

Destination Dowerin

The development of a Short Term Accommodation facility in Dowerin

Executive Summary

The Shire of Dowerin is situated as the gateway for the Wheatbelt Way self-drive trail and is the third stop on the Pioneer Pathway self-drive trail. For a number of years, Dowerin Shire staff and community members have been actively involved in regional tourism groups such as NewTravel and the Pioneers Pathways, investing thousands of dollars in marketing our region with the aim of increasing tourist spend within our town site.

In 2011 Dowerin received an 'RV Friendly Town' Status with the inclusion of a RV dump point within the town site. However despite this, the range of attractive, affordable and suitable accommodation options in Dowerin is limited and feedback suggests that those tourists that we have worked so hard to get to town unfortunately keep on driving.

The Shire of Dowerin received over 350 comments and suggestions from the community members, local business and community groups in response to a community consultation process 'Community Future Surveys' in 2012. Through this consultation process the community of Dowerin has outlined that there is a current need to develop accommodation options within Dowerin and it was highlighted that a high quality Caravan Park could be a major tourism asset for the Shire of Dowerin.

This document recommends that approval is given for the development of Concept Plans for a Caravan/Accommodation Park. The proposed location of this facility is to the western side of the Dowerin Community Club whereby power and water is easily accessible and the proximity to the Dowerin Community Club will provide opportunity for increased utilisation of the Club's facilities

The aim of the Short Term Accommodation Facility is to provide:

- An RV Friendly caravan park style accommodation suitable for grey nomads, couples and families.
- A range of quality, affordable accommodation that is self-contained, air conditioned with internet access suitable travelling sales/ reps and business people, couples and families
- A group style accommodation unit (bunkhouse) suitable for large groups such as car clubs, 4x4 groups, schools and DFD exhibitors

The accommodation park will be complete with communal BBQ area as well as an ablution block containing showers and toilets (including facilities accessible to disabled people).

Community Profile

Green in winter, gold in summer Dowerin is situated 156 kilometres north east of Perth and is the gateway for the Wheatbelt Way self-drive trail and the third stop on the Pioneer Pathway self-drive trail.

Dowerin enjoys a temperate climate with winter rainfall and hot, dry summers. Dowerin offers the best possible standard of living within the Wheatbelt and is a one stop shop for visitors. An appealing country environment is complemented by the development of state of the art facilities such as the proposed Dowerin Community Club recreation facility.

Accurate tourist numbers to Dowerin are difficult to determine although Dowerin is home to one of the largest and most impressive agricultural exhibitions within Australia. From a humble suggestion for raising funds to water a tennis court in 1964, today the Dowerin GWN7 Machinery Field Days has put Dowerin on the map as home to the biggest rural event in Western Australia and continues to attract a growing number of state, interstate and international visitors.

It is essential that Dowerin continues to keep a high profile amongst tourists & visitors to the region. Despite the fact that the impact of tourism is not always obvious in Dowerin feedback from local businesses highlight that there has been a significant increase in visitors to the town with steadily increasing overnight stays at the Hotel, bed & breakfast and Caravan Park.

Project Background

Tourism in Dowerin

Notable good facilities are often a factor when encouraging visitors to stop for a break or even an overnight stay in the Wheatbelt, the Shire of Dowerin therefore must strive to encourage a bustling main street and a vast range of quality infrastructure for the benefit of residents and visitors to our town.

Increased tourism can help arrest decline in regional populations and the Shire of Dowerin realises the positive financial benefits that increased visitor numbers have on local businesses. For a number of years, Dowerin Shire staff and community members have been actively involved in regional tourism groups such as NewTravel and the Pioneers Pathways, investing thousands of dollars in marketing our region with the aim of increasing tourist spend within our town site.

Dowerin itself is attractive to a tourist due to:

- Proximity to Perth
- History
- Field Days
- Flora & Fauna

In 2011 Dowerin received an 'RV Friendly Town' Status with the inclusion of a RV dump point within the town site. However, despite this the range of attractive, affordable and suitable accommodation options in Dowerin is limited and feedback suggests that those tourists that we have worked so hard to get to town unfortunately keep on driving.

Crucially due to this reason our town, our businesses and our services are missing out on the 'tourist dollar' which may help to sustain local services and facilities whilst enhancing the quality of life of rural communities by creating opportunities to improve services and increase employment opportunities at a local level.

