

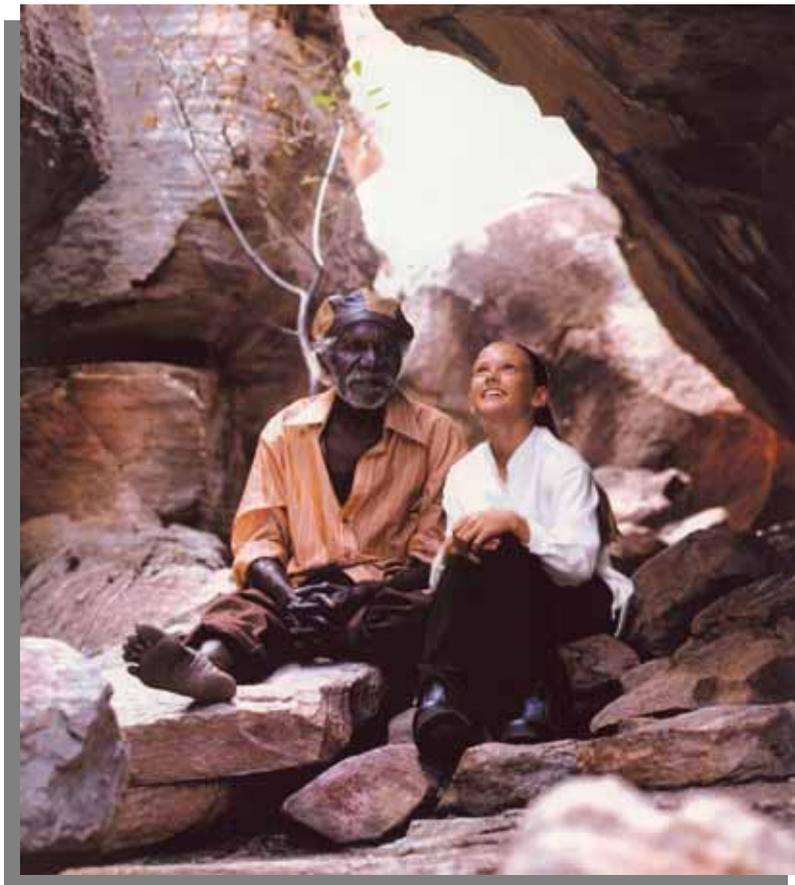


Wanpa-rda Matilda

Outback Education Centre

2016 Annual Report

Adventure Packages to Australia's Biggest Classroom!



IT TAKES A WHOLE COMMUNITY TO EDUCATE A CHILD

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Wanpa-rda Matilda

Outback Education Centre

Adventure Packages to Australia's Biggest Classroom!



TESTIMONIAL



Hello Tim,

How are you? Thanks for the kind words in your letter. All of the people that we take- children, parents and staff, love their experience at Wanpa-rda. You are a massive part of the enjoyment factor and all of us really respond to your relaxed, respectful manner that you take our students out of their comfort zone. Everyone always talks about how knowledgeable you are and your obvious passion for what you do.

Thanks again

Chris Ferguson

Principal St Therese's Catholic Primary Monto QLD 4630

TESTIMONIAL



"Activities catered for everyone, were flexible enough time wise and were highly engaging!

Really enjoyed movies, Qantas museum, Stockman's show and Age of Dinosaurs.

The Australian Workers Heritage Centre's facilities and attractions were very good.

The accommodation and facilities at Wanpa-rda were perfect for our group.

Catering quantity and quality was excellent. Service was outstanding.

Nothing needs improving, we loved it, can't wait to come back." - Chris Ferguson - St. Therese's CPS - Monto

TESTIMONIAL



Hi Tim,

I meant to email you before now and let you know the kids and staff really enjoyed their trip out to Barcaldine. All the feedback I have had has been very positive and Kate said it is a better camp than going to Noosa where they have gone over the past couple of years. They have all raved about the food and some of the teachers think they have put on a little weight since going on camp☺ Sounds like our kids could have taken some more warm clothing which they were told to do but hopefully they learned that it is a little colder inland than here on the coast.

So thank you for all your hard work and effort to make the Year 6 camp enjoyable☺

Hope to see you soon.

Kind Regards

Debbie Ludkin|Business Services Manager Workplace Rehab Officer Gladstone Central State School

TESTIMONIAL



"Accommodation and amenities were fine - lots of room for students and staff.

Program content was great - learning outcomes very clear- lots of opportunity to extend students or assistance for students struggling.

Regional attractions were great - movie theatre was great - tied in well with our English unit looking at historical recounts.

Loved the Workers Heritage Centre - kids loved that they got to touch and interact with displays.

Great range of food - catered to all requirements. No improvements needed - kids and teachers were well fed.

Overall, great camp- we will be coming back!" - Kate Bettiens - Gladstone Central SS

TESTIMONIAL



"Thanks so much for such an excellent camp. Students thoroughly enjoyed their time at Wanpa-rda.

Activities such as the excursion to the Workers Heritage Centre and Hall of Fame are a great balance with active team based games (Archery/orienteering).

The Workers Heritage Centre is well presented, great information. Students particularly enjoyed the interactives (eg. trying on clothes).

Students and staff were well accommodated with amenities clean and functional. The food was lovely thank you.

This camp is such a valuable experience for our students.

Our kids learn so much from this experience and comments from parents I saw last week reflected the growth of their children in such a small amount of time.

Thank you Tim and staff for professional delivery of program and great facilities" - Meredith Grove – G6 St Francis CPS, Tannum Sands.

TESTIMONIAL



"I would also just like to say a big thank-you to yourself for your dedication and professionalism in running the OEC; you are doing a great job..."

Catering was fantastic! There was ample food of a very high quality, there were no complaints whatsoever! There is nothing I can think of (suggestions for improvements).

We will definitely be back again next year, even if I am not in Clermont anymore, as this was a great experience for our students." – Josh Grant – Clermont SHS.

TESTIMONIAL



"Thanks once again for an amazing camp, we really can't thank you enough for all your effort and hard work you put in to make the camp as awesome as it is.

Loved how it was flexible during the camp to meet the needs of the students.

Learning outcomes for the camp were met in all activities. Students were learning new skills and information throughout the whole camp.

The food was excellent and abundant and Mandy went well above what we expected in terms of choice and quality!

Can't wait to come back next year!" - Blair Smith- St Therese's CPS Monto

TESTIMONIAL



"All of the activities were excellent. We never felt rushed, which was a pleasant change. There was great variety, plenty of challenges and many successes.

The accommodation and amenities were excellent. It was so much easier supervising students at night because they were all in the dorm together."

Everything ran smoothly - no problems. Tim was fantastic as was the kitchen staff. Special dietary requirements were well catered for. Thank-you.

One of the highlights of our year!" - Cherie Clancy- St. Joseph's CPS - Bundaberg

TESTIMONIAL



"The Program content was perfect lots of things we don't do at school but link with our education plan. Tim was fantastic we are going to start orienteering lessons.

Catering was fantastic! Mandy was very accommodating and we were fed well every day!

Accommodation and amenities were clean, spacious and well laid out.

The Workers Heritage Centre was fantastic. Lots of time and effort has been put into the layout and set up. The audio was great! We found lots of things that linked to History units we have learnt.

Stockman's Hall of Fame and Qantas Museum were excellent. Tour Guides made it educational for all.

The camp was fantastic! Tim is certainly a perfect person to have as a teacher, leading the activities. He has good behaviour management strategies that work perfectly with a group of unknown students. Thanks for having us!

I will be recommending Wanpa-rda to other schools to make them aware of the quality camp you have on offer." - Teelba State School

TESTIMONIAL



"Fantastic - well run, organised and supportive camp. All learning outcomes were met and much more. Tim had a wealth of knowledge

Accommodation was great - air-conditioned, hot showers and comfy beds!" - St Francis Tannum Sands G7

TESTIMONIAL



"It was great for the students to learn some real life stuff outdoors - they were really interested in all the activities and info.

Food was fantastic – Thanks Mandy! Delicious and served with cheers.

The kids had an awesome time; they are still raving about it." – Alycce Wilson – Alpha State School.

TESTIMONIAL



"Thanks for a wonderful camp once again - the kid's just adored it and all had a fabulous time! Tim is always excellent at helping organise the most stress free camps ever!

Love the crawchie trap making activity as always! Students have followed up with group reports and posters. Kids really enjoy the campfire.

The Australian Workers Heritage is a great place to visit. Hall of Fame and Qantas Founders' also excellent. The kids love the movies too.

Lovely meals as always! Thanks to Mandy for being so flexible. The sandwiches for packed lunches were great. All meals were lovely, especially the chicken dinner!

Excellent place to stay. It's all great! Thanks for another wonderful camp, Tim - Hope to see you again next year." Robyn Cuskelly Emerald State School

TESTIMONIAL



"Our trip was amazing it changed the life of many of our students.

Both students and staff gained a lot out of the program provided.

The accommodation and amenities were clean, fresh and well maintained.

The cooking was fine and both students and staff enjoyed their meals. It was also appreciated that extra time was taken to create a special 'fare-well' cake for a student who was leaving the school once camp was over.

Yes once again both the students and staff gained a lot out of the attractions in the region.

Yes students thoroughly enjoyed the Workers Heritage Centre and returned for numerous visits throughout their stay!

No suggestions for improvements. All was good Thank-you"! - Trinity College Gladstone

1.0 Introduction

Mission Statement

The Wanpa-rda Matilda Outback Education Centre endeavours to share with students, teachers, schools and the wider community the uniqueness of Central Western Queensland by providing quality life and educational experiences.

The Wanpa-rda Matilda Outback Education Centre (WMOEC) is a joint project between The Australian Workers Heritage Centre (AWHC) and Education Queensland (EQ).

Wanpa-rda pronounced “warn-pra-da”, is a Wangkangurru word from the Birdsville district and means, “to carry”. Matilda comes from the song of the Winton district “Waltzing Matilda” and traditional folk language meaning “swag”. Hence, Wanpa-rda Matilda means, “to carry your swag”.

The concept, initially promoted by the Australian Workers Heritage Centre, centred on the creation of a residential facility to encourage school groups to undertake educational excursions to the Outback region of Queensland.

