

Gladstone

Community Development Action Plan



November 2023

Foreword



Gladstone has always benefited from its geographic position and seen many changes over the last 150 years. Situated in the Rocky River Valley in the Southern Flinders Ranges of South Australia, its rich and diverse history is highlighted by the significant roles it has played in agriculture, rail development, military contribution, and location of government facilities including the historic Gladstone Gaol.

While many of these experiences are now part of our heritage, the town continues to play a significant role as an important centre for the region and has shown resilience through difficult times.

Our Community Development Action Plan will provide a basis for the continuing life and improvement of the town: a place that remains welcoming, peaceful and a wonderful environment to live, work and visit.

David Catford
GCDTA President

Acknowledgements

The formulation of this Business and Community Development Action Plan was initiated by the Gladstone Community Development & Tourism Committee Inc. It was funded by Rural Aid as part of their commitment to supporting Australia's small rural towns. A three-day community engagement process was undertaken to gather ideas, opinions and feedback to develop this Plan. The formulation of the Plan was undertaken by Peter Kenyon from the Bank of I.D.E.A.S. and Jen Curnow-Trotter from Rural Aid. Special thanks to so many passionate community members, organisations and businesses who gave so generously of their time, wisdom and experiences.



Our Story



Gladstone with a population of 745 people is nestled in the Rocky River Valley at the southern end of the Flinders Ranges, 209 kms north of Adelaide. The town lies within the Northern Areas Council (NAC) area.

The Nukunu First Nations language group have occupied this area for thousands of years. The first Europeans moved into the area in 1851 and established the Booyoolee Run. The town of Gladstone was privately developed by Dr Matthew Moorhouse east of the railway line in 1872. A government town named Booyoolee was laid out in 1875 on the western side of the railway line. In 1940, Booyoolee was renamed Gladstone to match the private town and railway station. The name Gladstone is derived from William Ewart Gladstone, a well-known UK Prime Minister.

Historically Gladstone has been an important rail centre from 1875, being located on the main Crystal Brook-Broken Hill railway line, with branches going north and south. Gladstone station is internationally unique in convening three railway gauges - narrow, standard and broad gauges. In the 1970's there were 90 rail workers. The original station is currently held in private ownership & somewhat rundown. Although public access is fenced off, some of its previous grandeur is still visible from the Indian Pacific passing through four times a week. It would still appear possible to restore for historical & community use.

The Gladstone Gaol was built in 1881 and operated as a gaol until its closure in 1975. Its original purpose was for 'inebriates and debtors'! At its peak it had 120 cells. Built from local stone and Mintaro slate, it is today our town's best potential tourist attraction.

Our community has always been a service centre for a strong and profitable wheat and sheep industry and the town houses the largest grain receival site in inland Australia.

Our greatest asset is our community members and their determination to reverse declining economic fortunes by attracting new families and economic opportunities to the town. Our peak community body is the Gladstone Community Development & Tourism Association Inc. (GCDTA) that focuses on community and business development. Since its incorporation in 1995, the Association has undertaken a number of impressive community economic initiatives including establishment of the Gladstone Caravan Park, the creation of the Southern Flinders Discovery Centre (SFDC) and the restoration and sale of a number of housing properties. A focus now for GCDTA is the re-invigoration of the old Gladstone Gaol as a major heritage and tourism initiative.

The Flinders Ranges is one of Australia's National Landscapes and has always been a magnet for tourists. Its southern sub region is evolving as a destination in its own right within the greater region, and Gladstone is its key southern gateway.

Our Vision

A welcoming, connected, safe, vibrant and proactive community which retains its small town charm while attracting new families, visitors and business opportunities

Our Goals

Community goals are broad statements of intent that direct our efforts towards accomplishing our vision in line with our guiding principles.

Below are the six community goals which guide our community aspirations, namely –

- To grow our population and business base.
- To actively promote and showcase our community as a great place to stop, stay, and experience, especially through our events, promotions, first impressions and vibrant and welcoming town centre.
- To create an environment where our young people feel involved, supported and empowered, and will view our community as an attractive, liveable place of choice.
- To retain strong sporting and cultural clubs, events, facilities and traditions.
- To promote and support active citizenship, community participation and volunteerism.
- To raise the tourism profile of Gladstone and develop it as a tourism destination through development of the old gaol and other unique tourism assets.



