

# NEW WEST

**SYNOPSIS REPORT**  
Short Term Commercial  
Accommodation Study

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**PENRITH**  
CITY COUNCIL



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# 1

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Stafford Group (The Group) was commissioned by Penrith City Council (Council) to undertake a Feasibility Study to support short-term commercial accommodation in Penrith. The purpose of the Feasibility Study was primarily to assess market demand for investment and to identify mechanisms to help encourage appropriate development to occur.

## 1.2. KEY FINDINGS

The following are the key findings from the research, analysis and consultation undertaken.

- Though the focus is clearly the Penrith local government area (LGA) the potential exists for Penrith to act as a short-term commercial accommodation hub for visits into the Blue Mountains and into the surrounding Hawkesbury area as well as for the Penrith LGA.
- Penrith's largest accommodation property is the Mercure Hotel, which has 216 rooms. It is the largest property (by number of rooms) across the neighbouring Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains LGAs as well.
- The vast majority of accommodation appears to be at 3-3.5 star quality rating or lower.
- A number of properties utilise an unofficial self-rating assessment which anecdotal feedback suggests may be higher than what would be given if an official rating was to be applied.
- Whilst mid-range hotel and serviced apartment facilities currently fill an important niche in the market mix, every effort should be undertaken to support higher quality hotel and serviced apartment facilities which can help stimulate higher yielding visitor markets than those which are visiting currently.
- The location of Penrith to quality recreational sites in the Blue Mountains, the Nepean River catchment, and the neighbouring Hawkesbury area, as well as its potential easy access to the proposed Western Sydney Airport, make Penrith a particularly compelling location for an accommodation precinct which can support a wider region.



# 2

## TOURISM IN PENRITH



### 2.1. A SNAPSHOT OF PENRITH

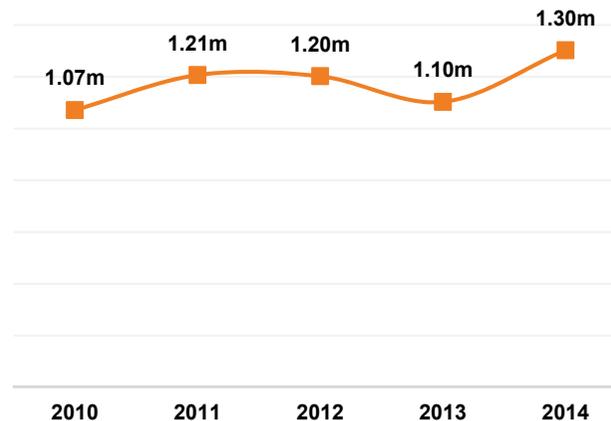
Penrith LGA, situated in Western Sydney, has a population of just over 190,000. The LGA is one of the main service centres of greater western Sydney, providing a range of amenities, jobs, services and infrastructure to a wider catchment of over 500,000 residents. Penrith LGA is well recognised as one of the major growth centres in Western Sydney.

Over the past 10 years, the LGA's population has continued to grow strongly and this trend is expected to continue, necessitating the need for more tourism and recreational facilities to meet local demand.

### 2.2. VISITATION TO PENRITH

Penrith LGA receives approximately 1.3 million visitors per annum (see Figure 1). The majority (78%) of visitors are day trippers, visiting the LGA for primarily leisure (including visiting family and friends), attending events (sporting and cultural) and for business. Domestic overnight visitors account for just over 20% of visitors. International visitation is small (2%), with visitors primarily coming from NZ (27% of all international visitors) and the UK (21%).

FIGURE 1: HISTORIC VISITATION TO PENRITH 2010 – 2014<sup>1</sup>



Natural assets such as the Nepean River and the Penrith Lakes Scheme have potential to be stronger drivers for increased visitation when able to be activated.

Penrith is situated on the well-worn domestic and international visitor route to the Blue Mountains. Though it is currently perceived as more of a gateway to the Blue Mountains, potential exists to capture many of these travellers so more of them stop and stay in Penrith.

The potential exists to develop Penrith as a strategic visitor hub to service not only Penrith based tourism attractions and experiences, but to act as an overnight hub for those visiting to also explore the Blue Mountains, the Hawkesbury and potentially further afield. The point of difference for Penrith is its positioning as the “adventure capital of NSW” with industry and Council working collectively to strengthen this.

Significant urban expansion out into parts of the Penrith LGA (and broader Western Sydney region) for residential development has also impacted on the way the LGA is perceived; often seen more as a major dormitory suburb for greater Sydney with large industrial parks and less well known as a tourist destination in its own right, though this perception is changing.

