

Denison Bowling Club May Carnival

Denison, Shire of Irwin, 26-30 May 2018



MID WEST *Sports Tourism* PROJECT



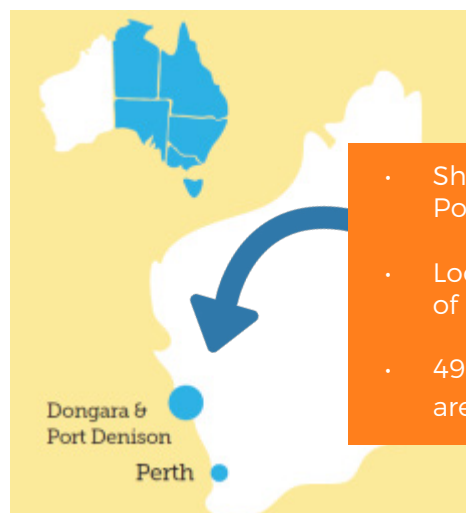
OUR FINDINGS

- 350+ visitors to the Mid West region
- Each visitor surveyed stayed an average of 12 nights
- 57% of visitors surveyed stayed longer in the region because of the event
- An average spend of \$565 per person in the region
- The economic impact in the Mid West, as a result of hosting the event, was \$177,000 (Gross Regional Product)

* Data sourced independently through ACIL Allen Consulting

When it comes to hosting quality regional sporting events, some clubs are punching above their weight. Denison Bowling Club, humbly run by a handful of volunteers and paid staff, is paving the way for community-led sporting events in Western Australia's Mid West region with their annual May Carnival.

Despite running on a shoestring budget, this successful annual event sees the small coastal towns of Dongara and Port Denison (combined Shire population 3,600) booming as a result.



- Shire of Irwin Population - 3,600
- Located 350km north of Perth, WA
- 49.73% of population are aged +50

According to fresh statistics from the Mid West Sports Tourism Project, more than 350 people visited the Mid West in 2018 to attend this event. Importantly, more than 50% of those visitors extended their stay to enjoy all that the Mid West has to offer.

The 5-day event cost a modest \$28,000 to host but generated over \$197,000 of spending by visitors in the Mid West - almost eight times the initial investment.

Country hospitality a drawcard

Denison Bowling Club Men's Captain, Ian Payne, oversees the management of the 5-day carnival. He said the event's 20-year success boiled down to quality facilities, volunteer support and good old-fashioned country hospitality.

"This is the biggest event in the Club's financial year and we rely greatly on our volunteers to help make it happen. The carnival attracts hundreds of bowlers and is regarded as a huge financial input to the local Dongara and Port Denison business community," Mr Payne said.

"The Denison May Carnival has many repeat visitors, plenty of whom are 'caravan bowlers' and choose to make this event their first stop on their journey north."

‘Caravan Bowlers’ on the move

Perth retiree Lionel Bell agreed that the country hospitality was a huge reason why he returns to the Denison Bowling Club’s May Carnival each year.

“We’ve been doing this for about 20 years now and it’s usually the start of our annual winter trip. The Club is very organised, the playing conditions are good (and so is the food) but it’s really the warm welcome we all get that keeps us coming back year after year - and we will be back again.”

A boost to the local economy

“Together, the direct economic, productivity and volunteering benefits from sport (in Australia) create a total economic value of approximately \$50 billion annually.”

- Intergenerational Review of Australian Sport 2017

Communities are increasingly using sport as a valuable injection of funds through the hosting of major sporting events and there is much to be said for the sustained economic contribution from annual, regional sporting events that attract repeat visitation.

Collaboration between Mid West bowling clubs and their thoughtful approach to event scheduling has enabled the region to capitalise on the annual migration of bowlers as they make their way up the coastline in search of warmer climes. This 2018 snapshot sees **visiting bowlers ‘play and stay’ in the region for potentially a four-week period**, demonstrating the significant impact of intra-regional planning.

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- **19-23 May 2018:** Green Head & Leeman Bowling Clubs (Shire of Coorow)
 - **26-30 May 2018:** Denison Bowling Club (Shire of Irwin)
 - **2-7 June 2018:** Geraldton & Wonthella Bowling Clubs (City of Greater Geraldton)
 - **9-11 June 2018:** Northampton Bowling Club (Shire of Northampton)

Shire of Irwin Manager of Community Capacity, Nicole Nelson, said the May Carnival has helped extend typical tourism periods and has caused a positive flow-on effect to communities in the shire.

“Visitors stay an average of 12 nights in the Mid West due to this event, so it’s an enormous economic benefit to the region. This broader regional impact highlights the importance of Mid West towns working together to attract events, because it’s not just the host town that benefits,” Ms Nelson said.

“[The Club’s] event management processes incorporate social and community wellbeing outcomes by actively involving the community. The town is very proud of the Club’s success in managing such an event and facility, which adds to the community’s identity.”

Building community capacity

Mid West Sports Federation Chair Mike Bowley said the Mid West Sports Tourism Project is here to support existing events and to help put the Mid West sports industry on the map.

“We have already seen the potential for nationally recognised sporting events in our region, and this carnival is a fantastic example of what our sporting community can achieve at a regional level” Mr Bowley said.

The Mid West Sports Tourism Project aspires to build a thriving sports tourism industry and make the Mid West region of Western Australia a top destination for sporting events through promotion, advocacy and strengthening of our sporting community.

To learn more about the Mid West Sports Tourism Project please visit www.mwsf.org.au.

This Project is led by the Mid West Sports Federation and supported by funding from the Australian Government through the Building Better Regions Fund, the State Government through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries and Lotterywest, and the City of Greater Geraldton.