Current accommodation

Current Accommodation in Dowerin includes:

Dowerin B & B - Currently has available 1 Double, 1 Family and 2 garden rooms.
Single \$99 and Double \$132 including breakfast.

Dowerin Roadhouse Caratel

- 8 units with twin beds.
- Single \$70 and Double \$80.
- \$10 per night for a tent site
- \$15 per night for a caravan site

Dowerin Commercial Hotel –Approximately 20 rooms being a mixture of singles, twins and doubles.

- Single \$50,
- Twin \$60
- Double \$65.

The Dowerin Roadhouse and Caratel and Dowerin Commercial Hotel would be classed as very basic

accommodation, while the Dowerin B & B would be classed as quality accommodation but only has 4 rooms.

External Research

Grey nomads, an increasingly popular tourist demographic in the region, have conducted their own research by means of collecting their receipts from shops they had visited whilst staying in town. Results demonstrate that they buy the paper, Lotto, food, medicines, 2nd hand items, items from local craft shops and the merchandise found in the Visitor Centre when visiting towns within the Wheatbelt albeit disputing claims that RV's are self-contained and do not impact positively on the local economy.

The Central Wheatbelt Tourism Strategy 2009-2014 (<http://www.wheatbelttourism.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Central-Wheatbelt-Tourism-Strategy-pdf-final.pdf>) outlines the current situations and future trends for accommodation in the Wheatbelt at present. Items in this strategy paint a familiar picture to the current range of facilities currently in Dowerin:

'Much of the hotel accommodation in the region was built over 50 years ago and consists of the older style two storied hotel with small rooms and shared facilities located on the upper floor. This type of accommodation has limited appeal for the most market segments but represents 28% of the beds available'

And:

'there is very little capacity for properties to accommodate tour coach passengers (up to 40 passengers) due to high corporate occupancy rates and a reluctance to hold rooms well in advance, a requirement needed for coach tour operators if they are planning to advertise tours through the central Wheatbelt. The lack of accommodation for the coach market, especially the seniors' coach market, is a constraint in growing this segment of tourism business in the Wheatbelt'.

Further to this, the Central Wheatbelt Tourism Strategy highlights that there has been little development in terms of built accommodation facilities within the region over the past 20 years and recommends that:

'the development and awareness of accommodation products in the region including self-contained units, caravan parks, RV friendly sites and Bed and Breakfast properties should be encouraged'

And;

'the range, quality and capacity of accommodation across the region should be increased'.

Community Consultation

The Shire of Dowerin received over 350 comments and suggestions from the community members, local business and community groups in response to a community consultation process 'Community Future Surveys' in 2012.

Through this consultation process the community of Dowerin has outlined that there is a current need to develop accommodation options within Dowerin and it was highlighted that a high quality Caravan Park could be a major tourism asset for the Shire of Dowerin. By attracting more visitors

through site improvements and provision of on-site accommodation, it would improve economic sustainability of local business through higher numbers of visitors utilising local goods and services.

The development of a short term accommodation facility in Dowerin has been widely documented as a 'need' for the community and is a recommendation as part of the Dowerin Strategic Community Plan 2013-2017. Further this this, this project forms an integral part of the Dowerin Corporate Plan which was adopted by Council in November 2013 and is a 2 year forward planning document for the Shire of Dowerin.

Project Description

Destination Dowerin is an advisory document with an aim of providing a detailed recommendation to Council for the further development of a Short Term Accommodation facility within the Dowerin Town Site.

The aim of the Short Term Accommodation Facility is to provide:

- An RV Friendly caravan park style accommodation suitable for grey nomads, couples and families.
- A range of quality, affordable accommodation that is self-contained, air conditioned with internet access suitable travelling sales/ reps and business people, couples and families
- A group style accommodation unit (bunkhouse) suitable for large groups such as car clubs, 4x4 groups, schools and DFD exhibitors

The accommodation park will be complete with communal BBQ area as well as an ablution block containing showers and toilets (including facilities accessible to disabled people).

Proposed Location

A number of possible locations for the development of a Short Term Accommodation have been assessed for suitability of purpose.

1. Braithwaite's Block Lot 154 and 155 Goldfields Road

Positives

- Land is freehold - could be sold as a business
- On main arterial route – visible to people passing through
- Power water and sewer is available.