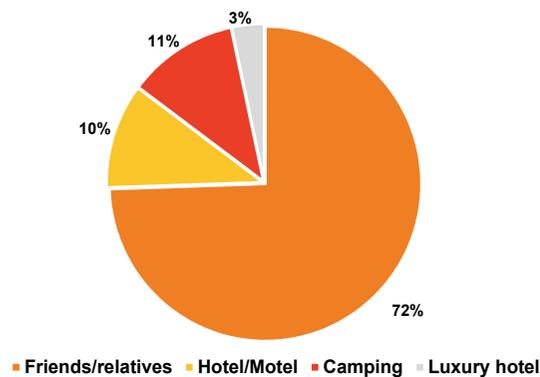
Being very close to such a large urban catchment area (Sydney), makes the LGA highly accessible not only to the local domestic market but also the inbound international market which primarily flies into Australia via Sydney.

<sup>1</sup> Special data request to Destination NSW. Data reflects June YE periods.

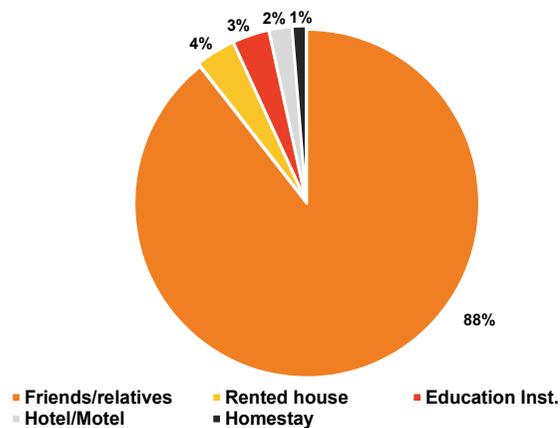
## 2.3. CURRENT ACCOMMODATION PREFERENCES

Figure 2 and 3 demonstrate that over two-thirds of overnight (domestic and international) visitors to the LGA stayed with friends and relatives, as opposed to staying in commercial accommodation (motels, hotels, resorts, caravan parks etc.).

**FIGURE 2: TOP ACCOMMODATION USED BY VISITORS TO PENRITH 2014 FY – DOMESTIC OVERNIGHT<sup>2</sup>**



**FIGURE 3: TOP ACCOMMODATION USED BY VISITORS TO PENRITH 2014 FY – INTERNATIONAL OVERNIGHT<sup>3</sup>**



<sup>2</sup> National and International Visitor Surveys, YE June 2014, Tourism Research Australia

The Destination Management Plan (DMP) undertaken in 2015 highlighted a lack of accommodation during peak periods, an insufficient range of accommodation and variable quality, at times.

Stakeholder feedback gathered during the DMP highlighted the need for additional 3.5 – 4.5 star quality rooms to enable industry to package up attractions and experiences (with accommodation) and to offer additional venues for corporate and family (life event) functions.

Potential was also seen for a wider range of commercial accommodation, including glamping and one or more major destination holiday parks to support the caravan and camping sector (within Penrith Lakes or near the Nepean River).

Introducing new accommodation supply is likely to change the percentage balance of accommodation types used in the future and help support the growth in adventure operators and other tourism attractions.

## 2.4. PENRITH'S POINT OF DIFFERENCE

Whilst Penrith is currently positioned as one of the three major growth centres in Western Sydney, from a tourism perspective, it is developing its unique point of difference as the adventure capital of NSW building on the Regatta Centre, White Water Centre and various soft and hard adventure operators already well established in the LGA.

The major natural features which can provide this unique point of difference are mostly water based; via the future activation of Penrith Lakes and the Nepean River. No other LGA in Greater Sydney (excluding those on the coast or harbour) can offer these major natural features. Importantly however, Penrith Lakes and the Nepean River require activation for "tourism development" to change these water based assets from merely passive features to working sustainable attractions. Tourism's needs however are

importantly in harmony with environmental and sustainability needs for these waterways.

These water based assets, coupled with the growth in new visitor experiences, are seen to potentially support a number of new tourism investment opportunities and to provide further recreational amenities to a wide local catchment.



<sup>3</sup> National and International Visitor Surveys, YE June 2014, Tourism Research Australia

# 3

## SITE ASSESSMENT

### 3.1. THE SITES ASSESSED

The following section offers analysis on the various sites which have been identified by Council and subsequently reviewed by The Group.

Whilst there are a number of sites which have been identified, the focus is now on sites which:

- offer the shortest pathway to activating new commercial accommodation;
- fit best with existing Council planning guidelines for areas; and
- are the catalyst for a number of other economic related Council initiatives.