Our Guiding Values

The following five guiding values and attitudes provide context for our community's identified actions and initiatives, namely -

- **Community pride and connection** - ensuring all our community members experience connection, inclusion and a sense of pride in our rich heritage, achievements and future.
- **Small town lifestyle** - retaining our country charm, local connections, agricultural links and picturesque rural landscapes and setting.
- **Respect for heritage** - appreciating our unique historical assets, stories, and rural culture and their importance to our community and economic development.
- **Positive mindset** - fostering community attitudes and behaviours that embrace change, proactive 'can-do' behaviours, optimism and hopefulness.
- **Embracing new opportunities** - building upon our assets, capacities and creativity, and creating an environment that enables all our community members to see and experience Gladstone as a place of opportunity.



Our Challenges

Like many small inland rural communities, our community needs to respond creatively to a series of demographic, social, economic and environmental challenges. These issues include :

- Volunteer fatigue and declining numbers.
- Ageing population with a medium age of 51 years (Australian average - 38 years)
- Loss of farming families - farms are becoming larger.
- Considerably lower personal, family and household incomes compared to the Australian and South Australian averages.
- Poor town first impression entrances.
- Local ownership of the Gladstone Goal.
- Traffic by-pass arrangements.
- Tired signage.
- Bland main street appearance.
- Deteriorating state of some heritage buildings.
- Flood mitigation.
- Declining school numbers.
- Negativity.
- Lack of resident doctor and limited medical services.
- Lack of ATM.
- Limited local employment opportunities.
- Limited leadership development initiatives.
- Limited housing availability and affordable rental accommodation.
- Lack of visitor accommodation options.
- Lack of eating options.
- Lack of visitor access to Booyoolee Station.
- Business and service gaps.
- Proximity of larger regional centres that act as 'Sponge Towns' drawing services and employment.
- High club and event insurances.
- Limited bus services.
- Limited support for mental health challenges.
- Lack of out of school hours care.
- Dated Tourism Strategy (2011).
- Low profile in the tourism marketplace and lack of iconic tourist attraction.
- Limited retail hours.
- Business collaboration.
- Main Council office located in Jamestown 28kms to the east of Gladstone.

Our Assets

People

- 745 residents, 193 families
- Local volunteers, sports coaches
- Anglican Bishop of Willochra
- Regional high school
- Farming skills, trade skills, engineering skills, teachers, nurses, artists
- CFS Cadet Program
- Passionate locals, strong community leaders
- Young people, young business leaders
- Proximity to a regional university
- New families
- Diversity of residents
- Justices of the Peace

Social Networks

- Sporting Clubs- golf, bowling, cricket, football, tennis, swimming, darts, netball
- Gladstone Community Development and Tourism Committee
- Tai Chi, karate
- Gladstone History Group
- St Joseph's Parish Catholic School P&F, Gladstone Public School P&C, Gladstone High School P&C, School Governing Councils
- Probus, Lions
- Playgroup
- Churches- Catholic, Anglican, Uniting
- Stadium Committee, Combined Sports Association Inc, Pool Committee
- Rocky River Writers Group
- History Group
- Gladstone Ex-Service Personnel Group
- Wattsiana Homes affordable living

Physical

- Rural landscapes, village atmosphere
- 415 dwellings
- Open spaces, light pollution free night skies
- 2.5 - 3 hours from Metropolitan Adelaide
- Name connection to British Prime Minister Gladstone
- Infrastructure: Ewart Oval, Southern Flinders Sporting Complex, children's playground, swimming pool, bowling green, golf course and club, Tresylva Park, dog park, bike trails, Soldier's Memorial Area/Peace Garden
- Rocky River, Pisant Creek, national parks along the ranges
- Silos, largest grain storage facility in the Southern Hemisphere
- Stone houses
- Heritage buildings- town hall, pubs, gaol, railway station, shops, churches, butter factory, old school, Bishop's House, banks, residences, silos
- Diversity of architectural building designs
- Railway station, line & corridor, three gauges, 80 train movements per week, Indian Pacific train passes through 4 times a week
- Unused workspaces
- Cycle trail opportunities
- WWII Aircraft Fuel Dumps, war memorial, Town Hall-stained glass, directional signage monument
- Electric charging station, cemetery, waste treatment plant
- Central proximity to other Flinders communities - Laura, Georgetown, Crystal Brook, Melrose, Port Pirie, Jamestown, Wirrabara
- Rocky River, bike track
- 'Southern Gateway' to the Flinders
- Limited light pollution

