Setting the Direction for Mon Repos Turtle Centre

Directions Paper for the Mon Repos Concept Master Plan
June 2014

Gateway Visitor Centre
Master Planning initiative 2013–14
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Photo: Maxime Coquard
Mon Repos—gateway to world-class turtle encounters

The natural phenomenon of sea turtles nesting and hatching is an iconic experience drawing domestic and international visitors to Mon Repos Regional Park and its Visitor Centre during turtle season. Mon Repos has an unprecedented opportunity to extend and enrich the encounter for visitors to become a world-class ecotourism experience attracting people all year round.

The Queensland Ecotourism Plan 2013–2020 sets the vision to establish Queensland as a world leader in ecotourism, delivering best practice nature-based experiences that contribute to the conservation of our natural resources and cultural heritage. The Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing (the department) has also released the long term Master Plan for Queensland’s Parks and Forests, with a goal that our parks and forests provide sustainable environmental, economic and social benefits to the Queensland community.

Through this Gateway Visitor Centres master planning initiative, the department aims to support Queensland’s ecotourism aspirations, enhance visitor experiences and create new opportunities for Mon Repos.

Over 30,000 visitors travel to Mon Repos during November–March each year to participate in the ranger-led turtle encounter experience. A well-respected research and volunteer program, led by the Department of Environment and Heritage, operates behind the scenes to support Mon Repos marine turtle conservation work.

The actions set out in the Mon Repos Concept Master Plan and this Directions Paper will realise the potential of Mon Repos both as an ecotourism destination and important habitat for marine turtles, and a visitor ‘gateway’ to other natural areas and national and marine park experiences in the Bundaberg North Burnett and broader Southern Great Barrier Reef regions.

The Gateway Visitor Centre will be delivered in a staged approach in partnership with ecotourism operators, research organisations, other stakeholders and the local community. The delivery of opportunities presented in the Concept Master Plan, including the building of a new centre, will be subject to the department securing funding.

Through new and improved visitor experiences and facilities, Mon Repos will provide international and domestic visitors with a world-class encounter with marine turtles and opportunities to connect with nature year-round.

Mon Repos will also provide visitors with inspirational and educational information about Queensland’s national and marine parks and the crucial role they play in protecting wildlife and conserving their habitats.
The vision for Mon Repos Turtle Centre

The Mon Repos Turtle Centre is a world leading ecotourism experience and turtle conservation partnership that inspires and touches the hearts and minds of domestic and international visitors.

This vision is supported by a series of aspirational objectives for 2020 that will ensure the sustainable future of Mon Repos.

The vision and aspirations support the Queensland Government’s tourism commitments in the Queensland Ecotourism Plan 2013–2020 and the Master Plan for Queensland’s Parks and Forests.

Our aspirations for 2020 are:

- to consolidate the position of Mon Repos as an iconic wildlife experience and world leader in interpretation and presentation of encounters with marine turtles
- to deliver high quality learning, conservation outcomes and measurable change in the conservation status of marine turtles
- to offer new experiences as part of a new Visitor Centre development that encourage year-round visitation and support the critical conservation role of Mon Repos
- to develop a new Visitor Centre which encourages visitors to explore and immerse themselves in the world of marine turtles and is a ‘gateway’ to the national and marine parks in the Bundaberg North Burnett and broader Southern Great Barrier Reef regions
- to develop supportive and engaged partner working relationships with universities and other research organisations
- to provide an iconic and contemporary national parks Gateway Visitor Centre delivering engaging interpretative experiences
- to attract and retain a team of passionate volunteers that support QPWS rangers in delivering high quality visitor experiences
- to grow average visitor expenditure at the Centre as part of a sustainable ecotourism model
- to establish a business, governance and fundraising model which enables revenue to be reinvested into conservation, research, education and training at the Centre.