The Wanpa-rda Matilda Centre is a multi-faceted product. The Centre provides a fully self-contained residential facility (60 beds) within the grounds of the AWHC complex in Barcaldine, which acts as a centralised base from which to conduct day trips to the many and varied educational, historic and cultural attractions within the Central Western region as well as utilising on site assets and local bushland. The accommodation, corporate facilities, state of the art kitchen and public amenities are provided by the AWHC.

The centre also consists of an Education Officer funded by Education Queensland, who markets and coordinates the tour packages and oversees the development and delivery of the curriculum and education kits to the students. Wanpa-rda Matilda offers additional educational activities on the site, conducted by the Education Officer.

Student groups basing themselves at the Centre can participate in programs specifically designed to meet their particular needs and interests. They can visit properties and attractions, talk to locals, and visit sites of historical significance to discover the rich story of Outback Queensland and its people.

At the end of 2007 the centre said goodbye to Ms Anna Barrett, who had spent 3 years in the Education Officers position. Mrs Brooke Miller then joined the Wanpa-rda Matilda team at the beginning of 2008 followed by Jane Dickson in 2009. In 2010 Tim Berry took the position as Education Officer and has enjoyed contributing his knowledge and skills to the development of the already fantastic educational programs offered at Wanpa-rda. Now at the close of the 2016, Tim is finishing up his duties at Wanpa-rda and making way for the appointment of a new staff member for 2017. A revisitation of the MOU has been undertaken and at the time of this report, new applicants are being reviewed.

The following report will outline the goals of the Wanpa-rda Matilda OEC for 2016 and how the team has worked towards meeting these goals over the past year.

2.0 Wanpa-rda Matilda OEC Goals

The drafting of a 2016 Wanpa-rda Matilda Outback Education Centre 'Action Plan' was initiated before end of year 2015. An early start was initiated in order to capitalise on the momentum generated from the successful navigation of the new challenges and opportunities presented throughout 2013 - 2015. Some of the key areas included in the '2016 Action Plan' were;

1. Steadily increase annual income through core business focus.
2. Maintain and expand Wanpa-rda website.
3. Maintain and develop Direct Marketing strategy.
4. Develop relationships with transit companies to increase client base.
5. Improvements to infrastructure, equipment and functionality.



1. **Increase annual income through core business focus** - Moving into 2015, the drive to close the gap between the income generated by Wanpa-rda and the key performance indicators was an increasingly urgent consideration. Wanpa-rda had been striving to improve KPIs without sacrificing their core values by restricting access to smaller school camps (that generate lesser revenue). In perspective, the majority of the active key measures listed in the 2015 action plan were directed at working towards this end. Impressively,

the significant success in this field gave us confidence in our approach for 2016. A significant factor contributing to the decrease of revenue affecting Wanpa-rda's KPIs from 2011 – 14 was the nationwide shift to the national curriculum, requiring grade 7 classes to merge into high school. Group bookings were adversely affected during the period of change, as in previous years, grade 7 camps have been amongst the most represented in Wanpa-rda's direct school booking quota. A flow on effect took place affecting participation numbers, bed night usage and catered bed nights.

Two of the three initiatives launched in 2015 continued through 2016 to improve upon participation and group booking numbers and for those numbers to translate to an increase in Wanpa-rda facilitated activities, bed nights and catered meals. The first initiative was the revamping and development of the direct marketing awareness campaign in order to actively attract new clientele. The second was the collaboration with transit companies in order to reach out to schools through multiple avenues, as well as make booking an easier experience for schools. The third initiative was to expand the scope of the Outback Education Subsidy to include high school students up to grade 8. Having achieved this third initiative in 2015 there was no more action required in regards to this issue except to ensure schools were made aware of the subsidy. In addition to these initiatives, a review of Wanpa-rda practices around catering and Wanpa-rda facilitated activities aided in increasing financial outcomes. Each of the above mentioned will be discussed in detail below.

In summary, the fiscal goal for 2016 was to maintain and where possible increase on the significant gains noted from 2015. In 2016, Wanpa-rda succeeded in maintaining a comparable annual income without compromising core business focus and without significant price increases and increased in some key performance areas.

2. **Maintain and expand Wanpa-rda website** –The construction of Wanpa-rda's new website was underway early in 2014 and went live on May 2nd, 2014. The idea of our online component is that it can be instrumental in both encouraging participation by schools, as well as providing an easy platform on which to communicate with prospective and committed patrons. With only one staff member onsite to cover both the delivery and administration of camps, the availability of online resources and information was anticipated to reduce the correspondence time between

Wanpa-rda and the schools. This would in turn leave more time for the coordinator to facilitate activities and expand the work programs. Following on from 2015, 2016 enquiries were routinely invited to utilise the website to find out what Wanpa-rda could offer their schools, review itinerary options, learn about Barcaldine and the surrounding areas and to access forms and documents. With all of this information now available in an automated online resource it has never been easier for schools to quickly and easily access information. Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) became the next logical step for Wanpa-rda's Website. SEO allows the website to move further up Google's search engine rankings and in turn attract more hits. After extensive efforts Wanpa-rda's website climbed the google rankings until it eventually appeared on the first page using common search terms. This resulted in an increase in website traffic and added 'prospective client vetting' to the uses of the online resource. With clients now using the website to vet Wanpa-rda prior to contacting us for info, the website was expanded to include an increased focus on 'selling points' of a Wanpa-rda camp. An embedded video depicting students participating in a Wanpa-rda activity was added to the landing page resulting in very positive user feedback.

3. **Maintain and develop Direct Marketing strategy** - An evolving awareness campaign has been in place for five years now to ensure that schools across the state have the opportunity to consider Wanpa-rda as a camp destination. In its infancy the campaign was targeting schools within a specific geographical range and was incrementally expanded throughout 2012 and 2013. 2014 & 2015 saw a substantial expansion of the campaign to present an attention grabbing, photo rich email to every school (primary and high, state and private) in the state of QLD. In 2016, the campaigning continued in full force. The continually revised presentation of the campaign maintained a new look and feel and trended a new focus on directing prospective clients to both our website and the TQ website using links to important information, forms and documents, all Wanpa-rda promotional material, sample itineraries and the YouTube video. In doing so, schools were given the opportunity to access information and materials to consider their camp options and apply for the outback education subsidy. With the new website in full swing and interested parties able to access information at the click of a button, we were able to focus the content more towards stimulating the imagination of prospective campers with an exciting visually stimulating content rather than the information rich content utilised previously. This will be discussed in more depth in section '4.0 Marketing'.
4. **Develop relationships with transit companies to increase client base** – In addition to the direct marketing awareness campaign discussed above, Wanpa-rda sought other avenues to reach out to schools. In recent years Wanpa-rda has noted a trend of schools looking directly to transit companies to plan and facilitate school camps. School teachers and school camp coordinators who are experiencing ever increasing workloads, find it easier to hand a "wish list" to a coach company and then let them piece together the details. Wanpa-rda has already developed a close working relationship with Mackay Transit Coaches (MTC) and Kangaroo Bus Lines (KBL). In 2015, MTC and KBL both sent out multiple school bookings. These bookings accounted for **26%** of the year's total of school bookings. Although this is a considerable percentage it did not equate to a large percentage of Wanpa-rda's overnight bookings, only 7.69%. In 2016, bookings made directly through bus companies accounted for 40% of school visitation, 100% of non-local day bookings and 13.33% of overnight school bookings. See section '4.0 Marketing' for further information.



5. **Improvements to infrastructure, equipment and functionality** – Over the last 7 years there have been improvements / additions to the Wanpa-rda onsite facilities, although for Wanpa-rda to reach its full potential it would require significant site works (such as additional accommodation). Wanpa-rda has continued with its commitment to site improvement in 2016 - To compliment the upgraded bunks in the dormitory from 2012, the climate control in the resource centre in 2013, the new signage, additions to the activities room in 2014 and kitchen improvements in 2015, 2016 was the year of light(ing) and shade. – The central under-cover area is one of the most utilised areas in Wanpa-rda during structured and unstructured activities as well as dining times etc. New LED lighting was installed in 2016 ensuring adequate lighting for evening usage as well as a safer alternative in the event of impact by sporting equipment. In addition to the undercover area, new lighting was installed down the western side of the activities and office blocks providing important lighting for evening activities such as campfire. New shade sails have also been erected over previously unshaded areas of the Heritage Centre utilised by Wanpa-rda participants. For students and teachers arriving in a climate such as the one Barcaldine resides in, shade is more than a luxury, it is a necessity.



3.0 Overview of 2016

This overview will provide a brief summary of the outcomes recorded at Wanpa-rda over the 2016 calendar year. The information included in this section will be elaborated on in their respective areas within this report.

2016 has been a fantastic year for Wanpa-rda. After successfully navigating the difficult transition into the national curriculum Wanpa-rda has once again found stability and achieved great results. As previously referred to, predictions were that school visitation numbers would take a serious hit in EQ's transitional phase. School bookings have always been the core focus of Wanpa-rda and our identity as the "School of the Bush" for city kids to visit and experience the outback remained the steadfast dedication of the centre. Throughout the difficulties faced in this period 2011 – 2014, Wanpa-rda has relied on a dedicated team and strong leadership to keep us moving in the right direction, without deviating from our moral compass. 2015 provided us the first taste of the fruits of our labour, with positive outcomes across the board including achieving a **67.21%** increase in actual

income for the school calendar year. Looking forward to 2016, Wanpa-rda ascertained the factors that contributed most significantly to the forward momentum and set its sights on continuing the momentum in these areas. The continued drive to reinforce these positive trends resulted in 2016 maintaining its strong position. Annual income remained fairly steady, only 3.3% under the huge spike of 2015.