Our Assets

Economic

- Strong & reliable farming community- sheep, wheat, barley, peas, oats, canola, lentils
- Viterra
- Southern Flinders Discovery Centre – community administered Tourist Information Centre
- Caravan Park, B&Bs
- Local retail businesses- café, café/bakery, post office, supermarket, op shop, pop-up shop, roadhouse, hotel, rural supplies, pharmacy, hardware, art & craft supplies
- Booyloolee Brew licensed Coffee Bar and Restaurant
- [Local professional services -massage, photography, hair and beauty salon, IT services
- Trade businesses-mechanic, builder, electricians, plumber,
- Garage sales
- Bus service
- Proposed windfarm and community funding
- Southern Flinders Tourism 'n' Tastes
- Flinders Ranges & Outback South Australian Tourism
- Flinders Ranges Tourism Operators Association
- Gladstone Tourism Master Plan (2011)
- Growing Southern Flinders Food and Wine industry
 - Hypnobirthing and women's physio, iridologist

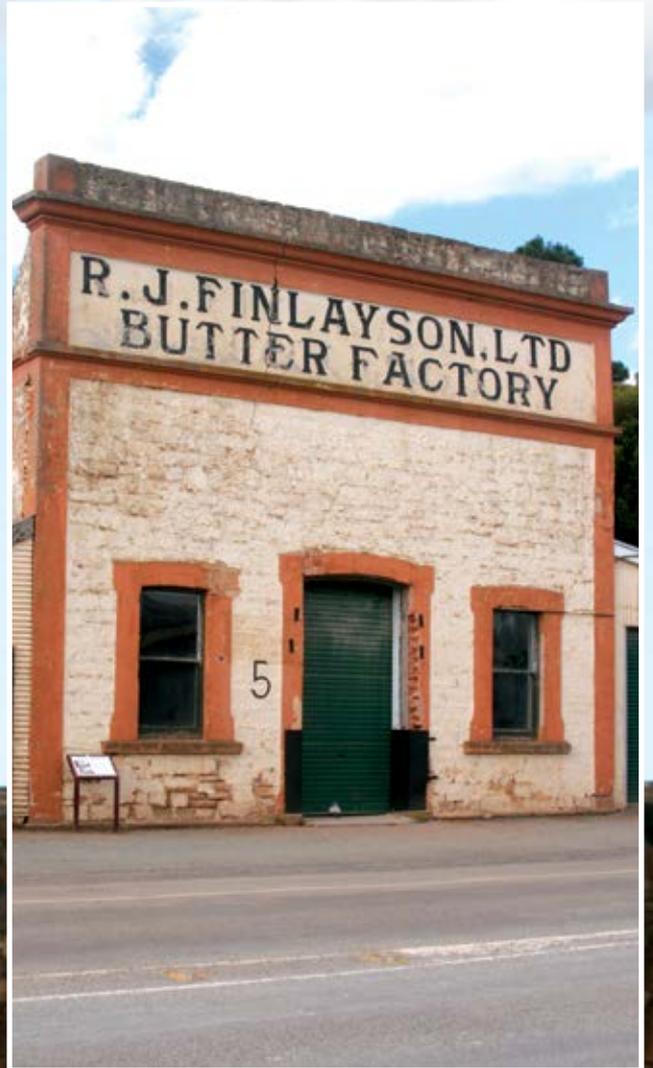
Institutions

- Education- pre-school, St Joseph's Parish Catholic School, Gladstone Primary School, Gladstone High School
- Northern Areas Council
- Police
- CFS, Ambulance
- Southern Flinders Health- Gladstone Campus
- Nearby Crystal Brook and Laura Hospitals
- Administrative Centre for Anglican Diocese of Willochra
- Senior Citizens and Aged Care Homes
- Flinders Mobile Library
- Occasional Care
- RDA Yorke & Mid North

Culture, Stories & Sources of Pride

- Special events- Australia Day Breakfast, ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day, Gladstone Art Exhibition
- Rail heritage
- Farming heritage, military heritage, grain storage heritage
- Gladstone Grain Trail
- Three gauges – one of the few places in the world
- First continuing high school
- C J Dennis connection-went to school here
- Booyloolee Station, Booyloolee Bully Beef
- Historic knowledge held by Sam Smith
- Gladstone Gazette
- Nukunu Land
- Gladstone History Group, Art Group
- Published authors
- Train spotting – 80 train movements per week
- Heysen and Mawson Trails passing in close proximity
- Location within the Flinders Ranges National landscapes - one of 15 National Landscapes in Australia
- Birthplace of Trend and FC Grubb soft drinks







