Visitor Centre and visitor flow requires review; and
- The rehabilitation of the surrounding Mon Repos Regional Park – subject to funding and approval of a Vegetation Rehabilitation Plan.

In addition, there are a number of other matters raised by the community where further investigation is required (as outlined in the tables in Chapter 3). These further investigations will inform the detailed design and development of the site in the future and are considered to be in alignment with the proposed vision and project direction.

4.3. Elements of the Concept Master Plan

The proposed Concept layout of the Mon Repos Turtle Conservation Centre is presented in Figures 4.4a-f. This concept design is an initial recommendation and would be subject to further refinement based on the outcome of detailed investigations, planning and approvals.

The proposed facilities included within the new Centre have been categorised into 7 areas and are detailed in the following text.

1. Amphitheatre

The existing amphitheatre could be refurbished with a new concrete deck and stepped seating. This viewing area would be enclosed with an opaque tensile fabric roof and wall structure. The space could be naturally ventilated and incorporate fans for comfort and to provide shelter for visitors in wet conditions.

2. Mon Repos Research Centre & Nursery

Turtle researchers could be accommodated within the existing Visitor Centre building, which could be refurbished to provide:

- An office for the lead researcher;
- Data entry stations;
- A work area;
- A wet lab; and
- Display windows with blinds (for privacy if required from time to time).

Visitors to the research area could be able to view & interact with the researchers through the display windows as part of a ‘behind the scenes’ activity. The existing projection room and screen could remain as is.

A new turtle hatching pool elevated viewing deck with a range of pools would provide year-round wildlife interaction for visitors to the Visitor Centre. Seawater would be required to be pumped through these pools and would require subsequent infrastructure and operational resources. Additional breakout decks off the spine walkway have been provided adjacent to the existing beach access points.

3. Ranger and Volunteer Facilities

A new pavilion strategically located behind the research area could provide much-needed facilities for the Rangers and volunteers who work long hours and shifts during turtle season. Required toilets and showers have been integrated with a locker area and foot wash bay. The Rangers could also benefit from a dedicated office and a staff room which could also be shared by all Visitor Centre staff. A storage facility would be provided for NPRSR use, including merchandising storage.
4. Dining and Breakout Facilities

A new air conditioned cafe/dining area would be serviced by a commercial kitchen. This space would open up to a protected landscaped court, a quieter and more contemplative space for more informal dining/breakout (fitting up to 30 seats). Both these areas would be accessed off the covered spine walkway. Public toilets for male, female and people with disability would be accommodated within this pavilion. The kitchen would be serviced via a rear path and screened refuse area.

Careful consideration would be required when designing these facilities to ensure that the cafe/dining area does not negatively impact the visitors’ turtle encounter. This is a guiding principle for the Centre, particularly as these facilities are in close proximity to the turtle hatching area. Integration of full height glazing to the cafe frontage, warm soft colours and finishes that dampen acoustics and subdued table level lighting are some, but not all of, the strategies that should be explored in order to create an environment that will be complementary to the visitor experience.

It is envisaged that these facilities would be managed and maintained by a separate commercial operator.

5. New Interpretive Centre and Entry

The spine walkway could be accessed via a generous entry canopy with integrated seating and entry signage. Visitors to the centre would be able to congregate in the entry court which would incorporate sales, orientation and merchandising functions. A separate air conditioned display area with contemporary exhibits could refresh the interpretive aspect of the Centre.

High levels of visible and physical permeability and covered open spaces could provide much needed legibility and protection for large numbers of visitors during both hot days and inclement weather events.

6. Car Park and Entry Feature

A new landscaped entry feature could signify arrival into the Mon Repos Conservation area at the junction with Mon Repos Road. The existing access road could link to a newly reconfigured and paved car park which would provide; people with disability (PWD) car parking, approximately 110 visitor car parks, 6 staff car parks and a bus set down/pickup area. A hardstand and NPRSR maintenance shed could be constructed adjacent to the staff car parking.

The car park could also be landscaped to provide shade, amenity and screening to the proposed fox fence on the southern boundary. The predator fence alignment is shown.