Photo: Maxime Coquard
A time for change

Located on the Woongarra Coast in the township of Bargara, approximately 14km from Bundaberg, Mon Repos Regional Park supports the largest concentration of nesting loggerhead turtles on the eastern Australian mainland and in the South Pacific. It is an important protected area and one of the regions “hero” tourism experiences. Unless action is taken to protect their nesting habitat and reduce threats on their migratory journeys the Mon Repos loggerhead turtle rookery faces the risk of continuous decline. Increased revenue and profile for Mon Repos are needed to support the work of rangers, researchers and volunteers in protecting the long term viability of this ecologically important site.

A further challenge is the limitations of the current Visitor Centre facilities which cannot accommodate large numbers of people or traffic, particularly in wet or humid weather. Visitors, including those with young children, can wait until midnight to view the turtles, due to unpredictable turtle nesting behaviour.

A combination of a greater range of products, a year-round experience, revenue reinvested into the Centre’s marine conservation activity and external funding and support will be critical for the sustainable future of the Mon Repos turtle rookery. The department has committed to achieving this through a staged development approach.

In the short term, modest improvements will be made to the existing Visitor Centre facilities, including a roof over the amphitheatre and new video content to entertain and educate visitors waiting to view the turtles. The turtle encounters program will be reviewed to enhance and extend the experience as needed.

If longer term funding is available, a new Gateway Visitor Centre will be constructed. Partnerships will be explored with research organisations to increase the accessibility of the research work at the site for visitors and enable turtles to be viewed year-round. Also, commercial operators will be invited to provide ecotourism products that attract visitors year-round while protecting the integrity of the turtle rookery and the turtle encounter experience.

Throughout the staged development the focus will be on consolidating the excellent work being undertaken by the dedicated and passionate rangers, researchers and volunteers at Mon Repos.

The need for marine turtle conservation at Mon Repos

Mon Repos’ loggerhead sea turtle (Caretta caretta) is an endangered species. Without strong conservation efforts they could become extinct from our shores. Marine turtles have a number of characteristics that make them highly vulnerable.

- The survival rate for hatchlings is low due to their susceptibility to predation and light spill from coastal development (which disorients their return to the ocean).
- They are highly migratory, travelling great distances across the Southern Pacific ocean feeding off food on the ocean’s surface and can encounter major threats such as commercial fishing or ingesting or becoming entangled in plastics.
- They tend to return to the same breeding and feeding areas and if these areas are negatively impacted in any way, the population can be heavily reduced or even decimated.
- They breed at a relatively late age (30–40 years old), increasing their chance of injury or death before they have a chance to breed.

The marine turtles that visit Mon Repos are a species and genetic stock that are unique to the area. For this reason it is critical to protect the marine turtle habitat and coastal areas and track and monitor visiting turtle populations to determine ways to reduce the potential for harm on their long migratory journeys.

There is scientific support for ‘headstarting’—the practice of rearing hatchlings and releasing them as young turtles. Turtles grown in captivity can survive and have been shown to migrate as normal. A hatchling facility at Mon Repos, if combined with research and conservation programs, has the potential to increase the marine turtle population.
Responding to the issues and opportunities

This Directions Paper is the result of a year-long Gateway Visitor Centre master planning initiative.

The department worked with a specialist contractor team, a cross-agency Reference Group and stakeholders to identify the long term future for Mon Repos. An extensive public consultation process provided valuable feedback on the suggested options.

The top nine issues from the public consultation (not in any order):

1. Support renaming to Mon Repos Turtle Centre (adding Turtle and/or Conservation in the name).
2. Ensure the sustainable design of the Centre, recognising the fragility of the site.
3. Minimise the impacts of adjacent development on the turtle rookery.
4. Re-vegetate the dunes at Mon Repos.
5. Progress the new Visitor Centre with year-round attractions for visitors.
6. Facilitate local tourism and Indigenous groups involvement in offering tourism experiences at the site.
7. Maintain volunteer involvement at the site.
8. Support the development of additional tourism products such as ‘behind the scenes’ activities and a turtle hatchery.
9. Review the need for camping accommodation at the site, given options for camping nearby.