The sites identified include:

- Carpenters site and Woodriff Gardens (Council owned);
- City Park site (Council owned);
- Log Cabin site (privately owned);
- Panthers site (privately owned);
- Penrith Lakes – the Muru Mittigar site (State Government owned);
- Penrith Lakes – the Church site (State Government owned);
- Penrith Lakes – the River site (State Government owned);
- Nepean River site (privately owned); and
- Thornton Multi User Depot (MUD) site (privately owned).

#### 3.1.1. The Carpenters Site

This site is currently zoned for tourism orientated and related uses and recreational purposes. Council is looking to create a master plan to guide future development at the site.

Ideally the site could accommodate major visitor attractions, larger scale hotel and serviced apartment facilities, conference facilities, mixed use development and supporting infrastructure.

Council are keen to encourage development of a higher quality to avoid scenarios where lower or basic mid-range level accommodation is suggested for the site.

#### 3.1.2. The City Park Site

The City Park site allows for various forms of commercial development adjacent to the site. The site (owned by Council) could be suitable in the medium term, for a mixed owner occupied and serviced apartment complex where short-term accommodation is able to be developed in tandem with residential owner-occupied apartments.

#### 3.1.3. Panthers Site

The potential exists to develop an accommodation precinct to support existing activities and proposed activities, not only in Penrith, but for surrounding regions. This could also link to the need for a dedicated accommodation precinct to support the Western Sydney Airport. The link to the neighbouring Penrith Panthers site is an important consideration, noting the existing visitor attractions within the Panthers site, the 216

room Mercure Hotel and the yet-to-be-developed serviced apartment complex within the overall site.

A precinct which links the River site, Panthers and the Carpenters site could be considered as a staged development to offer a unique cluster of complementary tourism and recreational elements on a scale not found in other parts of greater Sydney.

#### 3.1.4. The River Site

The River site comprises a number of separate privately owned parcels of land fronting the Nepean River, next to the Coffee Club and close to the Penrith Panthers site. The use of the River site for tourism activity is already noted within the planning designation for this area. Due to the flood-prone nature of parts of the land, it may be more appropriate to actively encourage a destination holiday park where moveable accommodation (motorhomes, RVs etc.) can easily be removed from the site, reducing risk.

#### 3.1.5. The Log Cabin Site

The site is zoned for tourism orientated development and lends itself to smaller scale development.

Any proposed development needs to respond to its location and setting, adjoining residential properties and the proposed Nepean River Green Bridge.

### 3.1.6. The Lakes Site

It is understood that the NSW State Government, via the Department of Planning and Environment, will create a designated planning scheme just for Penrith Lakes. The Lakes site would be suitable for a destination holiday park development.

### 3.1.7. The Thornton MUD Site

The site is zoned for defence purposes. The site would be suitable for a mixed use development which could encourage the development of serviced apartments or a hotel, however, this would require a change in zoning.

### 3.1.8. Site Summary Comment

Tourism often works more effectively when different tourism elements are able to be clustered together. The ability to potentially cluster tourism activity on the Carpenters site adjacent to Penrith Panthers and along further to the River site is an exciting possibility. The greater the level of certainty and focus on tourism which Council is able to offer investors and developers, the stronger the level of serious interest which is likely to be generated.

Whilst some sites are closer to the hospital precinct and the education precinct (Western Sydney University), we consider it preferable from a tourism planning and development perspective, to attempt to cluster short-term accommodation closer to the Penrith City Centre and the existing tourist attractions and amenities such as those along Mulgoa Road and within Penrith Lakes. In the medium to longer term, the focus can grow beyond these areas.

FIGURE 4: SITE SUMMARY





### 3.2. THE PRIORITY SITES

There are a number of potential sites which could be designated for short-term commercial accommodation. Through the site assessment undertaken, the following have been identified as the priority sites.

TABLE 1: THE PRIORITY SITES

Type	Site	Comment
Hotel Development	Carpenters site	As the site is sufficiently large, the potential exists to include commercial accommodation with a possible conference venue as well as an additional visitor attraction(s) as a composite cluster of tourism related facilities.
Holiday Park Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primary: Penrith Lakes</li> <li>Secondary: River site</li> </ul>	Primary site being the Muru Mittigar site within the Lakes precinct. If this is not feasible, consideration should be for the River site