7. Camping Accommodation

An area located on the existing researchers’ facilities site has been identified on the Concept Master Plan as an area for camping accommodation. The nature of the facilities at this site will be subject to review as outlined above and in Chapter 3.
Figure 4.4a: Proposed Mon Repos Turtle Centre – Concept Master Plan
Figure 4.4b: Proposed Mon Repos Turtle Centre
Figure 4.4c: Proposed Mon Repos Turtle Centre Ground Floor Plan

MON REPOS TURTLE CENTRE
- GROUND FLOOR PLAN LEGEND

- Existing Beach Access
- Amphitheatre (refurbished & covered - wattle fabric roof)
- Breakout Decks
- Ramp
- Public Viewing
- Projection Room
- Plant
- Wet Lab
- Walk Areas
- Store
- Pedestrian Stations
- Visitor Researcher's Office
- Handling Viewing Dock
- Handling Pools
- QPWS Staff WC
- QPWS Staff - Male WC and Shower
- QPWS Staff - Female WC and Shower
- QPWS Staff Lounges
- QPWS Secure Access
- QPWS Staff Lounge
- QPWS Office
- QPWS Store
- Public WC
- Public WC's
- Public - Male WC's
- Civil Rooms
- Kitchens
- Store
- Office
- Spine Walkway
- Landscaped Court
- Service Access
- Carpark Access
- Index
- Visitor/Merchandising
- Temporary - Covered
- Entry/Exit
- PWD Parking
- Box Set Downs

ARTIST'S IMPRESSION AND ACTUAL DESIGN MAY CHANGE BASED ON DETAILED DESIGN BRIEF.
Figure 4.4d: Proposed Mon Repos Turtle Centre – Typical Cross Section
Figure 4.4e: Artists Impression of Mon Repos Turtle Centre by day
Figure 4.4f: Artists Impression of Mon Repos Turtle Centre at night
4.5. Staging Roadmap

4.5.1. Stage 1 Deliverables

It is envisioned that there are a number of potential deliverables for the short term. The funding currently available for Mon Repos is intended to focus on improving the visitor experience (including the introduction of new products), supported with additional resources and training for Rangers, commencing the implementation of new governance arrangements that will support a more commercial business model (see Chapter 2) and commence a review of ticket prices and product offerings that would generate increased revenue in the season.

In addition, roofing of the amphitheatre is considered an important immediate investment. This will improve the visitor experience significantly in that it provides cover during rainy weather and cooling during the hot summer months of peak turtle season. Visitors often have to wait significant periods of time to be taken to the beach and providing a covered area supported by improved audio visuals will improve the experience substantially.

Specifically, the following is proposed in the short term to improve the visitor experience:

- Implement new tourism products to generate revenue from the smaller more engaged group offering;
- Develop new movie and visual products for visitors waiting at the Visitor Centre for the turtle encounter;
- Identify and undertake staff resourcing and training to deliver the enhanced tourism product;
- Design and construct a new high quality landscaped entry feature, with integrated and illuminated signage, at the Mon Repos Road site access;
- Design and construct a tensile or insulated roof over the existing amphitheatre for increased visitor amenity. The new roof would need to incorporate side walls, fans and low level high pressure sodium lighting (delivery is subject to detailed design and costing);
- Announce the creation of a new Recreation Area - under the RAM Act; and
- Commence action to create a Turtle Foundation.

In parallel, NPRSR would continue to seek to attract and secure funding to design and construct the new Visitor Centre.

4.5.2. Stage 2 – New Visitor Centre

Longer term deliverables defined in Stage 2, including the redevelopment of a Visitor Centre, are subject to funding becoming available. The design and construction of the newly expanded and upgraded Visitor Centre is intended to be delivered at the one time and not in stages. Key elements of the proposed Mon Repos Turtle Centre include:

- Retail and merchandising; and
- Upgraded car park.

The following activities would be required to enable design and construction of the Mon Repos Turtle Centre to be planned, approved and designed:

- Undertake necessary feasibility studies for detailed on-going planning of Mon Repos, including the preparation of a business plan, approvals strategy, thematic interpretation strategy and marketing strategy.
- Commission an architect led design team to design and document the new facilities.
- Tendering and appointment of the builder to commence the day after season end in order to be complete prior to the next season.

Figure 4.5 provides an overview of the proposed staging roadmap for the project as it moves through planning, approval, detailed design and construction of the Visitor Centre.

A key element of the design brief and the capabilities of the design team should be a commitment to the highest levels environmentally sustainable design and construction for the Centre.
Figure 4.5: Overview of the Proposed Staged Implementation

Stage 1: Planning of the New Visitor Centre

Stage 1 - Jul 2014 – Dec 2014

Early Proposals

- Develop new movie and visual products for the turtle encounter experience.
- Implement new tourism products to generate revenue from the smaller more engaged group offering.
- Identify and undertake staff resourcing and training to deliver the enhanced tourism product.
- Design and construct a new landscaped entry feature.
- Design and construct new cover for amphitheatre.
- Announce the creation of a Recreation Area under the RAM Act.
- Commence actions to create a Turtle Foundation.

Recommendations to be considered by NPRSR:

- Develop joint strategy for ecotourism and marketing opportunities with BNBT and TEQ.
- Work with Bundaberg Sugar to encourage re-instatement of the adjacent former wetland.
- Prepare Vegetation Rehabilitation Management Plan for Regional Park.
- Review of camping accommodation.
- Ongoing stakeholder engagement.
- Seek funding for Stage 2.