A quick analysis of the outcomes for Wanpa-rda in 2016 are as follows;

Catering- Catering is a large component of the Wanpa-rda package. 100% of overnight school bookings in 2015 and 2016 took advantage of in-house catering services. Of those 2016 bookings, 89% utilised the All-Day Meal Package and the remaining 11% utilised a part catered option. Part catering is available for overnight school bookings that use Wanpa-rda catering for the bulk of their meals and substitute some 'smokos' with food brought from away. Wanpa-rda determined that the catering component of a school package plays a significant role in actual income from the year and encouraged schools to utilise the cost effective health conscious 'All-Day Meal Package' menu. Wanpa-rda also caters for school day

bookings, non-school day bookings and non-school overnight bookings. In 2015, Wanpa-rda served **6604 meals**. This was a significant increase from the 4249 served in 2014, **an increase of 55.42%** (See Fig – 7.3). In 2016, this figure rose to a total of **6749 meals, an increase of 2.19%** from 2015.

Bed nights - Another significant highlight in 2015 was that Wanpa-rda increased its overall bed night quota by **38.03%** from 2014, boasting the highest bed nights recorded since the national curriculum dip in 2012. Bed nights are another significant factor in overall income for the centre. Maintaining Bed nights therefore remained a priority for Wanpa-rda in 2016. In 2016, the bed night count increased again to **1293, an increase of 4.78% from 2015**. (See Fig – 7.1).

Strategic marketing - Strategic marketing was one of many contributing factors that resulted in the improvement of the quality of overnight school bookings in 2015. This is discussed in greater detail in section *4.0 Marketing*. The fact is, that the quality of the bookings did improve as a result in 2015, with **30.77% of overnight school bookings having 40 participants or more**. 2016 continued to achieve at extremely high levels with **57.14% of overnight school bookings having 40 participants or more** with the average participant count at 39.6 per school. In 2016, **62.5% of day school bookings had over 50 participants** with the average participant count at 53.3 per school.

Overall participation - In 2015, Wanpa-rda recorded 1204 participants, an increase of **22.11%** from 2014, this was the highest recorded participation numbers since 2011(See Fig – 7.2). 2016 did record a slight drop of 4.2% in overall participation numbers from 2015, however group bookings in general were increased from 2014 and 2015 with an increase of 20% from 2015 (taking into account non-school bookings).

Also related (and elaborated upon in section *4.0 Marketing*), is the correlation of our developing relationship with bus line companies and increase in larger group sizes. In 2015, **26%** of all school bookings were booked directly by bus companies, **33%** of Non-Local School Bookings, **71.4%** of 'Day Bookings' and **100%** of all Non-Local 'Day Bookings'. These are bookings brought to Wanpa-rda directly by coach companies and are bookings that can be viewed as above and beyond those that would have been received without the relationships with these companies. With a notable ease of administrative responsibility, the relationship with the bus companies was considered one to foster. In 2016, **40%** of all school bookings were booked directly by bus companies, **22%** of Non-Local School Bookings, **67%** of 'Day Bookings' and **100%** of all Non-Local 'Day Bookings'. (See Fig – 7.9)



4.0 Marketing

Wanpa-rda's marketing strategy was divided into three areas in 2016. The first strategy was the continuation of the direct marketing agenda which has been evolving and developing since 2011. The second, being the promotion of our online presence including the upkeep of our comprehensive website and the third area being the extension of our working relationship with QLD Bus / Coach line companies.

Direct marketing remained as a key agenda on the 2016 action plan. Initially implemented to mitigate the drop in school bookings resulting from the roll out of the national curriculum, the evolving awareness campaign reached a maximum audience as of 2014/15 to include every QLD school; primary and high, state and private. With some stability regained as the new school system settles, the direct marketing strategy has remained in place to facilitate the ongoing growth of Wanpa-rda's clientele by raising awareness of the outstandingly reviewed camp opportunities on offer. The continually revised presentation of the campaign featured a new look and feel and promoted the 'focus' itineraries of the upcoming season. With the new website in full swing and interested parties able to access information at the click of a button, we were able to focus the content of the marketing email on stimulating the imagination of prospective campers. This was achieved with an exciting, visually stimulating content, rather than the information rich content utilised previously. Links to the relevant information and application forms on the TQ website were also utilised to make an application for the outback education subsidy as easy as possible. Also added to the content was a link to a professionally filmed and edited video depicting students participating in a Wanpa-rda activity. The video which was produced in collaboration with Tourism QLD was uploaded to YouTube so that an easy and safe link could allow prospective clients to see firsthand the educational quality of a Wanpa-rda experience.

The second marketing strategy was the promotion of our online presence including the upkeep of our comprehensive website. Wanpa-rda's new website is the greatest contemporary asset to the centre. The site went live on May 2nd, 2014 and was progressively populated over the following months. We found throughout 2015 / 16, that the time spent uploading the up-to-date documents was a welcome fraction of the time that used to be spent issuing each individual client, or prospective client, with the same information on an individual case by case basis. In particular, this element of the website's functionality has been pursued and developed throughout 2015 /16, and the promotion of the site has reduced the administration load for the Education Officer. Promoting the Website involved updating all digital



promotional material with the inclusion of specific links to specific and relevant forms, documents and information, all immediately and autonomously available at the click of a button. An example of Wanpa-rda's promotion of the website is the above mentioned direct mail out 'awareness campaign'. During these awareness campaigns the website was emphasised with several carefully located links directing prospective clients to specific relevant documents on our website.

In 2016, Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) became the next logical step for Wanpa-rda's Website. SEO allows the website to move further up Google's

search engine rankings and in turn attract more hits. After extensive efforts Wanpa-rda's website climbed the google rankings until it eventually appeared on the first page using common search terms. This resulted in an increase in website traffic and added 'prospective client vetting' to the uses of the online resource. With clients now using the website to vet Wanpa-rda prior to contacting us for info, the website was expanded to include an increased focus on 'selling points' of a Wanpa-rda camp. The above mentioned YouTube video depicting students participating in a Wanpa-rda activity was embedded to the landing page resulting in very positive user feedback.

The third marketing strategy Wanpa-rda worked towards in 2016 was developing our relationships with coach line companies. In 2014/ 15, having identified a trend of schools outsourcing their camp organisation to the coach companies, Wanpa-rda worked tirelessly to create an expanded range of suggested itineraries to be promoted directly by the coach lines to schools in their catchment areas. In addition to schools directly contacting their local coach service for itineraries, the coach services themselves conduct their own marketing campaigns to schools that are completely independent of, and complementary to our own. In 2015 /16, Mackay Transit Coaches and Kangaroo Bus Lines took a particular interest in promoting outback camps, specifically promoting their camps to utilise Wanpa-rda as a base. To capitalise on the momentum and to create the easiest possible booking experience for the greatest possible advantage, Wanpa-rda put together five all new comprehensive itineraries designed for coach lines. Each of these itineraries incorporate our strongest themes and make an outback trip a possibility all year round. Results were apparent quickly, with the third term of 2014 seeing the first full week direct coach line booking. 2015 continued on with growing momentum which continued throughout 2016. **In 2016, 40% of all school bookings were booked directly by bus companies, 22% of Non-Local School Bookings, 67% of 'Day Bookings' and 100% of all Non-Local 'Day Bookings'**. In 2016, Wanpa-rda welcomed an increase in the number of overnight school camps booked directly by bus companies, which in 2015 accounted for 8% and in 2016 accounted for 13% (See Fig – 7.9). Staff members from Mackay Transit Coaches and Kangaroo Bus Lines as well as Stonestreet Coaches have visited the centre in 2016 after receiving very positive feedback. These companies are looking forward to working with us again in 2017.



5.0 Visitor Feedback

After schools visit the centre they are sent a survey to complete reflecting on their experience. Feedback received in 2016 was again extremely positive. In addition to Wanpa-rda's feedback survey, some schools took it upon themselves to write to the Education Officer expressing the thorough enjoyment of their 2016 camp.

General Comments

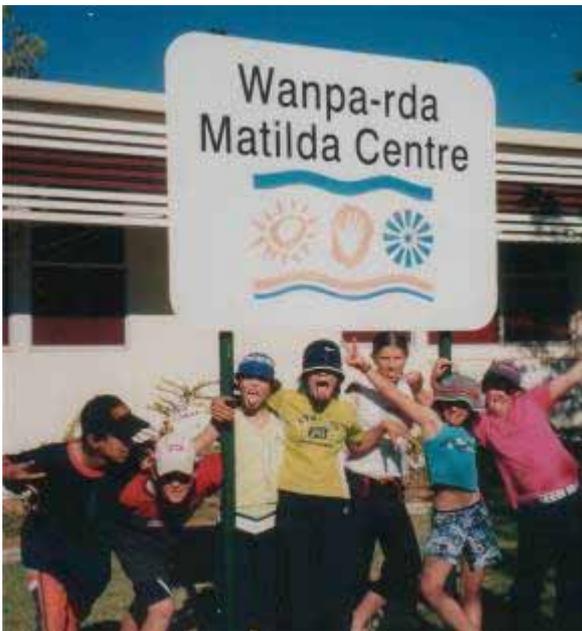
School Surveys all indicated that they were very satisfied with the assistance they received when planning their camp. They believed the price inclusive itineraries were suitable, clearly set out and specifically catered to the school's needs. The responses conveyed that schools were very satisfied with staff at the centre and felt they were friendly, helpful and knowledgeable.

"All of the people that we take- children, parents & staff, love their experience at Wanpa-rda. You are a massive part of the enjoyment factor and all of us really respond to your relaxed, respectful manner that you take our students out of their comfort zone. Everyone always talks about how knowledgeable you are and your obvious passion for what you do." - Chris Ferguson Principal St. Therese's CPS Monto

"The kids and staff really enjoyed their trip out to Barcaldine. All the feedback I have had has been really positive; they said it is a better camp than going to Noosa where they have gone the last couple of years. So thank you for all of your hard work and effort to make the Year 6 camp enjoyable." Debbie Ludkin Gladstone Central SS

"Overall great camp - we will be coming back" - Kate Bettiens Gladstone Central SS

"Tim is always excellent at helping organise the most stress - free camps ever!" - Robyn Cuskelly Emerald SS



"Thanks once again for an amazing camp, we really can't thank you enough for all your effort and hard work you put in to make the camp as awesome as it is." – Blair Smith – St Therese's CPS, Monto.

"The kids had an awesome time, they are still raving about it." – Kerry Gray – Alpha State School.

"Our trip was amazing. It changed the life of many of our students." – Rei Joseph – Trinity College Gladstone.

