

AGRITOURISM IN LIVINGSTONE SHIRE

A guide to diversifying your farm
business and where to start

Version 1

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Prepared by Regionality Pty Ltd
for Livingstone Shire Council

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Why Agritourism?

In Livingstone Shire Council's Blueprint 2030 Strategy, Council identified that the Shire's future economic development will be underpinned by innovation in traditional sectors of employment. These include technology-driven agribusiness and food production, alongside the diversification and development of the region's tourism sector. These industries are now priorities for investment through initiatives including:

- Increasing farm-gate, farm-to-plate dining experiences and associated food and agritourism opportunities
- Enhancing awareness of the "Beef Capital of Australia" brand
- Shortening the supply chain
- Diversification of accommodation options for visitors to the region
- Development of themed experiences to complement existing tourism assets
- Reduction of barriers and costs for agri-tourism and experiential tourism product development
- Growth and development of Indigenous cultural tourism.

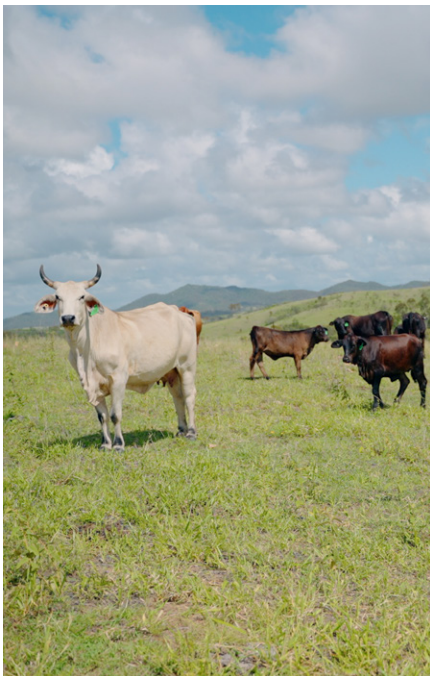
Overall, Council has committed to dedicate more resources to develop and grow agri-based tourism opportunities.

This how-to guide has been created for farmers operating in the Shire, who have an interest in diversifying their business to include tourism. It is intended to complement existing and more generalised resources by providing a local perspective and practical advice.

For more information or to further discuss how your business can benefit from diversifying into the agritourism industry, contact our Customer Support team on 1300 790 919 or enquiries@livingstone.qld.gov.au.

This project received funding from the Australian Government.

This guide has been developed by Livingstone Shire Council and Regionality Pty Ltd – a highly regarded and specialised consultancy working across Australia in the areas of agriculture, food and regional tourism. Regionality delivers strategic support to assist regions with business innovation programs and cluster development. Learn more about Regionality at www.regionality.com.au.



Agritourism In Livingstone Shire



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Agritourism In Livingstone Shire

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Livingstone Shire Council acknowledges and pays respect to the Darumbal and Woppaburra people as Traditional Custodians of the land and sea within Livingstone and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters, and culture. Council pays respect to Elders past, present, and emerging.

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AGRITOURISM: THE BASICS

What is agritourism?

Agritourism is a visitor-related experience, product or service that connects agricultural products, places, people and their passion, with visitors on a farm or rural land.

The importance of connecting farm production, landscape, infrastructure, and the farming family with the offering is a distinctive component of authentic agritourism.

In a region like Livingstone Shire, agritourism may provide farmers with a pathway to sell produce directly to locals and visitors; it may improve the viability of the farm, and it may create new opportunities to add value to produce and create branded products. It may also provide an opportunity to diversify income to ensure resilience and viability or succession planning.

From a Council perspective, agritourism provides great economic opportunities however, the protection of prime agricultural land from inappropriate development is an overriding priority.

It's important to understand that agritourism is not like other forms of tourism as it is likely to occur on a working farm that is the primary focus of the business. The agritourism business needs to ensure it does not compromise the productivity and productive capacity of the farm in which it is conducted, or neighbouring farms.

What could agritourism look like?

Some examples of agritourism include:

- “Pick your own fruit” activities
- Cellar doors and farm shops
- Farm tours
- On-farm workshops
- Accommodation offerings – hosting caravans and camping, farm stays, eco-escapes, tiny home stays and luxury getaways
- Event and wedding venues

Setting up a golf course on a cattle property is NOT agritourism. This would be classified as a rural tourism development and may be assessed differently from a Council perspective.

Why is agritourism booming?

Consumers want to know the origin of their food, drink and textiles, and are seeking genuine connection with the people and places that produce them. Agritourism gives visitors insight into, and greater understanding of, these industries.

Agritourism visitors want to dig deeper for:

- Information and education – the what, how and why
- Authentic stories
- Hands-on sensory experiences
- Souvenirs to take away with them

Local inspiration

See what local businesses are already doing in the agritourism space for inspiration:

- [High Valley Dawn Permaculture Farm](#), Rosslyn
- [Waterpark Farm](#), Byfield
- [Koorana Crocodile Farm](#), Coowonga



IS AGRITOURISM RIGHT FOR ME?