Stage 2a: Approvals and Detailed Design

Stage 2a - Timing Subject to Funding

- Determine environmental, planning and building approvals required for Stage 2 and undertake necessary site investigations.
- Prepare business plan, marketing and thematic interpretation strategy.
- Commence investigation and detailed planning for the turtle hatchery.
- Implement Vegetation Rehabilitation Management Plan.
- Commission an Architect led design team to design and document the new Centre including key stakeholder group review of Centre layout.
- Develop concept design, design development, construction documents and tendering.
- Tender Review and Building Contractor Appointment.
- Prepare and lodge submissions for statutory planning/environmental/building approvals.
- Prior to Stage 2b Works it is anticipated that the Recreation Area would be declared and the Turtle Foundation would be up and running.

Stage 2b: Construction of Visitor Centre

Stage 2b - Timing Subject to Funding

- Appointment of a building contractor with proven experience in project managing complex projects in compressed timeframes.
- Tendering and appointment of the builder for the Centre should take place during the turtle nesting and hatching season.
- Construction works will need to commence the day after season end in order to be complete prior to the next season.
### Appendix A: Key Themes and Key Response Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Key Themes</th>
<th>Key Response Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>• Improve the existing facilities to provide a world class attraction to both domestic and international guests whilst maintaining the unique charm and attractiveness of the site.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Enable access to the centre all year round and provide educational opportunities during this time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Access to the site needs to be improved including consideration of the one way road, the signage and improvement to the car park as well as improved pedestrian foot and cycle access.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provision of a café was supported with consideration being given to competitors in the area, possibility of small meals only and the use of environmentally friendly packaging.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The overwhelming majority supported the changes with a caveat on minimising impacts to the environment and the turtles.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Concern was raised about the surrounding environment including any increased light in the area as a result of the upgraded centre, and the need for revegetation of the area.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Concern was raised on the potential effect of development particularly in relation to the proposed adjacent Bundaberg Sugar site.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• There was support for renaming the centre to include Turtle in the title and possibly conservation.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There is a belief this project has the ability to increase education and awareness of the conservation of the turtle whilst being key to tourism growth in the Bundaberg Region.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecotourism</td>
<td>• Support was given to the proposal of ecotourism activities so long as there was no impact to the turtles and local environment.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Strong support for year round visitor experience as this is viewed as currently having major potential for the site.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There was mixed support for onsite camping and accommodation.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There was support for the inclusion of local tour operators only if QPWS maintain overall operation of the site, the turtle encounters and regulate their involvement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Recreation</td>
<td>• Community support for other activities in the area supported passive activities in the main which aimed at education and awareness of the site, the turtles and other parks whilst maintaining the natural amenity of the area.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Comments focused on the need to concentrate on turtle conservation and keep attractions to a minimum.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Key Themes

#### Community Education and Community Use

- Improving the facilities such as the amphitheatre, the interpretive signage, the cafe, and the "edutainment" for waiting tourists was seen as key to ensuring the ongoing success of the centre.

- Overwhelming support for the inclusion of school groups in the future planning and the opportunity for a gathering area or training room for groups (community, schools, TAFE, Universities).

- Strong belief the plan would improve the visitor experience particularly with year round access, improvement of facilities such as the amphitheatre, cafe, films and the dated information displays, inclusion of a hatchery, tagging and ‘follow a turtle’ opportunities.

- Inclusion and/or enlisting volunteers to be involved in activities such as the revegetation of the area, tours and research and as champions or advocates of the success or attraction of the centre.

- Overwhelming support for educational opportunities for children.

- Some mentioned the need for local businesses to be included in any tendering opportunities and the opportunity for provision of local jobs as a result of this.

- Continual communication with the local community on the plan and any progress or opportunity to input.

- A need was identified to understand the existing research undertaken on site and to communicate the results and findings to the visitor to continue to educate on the conservation of the turtle.

#### Wildlife Experiences

- The majority supported the opportunity for ‘behind the scenes’ experiences as a standard offering amongst other similar world class facilities.

- Commentary focused on maintaining the existing experience, managing the size of the groups and not having any further contact or possible intrusion for the turtles habitat.

- The introduction of a hatchery was supported by many with a focus on the opportunity for year round visitation, sponsoring and insight into the research currently undertaken. However, some voiced concern for how this was undertaken, impacts on the turtles and the need for further information.

- There is concern amongst many that the main attraction of Mon Repos will no longer be there should the focus not be extended to cutting the light pollution in the area, addressing the development issues around the beach and addressing the need for revegetation of the dune.

- Expansion of the education materials to include the other animals in the area and aspects of the reef.