#### 3.2.1. The Carpenters Site

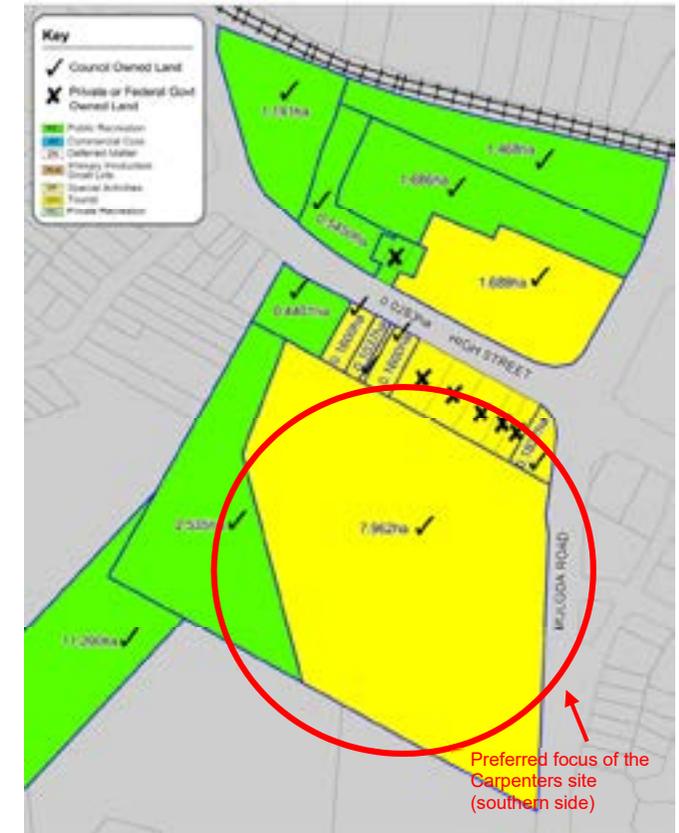
The greatest opportunity identified as part of this Study is for a larger scale and branded hotel facility on the Carpenters site. This site has been selected as the priority hotel site for the following reasons:

- it is owned by Council and strategically located opposite Council's civic precinct which includes the Joan and Westfield,
- Council can designate the quality of hotel it wishes to encourage to offer greater certainty to investors;
- the site is large enough to encourage a variety of development elements so activities could be clustered;
- it could be a fully master planned site to include a hotel, conference centre, major visitor attraction and other mixed use retail/commercial development components;
- it is large enough to cater for possibly 2 staged major hotels or a serviced apartment/hotel mix;
- it is close to the Panthers site so could potentially leverage off visitation;
- it is on a major road so easily accessible and has high visibility;
- it has surrounding land uses which are compatible and easy to integrate or, if need be, the site is large enough to create wide vegetated buffer zones; and
- it could attract an investor syndicate/consortium to potentially undertake the development of all elements.

For the Carpenters site, which is zoned for tourism orientated and recreational purposes, there is potential to have this developed as part of a wider, short-term accommodation precinct and to be master planned for this purpose so that other forms of visitor attractions and conference facilities can also be established.

There is also the potential for this site to potentially be the core of a commercial short-term accommodation precinct to support Western Sydney Airport as well as other Penrith-based requirements.

FIGURE 5: CARPENTERS SITE



Preferred focus of the Carpenters site (southern side)

### 3.2.2. The Lakes Site

We have also assessed the potential for a high quality destination park and we note there is significant pent up demand within greater Sydney for destination parks and as identified in the Penrith DMP. Penrith could provide an ideal location, being on the fringe of greater Sydney for a high quality destination park to be a base for many visitors to Sydney.

There are various locations within Penrith Lakes for such a development. The land adjoining Muru Mittaggar has been selected as the priority site for the following reasons:

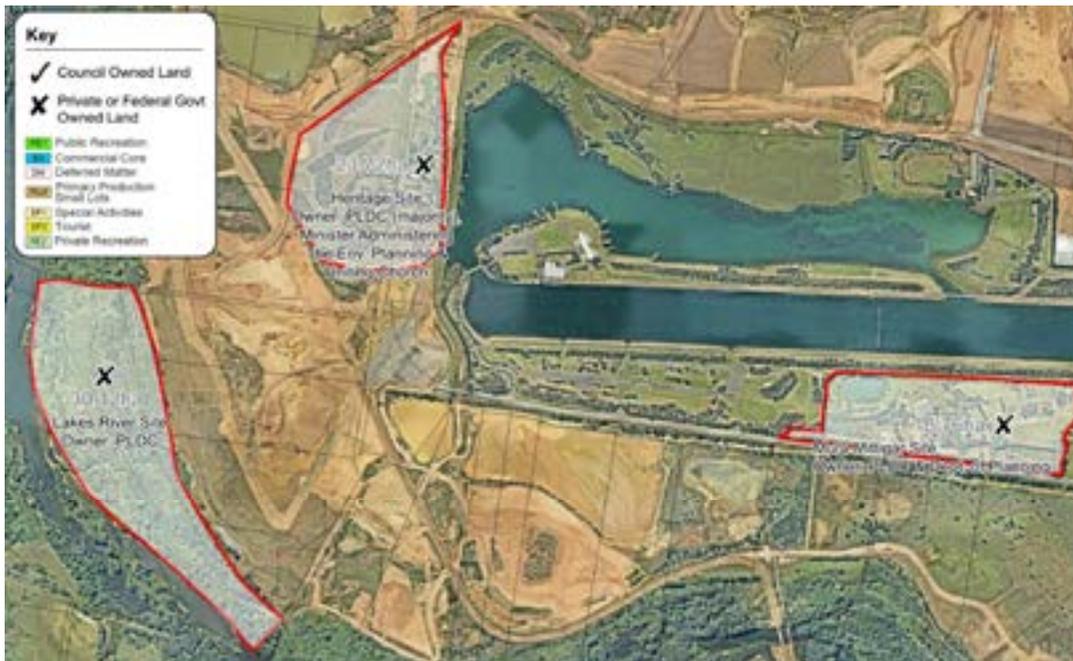
- the site is well located next to the Lake and offers an attractive outlook whilst being close to other visitor amenities which could be leveraged off;
- the site already has much quality infrastructure in place including electricity, sewer, water, roads etc.;
- existing uses of the surrounding area are highly compatible with a destination holiday park;
- it could be designated just for a destination holiday park under the proposed planning guidelines which the State Government will establish for the lakes area;
- the site offers easy and good access to main roads;
- it is sufficiently large to develop a highly attractive and private destination holiday park on; and

- as the site is completely owned by Penrith Lakes Development Corporation, there is no need to consolidate separate land parcels.

The site activation as a destination holiday park is dependent on zoning of this area by State Government. Council will need to work with Penrith Lakes Development Corporation and State Government to have this site zoned specifically for tourism development use.

If this is not feasible, consideration should be given to the River site which could fit alongside the Panthers development and create a river bank tourism focused precinct with Panthers and ideally Carpenters as a composite larger tourism precinct.

FIGURE 6: THE LAKES SITE



### 3.3. THE SECONDARY SITES

Whilst a number of the other sites identified also have potential for short term accommodation development, they are not considered as optimal as the primary sites though all have high market appeal. After the primary sites are developed, development for these secondary sites can then be considered so development happens in an orderly fashion.

The secondary sites and their preferred uses are outlined below.

#### 3.3.1. The River Site

The River site (land directly adjacent to the river) is already zoned for tourism oriented purposes. It would be beneficial to have short-term commercial accommodation, particularly in the form of destination holiday parks as a preferred development use for this area. This is seen as totally compatible with the proposed restaurant/café cluster expansion proposed for the Coffee Club site and it also links appropriately to the Penrith Panthers site.

#### 3.3.2. City Park Site

Land adjoining the City Park site, is primarily zoned B3 Commercial Core (which permits certain forms of short term commercial accommodation development).

The site lends itself to a mix of residential and serviced apartments. Offering a serviced apartment complex as part of a mixed use development would be a useful project to stimulate further economic development in this area and act as a catalyst for other surrounding commercial land to be redeveloped as well.

It is noted that a planning proposal seeking to rezone the land bounded by Station Street, Henry Street, Allen Place and Woodriff Street from Commercial Core to mixed use, is currently being considered.

#### 3.3.3. The Thornton MUD Site

The Thornton MUD site is currently not designated specifically for tourism related development though some uses are permissible. Potential exists to develop part of this site for a hotel or serviced apartments.

#### 3.3.4. The Log Cabin Site

The Log Cabin site is zoned for tourism oriented development. For a smaller scale development, it offers an attractive river frontage and is well located to main roads and the CBD.

#### 3.3.5. Non-Specific Site Requirements

For all of the sites identified above, it is important that the planning controls for tourism development are able to be sufficiently flexible to enable developers-investors to create development on site which can allow for sufficient rooms.

A number of sites offer the potential for mixed use development which could include a mix of hotel and serviced apartments as well as potentially owner-occupied apartments. Being at a higher level enables expansive vistas and views for some sites over the Nepean River and out towards the Blue Mountains as well as other attractive landscapes.

### 3.4. TIMING AND STAGING

The development of a new 4 – 4.5 star internationally branded hotel and a high quality destination park will likely satisfy peak season demand for the short – medium term.

The establishment of new visitor attractions and a conference centre, as well as mixed use commercial development, however, could stimulate increased visitor demand however and necessitate the need for additional accommodation.

Introducing additional short term commercial accommodation in the medium term (3-5 years) post the opening of the priority new development proposed could potentially meet additional market demand.



