

Boosting Tourism in the South West

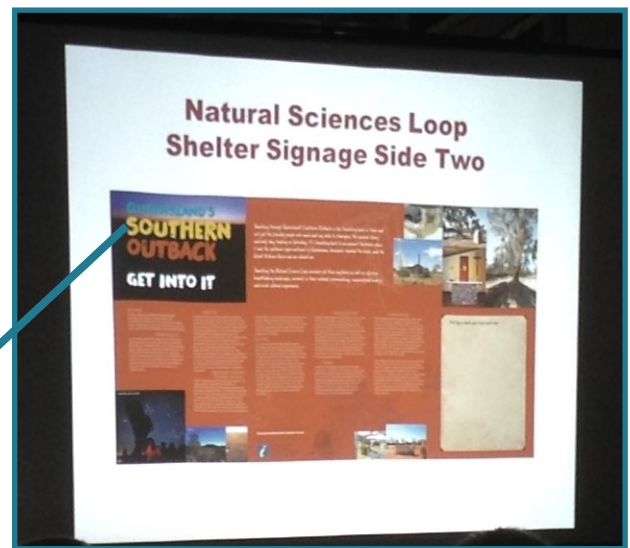
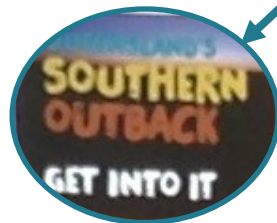
Over the last few months South West NRM staff have attended the Outback Queensland Tourism Association (OQTA) Workshop, and also the South West Regional Economic Development Association (SWRED) Conference. Both of these events were held in Charleville, and we attended these events in order to stay up to speed with what is happening in our region.

The comments made in our Social Media Workshops (see story on page 24) demonstrate just how important tourism is to our region. This was again reinforced at both the OQTA and SWRED events. One interesting statistic that came up at the SWRED event was that tourism is the world's largest industry, accounting for 9.8% of world gross domestic product.

At these events we heard about a range of planned road improvements over the next 10 – 15 years and we hope that they come through as better transport links help everyone.

Also during the SWRED Conference, new branding was launched for the South West. We are now known as 'Queensland's Southern Outback'. This new branding will soon start appearing in media and websites.

Another big positive is that the Natural Sciences Loop is being redeveloped and relaunched as well.



Above: Slides presented at the SWRED Conference previewed the new logo for the South West: 'Queensland's Southern Outback'.

What is the Natural Sciences Loop?

The Natural Sciences Loop is a round trip starting in Charleville, then running through Cunnamulla, Thargomindah, Noccundra, Eromanga, Quilpie and back to Charleville. There are a great deal of things to see and do along the way, including the Charleville Cosmos Centre, Artesian Mud Baths at Eulo, Quilpie Opals, various National Parks to explore, and the Eromanga Natural History Museum, just to name a few! If you haven't had a good look around our own region, now might be the time to get out and see what's in our very own backyard.

Ecotourism is another expanding area of the tourism industry, and that is right up our alley here at South West NRM! We enthusiastically encourage and support all those venturing into this market, as there are plenty of Ecotourism options out here.

The digital space is becoming more and more important as we move forward, and the information presented about the National Broadband Network, if proved true, will certainly help us all promote our region to the tourist market. The new satellite service should provide four times the speed of the current service, with 30 times the capacity. Lets hope those numbers stack up!