These points have been taken into consideration in the development of the Mon Repos Concept Master Plan and the strategies of this Directions Paper, with the exception of the proposal for onsite camping accommodation. This issue has not been included in the strategies because community and stakeholder input highlighted the existing and future opportunities for accommodation at adjacent sites.

The department will review options with accommodation, tourism operators and other site owners, local staff, researchers and volunteers. Camping proposals are not expected to be progressed in the short term.

Photo: Rowan Bestmann
How we will achieve the vision

Through the master planning process five themes have been identified as key to Mon Repos’ long term success.

1. Attracting visitors
2. Delivering authentic visitor experiences
3. Valuing our volunteers
4. Developing strong partnerships
5. Governance for a sustainable long term future

Future development at Mon Repos will be guided by a series of strategies within each of the above themes. While not exhaustive, the strategies set out below are considered critical to the success of Mon Repos in achieving its full potential as a ‘must do’ ecotourism experience and an important asset for marine turtle conservation.

1. Attracting visitors

The Queensland Ecotourism Plan 2013–2020 highlights the important role of national parks in ecotourism, with their unique environments and wildlife, and as a major driver for tourism in Australia. Wildlife is one of the main attractions for visitors, with nature tourism ranking among top travel motivators for international visitors to the country.

Should funding be secured for a new Gateway Visitor Centre, Mon Repos has the potential to consolidate its position as an important ecotourism attraction and grow its economic and social contribution to the Bundaberg North Burnett region. Mon Repos also has the capacity to increase its appeal for education institutions, research organisations and special interest groups. The new Centre, however, will need to increase revenue for the conservation work of passionate rangers, researchers and volunteers and direct reinvestment to sustain these activities.

In addition to a new Centre, additional world-class ecotourism products at Mon Repos will be key to attracting visitors throughout the year, improving the visitor experience and increasing visitor expenditure. As a gateway to the Southern Great Barrier Reef, there is also an opportunity to work with the tourism industry to cross-promote Mon Repos in the marketing of other wildlife experiences such as the manta rays at Lady Elliot and Lady Musgrave Islands and the whales in Hervey Bay.

New ticket options present an opportunity to attract visitors and improve their experience. The options could include a Premium Family Pass, which allows early access to turtle viewing for a higher entry fee, or a ‘Red-Eye’ Pass for visitors opting for budget prices. Also, arrival times could be staggered so later groups have reduced waiting times for the turtle encounter experience. The different ticket passes and timings could be introduced while the existing Centre is in operation to improve the visitor experience during the peak turtle season.

Understanding the needs of the target visitor markets and their changing expectations will be essential to ensure Mon Repos can deliver and where possible exceed these expectations.
Strategies

1.1 Rename the Centre from Mon Repos Regional Park to Mon Repos Turtle Centre.

1.2 Secure funding for a new Visitor Centre that is attractive and comfortable for visitors and encourages engagement in interpretive displays.

1.3 Increase the appeal of Mon Repos for special interest groups, tertiary students and local residents by increasing the opportunities to learn about conservation through direct observation and/or hands-on experiences.

1.4 Increase school and education group visitors and become a preferred destination in the region for education providers, by delivering best practice programs that inspire, captivate and educate students.

1.5 Position Mon Repos as a year-round world-class turtle experience and gateway to national and marine parks in the Bundaberg North Burnett and Southern Great Barrier Reef regions.

1.6 Develop an annual marketing plan to clearly position the Centre in the mind of its target markets.

1.7 Work in partnership with organisations such as Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) and Bundaberg North Burnett Tourism (BNBT) to create a brand for Mon Repos that is aligned with the Queensland National Parks consumer brand and the Bundaberg and Southern Great Barrier Reef destination brand.

1.8 Ensure the Mon Repos brand is supported by appropriate images and messages that clearly communicate Mon Repos’ positioning.

1.9 Identify the characteristics, needs and expectations of Mon Repos’ target markets through surveys and industry engagement and establish a visitor satisfaction baseline.

1.10 Review and regularly update the Gateway Visitor Centre products and experiences offered to ensure they continue to meet visitor needs and expectations and their pricing is comparable with industry averages.