"I would also just like to say a big thank-you to yourself for your dedication and professionalism in running the OEC, you are doing a great job... We will definitely be back again next year, even if I am not in Clermont anymore, as this was a great experience for our students." – Josh Grant – Clermont SHS.

"Thanks so much for such an excellent camp. Our kids learn so much from this experience and comments from parents I saw last week reflected the growth of their children in such a small amount of time." Meredith Grove – G6 St Francis CPS, Tannum Sands.

Programs/ suggestions for improvements

Schools were very happy with the programs they had chosen while attending Wanpa-rda Matilda OEC; carefully designed flexible lessons and supporting material were implemented successfully and all feedback



received in this area was extremely positive. Some feedback in this area included;

"Nothing (suggestions for improvement) we loved it, can't wait to come back. Activities catered for everyone, were flexible enough time wise and were highly engaging" - Chris Ferguson Principal St. Therese's CPS Monto

"We just love the crawchy trap making activity - students have followed up with group reports and posters. Kids also really enjoy the campfire" Robyn Cuskelly - Emerald SS

"Program content was great - learning outcomes very clear - lots of opportunity to extend students or assistance for students struggling. Regional attractions were great - tied in well with our English unit looking at historical recounts. Loved the Heritage Centre - kids loved that they got to touch and interact with displays!" - Kate Bettiens Gladstone Central SS

"All (outcomes) met & much more. Tim had a wealth of knowledge." Kerrie Lisle – G7 St Francis CPS, Tannum Sands.

"There is nothing I can think of (suggestions for improvements). Tim Berry is a great coordinator who should be commended for his dedication & professionalism. We will be back again!" – Josh Grant – Clermont SHS.

"It was great for the kids to learn some real-life stuff outdoors – they were really interested in all the activities and info." – Alycye Wilson – Alpha State School.

"This camp is such a valuable experience for our students. Thank you Tim and staff for professional delivery of program and great facilities". Meredith Grove – G6 St Francis CPS, Tannum Sands.

Facilities and Services

Schools Feedback in 2015 was positive with numerous commendations of the quality, cleanliness and comfort of the facilities. Some comments received in the feedback surveys are;

"Facilities were perfect for our group." - Chris Ferguson Principal St. Therese's CPS Monto

"Accommodation and amenities were fine - lots of room for students and staff." - Kate Bettiens Gladstone Central SS

"It's a great place to stay." Robyn Cuskelly - Emerald SS

"Accommodation and amenities were clean, spacious and well laid out." – Karina Schick – Teelba State School.

"Students and staff were well accommodated with amenities clean and functional" – Meredith Grove – G6 St Francis CPS, Tannum Sands.



Catering

In 2016 Mandy Balderson continued on with her fourth year catering at Wanpa-rda. She provided the already popular menu in addition to a new and improved variety of health conscious meals. 99.11% of overnight school groups took advantage of the well priced home cooked style menu. The most popular catering selection was the 'all day meal package' including breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner and dessert.

"Great range of food - catered to all requirements. No improvements needed - kids and teachers were all well fed." - Kate Bettiens Gladstone Central SS

"Excellent meals, plenty of food, delicious & good variety." Robyn Cuskelly - Emerald SS

"Catering quality and quantity was excellent. Service was outstanding." Chris Ferguson Principal St. Therese's CPS Monto

"Catering was fantastic! There was ample food of a very high quality, there were no complaints whatsoever!" – Josh Grant – Clermont SHS.

"Food was fantastic – Thanks Mandy! Delicious and served with cheers☺" – Alycce Wilson – Alpha State School.

"Plenty of food. Staff was willing to cater for individual needs." – Roslyn Penrose – Yarwun State School.



6.0 Wanpa-rda Matilda OEC Usage

2016 maintained the positive trend achieved in 2015, which saw Wanpa-rda's increase in actual income for the school calendar year by **67.21%**. Dropping by only 3.3% from the impressive spike of 2015. School group bookings, in particular overnight school camps, have always been the focus of Wanpa-rda. Bringing kids from the city to the outback was the ethos behind the vision of Mr. Bob Gleeson, CEO AWHC, to build a "School of the bush" for city kids to visit and experience the outback. The Centre also strives to provide an opportunity for kids, regardless of where they live, to come and stay in the education facility and immerse themselves in the heritage rich township of Barcaldine. On these merits both 2015 and 2016 were a great success. In terms of the overall number of overnight school bookings, 2014 / 2015 tied for the second highest recorded over the past five years with an **18.2 % increase from 2013, 14.4% increase from 2011 and a 30% increase from 2010**. In 2016, there was an increase in overnight bookings however non-school overnight bookings were represented at a higher level than previous years and overnight school bookings were slightly down. In all, 2016 overnight bookings were **up 15.38% from 2015**.



The contrast between the financial outcomes of 2014 and 2015 was an important piece of data to explore in order to keep Wanpa-rda moving forward into prosperity for 2016. With group numbers having dropped and overnight school bookings remaining the same from 2014 to 2015, such a huge increase in actual income without sacrificing the core values of the centre became an important point of analysis. The following section will discuss how we achieved this goal in 2015 and maintained those exemplary achievements throughout 2016.

We have established that the hits to the KPI's in 2014 were not resulting from a lack of overnight school camps at all. The following areas were noted in the 2014 annual report and were subsequently addressed in 2015 to bring the KPI set to its current position. The approach sustained through 2016 has reaffirmed the strategy with a very positive data set.



Catered Bed Nights- Catered bed nights account for a significant proportion of Wanpa-rda's actual income. Increasing catered bed nights was imperative if Wanpa-rda was to improve its KPIs. In 2015, a strict no self-catering policy was enforced. Although this policy has been in effect for some time, exceptions had been made for some bookings that visited from within the region. In 2016, Wanpa-rda continued to stress the no self-catering policy, enforcing the rule that no meals were to be prepared in Wanpa-rda kitchens at all and part catering requests were required to have the bulk of their catering provided by Wanpa-rda. An 'All Day Meal Package' is a cost effective health conscious menu which includes breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner and desert (six meals). A partially catered bed night requires the bulk of catering to be provided by Wanpa-rda, but

less than the total of 6 meals. An un-catered bed night reflects usage of Wanpa-rda accommodation without any meal servings provided by Wanpa-rda. In 2016, 100% of overnight school bookings took advantage of in-house catering services. Of those, 89% utilised the 'All Day Meal Package' and the remaining 11% utilised the part catered option (These statistics refer to meals served to participants utilising accommodation only and do not include other catering jobs such as catered events and conferences). Wanpa-rda also caters for school day bookings, non-school day bookings and non-school overnight bookings. A look at the data set of all catered meals gives an insight into the strengthened financial position in 2015 and 2016. In 2015, Wanpa-rda served **6604 meals**. This was a significant increase from the 4249 served in 2014, **an increase of 55.42%**. In 2016, this figure rose to a total of **6749 meals, an increase of 2.19%** from 2015 (See Fig – 7.3).

Bed Nights- Bed nights in themselves are an important component for Wanpa-rda's income. Maintaining adequate bed night statistics represents a stable client base. Increasing bed night numbers indicates a growing client base. Many first time visitors to the centre quote word of mouth as their exposure to Wanpa-rda, it then follows that the more guests we host translate to more mouths that can further encourage clientele, and so it goes on. In 2015, Wanpa-rda increased its bed night quota by **38.03%** from 2014, the highest bed nights recorded since the national curriculum dip in 2012. In 2016, the bed night count increased again to **1293, an increase of 4.78% from 2015**. (See Fig – 7.3).

Small group sizes- Wanpa-rda has never prioritised schools by their number of participants. Bookings are taken on a first in, first served basis to give every student the same opportunity regardless of their school size or potential to generate higher revenue for Wanpa-rda. As highlighted in the 2012 - 2014 reporting process, Wanpa-rda saw a dip in school bookings as schools across QLD implemented the merge of grade 7 into high school. An age demographic that was previously our most represented. This merge resulted in only one grade seven camp booking in 2014, and none in 2015. Typically the senior level in a school undertakes a leadership styled camp to both prepare them for their role as school leaders and to prepare them for their transition into high school. With the shift to national curriculum we skipped the whole cohort of grade sevens as well as the upcoming grade 6 students that undertook their camps at more mainstream venues such as the nation's capital. Wanpa-rda has been instrumental in implementing and expanding TQ's outback education subsidy that encourages QLD schools to visit the bush in place of more typical destinations. In doing so we were attempting to attract the larger schools that reside further afield to host their camp here in the outback.

In 2015 / 2016 we began to reap the fruits of our labour. Wanpa-rda generally considers an average group size to be 25 students. In 2014, **69.2%** of overnight school bookings were under the 25 participant mark. **61.5%** were under 20 participants and **46.2%** were under 15 participants. In 2015, only **46.15%** were 20 participants or under, **23%** were 15 participants or under, and **30.77% of overnight school bookings had 40 participants or more.** In 2016, Wanpa-rda continued to achieve at extremely high levels with **57.14% of overnight school bookings having 40 participants or more and the average participant count at 39.6 participants per school.** Also recorded in 2016, was that **62.5% of day school bookings had over 50 participants,** with the average participant count at 53.3 per school. In 2015, 2016 and already for 2017 Wanpa-rda has had to turn away overnight school group bookings as their accommodation requirements exceeded our accommodation capacity.



Participation Numbers- Participation numbers are tallied according to a head count of people who have participated in any function or activity onsite over the calendar year. Although the Majority of participants included in the tally are school students participating in Wanpa-rda activities, the statistics are diluted to some extent by non-school participants. In regards to income from participation numbers, the focus in this section will be regarding school participation in Wanpa-rda conducted activities. Wanpa-rda conducted activities incur a minimum activity price (MAP). This fee is calculated by deviation for the average group sized booking of 25 participants. If a group participating in Wanpa-rda facilitated activities has lower participant numbers than 25 they are charged at the MAP. Group sizes that are above and beyond the 25 participants are charged at a per person rate. This policy is in place to mitigate revenue losses incurred by Wanpa-rda as result of undersized bookings. A considerable variation in income can



still be noted between groups of 25 students and larger groups of up to 56 participants. In 2015, Wanpa-rda recorded 1204 participants, an increase of **22.11%** from 2014. 2015 was the highest recorded participation numbers since 2011. 2016 dropped slightly (by 4.2%) from 2015, however is still the second highest since 2011 (See Fig – 7.2).