Our Strategies & Actions

Theme One

Developing Community Capacity & Connection

ACTIONS

1

- 1. Undertake a community asset and learning mapping activity** to discover our community's skills and contributions and their learning aspirations through creation of a Task Team.
Timeframe: Immediate
- 2. Strengthen our community involvement** in growing the content and reach of the town's 'Website' and 'Gazette'.
Timeframe: Immediate & ongoing
- 3. Actively promote** the importance, achievements and stories of our **local organisations** and the need for community active support and participation.
Timeframe: Immediate & ongoing
- 4. Create a local initiative (e.g., the BOI RuMAD? Program)** to encourage greater child and youth participation and citizenship in the Gladstone community.
Timeframe: Immediate & ongoing
- 5. Utilise a range of local, regional, state and national programs, regularly identify and connect our local residents with leadership development opportunities.**
Timeframe: Immediate & ongoing
- 6. Locate improved facilities for the Gladstone History Group.**
Timeframe: Short term
- 7. Further develop the annual Christmas Party.**
Timeframe: Short term & ongoing

LEAD GROUP

GCDTA

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

NAC
GHG
GHS
CSAI
Probus, Lions
SFDC

PIRSA
Rural Aid
BOI
FRRR
Viterra Community Fund
NAC Community Grants

Our Strategies & Actions

Theme Two

Re-invigorating the Old Gaol

ACTIONS

2

1. Support GCDTA to coordinate the achievement of our community ownership, preservation, management and use of the Gaol as a major tourism initiative.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

2. Establish an agreement with DEW regarding the Gladstone Gaol ownership and operation.

Timeframe: Short to Medium Term

3. Achieve funding for the formulation of a 'Business Plan' for the operation of the Gaol as a major heritage and tourism site.