Artist impression of the new Mon Repos Turtle Centre—night time view

Artist impression of the new Mon Repos Turtle Centre—cross section
Proposed concept for Mon Repos Turtle Centre
2. Delivering authentic visitor experiences

Mon Repos’ rangers, volunteers and researchers currently offer a world-class turtle encounter experience and marine turtle education during turtle season. However, Mon Repos has the potential to show visitors that when it comes to marine turtle conservation there is so much more to discover.

As a Gateway Visitor Centre, Mon Repos has the opportunity to provide year-round experiences in partnership with commercial tourism operators, Indigenous groups, and research and education organisations. The new Centre will offer ecotourism attractions that complement the turtle encounter, as well as activities that provide visitors with new ways to experience marine turtle conservation, such as a turtle hatchery and ‘behind the scenes’ access to marine turtle research and monitoring.

As part of the development of the Gateway Visitor Centre, contemporary interpretative displays will improve the visitor experience, provide reasons to visit outside of turtle season and inspire visitors to support the long term conservation of marine turtles.

The QPWS rangers, with their knowledge and passion for conservation are an important asset and provide a point of difference for Mon Repos and Queensland’s national and marine parks. There is an opportunity to raise the profile of rangers and their nature conservation work so they become as iconic as Australia’s surf life savers and a draw-card for international and domestic visitors.

Strategies

2.1 Maintain the ranger-led turtle encounter as the signature experience for the Centre and investigate opportunities to increase and improve the product offering, including ecotourism experiences delivered by commercial operators.

2.2 Maintain the numbers cap of 300 visitors viewing the turtles on the beach during peak turtle season to protect the integrity of the turtle experience.

2.3 Work with BNBT, TEQ, the tourism industry and local Indigenous groups to identify opportunities for joint marketing and additional ecotourism experiences that can be offered as part of the turtle encounter experience.

2.4 Raise the profile of QPWS rangers as ambassadors of Queensland’s national parks, and ensure rangers are a visible and engaging component of the visitor experience, and present in marketing collateral and promotional activities.

2.5 Ensure rangers, researchers and volunteers receive training in the delivery of contemporary interpretation for a range of visitor markets.

2.6 Require all tour operators at Mon Repos to meet the department’s Best Practice Ecotourism Development Guidelines.

2.7 Continue to work with Bundaberg Regional Council and state and federal government to mitigate any impacts from adjoining properties and coastal development on the long term sustainability of the turtle rookery.

2.8 Seek funding and resources for a vegetation rehabilitation management plan for the Mon Repos Regional Park in partnership with government, non-government organisations (NGOs) and community stakeholders, to protect the ecological integrity of the nesting beach.

2.9 Build strong partnerships with academic and research institutions to increase the knowledge and capacity of rangers and volunteers to manage the Mon Repos turtle rookery for the conservation of natural and cultural values.

Should the new Gateway Visitor Centre receive funding:

2.10 Investigate the development of ‘behind the scenes’ activities to increase year-round appeal, enrich the experience for visitors and bring to life the valuable research and monitoring activities at Mon Repos.

2.11 Work with research partners to investigate the development of a turtle hatchling research facility and ‘Headstarting’ program at Mon Repos.

2.12 Develop a sustainably designed and operated Gateway Visitor Centre, consistent with the department’s Best Practice Ecotourism Development Guidelines, with ranger-led environmental education and high quality and creative exhibits and interpretive products that connect and engage visitors intellectually and emotionally with the marine turtles and the other natural assets of the Southern Great Barrier Reef region.

2.13 Attract best-practice ecotourism operators that will offer products that add-value to the turtle encounter experiences for visitors.

Target market for Mon Repos

Artist impression of the new Mon Repos Turtle Centre—day time view
3. Valuing our volunteers

Community volunteers are critical to the successful delivery of the Mon Repos turtle encounter experience. The time they dedicate over the turtle season is vital to the overall running of the Visitor Centre and the guided groups.