Overnight Non-School Bookings – Although not the core focus for Wanpa-rda, Overnight Non-School Bookings are an important financial contributor for the centre. There has been a steady decline in Overnight Non-School usage over the past few years reaching an all-time low in 2015 with only 1 Overnight Non-School Booking recorded. This was addressed as an area for improvement for 2016 in the 2015 annual report as follows;



“In 2014, Non-school usage was way down on previous years. Particularly damaging was the drop in overnight non-school usage. Overnight Non-School usage spiked at the end on the 2000’s and has been steadily on the decline since 2010. 2014 had a 50% decrease in the numbers of overnight Non-school group bookings from 2013 accounting for 178 less bed nights, a drop in bed nights of 76%. A 62.5% decrease from 2012 accounting for 162 less bed nights, a drop of 74.3%. A 72.7% decrease from 2011 accounting for 327 less bed nights,

a drop of 85.4%. A 57.1% decrease from 2010 accounting for 208 less bed nights, a drop of 78.8%. In 2015, the amount of overnight Non-school bookings dropped a staggering 75% again from the already low 2014 figures. Although not the core focus for Wanpa-rda, this is an area that could be scaffolded to further increase KPIs for 2016.” – (Wanpa-rda Matilda Annual report 2015)

In 2016, 6 Overnight Non-School Bookings were taken which equates to an **increase of 500%** from 2015.

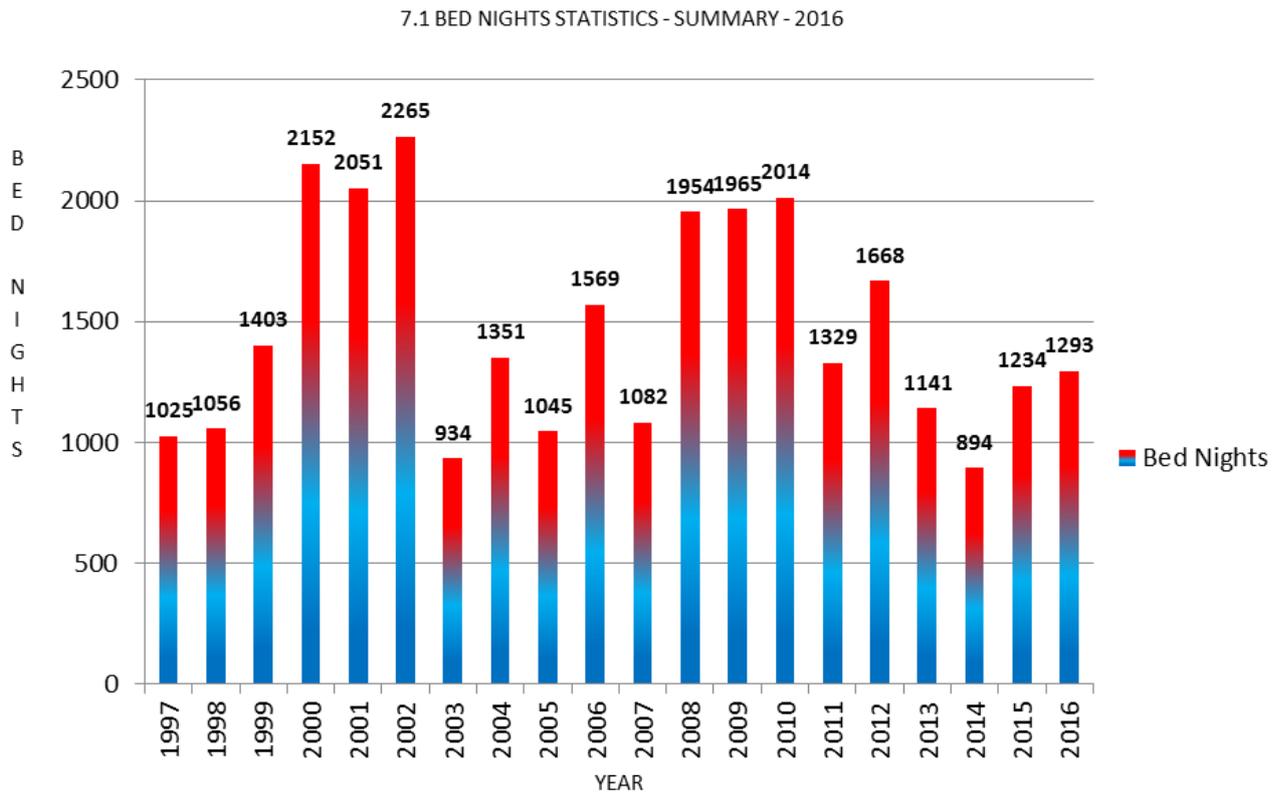
Wanpa-rda facilitated activities - An interesting piece of data was collected in 2013 showing an increase in Wanpa-rda facilitated activities. This trend continued through 2014, 2015 and into 2016 (See Fig – 7.8). In 2016, 57.14% of overnight school bookings having 40 participants or more, coupled with the increased quantity of Wanpa-rda facilitated activities selected, Wanpa-rda activities played a larger that previously seen role in overall financial KPIs. Attractions based in the town of Barcaldine increased across the board in 2013 – 2016. Visitation to the attractions of Longreach, Winton, decreased in 2014, increased in 2015 and further increased in 2016. (see fig. 7.8 Graph 2). This variation has been attributed to two factors. The first contributing factor is the shift in season for school visitation and the nexus between season and activity selection. The second contributing factor is the previously highlighted datum that schools geographically closer to Wanpa-rda were represented in higher numbers in 2014 than in previous years. In 2015 the ratio of local to non-local school was much more in favour of non-local schools with **78.9%** of school bookings from non-local schools. In 2016 this number rose again to **93.33%** (For the purposes of these statistics a ‘local’ school is a school whose campus is within 300km one way of Wanpa-rda).

7.0 Statistics - 2016

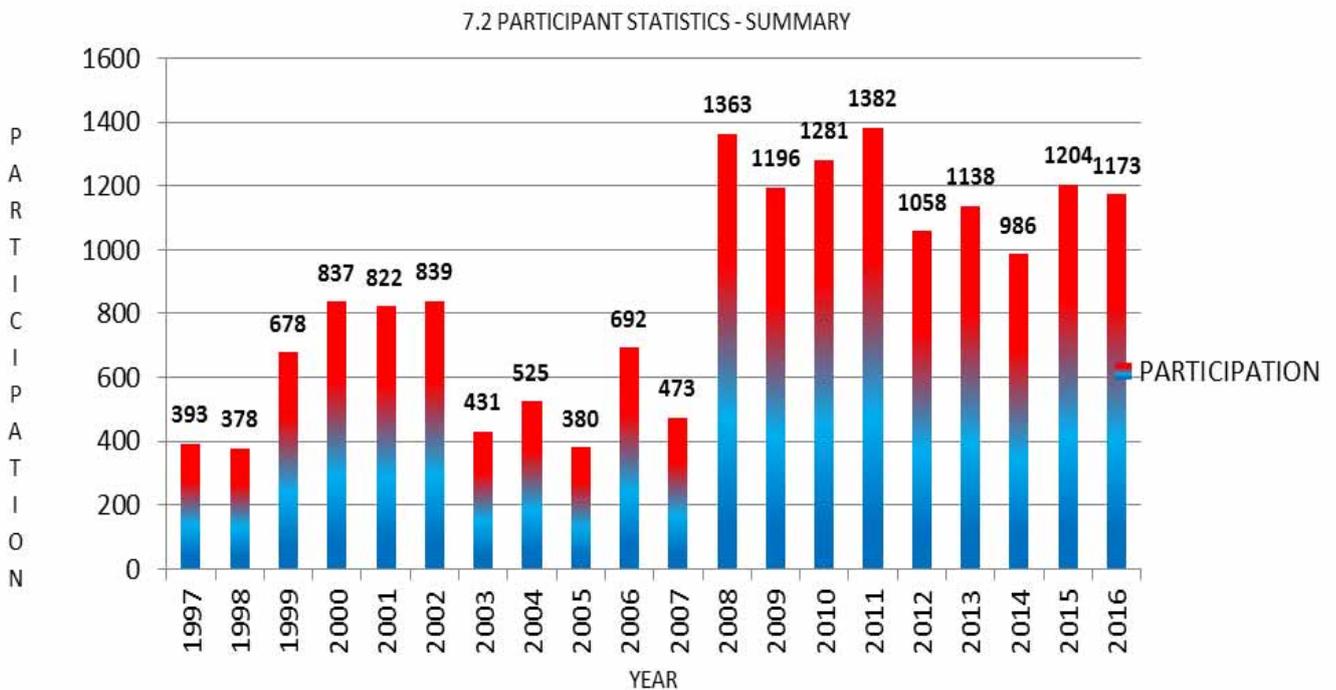
Year	Bed Nights
1997	1025
1998	1056
1999	1403
2000	2152
2001	2051
2002	2265
2003	934
2004	1351
2005	1045
2006	1569
2007	1082
2008	1954
2009	1965
2010	2014
2011	1329
2012	1668
2013	1141
2014	894
2015	1234
2016	1293
TOTAL	24863

Year	No. of People	No. of Groups
1997	393	13
1998	378	12
1999	678	26
2000	837	28
2001	822	30
2002	839	31
2003	431	20
2004	525	16
2005	380	15
2006	692	17
2007	473	12
2008	1363	35
2009	1196	32
2010	1281	44
2011	1382	41
2012	1058	37
2013	1138	37
2014	1034	29
2015	1204	25
2016	1173	31
TOTAL	12728	409