# 4

## MARKET DEMAND

### 4.1. EXISTING ACCOMMODATION AUDIT

Table 2 provides a summary of an accommodation audit undertaken as part of this Feasibility Study. This provides a useful context regarding the number of accommodation providers which currently operate in Penrith LGA, as well as the neighbouring Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains LGAs.

**TABLE 2: ACCOMMODATION AUDIT SUMMARY**

	Blue Mountains		Hawkesbury		Penrith		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Motel	22	49%	7	33%	8	44%	37	44%
Caravan Park	4	9%	6	29%	4	22%	14	17%
Hotel	15	33%	4	19%	3	17%	22	26%
Serviced Apartments	-	0%	-	0%	2	11%	2	2%
Campus (Uni) Accommodation	-	0%	-	0%	1	6%	1	1%
Backpackers	1	2%	1	5%	-	0%	2	2%
Cabins	3	7%	3	14%	-	0%	6	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100%</b>

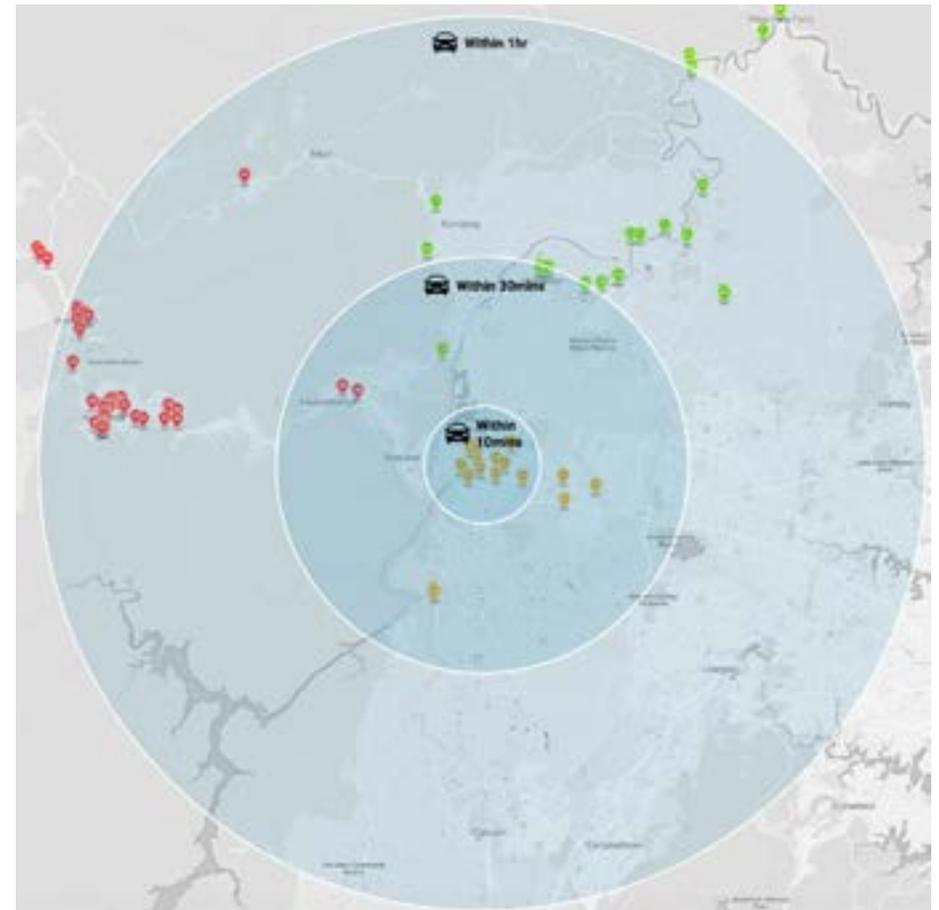
This demonstrates that:

- the under representation of various forms of accommodation in Penrith and potential for new product;
- in Penrith, whilst motels are also the most common form of accommodation (44%), caravan parks are the second most common form of accommodation (22%); and
- the vast majority of accommodation appears to be at 3 - 3.5 star quality rating or lower.

The introduction of new, quality accommodation can be useful for setting a higher quality benchmark and encourage others to improve the quality of accommodation provided.

Figure 7 maps current accommodation properties and illustrates driving time from Penrith CBD where most of the sites are located. Importantly, Penrith is strategically located within easy reach of all of western Sydney and just beyond an hour's drive from the Sydney CBD and Sydney's Kingsford Smith International Airport.

**FIGURE 7: ACCOMMODATION WITHIN 1 HOUR**



## 4.2. DEMAND FOR ACCOMMODATION IN PENRITH

It is evident that there is pent-up demand for commercial short-term accommodation. The research and analysis undertaken highlights the following.