The well coordinated volunteer program has been successful in retaining passionate, customer-focused volunteers and providing them with the necessary training and experience to support QPWS rangers. An enhanced Gateway Visitor Centre volunteer program will provide opportunities for local residents, students, visitors and the wider community to become important champions for Mon Repos and turtle conservation. It 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.

Strategies

3.1 Review where volunteer help is most needed to support Gateway Visitor Centre activities, including operational support and fundraising.

3.2 Continue to deliver a volunteer program that fosters a team of volunteers with the knowledge and commitment to assist in delivering Mon Repos’ functions and services.

3.3 Enhance volunteer management as a core function of QPWS staff at Mon Repos and ensure they have the skills and training to guide and motivate a team of volunteers.

3.4 Identify and document for staff and volunteers the roles, responsibilities and outcomes expected of volunteers and their own expectations of the Gateway Visitor Centre staff.

3.5 Increase the number of volunteers through a regular program of promotional activities and partnerships targeting the local community, the business community and local clubs.

3.6 Recruit volunteers who are enthusiastic and passionate about Mon Repos and committed to going the extra mile to enhance visitors’ experiences.

3.7 Increase volunteer engagement by introducing a recognition and reward program that regularly acknowledges the efforts of volunteers.
4. Building strong partnerships

Achievement of the vision for Mon Repos as a Gateway Visitor Centre will require effective relationships with the tourism industry and other key stakeholders such as the Department of Environment and Protection (EHP), Bundaberg Regional Council, tertiary institutions, local and state government and the local community. Each of these partners has a valued role in increasing revenue at the Gateway Visitor Centre and sustaining the integrity of the marine turtle rookery and the visitor experience.

Partnerships with commercial operators will deliver new facilities and services out of the Gateway Visitor Centre, such as a café and retail area, and additional ecotourism experiences. The department will seek to establish a governance and management approach which enables appropriate partnerships to be successfully established and maintained.

Research organisations are an important partner in Mon Repos’ marine turtle conservation activities. The development of new ‘behind the scenes’ visitor experiences, including a proposed turtle nursery and ‘headstarting’ program, present an opportunity to increase awareness of the contribution research is making to marine turtle conservation.

Strategies

4.1 Continue to work with EHP in providing high quality training to local, national and international tertiary students, volunteers and Indigenous groups.

4.2 Encourage partnerships with BNBT and local tourism attractions to deliver a richer Southern Great Barrier Reef ecotourism experience and to leverage the marketing efforts of these other tourism products.

4.3 Partner with local tertiary institutions to identify and promote volunteer roles suited for youth and seek recognition for the roles as work experience within study courses.

4.4 Should the new Visitor Centre receive funding, actively seek to partner with research organisations to advance Mon Repos’ marine turtle conservation work and increase the accessibility of the research activities for visitors.

4.5 Develop mutually beneficial working relationships with BNBT, tourism operators, the community, public and private sector organisations who use Mon Repos.

Photo: Maxime Coquard
5. Creating a sustainable business

The success of a new year-round Mon Repos ecotourism destination is dependent on the establishment of an appropriate governance and management model. The model needs to allow the Gateway Visitor Centre to respond to commercial opportunities and challenges and remain contemporary and attuned to the expectations of its target markets.

A more commercially focused approach offers a number of benefits including increasing revenue to create meaningful visitor experiences and maximise support for marine turtle conservation. It could also give Mon Repos’ management team the ‘local ownership’ and flexibility to manage, invest and innovate, while incorporating appropriate safeguards for public investment within Queensland Government structures.

By creating a more sustainable business, Mon Repos will be able to contribute more fully to both the tourism economy and local communities, and deliver good value for money from the government’s continued investment.

Strategies

5.1 Investigate the formation of a not-for-profit Turtle Foundation alongside the chosen governance model to advance the Gateway Visitor Centre’s conservation, research, monitoring and educational activities.

5.2 Investigate land management options for the site, such as a recreation area declaration under the Recreation Areas Management Act 2006.