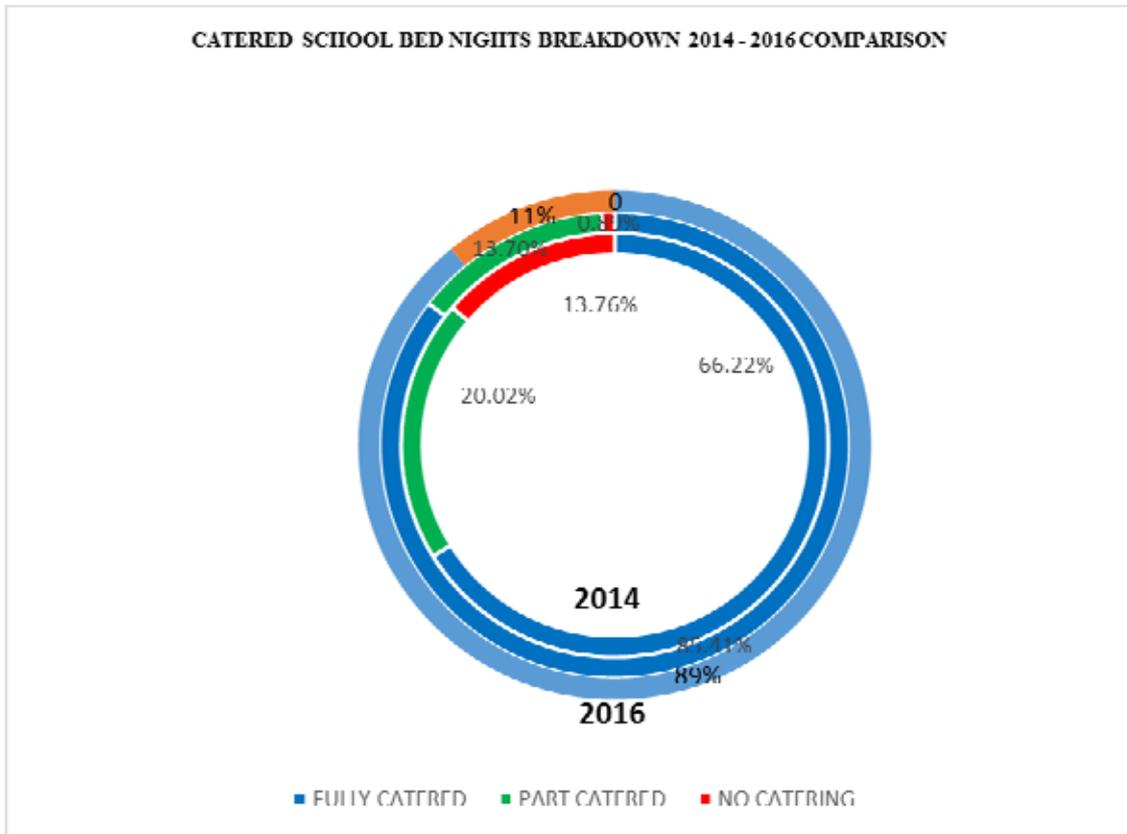
7.1 BED NIGHT STATISTICS – 1997 - 2016 SUMMARY



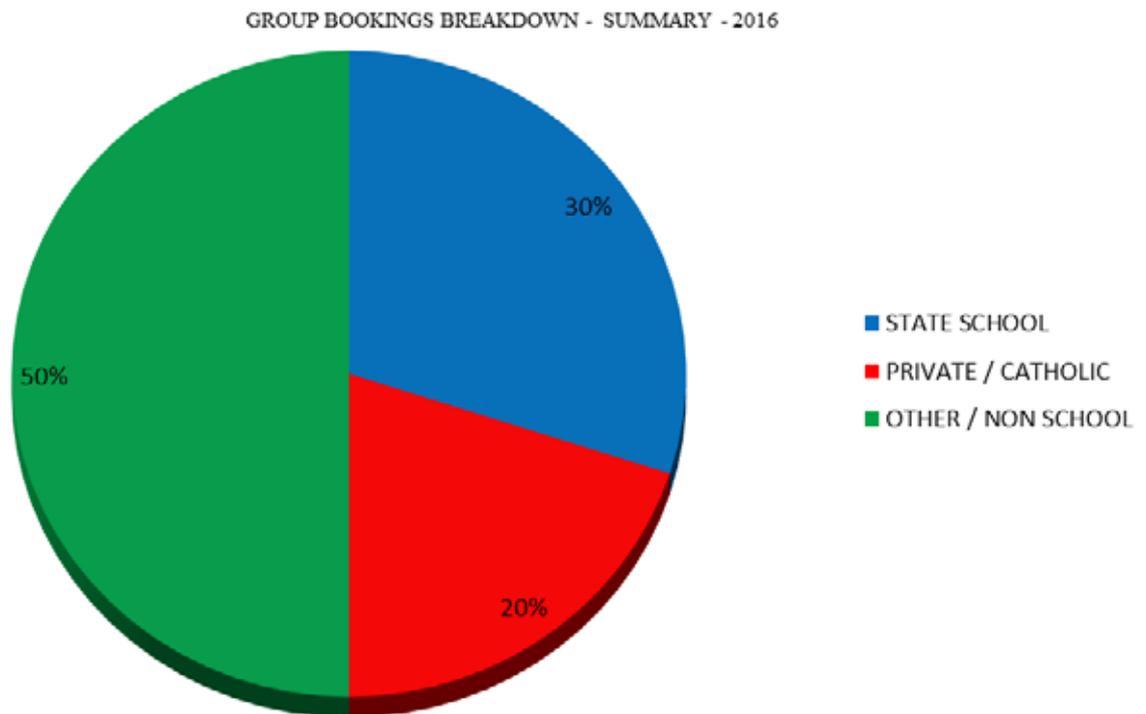
7.2 PARTICIPANT STATISTICS – 1997 - 2016 SUMMARY



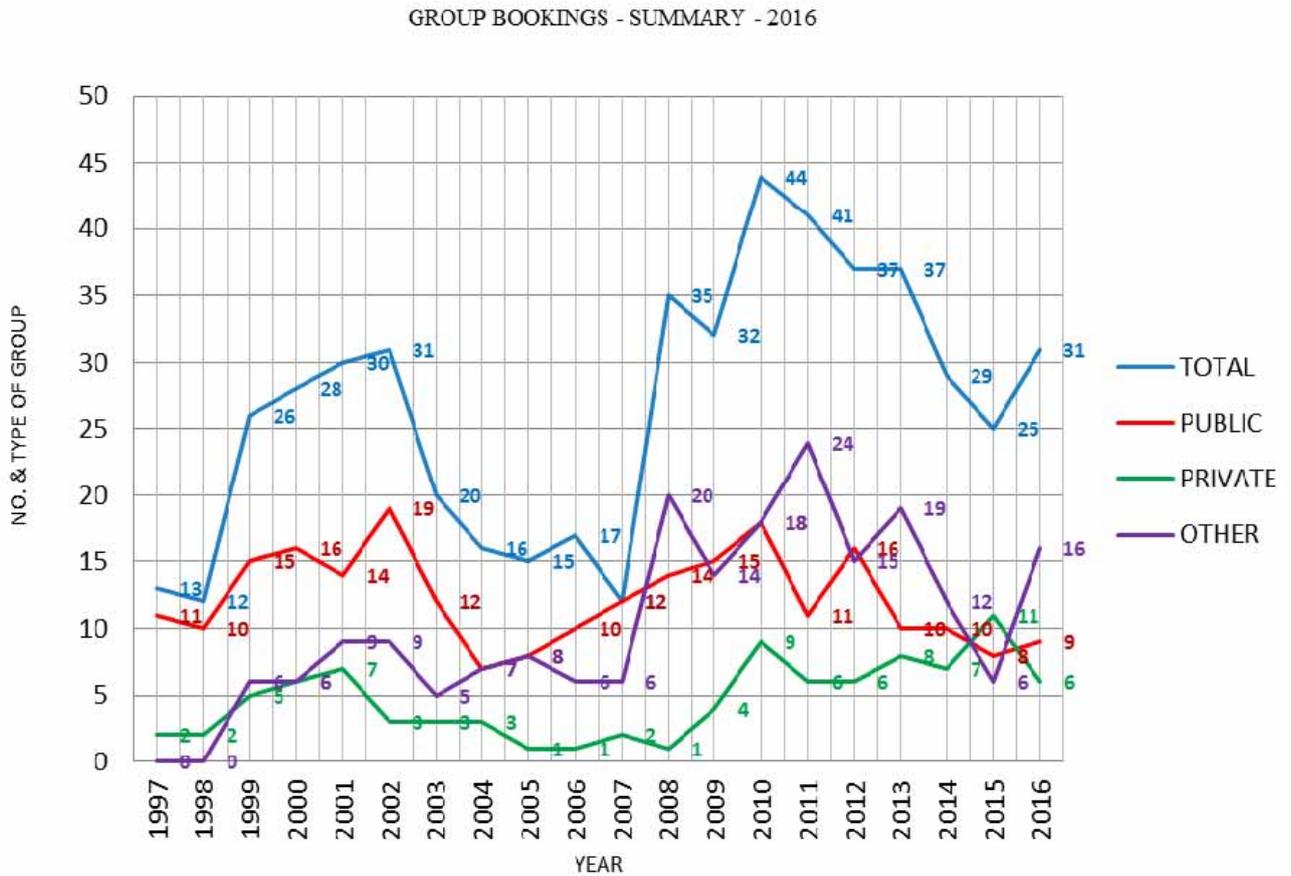
7.3 CATERED BED NIGHTS BREAKDOWN – 2014 - 2016 COMPARISON