- During periods of peak visitation, there is inadequate overnight accommodation capacity. This is particularly the case during major sporting events, conferences etc.
- There is currently a preference by operators to introduce mid-range 3-star commercial accommodation to hit a price point in the market which is seen to be more competitive and which matches many current visitor market needs.
- There is significant growth potential in sporting-based events and activities. Because of the lack of accommodation, many sporting event visitors either stay out of the region or travel back and forth to Penrith over competition days.
- There is significant growth occurring in the Penrith health and wellbeing sector, including expanded hospital facilities. Penrith is recognised as the health hub for greater western NSW.
- Western Sydney University is also growing, with major education and technology-based development potential.
- The development of Western Sydney Airport<sup>4</sup> (as Sydney's second international airport) could present further growth potential for Penrith (through strong road and rail links) as an airport accommodation precinct and adventure - entertainment hub.
- There is benefit for Penrith acting as an overnight commercial accommodation hub for day visits into the Blue Mountains and into the surrounding Hawkesbury area as well for various food and wine tours, equine events etc.

- There is interest from existing adventure and activity operators in Penrith (such as iFLY, Cables, Penrith Whitewater Stadium) and others to package up their various products. This will necessitate developing two days or more of activity experiences and will require more commercial overnight accommodation capacity.
- The business and meetings market are looking for new locations where there are recreational facilities to be used and not too far from the Sydney CBD.
- There is a recognised need to support the fast growing motor home, caravan and camping industry looking for major destination holiday parks on Sydney's fringe. Penrith can act as the hub for various day excursions into different locations and a base for RV/caravan visitors.

## 4.3. QUALITY RATING

### 4.3.1. Hotels/ Serviced Apartments

Whilst mid-range hotel and serviced apartment facilities importantly fill a gap in the market, there is a need to support higher quality hotel rooms and serviced apartment facilities to help grow different visitor markets than those which are visiting currently.

The conference, Meetings, Incentive, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) and functions/events market, for example, are often higher spending and, if facilities are offered to meet these niche market needs (e.g. four star), there is potential to grow this market niche more strongly and quickly.

### 4.3.2. Destination Holiday Parks

Higher quality destination holiday parks now offer chalets, caravan and camping sites (as well as potential glamping), and the increase in companies now providing these, reflects a stronger level of market interest and recognition of the financial returns possible. It is important to focus on short-term (rather than permanent) stays only as the major gap is

in the tourist/leisure market, rather than the longer term and potentially discounted permanent stay market. Higher quality destination parks offer a number of amenities which various visitor markets are wanting to see and are prepared to pay for.

FIGURE 8: DESTINATION HOLIDAY PARKS



Adventure Whitsunday Resort, QLD



Renmark Riverfront Holiday Park, SA

<sup>4</sup> Previously referred to as Badgerys Creek Airport

## 4.4. COMPETITION

Penrith has a number of unique selling features. The positioning of Penrith as the state's adventure destination, its proximity to recreational sites in the Blue Mountains, the Nepean River, and the neighbouring Hawkesbury area, as well as its potential easy access to the proposed Western Sydney Airport, makes Penrith a particularly compelling destination.

A number of councils on the Sydney fringe are keen to encourage higher quality destination holiday parks, though Penrith is better positioned than most with its extensive water ways and access to a good mix of built and natural attractions.

Competition will occur from those able to offer attractive sites that can be activated in the short to medium term, in particular. The Penrith Lakes and/or the River site (which would require consolidating privately owned parcels of land), potentially offer the preferred sites for one or more quality destination holiday parks.

## 4.5. WHAT IS THERE DEMAND FOR?

Based on the information gathered during the creation of the Destination Management Plan (DMP) and the discussions with various stakeholders for this study, there is current demand for:

- a 4 - 4.5 star, 160-240 room hotel;
- a destination holiday park offering 100 sites for RV/motorhome sites, 100-120 campsites, up to 25 chalets and a variety of supporting amenities; and
- a quality serviced apartment complex of 100-150 suites.

The greatest "leverage" factor is the supply of available land. Most councils in greater Sydney no longer have sites to allow for major hotel or related development including holiday parks.

## 4.6. PENRITH'S STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE

The strategic advantage for Penrith is:

- the desire of Council to actively want to encourage short term commercial accommodation development;
- the size of some of the Council-owned sites such as Carpenters, which could encourage the development (potentially in stages) of higher quality, short-term commercial accommodation, a conference centre, major visitor attraction and other forms of tourism-related commercial mixed use development as an integrated development project;
- the growing number of adventure and activity operators and attractions which have established at Penrith and which provide a ready visitor market to leverage from;
- the ability to work with State Government to ensure that the Penrith Lakes site is able to be activated for holiday park development;
- the potential for Council to work with private land holders in the River site to help consolidate land holdings for destination holiday park development;
- potential for possible rezoning of sites such as the City Park site for short term accommodation development as a preference;
- the ability to leverage off Penrith's strategic position as the accommodation hub for a far wider catchment and which allows easy access to visitor sites in the Blue Mountains and the Hawkesbury as well; and
- recognition that there are very few locations in greater Sydney able to offer the size and mix of commercial accommodation development options which Penrith can support.