Timeframe: Medium Term

4. Begin a program of pop-up events and exhibitions at the Gaol to develop awareness of its potential.

Timeframe: Long term & ongoing

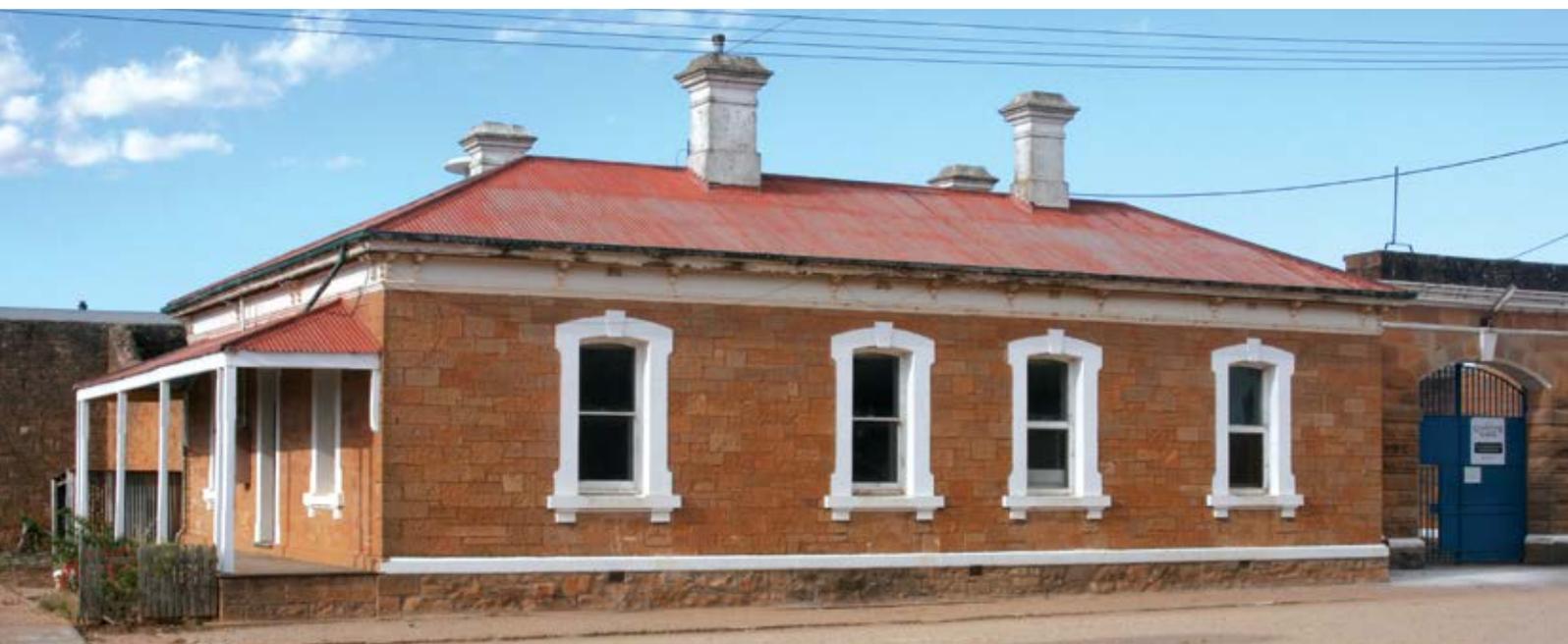
LEAD GROUP

**GCDTA
DEW**

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

**NAC
SFDC
RDAYMN
GHG
FROST
SATC
CASA
Probus**

**Lions
FRRR
FRTOA
SFTnT
Viterra Community Fund
NAC Community Grants**



Our Strategies & Actions

Theme Three

Enhancing Community WOW Factor & Appeal

ACTIONS



1. The GCDTA to undertake a 'first impressions and signage audit' of the Gladstone district.

Timeframe: Immediate

2. Form a Town Team as part of GCDTA to focus on the re-invigoration of our Gladstone Mainstreet and its appeal.

Timeframe: Immediate & ongoing

3. Develop a calendar of pop-up events in the Mainstreet.

Timeframe: Medium term & ongoing

4. Protect and promote our heritage buildings and heritage façade appeal.

Timeframe: Medium term & ongoing

5. Support the existing Pool Committee to investigate improvements at the Swimming Pool Complex.

Timeframe: Short term and ongoing

6. Instigate a regular 'Business Operators Networking Event'.

Timeframe: Immediate & ongoing

7. Advocate for funding support to locate a 'Rage Cage' and pump track in Gladstone CBD area.

Timeframe: Immediate & ongoing

8. Form a 'Friends of Gladstone' volunteer group to restore and maintain Pisant Creek as an attractive site.

Timeframe: Immediate & ongoing

9. Encourage NAC with their Economic Development Plan (2021) proposals re 'Come to Northern Areas', 'Shop Local/Future is Local', Council local procurement, and 'Mainstreet Relocation Incentives' initiatives.

Timeframe: Immediate & ongoing

10. Advocate strongly for the installation of an ATM in the main street.

Timeframe: Immediate & ongoing

11. Advocate for pedestrian crossings in Mainstreet and at school sites.

Timeframe: Immediate & ongoing

12. Reintroduce a welcome pack of town services and general information for new/potential residents.

Timeframe: Immediate & ongoing

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Town Team Movement

RDAYMN

GHG

CSAI

Lions, Probus

Rural Aid

Viterra Community Fund

NAC Community Grants

CASA Community Grants

LEAD GROUP

GCDTA
NAC

Our Strategies & Actions

Theme Four

Strengthening Tourism Potential

ACTIONS

4

1. Update the 'Gladstone Tourism Master Plan'.

Timeframe: Immediate & short term

2. Commence conversations with Booyoolee Station and Viterra regarding some limited access for visitation and events.

Timeframe: Immediate & ongoing

3. Identify locations and construct selfie spots around Gladstone.

Timeframe: Immediate & ongoing

LEAD GROUP

GCDTA
NAC

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

RDAYMN
SFDC
GHG
SAART
SARC
SFTnT
FROST

FRTOA
Rural Aid
Viterra Community Fund
NAC Community Grants
CASA Community Grants
FRRR



Abbreviations

BOI	Bank of I.D.E.A.S.
CASA	Country Arts SA
CFS	Country Fire Service
CSAI	Combined Sports Association Inc
DEW	Department of Environment and Water
FRTOA	Flinders Ranges Tourism Operators Association
FROST	Flinders Ranges & Outback South Australian Tourism
FRRR	Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal
GCDTA	Gladstone Community Development and Tourism Association Inc
GHG	Gladstone History Group
GHS	Gladstone High School
NAC	Northern Areas Council
P&C	Parents and Citizens Association
P&F	Parents and Friends Association
PIRSA	Department of Primary and Industries SA
RDAYMN	Regional Development Australia Yorke & Mid North
SART	South Australian Recreation Trails Inc
SATC	South Australian Tourism Commission
SFDC	Southern Flinders Discovery Centre
SFTnT	Southern Flinders Tourism 'n' Tastes





Gladstone

SOUTH AUSTRALIA