Negatives

- Site is zoned residential
- Location is in between two occupied residential dwellings
- Land has a sellable value
- Not in the Business district area

2. West side of Community Club

Positives

- Close to licensed amenities
- Close to sporting facilities and field days
- Power water and sewer is available.

Negatives

- Site is zoned recreational purposes
- Land is only vested in the Shire
- Not on a main arterial route
- Not in the Business district area.

3. Old tennis courts site

Positives

- Close to licensed amenities
- Close to sporting facilities and field days
- Power water and sewer is available.

Negatives

- Site is zoned recreational purposes
- Land is only vested in the Shire
- Not on a main arterial route
- Not in the Business district area.

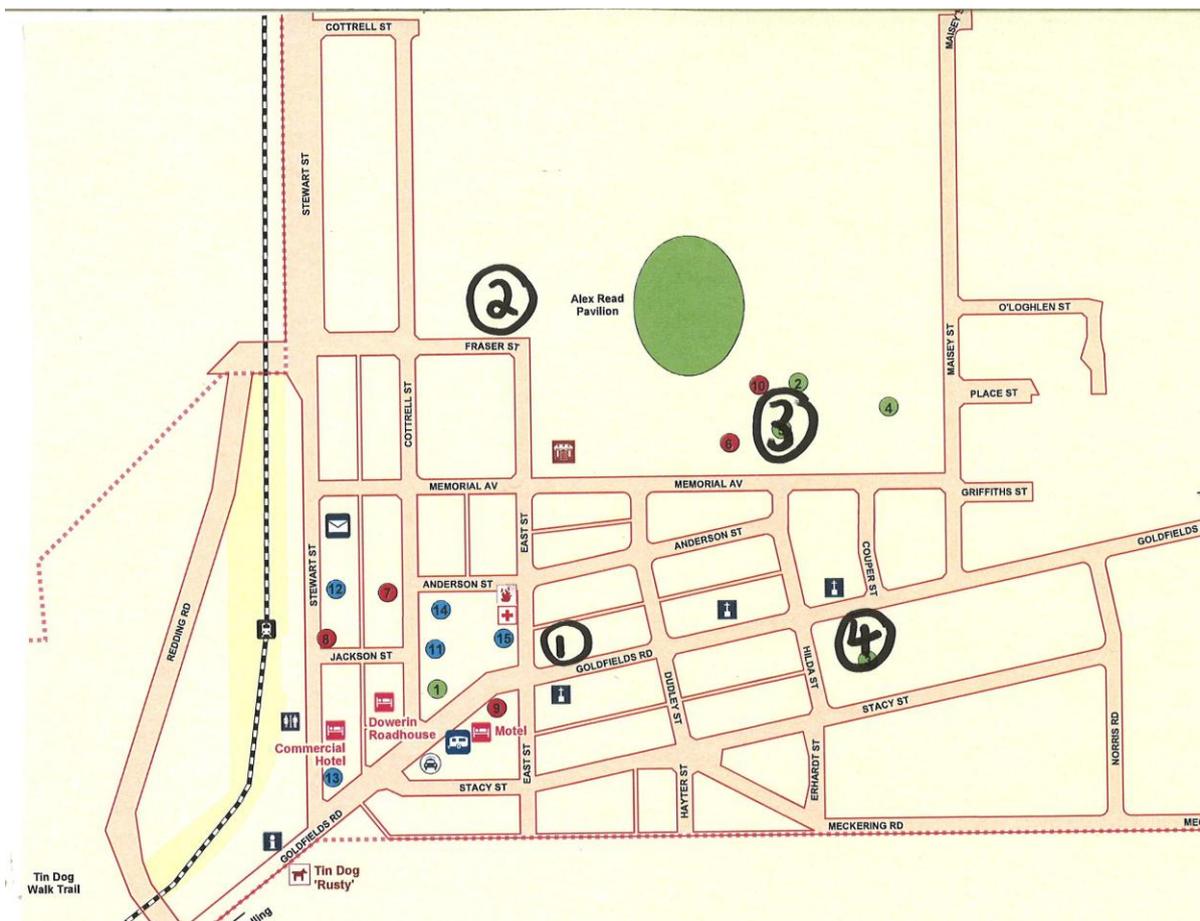
4. Dowerin Bowling & Amenities Club site

Positives

- Land is freehold - could be sold as a business
- On a main arterial route – visible to those passing through
- Power water and sewer is available.