# 5

## THE CATALYST BENEFITS

### 5.1. OVERVIEW

Other than the obvious benefits in supplying Penrith with new short-term commercial accommodation facilities, there are wider benefits which the development of higher quality short-term accommodation is able to offer.

The following provides a list of the various benefits which will accrue from new short term commercial accommodation and which support Council's commitment to encouraging this. These various benefits provide quadruple bottom-line factors covering economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits.



### 5.2. ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The following economic benefits will accrue from the introduction of new short-term commercial accommodation.

- The direct, indirect and induced benefits from the supply of various goods and services.
- Significant downstream benefits during the construction phase through the supply of goods and materials with many expected to be sourced locally.
- The ability to support, not only construction jobs, but many ancillary service providers required for the construction phase of hotels, destination parks etc.
- The improved value which new short-term commercial accommodation is likely to generate, not only for the site being developed, but its flow-on effect into surrounding sites and areas.
- The ability of short-term accommodation development to positively impact, not only on surrounding property values, but as a catalyst for further investment into various industry sectors.
- The ability to attract new skilled labour into new jobs to be created through the operations of a short-term commercial accommodation facility and ancillary development, such as a conference centre etc.
- The ability to support the viability of other major tourism attractions which will leverage off the ability to provide overnight accommodation and which can support greater levels of overall visitation to surrounding businesses.
- The flow-on economic benefit into improved marketing and demand for not only the existing visitor attractions which exist in Penrith, but new developments or

expansion that many of these businesses are contemplating, and which they require increased overnight commercial accommodation to support visitor growth.

- Providing links to hospitality and related training providers to build synergistic relationships with local universities and TAFE.

### 5.3. ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

There are a variety of environmental benefits which will accrue from the development of short-term commercial accommodation.

The various environmental benefits include the following.

- The creation of a variety of walkways and cycle ways, particularly in surrounding flood prone areas (the Carpenters site is but one example).
- The opportunity for high quality landscaping to provide a further visual amenity to support the locations identified.
- Environmental benefits will be seen in the rejuvenation of surrounding areas.
- On some sites, the opportunity may exist to either relocate high voltage power lines or potentially position them underground where it is practical.
- Potential changes to traffic patterns and may allow for traffic calming techniques to be introduced.
- The ability to provide pedestrian overpasses and/or underpasses to improve connectivity between sites, particularly looking at large areas such as the Carpenters

site and the potential to link to the Penrith Civic Precinct, Joan Sutherland Centre and Westfield.

- The ability to enhance the landscape in areas such as Penrith Lakes.
- The ability to encourage the creation of vegetated buffer zones between potential short-term accommodation development sites and surrounding residential areas.
- The ability to create short-term accommodation of a size and scale which does not dominate the landscape but, rather, adds considerable environmental value through the quality of the built facilities and related design and which can help raise awareness of environmentally appropriate building techniques.
- The ability to encourage, where appropriate, the use of green building technology in short-term commercial accommodation development, and the ways and means of recycling grey water, etc.

#### 5.4. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL BENEFITS

As well as the obvious improvements generated through the economy and through the visual enhancements to the environment, which short-term accommodation can stimulate, a variety of social and cultural benefits will also be created including the following.

- It will act as catalyst to stimulate gentrification of surrounding areas which may, in turn, result in improved social environments for locals including safer and more desirable areas for recreation (walkways, cycle ways etc.).
- The creation of recreational facilities for locals and visitors as part of short-term commercial accommodation development such as playgrounds, picnic areas and other community assets (exercise stations etc.).
- The supply of new function and meeting rooms to cater to local lifestyle family events such as weddings, major birthdays etc. will be supported.
- Through the ability of short-term commercial accommodation operators to support various community programs by providing facilities for functions and events as well as other forms of in-kind support and funding and sponsorship.
- Through actively supporting ongoing training for the hospitality sector in particular and through offering workplace positions for work experience, particularly for students (high school as well as TAFE-based and university).
- Through providing venues (external) to support a variety of new food markets, night time entertainment venues and other initiatives where offering overnight accommodation is important for stimulating greater local and visitor demand.
- Through offering new facilities to support existing community-based events and additional events which are now possible through the increase of short-term, overnight accommodation facilities.





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