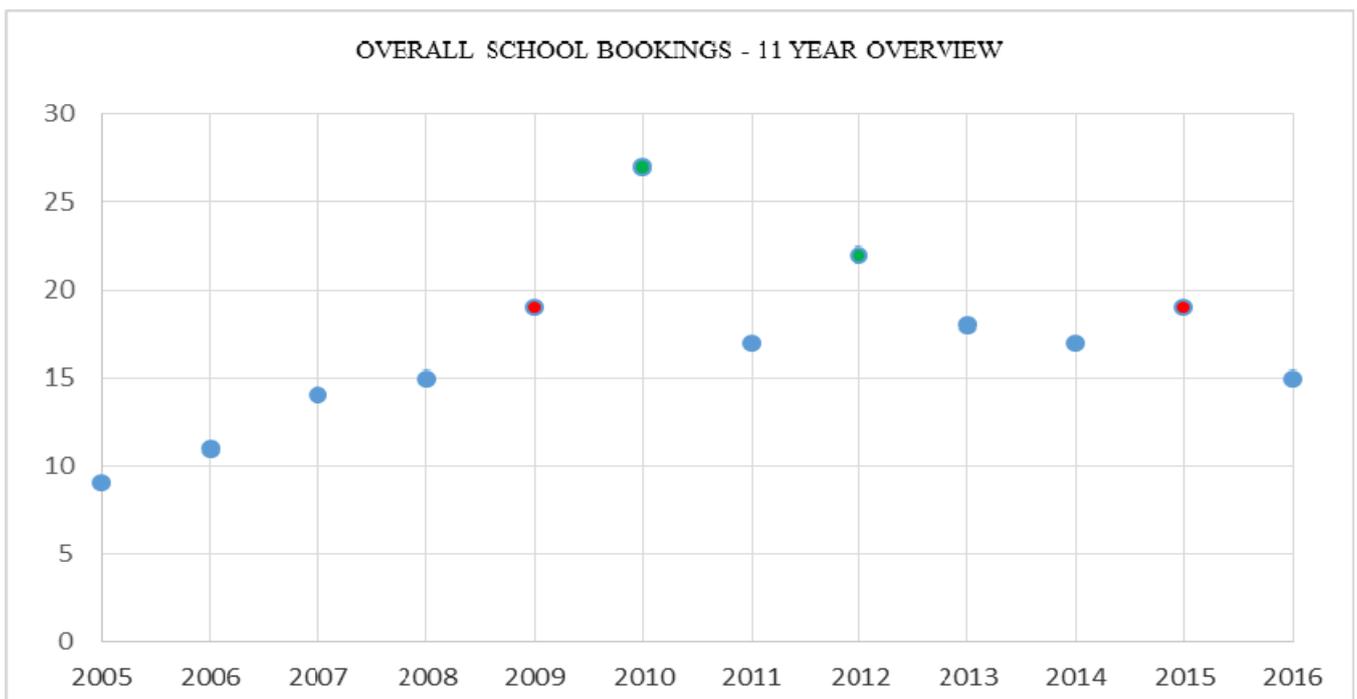
7.4 - 2016 GROUP BOOKINGS – SUMMARY



7.5 GROUP BOOKINGS BREAKDOWN, 1997 – 2016 SUMMARY

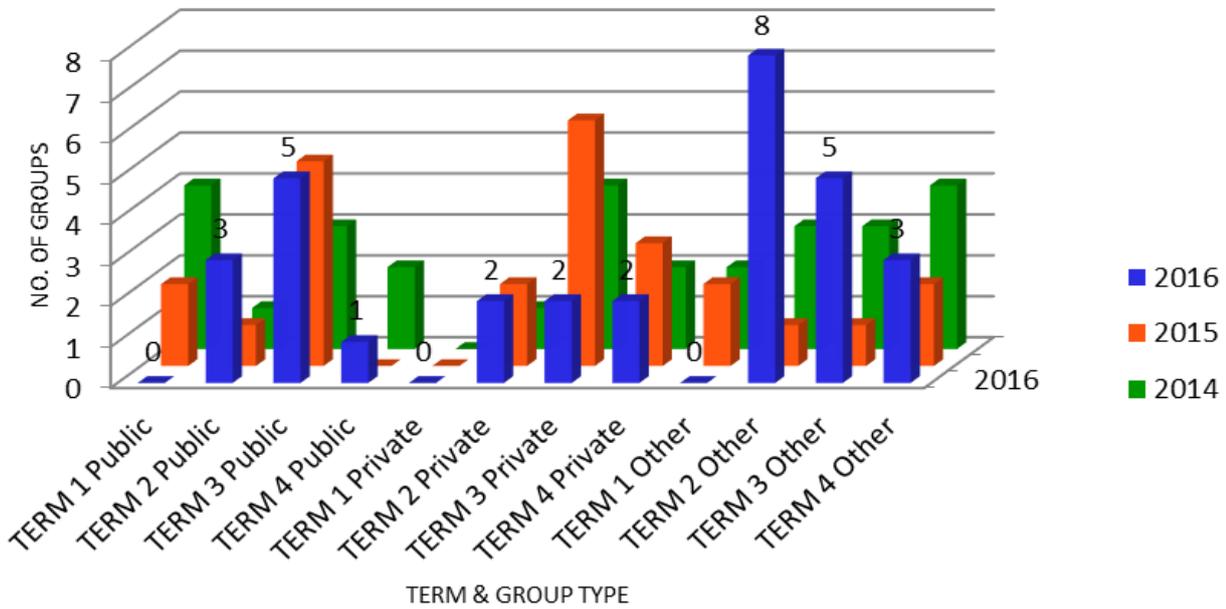


7.6 OVERALL SCHOOL BOOKINGS, 2005 – 2016 OVERVIEW



7.7 - GROUP BOOKINGS USAGE BY SCHOOL TERMS, 2014 - 2016 COMPARISON

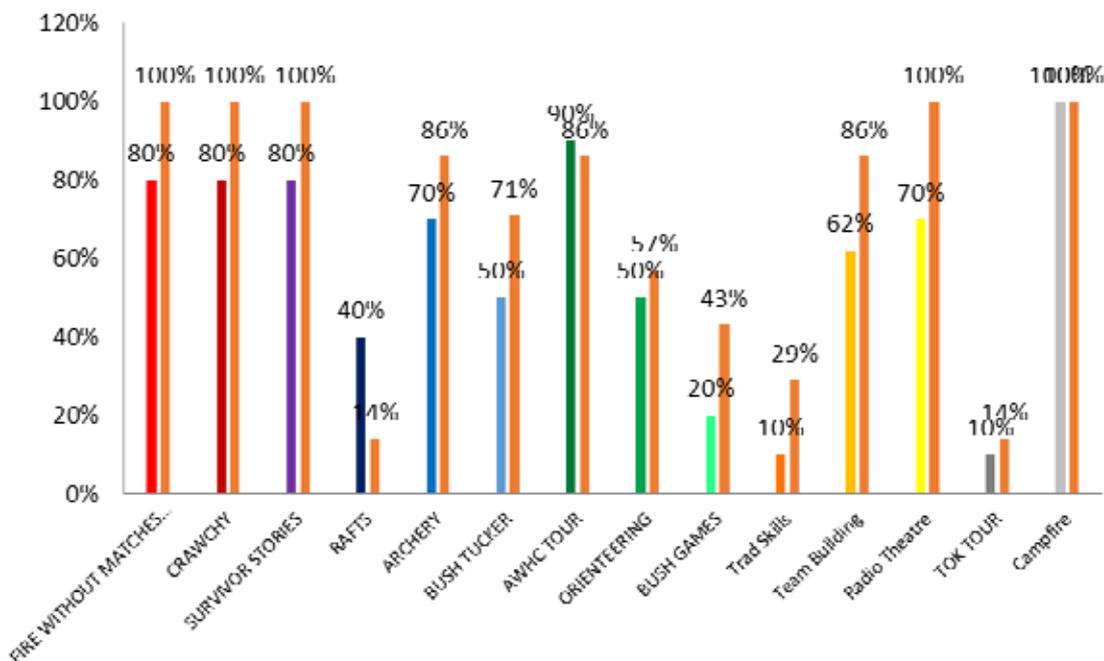
GROUP BOOKING TERM BREAKDOWN 2014 - 2016 COMPARISON



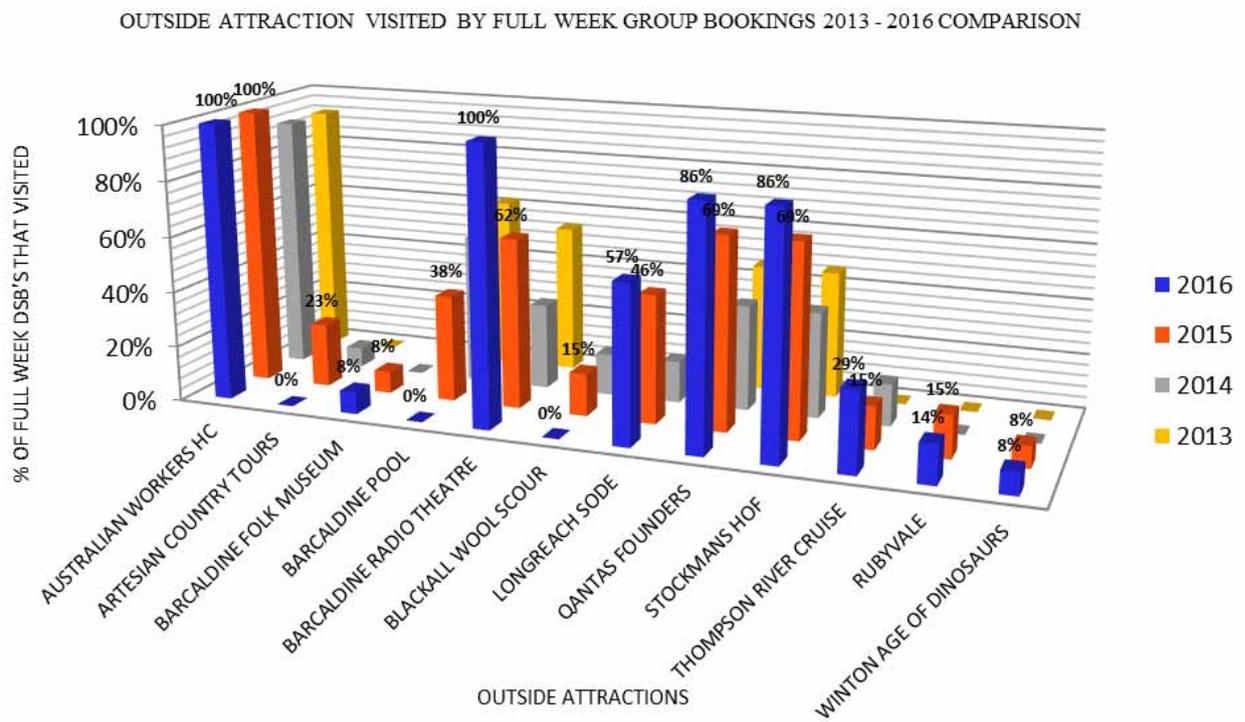
7.8 - 2015 to 2016 ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION BY VISITING SCHOOLS