5.3 Determine and transition to the most appropriate model of governance for management of Mon Repos, which will deliver the Gateway Visitor Centre’s objectives and priorities and improve outcomes and return on investment for the Queensland Government.

5.4 Foster sustainable commercial operations through streamlined permitting and adherence to the department’s Best Practice Ecotourism Development Guidelines.

5.5 Provide the Centre manager and relevant staff with the appropriate training and experience covering business management, visitor attractions, and commercial acumen, and the authority to implement operational decisions.

5.6 Develop quantitative and qualitative performance measures that support the development of an outcomes based centre and align with the objectives of Mon Repos as a Gateway Visitor Centre.

Making a difference to marine turtles

A Marine Turtle Conservation Foundation, as a not-for-profit organisation independent from the department, presents an opportunity to raise funds for marine turtle conservation. A foundation would enable individuals, families, groups and corporations to make a difference through tax deductible donations to specific projects, such as a new Mon Repos Gateway Visitor Centre, or to a general marine turtle conservation fund for Mon Repos.

A foundation could be funded through crowd funding, memberships, direct contributions or other relevant fundraising opportunities. Crowd funding is a contemporary fundraising method to raise the profile of a specific project and generate funds for its delivery. It can be initiated by a foundation or passionate individuals who want to make a tangible difference to the future of marine turtles in Queensland.
What will be delivered and when

Implementation of the development opportunities identified in the Mon Repos Concept Master Plan will occur in two stages. This staged approach will maximise the benefits that can be achieved for turtle conservation and the tourism industry within the reality of existing budgets and resources.

Stage 1 includes priority actions to improve the visitor experience at the current Visitor Centre. These actions will be delivered by the department in 2014–2016 from existing funds.

Stage 2 includes the longer term opportunity for the site—the construction of a new Gateway Visitor Centre. Development of the Centre will be subject to funding being secured in future years. The department will also enhance the visitor experience by attracting commercial operators with ecotourism products that complement the Turtle Encounter experience.

This funding allocation is consistent with the Queensland Government’s commitment to improving the State’s financial position. Funding for the Centre must be assigned on a priority basis, where the need is greatest.

Stage 1—Opportunities

Stage 1 includes a number of priority actions to enhance the visitor experience.

1. The amphitheatre will be refurbished to improve the comfort of visitors waiting to view the turtles on the beach. The design will be undertaken for a covered tensile fabric roof and wall structure that minimises light spill. Additional deck area and seating will also be included.

2. A new landscaped entry feature, with illuminated signage, will be constructed at the junction with Mon Repos Road to clearly indicate to visitors that they have arrived at the entrance to Mon Repos.

3. New video-based interpretative material will be developed to entertain visitors while they are waiting to view the turtles. It will be an important vehicle to educate and inspire visitors about marine turtle conservation and what they can do to make a difference.

4. A not-for-profit Turtle Foundation will be investigated as an option to raise funds for projects at Mon Repos. A foundation would enable individuals, groups and corporations to contribute directly to marine turtle conservation.

In addition to the priority actions, a number of development opportunities have been identified as highly desirable for Mon Repos, but are subject to funding.
Proposed capital works 2014–2016

Priority actions
(in order of priority and subject to funding availability)

1. Design and construction of a tensile roof over the existing amphitheatre for increased visitor amenity.

2. Design and construction of new high quality landscaped entry featured, with integrated and illuminated signage at the Mon Repos Road site access.

Proposed operational investment 2014–2016

Priority actions
(in order of priority and subject to funding availability)

1. Rename the Centre to Mon Repos Turtle Centre and refresh marketing and communications materials to reflect the new name.

2. Develop additional movie and visual products for visitors waiting at the Visitor Centre for the turtle encounter experience.

3. Initiate joint marketing opportunities with BNBT, TEQ and tourism operators, including market research.

4. Review the existing turtle encounters tourism offering to determine additional products, improve visitor experience and accommodate families with young children where possible, such as new ticket/pricing options.

