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ROTTNEST IS

Rottnest Island Gateway Design Vision Blueprint

April 2020



We acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of this land, the Whadjuk Noongar and their Elders past, present and emerging.

We wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this place.

Contents

Introduction	iv
Project methodology and approach.....	1
Rottnest Island Gateway	3
Rottnest Island Gateway Vision Framework	4
Project vision	4
Project themes.....	5
Gateway zones	6
Strategic Priorities.....	7

Introduction

Rottnest Island, or Wadjemup, lies in the Indian Ocean, 18 kilometres west of Fremantle in south-west Western Australia. The Mediterranean climate, scenic land and seascapes, unique biodiversity and turquoise waters in 63 sheltered beaches and 20 bays have made the Island a favourite holiday destination for local, domestic and international visitors. The Island is part of the traditional lands of the Whadjuk Noongar people, who know the Island as Wadjemup, or 'place of spirits'.

On 9 April 2019, the Federal Tourism Minister, announced \$17.2 million for vital infrastructure upgrades to help enhance the visitor experience and ensure the long-term sustainability of Rottnest Island.

This design vision proposes a number of opportunities to improve visitor amenity and experience while retaining the Island's character and accessibility.

This design vision has been developed with reference to the Rottnest Island Management Plan (RIMP) 2020-2024. The RIMP differs from its predecessors in that it has been produced at a time when the Island is experiencing unprecedented growth in visitor numbers. It outlines four strategic focus areas:

1. Diversify the visitor base and enhance visitor experience
2. Strengthen Island infrastructure and services
3. Engage with, promote and preserve the Island's environment and cultural heritage, with a focus on Aboriginal cultural heritage, and
4. Establish a new way of doing business.

In the context of responding to these focus areas, this design vision proposes a number of strategic priorities throughout the settlement of Rottnest Island.

The "Rottnest Island Gateway Project" with \$4.5 million funding as part of the Federal Government's \$17.2 million National Tourism Icons investment will deliver against key initiatives of the RIMP which are to:

- Enhance overall visitor experience;
- Manage increased visitor-related demand; and
- Enhance the Island's Museum and other cultural heritage offerings, with a focus on Aboriginal cultural heritage.

The Gateway project is to be completed within Tourism Icons funding period between years 2019 and 2022. This design vision provides the overarching narrative to act as a guide, promote and sustain sense of place values of Rottnest Island for the Gateway Project.

Project methodology and approach

element was appointed by the RIA to facilitate and define a design vision for the Gateway project. The approach has been to consider and respond to a range of stakeholder inputs including visitor feedback, a commercial operator survey, priorities outlined in the RIMP 2020-2024 and with reference to the Rottneest Island Master Plan (20 year vision). This was then complemented by a series of facilitated workshops with Board, executive and operational teams.

Commercial operator survey

A survey was issued to 31 commercial operators via RIA's property management provider, Burgess Rawson. 13 responses were collected, representing a 42% participation rate. The top priorities identified for improvement within the nominated gateway project area included:

- ~ Shade
- ~ Wayfinding and signage
- ~ Movement / flow of people and traffic
- ~ Servicing
- ~ Interpretation
- ~ Seating







Rottnest Island Gateway

It is said that you only get to make one first impression, the same could also be said for the last impression in that it too leaves a visitor with either a positive, negative or indifferent sentiment towards their experience.

The Gateway is defined as the area that encompasses the island arrival point, the Visitor Centre, the Salt Store precinct and adjacent seating spaces through to the Mall, Museum and the Common. In the other direction visitors make their way towards, the bike and equipment hire or to the Bus Stop. This 500m walking zone covers the ground that is mostly traversed while people are wayfinding from the boat to get access to accommodation, obtain information, food and drinks, bike hire or tours/bus transport. The departure sequence is the reverse of the above except it often includes time waiting for the boat, a period when people need comfortable shade and shelter to reflect on their trip and the opportunity to pick up last minute mementos.

Creating an efficient, enjoyable and memorable first and last hour on Rottnest is challenging as it must provide for a wide variety of ages, nationalities, languages, interests and abilities. In regard to the return visitor, the opportunity is to surprise and delight them with improvements to the arrival sequence so that each holiday starts off better than the last. In an era where product and experience feedback are instantaneous through social media and popular travel forums, and with a recent increase in visitation, the opportunity exists to ensure its growing reputation is enhanced and expectations are met.



Rottnest Island Gateway Vision Framework

The vision framework articulates the distinct and defining qualities and spirit of the quintessential Island experience. It comprises a unique vision statement along with a series of supporting themes that work to align key strategies and opportunities within the project area.

Project Vision

“We will welcome and host our visitors in a relaxed, easy and memorable Gateway precinct that is true to the Island’s natural narrative.”

Through a purposeful evolution of the visitor experience, we will respond to changing needs and deliver new infrastructure and amenities that provide comfort and convenience, deepen connection to place and enhance destination advocacy.”