GRAPH 1 - WANPA-RDA FACILITATED ACTIVITIES, FULL WEEK GROUPS BY % 2015 / 2016 (2016 in orange) COMPARISON

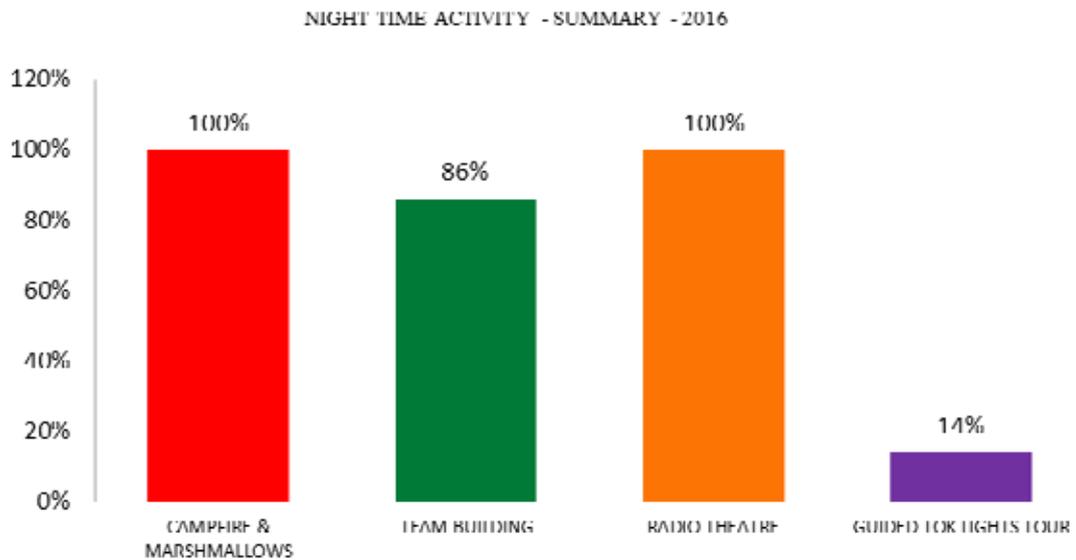
WANPA-RDA FACILITATED ACTIVITIES, FULL WEEK GROUPS - SUMMARY - 2015-2016



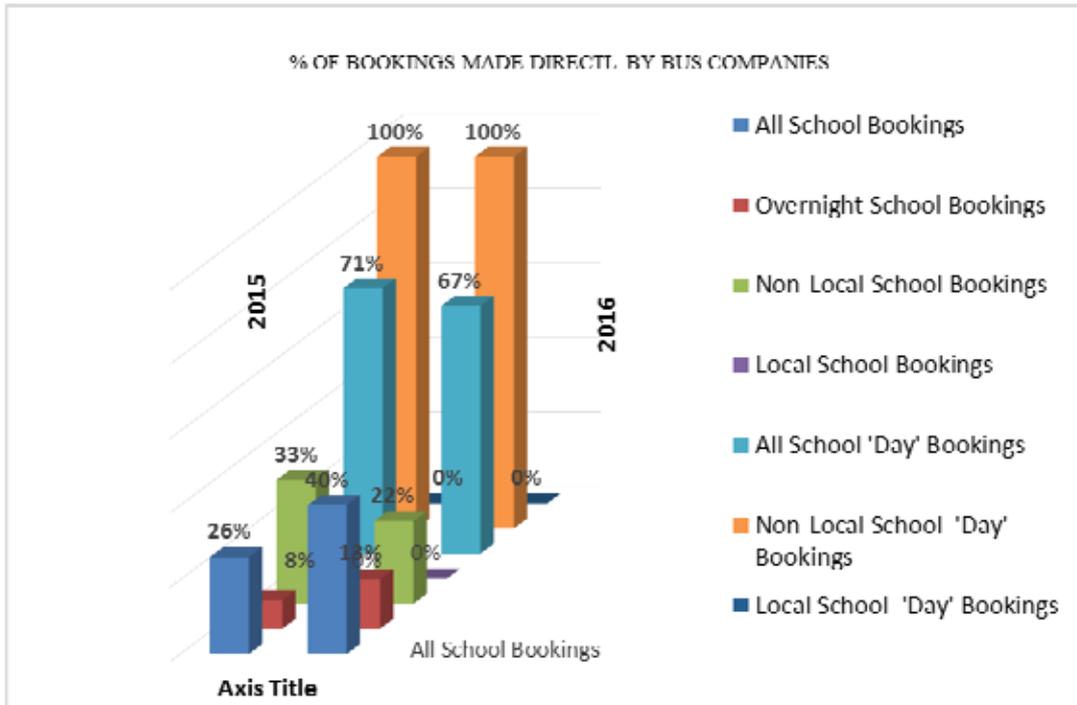
GRAPH 2 - OUTSIDE ATTRACTIONS VISITED BY FULL WEEK GROUPS BY % 2013 - 2016 COMPARISON



GRAPH 3 - WANPA-RDA FACILITATED NIGHT TIME ACTIVITIES, FULL WEEK GROUPS BY % 2016



7.9 - BOOKINGS MADE DIRECTLY BY BUS COMPANIES BY % 2015/2016 COMPARISON



8.0 Conclusion

2017 – What does the future hold for Wanpa-rda?

As in previous years, firstly, a huge congratulations to the Wanpa-rda team, who managed to successfully mitigate the difficult circumstances faced over the crippling weather and EQ transitional obstacles. Against all odds, we have maintained the true purpose of our enterprise. Wanpa-rda succeeded where others centres did not, while staying true to the ethos behind the centre envisioned by Mr. Bob Gleeson, CEO AWHC, back in 1997 when he manifested his vision to build a “School of the bush” for city kids to visit and experience the outback.

2017 will usher in a new era for Wanpa-rda. Tim Berry will be leaving his position after 7 years and new blood will come in behind him. EQ have finally taken a renewed interest in Wanpa-rda and have redrawn the Memorandum of Understanding in collaboration with Bob Gleeson CEO, in an attempt to secure a stronger future and strengthened relationship between the Australian Worker’s Heritage Centre and Education QLD. EQ have also reclassified the coordinator position to Band 5 Principal, attracting outstanding applicants. Wanpa-rda intends on keeping to its true purpose and ethos while transitioning into its new phase and is excited about the new skills and energy the new principal will bring.

In conjunction with revitalised relationships and staffing, the Education system in general has relaxed into its new structure and Central West is also teaming with a sense of ‘fresh air’ having

had a much needed turn of events in the seasons. With all the positivity surrounding the centre, Wanpa-rda predicts excellent outcomes to continue into 2017.

Feedback from school groups over the past few years affirm that the programs and facilities we have on offer are a valuable educational resource for the youth of QLD. The continuation of the Outback Education Subsidy is also a promising step to improve our clientele in 2017. With high school classes up to grade 8 within the reach of the enticing financial incentive, Wanpa-rda will now utilise valuable time and the fresh ideas of the new principal to extend the scope of existing activities to appeal to a wide variety of new clientele while satisfying the expectations of the regular attendees.

Our website continues to be a great asset to Wanpa-rda in terms of marketing and administrative efficiency. Our dedication to the ongoing maintenance, renewal, and expansion of the available content will ensure that we reap the maximum benefits of an online presence. We are very pleased with the presentation and functionality of the site as it stands and believe that it will contribute to the overall administrative flow of Wanpa-rda as well as providing a fresh public face for the centre.

The strengthening of professional partnerships with transit companies has demonstrated its merits in 2016 with a notable 40% of bookings being taken directly from bus / coach lines. The majority of these bookings were Day bookings, with 100% of Non-Local day bookings resulting from direct coach line bookings. In 2017 Wanpa-rda anticipates an increase in the number of overnight school camps booked directly by bus companies, which in 2015 accounted for 7.69% and in 2016 accounted for 13.33%. Bus companies that book directly have tended towards large group sizes. In some cases over double the capacity of our accommodation facilities, with the largest day booking of 2016 totalling 127 participants.

Having turned away several groups in 2015 / 16 due to group sizes and far exceeding our capacity for accommodation, these facilities need to be reviewed. As more and more groups are starting to take advantage of the opportunities available at Wanpa-rda and the financial subsidies available, we must consider the prospect of site infrastructure improvements that could further enable larger groups to be accommodated at the centre. The ability to augment the participant numbers for overnight group bookings would open the doors to substantially increasing income.

The direct marketing campaign continued throughout 2016 and has been expanded to reach the maximum audience available and we are continually revising the design of the marketing material. The most recent adaptations to the content of the marketing material seem to have increased interest among target consumers. We will continue to review and adapt our approach throughout 2017 to give Wanpa-rda the best chance for ongoing success in 2017.

Additional infrastructure such as ropes courses and climbing walls are also tabled for discussion to compliment the popular range of activities already on offer at Wanpa-rda and to create an experience that entices new clientele and keeps schools recommending the Wanpa-rda experience to others. A paleontological focus has been discussed with interest amongst Wanpa-rda stakeholders to tie into the increasing local interest and input into the field. With fossils abundant in the area, Winton having an established high quality educational facility and another dinosaur museum being constructed in Muttaborra, Wanpa-rda will consider its place in the availability of this educational endeavour.

The Wanpa-rda team look forward to working with everyone again in 2017 and appreciate your overwhelming support and enthusiasm, as together we continue producing the best Outback Education programs on offer in the state of QLD.



*West that we go
To a place we hardly know,
With these kids and teachers
I can assure you, the time felt slow.*

*From crawchy catching to raft crafting,
Experiencing funny singing
And bow flinging,
That kept our bell ringing.*

*Giving us a tour on the sandy tracks,
We tried our hand at building shacks.
The people we met,
Dreaming for it to be wet.*

*Seeing the animals here and there,
Each roo we drove passed, it felt unfair.
The Planes we saw...
The horse riding surprised us for shore.*

*But unfortunately this adventurous journey
Had to come to an end,
And this land will definitely be,
Our close, hot friend.*

Grade 5 student – St Joseph’s - Bundaberg.