



TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AT THE CREERY WETLANDS IN MANDURAH



Michael Volgger, Sara Cavalcanti Marques, Billy Sung, Christof Pforr and Greg Simpson (Murdoch University)
In collaboration with the Consumer Research Lab

How can the visitor experience at the Creery Wetlands Reserve be enhanced?

CONTEXT

Mandurah, the largest and one of the fastest-growing regional cities in WA, boasts a myriad of natural and cultural assets that can be leveraged on to boost its tourism attractiveness, such as the Creery Wetlands Nature Reserve, located on the north-eastern side of the Peel Inlet. The Reserve is of undisputable cultural and environmental significance, and has recently been identified as a potential site for the implementation of high-quality sustainable tourism product development. The "Tourism Product Development at the Creery Wetlands in Mandurah" project was established to address the need to create new and enhance existing tourism experiences in the area, through evidence-based generation of ideas for tourism product development

HIGHLIGHTS

- Over half of all visits to Mandurah are domestic daytrips. Current visitors to the Creery Wetlands are mostly Mandurah locals. The 2 key target markets for the Creery Wetlands are general visitors (domestic and international visitors interested in nature-based experiences) and birdwatchers (a specialist niche).
- The Creery Wetlands have high potential as Birdwatching destination. The presence of the estuarine and forest ecosystems and its proximity to other birdwatching sites means it could be a year-round tourism product.
- Negative perceptions include the uninviting entrance, lack of infrastructure, maintenance, shortage of information, the neglected bush track, vandalism.

METHODOLOGY

- Analysis of existing literature on Mandurah and Creery as tourism destinations
- Extensive qualitative interviews with 10 experts on tourism, birdwatching and environmental conservation & land management
- Qualitative and quantitative visitor surveys (63 participants)
- Biometric analysis and atmospheric and experience mapping activities
- Competitor and good practice analysis
- 2 idea-generation-workshops and a stakeholder questionnaire

Top tourism development ideas for Creery generated in the project:

- Incorporation of Indigenous name to the Reserve
- Landmark art and cultural interpretation
- Instalment of magnificent doorway at the entry gate
- Creation a Friends of Creery volunteering group
- Development of engaging educational kids' program
- Use boardwalk to put migratory flightpath into perspective and re-invigorate birdhide
- Support general visitors to uptake birdwatching (binocular rental and information on birds found at Reserve)
- Raise wooden structure to enable lookout over Reserve
- Install more seats, improve trails, create loop trail
- Connect Creery to a broader estuary experience

KEY CONCLUSIONS

- Communicate clear USP: Creery is one of the most important wetland systems in the South West of WA
- Boost visitation through iconic attraction(s)
- Enhance visitor experiences by increasing new engaging activities (e.g., educational kids' program)

For more information please contact: Michael.volgger@curtin.edu.au or trc@curtin.edu.au