Negatives

- Site is zoned recreational purposes
- Land has a sellable value
- Not in the Business district area and the furthest away of the four options

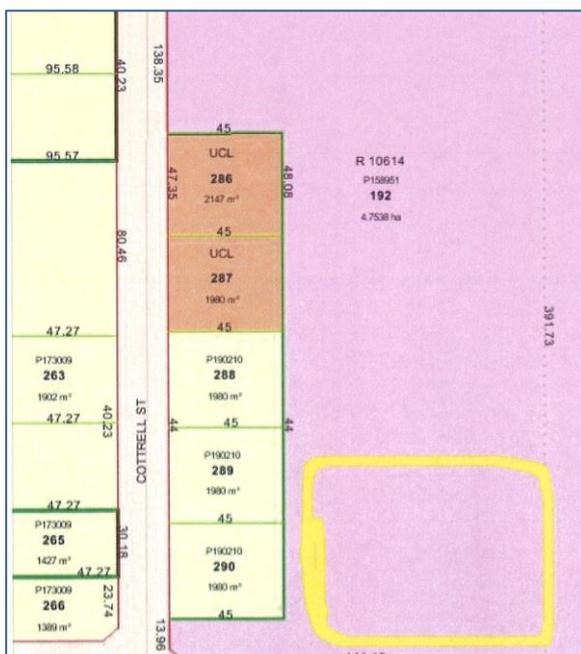


The Vision

Within the next 24 months, the Shire of Dowerin will have an asset - a caravan/accommodation park being utilised in a profitable manner. If the development goes according to plan and the business starts to grow as expected, there will be more expenditure throughout the community as well as future employment opportunities for local people.

Location:

This document recommends that a Caravan/Accommodation Park is developed to the western side of the Dowerin Community Club whereby power and water is easily accessible and the proximity to the Dowerin Community Club will provide opportunity for increased utilisation of the Club's facilities.



This location has been determined as the most suitable due to:

- Close proximity to DCC (licensed amenity)
- Close proximity to Stewart Street
- Close proximity to Dowerin Field Day site
- Existing power & water
- Otherwise vacant land
- Commercial/Industrial zoned land

Facilities

The development will encompass a range of 3 accommodation options in order to cater for diversity in visitor wants and needs, complete with an undercover communal BBQ area and ablution block.

The three accommodation options will include:

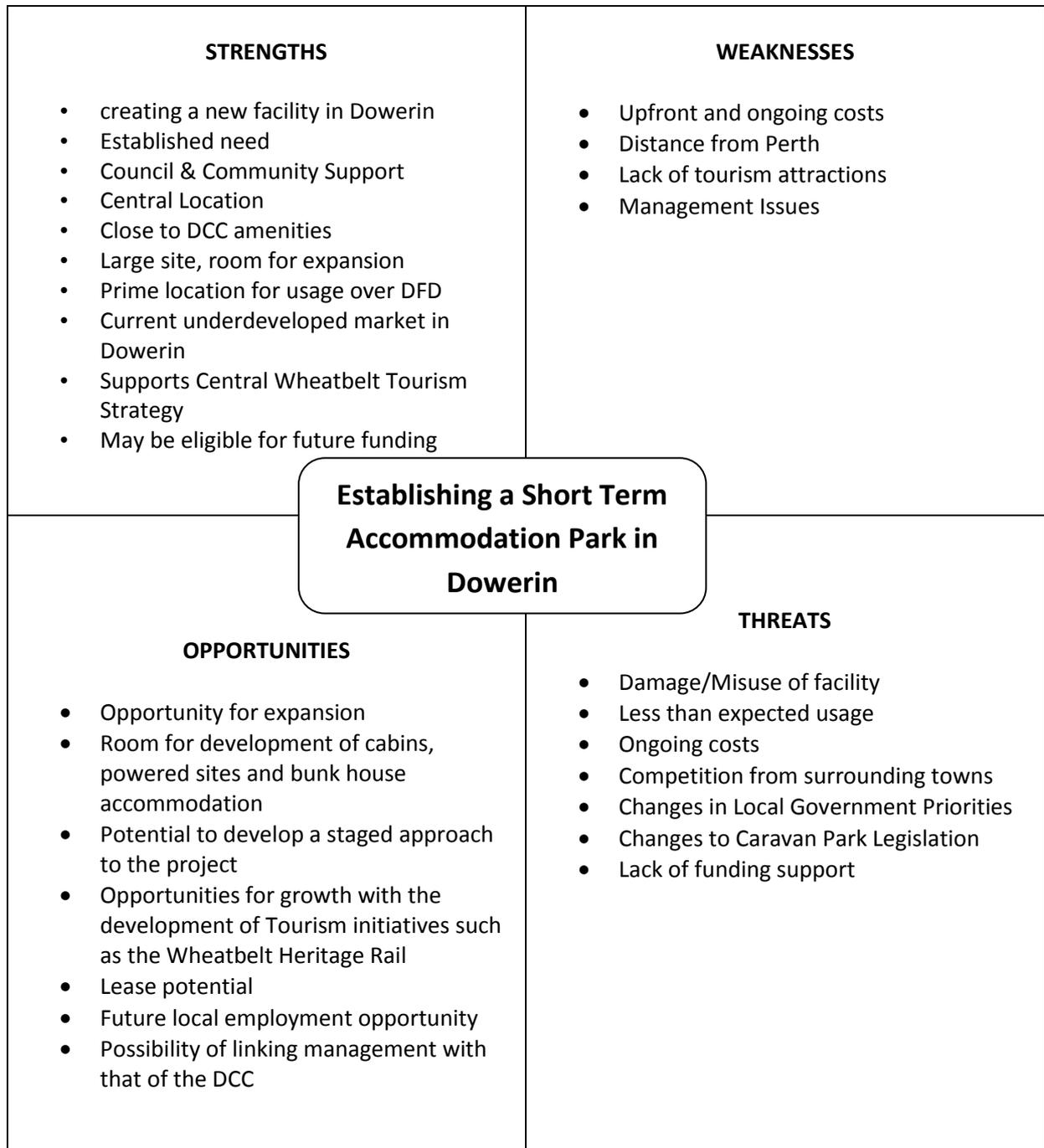
- **Powered sites** within a simple and attractive caravan park which can be marketed towards travellers and groups looking for an old fashioned camping experience within minimal facilities, perfect for tents, caravans and RV owners.
- **Cabins** with affordable prices and providing clean facilities which can be marketed towards grey nomads, couples, travellers and families.
- **Bunkhouse Accommodation** which can be marketed towards large groups including schools, special interest groups and large groups of families and friends. As well as providing a good accommodation option for exhibitors at the Dowerin Field Day and other events held in Dowerin.

The caravan/accommodation park will be landscaped utilising water wise principals reflecting our native flora & fauna with gravel paths and access routes.

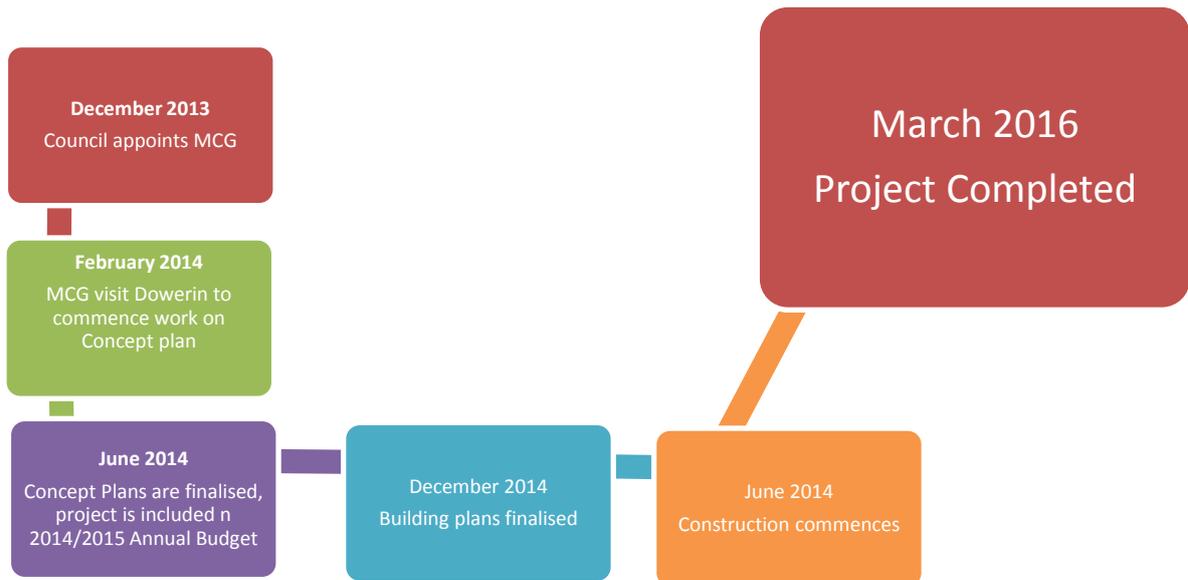
Where to from here

A detailed plan of the proposed facility is required, encompassing all options outlined within this document. From here, a more specific project budget can be outlined and this project will be 'shovel ready' should any grant funding opportunities arise.