The visitor economy in Livingstone Shire and surrounds

The region’s primary visitor markets are Queensland-based families with children, dual income families with no kids (DINKs) and self-funded retirees. Over recent years, more interstate and international visitors have begun to turn their attention to the region, indicating considerable growth potential in these existing markets.

Known as the Gateway to the Southern Great Barrier Reef, the region’s outstanding local assets include Great Keppel Island, Capricorn Caves, Byfield National Park, long stretches of stunning coastline and vast expanses of prime agriculture land.

In the year ending June 2021, the Southern Great Barrier Reef tourism region (encompassing Capricorn, Bundaberg and Gladstone regions) hosted 2.1 million overnight visitors¹.

The Capricorn Enterprise Destination Tourism Strategy 2021-2030 provides a definitive direction for tourism and events in the Capricorn Region towards 2030, highlighting the resources required to create a sustainable and competitive tourism and events destination.

Just some of the priority actions with potential crossover in the agritourism space include:

- 1.7 Explore opportunities for new Wellness and Eco-Tourism experiences, accommodation, tours, and facilities, including provision of support for the Capricorn Coast to be recognised as a Nature and Eco Destination.
- 1.8 Encourage and support the development of Arts and Culture to enhance the visitor experience.

- 1.9 Encourage the provision of a balanced portfolio of accommodation options and a mix of star rating levels to enable the region to target a wide variety of market segments.

The strategy also includes several Industry and Experience Development and Capacity Building actions, alongside Destination and Events Marketing actions that relate directly to the agritourism industry.

¹ <https://capricornenterprise.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Social-Indicators-2021-CAP.pdf>



IS AGRITOURISM RIGHT FOR ME?



What are the opportunities?

In addition to creating authentic local experiences for visitors, agritourism provides a pathway to market for farmers and food businesses, by creating consumer experiences that benefit agriculture, food manufacturing, retail and the tourism sector.

Agritourism offers opportunities for farmers to:

- Innovate and diversify through value-added products and services, building resilience
- Smooth volatility of cashflow/ income and create jobs
- Monetise underutilised assets such as farm buildings and natural aesthetic

- Connect directly with their consumers; and
- Create brand, establish provenance and build reputation by sharing their story in the context of their people, place and produce.

Businesses with relevant offerings in the Livingstone Shire can also leverage the existing [Taste Capricorn Coast](#) brand – a food trail encouraging visitors to discover local produce and explore the concepts of “paddock-to-plate” and “ocean-to-earth”. As part of the Australian Government’s Bushfire Recovery initiative and launched in June 2021, the project celebrates local flavours, producers, eateries, retail outlets, markets, and farm experiences.

TOP TIP

Think about what you enjoy doing; would an agritourism venture complement this? Australian Regional Tourism Ltd has put together a checklist to help answer this question, you can find it on page 7 of their [Farmer Toolkit Enabling Agritourism: A Guide for Farmers Planning to Diversify](#).

What are the challenges?

The challenges faced by businesses entering the agritourism industry can be complex and significant:

- Farmers have a day job – work on the farm doesn’t wait and must be the priority
- The farm is not just a workplace, it is often the farming family’s home and identity
- Farmers do not traditionally speak “tourism” or have a broad understanding of the sector
- Farms have legal responsibilities around safety, animal welfare and biosecurity

- Land-use planning and other regulatory requirements, as well as costs associated with this paperwork, can present as a barrier to entry
- Tourism can be seasonal, with demand fluctuating.

TOP TIP

You might be a perfect fit for the agritourism industry, but is your farm?

Australian Regional Tourism Ltd has put together a list of considerations for farmers; you can find it on page 8 of their [Farmer Toolkit Enabling Agritourism: A Guide for Farmers Planning to Diversify](#)

Who is your customer and what are they looking for?

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated emerging trends in the tourism industry, painting a positive picture for categories including agritourism. Interstate travellers are looking to spend their time and money in regional Queensland.

As per Tourism & Events Queensland:

“People are actively seeking experiences that enrich, awaken and transform them, and, eventually, the world. They want to ignite something new within themselves by consciously connecting with and appreciating our extraordinary planet, its people and cultures.”

Queensland’s current agritourism market are domestic travellers who are:

- Interested in quality food and drink, and keen to understand the source and stories of producers
- Combining agritourism with a range of other experiences into an appealing itinerary
- Adventurous and travelling with people they want to reconnect with
- Wanting to share experiences with their travel companions
- Seeking to be more conscious
- Wanting authentic experiences that are different or unique from their every day.

For further local insights, have a read through the Capricorn Enterprise [Destination Tourism Strategy 2021-2030](#).

TOP TIP

Understanding the profile of the visitors that Livingstone Shire already attracts will help you understand whether your agritourism venture will appeal to existing visitors or whether you will need to seek a new market.

Contact Capricorn Enterprise and the Visitor Information Centre at Ross Creek in Yeppoon to understand more about the types of visitors that are already visiting the Livingstone Shire.

TOP TIP

The competition is not your enemy; the more quality tourism offerings a region has, the more attractive it becomes to visitors.