Project Themes

Gnalla Wadjemup

- Welcome statement
- Cultural heritage acknowledgment
- Connection to place
- Shared ownership and understanding

Continuity and evolution

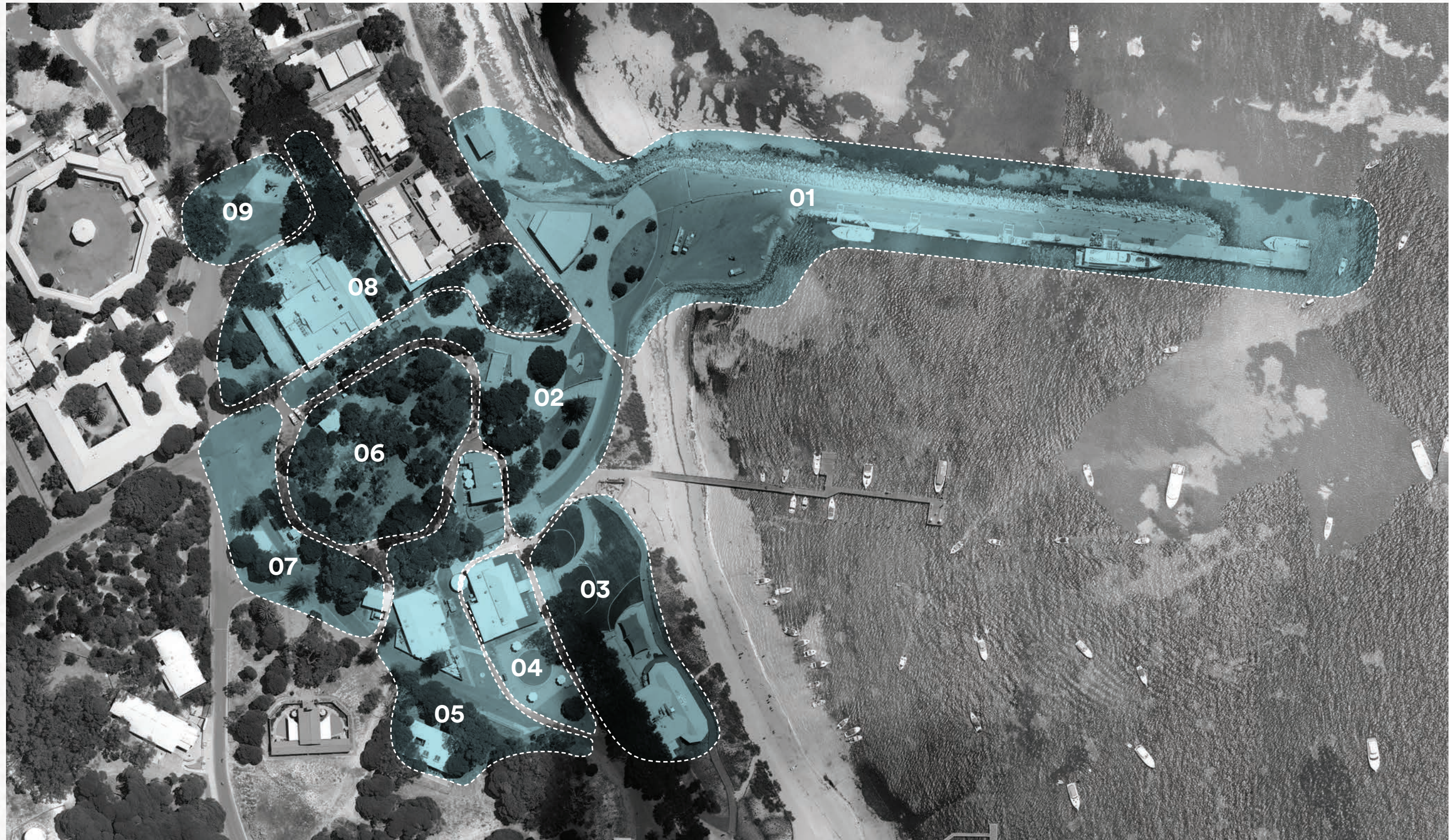
- New visitors, new needs
- Rottnest aesthetic and authenticity
- Carefree, easy, comfortable
- Both intuitive and explicit

Crafted and memorable

- Enduring customs
- Quality time: the first and last hour
- Personalised experience
- Incidental activities

Gateway zones

The project area can be considered as 9 interconnected Gateway zones – categorised by primary use, offer and significance in the arrival/departure sequence. Each Gateway zone is defined by strategies and opportunities to enhance visitor experience.



Strategic Priorities

Priority assessment

The opportunities in each Gateway zone have been placed within an options matrix – in which a weighting has been assumed to determine the overarching priority of each strategy. The criteria for assessment has been considered in terms of impact, effort, cost and value and is as follows:

Island Gateway priorities

Identified as immediate priorities for delivery with current Federal Icons Funding:



Wayfinding – implementation of whole of project area wayfinding strategy consolidating existing signage and wayfinding assets while filling gaps in information. Removal of outdated and unmaintained signage to ensure consistent application across Gateway area.



Traffic management and movement – opportunities to enhance traffic flow and interface between vehicles, bikes and pedestrians. This will dually consider the connections between Gateway zones, operational impacts and infrastructure enhancements to widen pathways, remove obstacles and reduce “bottlenecks”.



Amenity – infrastructure improvements including new seating, shade, shelter, lighting and minor works to enhance the Visitor Centre access and ablutions.



Welcome / departure statement (with explicit cultural acknowledgment).



Museum improvement – internal refurbishment, improved accessibility and enhanced curation.



Mall upgrade – A reconsidered comfortable and shaded space, fostering longer dwell through improved amenity and offer.



Future opportunities

That will require additional funding

- **Visitor Centre** – a redefined welcome and departure facility offering information, accommodation services and spaces to comfortably rest and reflect; capitalising on opportunities created through proposed relocation of current barge landing
- **Upgrade and activate spaces** for all ages
- **Bus stop upgrade** - A reviewed safe and efficient transport hub, with universal access, ease of movement and availability of Island information
- **Upgrade event spaces** – assessing baseline infrastructure required for events and activations





Prepared by:

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