5. Investigate the formation of a not-for-profit Turtle Foundation.

6. Partner with Bundaberg Regional Council and state and federal governments and neighbours in minimising impacts from adjoining properties and coastal development on the turtle rookery.

7. Review and enhance the volunteer program as needed.

8. Decide and transition to a new governance model.

9. Regularly review and update the products and experiences offered.

Highly desirable

10. Investigate an overarching coordinating mechanism such as a recreation area declaration.

11. Partner with community, and other government agencies and NGOs in a dune rehabilitation program.

12. Investigate options to provide live footage of the turtle encounter experience to waiting visitors at the amphitheatre.

13. Review staff resourcing and training needs to deliver an enhanced visitor experience.

14. Identify and establish other relevant partnerships.

15. Establish a visitor satisfaction baseline.

Stage 2 New Gateway Visitor Centre
(subject to future years funding availability)

The development of a new Gateway Visitor Centre has been identified in the Concept Master Plan as a long term opportunity for Mon Repos. This opportunity is subject to the department securing additional funding.

The Mon Repos Concept Master Plan proposes the sustainable design and construction of a contemporary Gateway Visitor Centre with a café/retail, interpretive centre, research centre (and potential hatchling facility), and ranger and volunteer facilities.

If the department secures funding for the new Centre, the design, construction and operation will reflect sustainability principles and include turtle friendly lighting to minimise light spill.

The new Gateway Visitor Centre will enable the range of experiences offered to visitors to be expanded. Partnerships will be established with commercial tourism operators, Indigenous groups, and research and education organisations to provide year-round marine turtle experiences and complementary ecotourism activities.

Other Stage 2 opportunities to be actioned in conjunction with the new Gateway Visitor Centre include:

- Investigate the development of a ‘behind the scenes’ experience and a turtle hatchling facility.
- Develop a program of curriculum-based education packages and school holiday programs to demonstrate conservation and research programs at the new Centre.
- Attract ecotourism operators offering products that add value to and complement the turtle encounter experience.
- Continue to refresh products and experiences offered and education packages.
- Ongoing delivery of Stage 1 actions.

Where to go for more information

For more information about the Gateway Visitor Centre Master Plans initiative and the Mon Repos Visitor Centre Concept Master Plan, visit www.nprsr.qld.gov.au. Concept Master Plans have also been developed for Walkabout Creek Visitor Centre and David Fleay Wildlife Park.

Find out more about Mon Repos Turtle Centre and the Turtle Encounter experience at www.nprsr.qld.gov.au/parks/mon-repos
### Stage 1: Planning of the New Visitor Centre

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Early Proposals</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Develop new movie and visual products for the turtle encounter experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Implement new tourism products to generate revenue from the smaller more engaged group offering.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Identify and undertake staff resourcing and training to deliver the enhanced tourism product.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Design and construct a new landscaped entry feature.</td>
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<td>• Announce the creation of a Recreation Area under the RAM Act.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Commence actions to create a Turtle Foundation.</td>
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#### 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 2a—Timing Subject to Funding</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Determine environmental, planning and building approvals required for Stage 2 and undertake necessary site investigations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Prepare business plan, marketing and thematic interpretation strategy.</td>
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<td>• Commence investigation and detailed planning for the turtle hatchery.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Commission an Architect led design team to design and document the new Centre including key stakeholder group review of Centre layout.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Develop concept design, design development, construction documents and tendering.</td>
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<td>• Tender Review and Building Contractor Appointment.</td>
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<td>• Prepare and lodge submissions for statutory planning/environmental/building approvals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Prior to Stage 2b Works it is anticipated that the Recreation Area would be declared and the Turtle Foundation would be up and running.</td>
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### Stage 2b: Construction of Visitor Centre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 2b—Timing Subject to Funding</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Appointment of a building contractor with proven experience in project managing complex projects in compressed timeframes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Tendering and appointment of the builder for the Centre would take place during the turtle nesting and hatching season.</td>
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<td>• Construction works will need to commence the day after season end in order to be complete prior to the next season.</td>
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### Staging Roadmap