SWOT Analysis



Timelines



Conclusion

Dowerin has an established need for the development of alternative accommodation options within the Town Site. Research has shown that Dowerin, its community, services and businesses are missing out on a popular and increasing market which may benefit the long term economic future of our community.

With proper planning, development and professional management Dowerin has the potential to offer visitors to Dowerin with a high quality short term accommodation facility with a point of difference to those in surrounding districts (the Bunkhouse). This facility will have potential both as a business for the Shire and an asset to the town.

Recommendation

- 1. Council gives in principal support to the development of a short term accommodation park to the western side of the Dowerin Community Club.***
- 2. Council allocates \$19,500 of the Economic Development Fund to the development of concept plans for the proposed facility.***

Appendices

Central Wheatbelt Tourism Strategy 2009 – 2014 - <http://www.wheatbelttourism.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Central-Wheatbelt-Tourism-Strategy-pdf-final.pdf>

Fee Proposal – MCG Architects



A.B.N. 48 124 937 248

3 December 2013
Our ref: 1348/1.3

Chief Executive Officer
Shire of Dowerin
P O Box 111
Dowerin WA 6461

Attention Dacre Alcock

Dear Dacre

**Re: Fee Proposal for Architectural Services
Master Plan, Concept design drawings
Proposed Dowerin Short Term Accommodation**

Further to our discussions earlier today and your subsequent email, we are pleased to confirm herewith our fee proposal to prepare a Master Plan and Concept Design drawings for the above project as discussed.

Fee Proposal

Based on other similar work for local authorities we offer the following fee:

Lump Sum Fee for master plan and concept design **\$ 16,500 + GST**

Travel – Travel to and from Dowerin shall be charged based on travelling by light aircraft Ex Bunbury and transfers to and from the airstrip being provided by the Shire. Based on similar trip, the charge per visit shall be \$ 1500 + GST

Thus total anticipated fee shall be **\$ 19,500 + GST**, allowing for two (2) site visits.

Deliverables

On completion of the commission we shall provide a master plan drawing and concept plans for the proposed buildings, fit for preliminary estimation purposes and submission for Funding Applications.

Shire to Provide

Ideally in order for us to carry out these works properly, we would require from the Shire a full feature and contour survey of the precinct carried out by a surveyor. This should be in an electronic format compatible with AutoCAD. However, for the purpose of concept work a site title diagram with boundary dimensions and corner angles should suffice.

Programme

We confirm we have the resources to commence your project early in February 2014 and could complete the work by the end of March 2014, depending on consultation and Council review processes.

Additional Services

Should any additional services be required beyond the above scope of services the following hourly rates shall apply:

Director	\$250.00 / hour + GST
Senior Architect	\$200.00 / hour + GST
Architect	\$150.00 / hour + GST
Draftsperson	\$120.00 / hour + GST

Accounts

Accounts shall be submitted at the end of each calendar month for the proportion of services completed to date. All accounts shall be payable within 14 days of invoice and shall be made payable to: "mcg architects pty ltd"

Terms and Conditions of Engagement

For the purpose of our engagement we propose the use of the RAIA Standard form of Client and Architect Agreement for the engagement of the architects. We can provide you with a copy of this agreement on request.

Thank you once again for considering our Practice and we look forward to and hope for a positive response.

If the above proposal is acceptable please sign the acceptance below and return the original to our office and we shall draw up the formal agreement as soon as possible.

However, should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at your convenience.

Yours sincerely



Michel Greenhalgh
Director
B.A., B. Arch., R.A.I.A., PPL

Acceptance of offer

I / We accept the above fee proposal offer by **mcg architects pty ltd** and agree to the terms and conditions as stated above, subject to reading and accepting the full terms and conditions of the Client and Architect Agreement.

Acceptance by Client _____ Date _____
(signature)

Name(s) in Full _____ A.B.N. _____
(print name(s) in full) (if applicable)