Speak with existing agritourism operators and tourism businesses for insight on who their customers are, and the gaps that exist in the industry’s current offerings.

Engaging with stakeholders

Entering a new industry like agritourism will require you to touch base with the people you already work with in your farm business and engage with networks of people you may not have come across before. It’s important to connect with these stakeholders early and often to seek advice, support and feedback.

Some important stakeholders to consider for your business and across the Livingstone Shire and surrounds include:

- Your family, particularly those already involved in your farm business
- Existing staff
- Existing business services – your bank representative, insurer, business advisor, accountant, solicitor
- Your neighbours
- Livingstone Shire Council
- Traditional owners
- Capricorn Enterprise
- Capricornia Chamber of Commerce
- Existing agritourism operators in the Livingstone Shire and surrounds
- Existing tourism operators in the Livingstone Shire and surrounds

Consider engaging with an experienced and trusted consultant such as [Regionality](#) who will help you to look at your idea from another point of view.

TOP TIP

Australian Regional Tourism Ltd has put together a list of potential stakeholders and important considerations related to them; you can find it on page 10 of their [Farmer Toolkit Enabling Agritourism: A Guide for Farmers Planning to Diversify](#).

DOING YOUR RESEARCH

Linking up with existing communities

You don't have to go it alone! There are a number of local groups and organisations who already have important insight into the local tourism landscape – explore their resources, subscribe to their newsletters and join their membership to start engaging with them:

- Capricorn Enterprise – <https://capricornenterprise.com.au/media/e-newsletter/>
- Capricornia Chamber of Commerce – <https://capricornchamber.com.au/>

Don't forget about Livingstone Shire Council's Economic Development hub – <https://www.livingstone.qld.gov.au/doing-business/investment-and-business>

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Research your customer – who they are, what they want, what they expect and what they're already doing. Make sure you consider the accessibility of your business.
2. Connect with your stakeholders early and often (including Livingstone Shire Council), to avoid unwelcome surprises.





HOW CAN COUNCIL SUPPORT MY AGRITOURISM ASPIRATIONS?

Let’s chat!

Make an appointment with a Duty Planner at Livingstone Shire Council to talk about your idea – we’ll be able to help you identify your compliance responsibilities around issues like:

- Land zoning
- Planning permits for development, construction and building works
- Food safety
- Biosecurity
- Environment
- Tourism business licensing and permits
- Traffic and road management
- Fees and charges
- Workplace health and safety and risk management
- Fire safety

We can also refer you to relevant authorities and contacts outside of Local Government.

HOW TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT



www.livingstone.qld.gov.au



enquiries@livingstone.qld.gov.au



1300 790 919

FURTHER RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Looking for more information on the agritourism industry or to help explore your business idea?

We've compiled some relevant and useful resources including policies, strategies and guides to get you started.

Livingstone Shire

.idcommunity, [Livingstone Shire economic profile](#)
Capricorn Enterprise, [Destination Tourism Strategy 2021-2030](#)
Capricorn Enterprise, [Grow Your Business](#)
Livingstone Shire Council, [Animal Management Local Laws](#)
Livingstone Shire Council, [Blueprint 2030: Livingstone Shire Council Economic Growth and Investment Strategy](#)
Livingstone Shire Council, [Building and Development](#)
Livingstone Shire Council, [Fees and charges](#)
Livingstone Shire Council, [Invest Capricorn Coast Region Event Strategy 2025](#)
Livingstone Shire Council, [Planning Scheme Information](#)
Regionality Pty Ltd, www.regionality.com.au



Queensland

Business Queensland, [Getting into the tourism industry](#)
Business Queensland, [Licences, permits and legislation for tourism businesses](#)
Business Queensland, [Liquor and wine licences and permits](#)
Business Queensland, [Plumbing and drainage forms and templates](#)
Queensland Building and Construction Commission, [Regulated plumbing working requirements](#)
Queensland Farmers' Federation, [Queensland Farmers' Federation Agritourism Roadmap](#)
Queensland Government, [Do I need a food business licence?](#)
Queensland Government, [Food Act 2006](#)
Queensland Government, [Register as an inbound tourism operator](#)
Queensland Government [Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Animal biosecurity and welfare](#)
Queensland Government [Department of Environment, Science and Innovation, Management](#)
Queensland Government [Planning, Development application forms and templates](#)
Safe Food Queensland, [Food Business](#)
State Development and Infrastructure, [Subordinate Local Law No. 1.12 \(Operation of Temporary Entertainment Events\) 2011](#)
Tourism & Events Queensland, [Experience design and development](#)
Tourism & Events Queensland, [The Ultimate Transformational Experience Guide: 7 steps to creating better value for your guests and your business](#)

Australia

Australian Regional Tourism Ltd, [Enabling Agritourism: A Guide for Farmers Planning to Diversify](#)
Australian Tourism Data Warehouse, [Australian Tourism Data Warehouse](#)
Before You Dig, [Guide to Free Plans](#)
Tourism Australia, [Future of Global Tourism Demand](#)
Tourism Australia, [Tourism Trade Ready and the Australian Tourism Toolkit](#)

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